Associated Student Government
University of Arkansas

ASG Senate Resolution No. 12
Author(s): Senator Abagail Hisler, Senator Gabrielle Gies, Senator Danny Moreno, Senator Mary Eichenberger, ASG President-Elect Lauren Loften, ASG Secretary-Elect Kara Grace Miranda
Sponsor(s): Senator Grace Wood

A Resolution to Include EMPOWER Students in Senior Walk

Whereas, EMPOWER – Educate, Motivate, Prepare, Opportunity, Workplace Readiness, Employment, Responsibility – is a four-year, non-degree college experience program for students with cognitive disabilities that incorporates functional academics, independent living, employment, social/leisure skills, and health/wellness skills in public university setting with the goal of producing self-sufficient young adults, and

Whereas, EMPOWER students complete 120 hours of coursework between EMPOWER-specific courses and regular, general university courses. During the last two years of the program, students work 10-20 hours per week at campus internships. Students may live on campus, attend sporting events, participate in campus activities, creating an equitable college experience for students with cognitive disabilities, and

Whereas, EMPOWER students pay the same tuition and fees paid by all undergraduate students, in addition to paying an additional EMPOWER support fee of $5,000 per semester, and

Whereas, the EMPOWER program typically has between 4-6 graduates per year and is not expected to ever have more than 25 students at a time, and

Whereas, over 300 other institutions across the country have inclusive education programs similar to EMPOWER, and
Whereas, the EMPOWER program is unique among other non-degree, certificate programs on campus in that its purpose is to create an inclusive, near-equivalent college experience for students with cognitive disabilities, and

Whereas, Senior Walk is the University of Arkansas’s longest standing tradition, in place since 1905. This tradition is unique to the University of Arkansas campus and creates a sense of belonging among campus members, and

Whereas, EMPOWER students are not included in Senior Walk, despite completing a college experience practically equivalent to that of degree-seeking student with the exception of accessibility adjustments and receipt of a certificate rather than degree, and

Whereas, the University of Arkansas has made a goal to “create an environment on campus where every member of the university community feels welcomed and included and has the same opportunities to be successful through equitable policies and practices,” and

Whereas, exclusion of EMPOWER students from Senior Walk is a discriminatory and non-inclusive practice that diminishes belonging on campus, and

Whereas, an online petition to include EMPOWER students in Senior Walk has received over 1,000 signatures, and

Whereas, the exclusion of EMPOWER students from Senior Walk is unacceptable.

Be it therefore resolved: the Associated Student Government Senate supports the expansion of Senior Walk to include EMPOWER students, in order to

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Be it finally resolved: a copy of this resolution be sent to Interim Chancellor Charles Robinson, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Harwood-Rom, and Faculty Senate.

Amendments: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Vote Count: Aye 37  Nay 0  Abstentions 3

Legislation Status: Passed  Passed  Failed  Failed  Other  Other

Jack Switzer, ASG Chair of the Senate

Coleman Warren, ASG President

Date 4/25/2022

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