

U N I V E R S I T Y *of* H O U S T O N

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

Special Session

Minutes for July 29, 2009

A special session meeting of the University of Houston Undergraduate Council convened at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29, 2009, in the Elizabeth D. Rockwell Pavilion, M.D. Anderson Library.

Members Present: Bill Barnes, Betty Barr, Amanda Baumle, Roger Blakeney, Simon Bott, Elaine Charlson, Lawrence Curry, Agnes DeFranco, Luces Faulkenberry, Sarah Fishman, Martha Haun, Debbie Hermann, Stephen Huang, Lannis Kirkland, William Munson, Charles Peters, Richard Scamell, Kevin Simon, John Snyder, María Soliño, Rebecca Achee Thornton, Dana Wierzbicki, Lawrence Williams, Djuana Young

Members Absent: Williams Dupré, Catherine Hatfield, Martha Haun, Christina Hughes, Richard Kasschau, Rincy Mathai, Iain Morrison, Norma Olvera, Melissa Pierson, Laurence Rapp, Michelangelo Sabatino (for John Zemanek, spring 2009), Ron Singer, Nina Tucci, Jerry Waite

Guests: John Antel (Academic Affairs), Ed Hugetz (Academic Affairs), Lesley Sisk (ENGR), Kenneth Fomunung (SGA)

Staff: Heidi Kennedy, Jeanette Morales

I Call to Order;

Council was called to order by Chair Lawrence Williams at 3:07 p.m.

II Announcements

A The first Undergraduate Council meeting of the 2009-2010 academic year will be held on September 2, 2009.

B Undergraduate Council Web Address: <http://www.uh.edu/undergraduatecouncil/index.html>
Core Curriculum Website Address: <http://www.uh.edu/academics/corecurriculum/>
Undergraduate Studies Catalog Web Address: <http://www.uh.edu/academics/catalog/>

C E-mail listserves:

UNDERGRAD-COUNCIL@LISTSERV.UH.EDU
UC-DEGREE-PROGRAMS@LISTSERV.UH.EDU
UC-POLICIES-PROCEDURES@LISTSERV.UH.EDU
UC-CORE-CURRICULUM@LISTSERV.UH.EDU
UC-NEWS@LISTSERV.UH.EDU (Minutes only)

D Vice chair Simon Bott announced that the PAL project (Personal Access Liaison) is underway. FTIC students are assigned a faculty or staff member to check on the student periodically during the semester (particularly stressful times such as registration and final exams). Emails will be sent to the FTIC students informing them of their PAL contact. Dr. Bott encouraged the UC members to take part in this project to support the undergraduate community and bolster student success.

E Council Chair Larry Williams informed the members that tomorrow, July 30, 2009 an orientation parent session at Chili's Too will be held and he asked that UC members volunteer to meet with

parents. He mentioned that these faculty/parent sessions have been met with enthusiasm and appreciation by the parents. There is another orientation faculty/parent session to be held on August 6, 2009.

III Administrative Reports

No reports.

IV UC Bylaws on Special Sessions

Dr. Larry Williams went over the UC Bylaws regarding special meetings.

V Raising Freshman Admissions Standards in Fall 2011 (UC 10295 09S)

Senior Vice President and Provost of Academic Affairs, John Antel was invited to speak to the Undergraduate Council members about the proposed raising of freshman admissions standards and to answer any questions and discuss concerns that the Council may have.

Some council members asked about the “hurried” timing of the proposal especially when the Council normally doesn’t deal with major policy changes during the summer. Dr. Antel explained that in order to implement the new freshman admissions standard by fall 2011, the new policy has to be approved now (2009) and it has to be advertised to the important constituents (i.e., school districts, high schools, students/parents, etc.) one year before implementing (2010). This implementation process is a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board statute.

One major concern of the Council is the higher excess of freshmen students who are not accepted to UH – Main Campus due to the higher standards (51% or lower class ranking). John Antel informed them that the other UH campuses are planning to step up and take the excess students. He mentioned that the Pathways initiative is one example of another UH campus accepting students. Students who aren’t accepted to UH – Main Campus can attend UH-Downtown. Also, current UHD students can also transfer to UH-Main Campus. This initiative is also being implemented along side with community colleges, which will in turn recruit better quality transfer students. Another method of handling excess students is through the individual review process, where a committee reviews the records and circumstances of each student. It was mentioned that the individual review process will become more automated: utilizing review committees for unique or more difficult application reviews. Faculty members will be encouraged to get more involved in the review process.

Even though raising the freshman admissions standards is to be implemented by late summer 2009, Dr. Antel stressed that the University of Houston plans to raise admission standards incrementally. He mentioned a few methods for recruiting better quality students besides raising admissions standards such as: offering more scholarships (i.e., Tier One Scholarship), attract more undergraduates to live on campus (new and improved housing), and creating more competitive academic programs are some of the recruiting initiatives.

Other concerns such as maintaining UH’s ethnic diversity even when admissions standards are raised were voiced by Council members. It is expected for ethnic diversity to make a small drop. However, according to the proposal, UH plans to be more aggressive in recruiting and to provide more financial means to top notch students via scholarships especially “those from ethnic groups underrepresented in higher education.”

After much discussion, Chair Larry Williams asked the Council to move UC 10295 09S forward for final UC decision. At-Large member Lawrence Curry made the first motion to forward the proposal. However, Council member John Snyder proposed an amendment that will accommodate a more

individualized review process for music students (or any other students that have a specialized talent), but do not meet the high school ranking or the minimum standardized test scores. John Antel and Ed Hugetz suggested instead of amending the proposal, but instead make a recommendation to review and improve the individual review admission process. Larry Williams asked John Snyder if he would be amenable to this suggestion and withdraw his motion to amend UC 10292 09S. John Snyder agreed and withdrew his amendment. UC 10295 09S: Proposal to Raise Freshman Admission Standards in 2011 was unanimously approved by the Undergraduate Council.

VI New/Old Business:

None

VII Adjournment at 4:40 p.m.