



**University of Houston Faculty Senate Resolution
in Support of the Formation of a Phi Beta Kappa Chapter**

[Approved by unanimous vote of the University of Houston Faculty Senate on April 15, 2009]

Whereas, the honor society Phi Beta Kappa:

- Is one of the Nation's oldest and most widely known Academic Honor Societies,
- Celebrates and advocates excellence in the liberal arts and sciences,
- Is a resource for students seeking information about liberal arts and sciences,
- Facilitates interdisciplinary scholarly activities,
- Sponsors lectures, seminars and conversations that facilitate further the development of the liberally educated student,
- Provides social and cultural opportunities for the members.

Be it Resolved that the Faculty Senate fully supports the formation of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter at the University of Houston.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. E. Weidner', written over a horizontal line.

President
University of Houston Faculty Senate

A handwritten date '4/29/09' written in black ink over a horizontal line.

Date

U N I V E R S I T Y o f H O U S T O N

Faculty Senate
(713) 743-9181
Fax: (713) 743-9184

306 M. D. Anderson Library
Houston, Texas 77204-2005
<http://www.uh.edu/fs/>



May 27, 2009

Dr. John Antel, Provost
University of Houston
Houston TX 77204

As both Faculty Senate President and Chair of the University Coordinating Commission (UCC), I am greatly disappointed in the decision to formally enact a new Travel and Entertainment policy at UH without vetting through the UCC process. This is despite personal assurances to myself and other members of the Faculty Senate that the administration would follow the standard UCC procedure in submitting this.

The University Coordinating Commission (UCC) was formed several years ago as a joint effort by the Faculty Senate, the University Councils (i.e. GPSC, UC and RC) and the UH administration. It was created as a response to the recommendations of FS-CoUG report, in which you yourself participated. As you know, the role of the UCC has always been advisory. The purpose of the UCC has always been to ensure that all policies developed by individual units of the university are properly vetted by affected constituencies in the university prior to their implementation. This "clearing house" approach has resulted in a much broader-based discussion of new policies between units and has encouraged individual units to assess the effects of their proposed policies beyond their normal scope of operations. In the past, the UCC has provided a useful mechanism for providing feedback to units proposing new policies thereby preventing unwanted and often unintended consequences of such policy changes prior to final approval by the UH administration.

The UCC process has been criticized at times as appearing unwieldy and time consuming. This is particularly true when one University unit has spent several months painstakingly developing a policy, and when finally finished, wants it implemented immediately. Although the UCC procedure can add over a month to this process, its value has been observed in the increased level of communication between disparate units within the University of Houston. This has resulted in a much more proactive rather than reactive process in developing new policies that affect the broader operation of the University's highly complex and interrelated constituencies.

It is within the spirit of the framework described above that we are proposing several changes to the way in which the UCC operates. The Chair of the UCC already has the authority to administratively certify that a new policy has received adequate discussion prior to implementation. However the process whereby this "fast-track" review can be utilized appears to be unclear and requires adequate pre-vetting of proposed policy changes by the sponsoring unit before they reach the UCC for consideration. The proposed changes to the operation of the UCC are intended to clarify and codify the most

efficient pathway for individual units on campus to receive UCC certification in the most expeditious manner possible.

In order to achieve this goal, we propose the development of a MAPP that clearly delineates this process, to include: 1) time-lines for submission of new policies; 2) clear examples of what a “policy change” is and hence requires UCC certification, rather than what an “administrative” change is that does not require UCC certification; 3) a clear pathway for vetting of a proposed policy change prior to submitting it to UCC for certification; 4) criteria for requesting expedited review of a proposed policy change by the Chair of the UCC and 5) development of an “on-line” infrastructure to achieve a seamless and expeditious review and certification of a proposed policy change by members of the UCC.

The UCC and the Faculty Senate Executive committee believe that such a MAPP is essential for the continued operation of the UCC. Without such a MAPP, the process whereby proposed new policy changes receive UCC certification will remain vague and open to interpretation by individual units on campus. Such vagueness can lead to a sense that UCC certification of new policy items is not valued within the organization and serves little purpose. In addition, it is essential that the time and effort spent by members of the UCC in certifying new policies and enhancing the operation of the university does not appear to be wasted or counter-productive through a lack of effective communication.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dan Wells
President of the Faculty Senate and
Chair of the University Coordinating Committee
University of Houston
Houston, TX 77204-2005

cc: Renu Khator
Carl Carlucci
University Coordinating Commission
Faculty Senate Executive Committee – UH Council Chairs