



The University of Alabama at Birmingham
Student Senate 2025-2026

**A Resolution to Stand Against the 2025 Winter Housing Charges Imposed on
Student Residents Living in UAB Housing**

WHEREAS, the University of Alabama at Birmingham Undergraduate Student Government Association has the honor and responsibility of representing the entire undergraduate student voice; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the USGA to lead the undergraduate student body toward positive and relevant changes; and

WHEREAS, the department of Student Housing and Residence Life has recently announced that students who remain in on-campus housing over the Winter Break period will be assessed charges of up to \$350; and

WHEREAS, this newly established policy departs from longstanding institutional precedent, as UAB has historically allowed undergraduate students to remain in residence halls over Winter Break at no additional cost; and

WHEREAS, UAB has successfully operated for decades without imposing such fees, and the university's substantial economic impact, estimated at approximately \$12.1 billion annually; and

WHEREAS, peer institutions with far fewer financial resources, such as the University of North Alabama (UNA) with an economic impact of approximately \$343 million, do not require students to vacate residence halls nor do they impose additional housing charges for remaining over the Christmas/Winter Break; and

WHEREAS, students were inadequately provided twenty-seven days' notice of this charge in accordance with the 2025 Fall Housing Contract, which states that Rate Charges must be provided at least a thirty-day written notice for Rate Charges; and

WHEREAS, results from the survey created and shared by USGA titled the “Housing Fee Survey” show as of 11/16/2025, 85% of survey participants did not know about the housing fee previous to 11/04/2025; and

WHEREAS, Resident Assistants (RAs) and Peer Wellness Ambassadors (PWAs), who are not compensated during academic breaks, were informed of the new fee at the same time as their residents, limiting their ability to prepare or support those affected; and

WHEREAS, the lack of public notice regarding advance planning and the rollout of the policy have resulted in extremely short turnaround times for responses and logistical decisions, creating undue stress and confusion for students; and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Fall Housing Contract does not adequately make obvious that the \$200-\$350 fee on Winter housing would be applied to the Spring semester student balance, causing undue stress onto unknowing students who may believe that the fee is paid upfront; and

WHEREAS, results from the survey created and shared by USGA titled the “Housing Fee Survey” show an average stress rating of 3.64/5, with around 30% of participants answering a level 5 stress rating in association with the imposed fee; and

WHEREAS, despite paying, students receive no additional benefits than they did when it was free last year, indicating no extra compensation for the additional charge; and

WHEREAS, a portion of UAB’s student population does not have access to safe, stable, or healthy home environments to return to during academic breaks, and Winter Break housing access is essential for their mental, physical, and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, numerous students have expressed concern that an unexpected charge ranging from \$200 to \$350 would cause significant financial hardship, particularly for those who are self-supporting, work to pay their own living expenses, or have limited financial flexibility; and

WHEREAS, nearly all students (86%) who participated in the “Housing Fee Survey” reported that they either could not or knew someone who could not pay the housing fee in the given time frame; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Student Affairs acknowledges that some students “experience homelessness or housing insecurity, transportation insecurity, and other barriers to success,” which The Division of Student Affairs follows by claiming to “[seek] to remove barriers to support student success at UAB”, highlighting the awareness of UAB as an institution to avoid policies that remove access to safe housing for students; and

WHEREAS, dining facilities and many campus services will be closed during the break, compounding challenges for students who already struggle with food insecurity and rely on campus dining for consistent access to meals; and

WHEREAS, some students lack affordable travel options or may face circumstances that make leaving campus logically or financially prohibitive; and

WHEREAS, housing insecurity is already a significant problem impacting the Birmingham community, with around 1,000 individuals unhoused on any given night (HUD, 2024), signifying the role of UAB as a safe dwelling for UAB students that is not offered elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, over a third (34%) of students who filled out the “Housing Fee Survey” are unemployed, highlighting how an additional fee would add considerable stress to this population in particular; and

WHEREAS, 104 of the 229 student participants (as of 11/16/25) in the “Housing Fee Survey” are freshmen, 53% of whom are unemployed, emphasizing how freshmen represent the most significant portion of individuals living on campus and will be disproportionately impacted by this fee; and

WHEREAS, imposing additional fees on vulnerable students during a period intended for rest and academic recovery may exacerbate inequities contrasting UAB’s values as a Health Promoting University per the Okanagan Charter signed in 2020; and

WHEREAS, students who have the option to stay on campus have historically shown a significant advantage in achieving their degree (12%) and higher retention rates (Sheffield, 2016), and imposing additional unexpected fees pushes students off-campus, effectively enforcing various negative outcomes: “statistically, the graduation rate deteriorates, the retention rate lowers, and the University loses potential revenue” (Sheffield, 2016); and

WHEREAS, statistical models incorporating variables related to housing availability on-campus and commuting distances in relation to academic performance, specifically employing “Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) and Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE)” indicates that students living on campus can achieve a Grade Point Average (GPA) “between 0.7 to 1.0 higher due to living on campus” (Araujo & Murray, 2010); and

WHEREAS, students who have ever had the experience of living on campus, spanning over breaks or only a semester, experience long-term benefits, causing an “increase in both semester GPA and cumulative GPA” (Araujo & Murray, 2010); and

WHEREAS, UAB is, by Division of Student Affairs’s definition of Health Promoting University, “an international community that aspires to... contribute to the well-being of people[...];” and

WHEREAS, the Division of Student Affairs commits to “promoting health and well-being and supporting UAB students;” and

NOW THEREFORE, be it RESOLVED, that the USGA, representing the perspective and voices of the student body, stands opposed to the new policy Student Housing and Residence Life plans to enforce, which would impose up to \$350 on students signed to stay in UAB Housing over the Winter Break; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UAB USGA encourages other positive and relevant changes be made for the benefit of campus and student life; and

Resolution FA-01-25
Vote: 29 Y; 0 A; 0 N
Rules Committee on: 11/18/25
Passed in Senate: 11/18/25

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that undergraduate students of the University of Alabama at Birmingham shall exercise their rights in instances where university departments have violated contractual obligations.

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Mary Wallace
Please see below...

USGA Advisor



**This signature confirms that the previous signatures and their divisions have followed the process outlined in the USGA Constitution, USGA Code of Laws, and any processes set forth by the Executive Vice President and the Legislative Branch.*