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**Author:** UC 2015 Committee; President Dike

**Sponsor(s):** Senator McCaughan; Senator Xu

**Committee:** University of Administration and Finance

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**A University Bill to Authorize a University Center Student Fee Referendum**

- WHEREAS: The University Center, the heart of student activity since its completion in 1967, offers a wide variety of useful products, services and opportunities for students to meet and connect with other members of the University of Houston community; and
- WHEREAS: The University Center provides quality support services, facilities and programs at the lowest possible cost to our students and other users; to provide a common gathering and meeting place for all segments of the University Community; and to provide a setting in which students may develop character, personality and intellect while experiencing a sense of community; and
- WHEREAS: The Mission and Mission Values for the University Center and Associated Facilities (see attached titled "UC and Associated Facilities Mission and Mission Values") is to support the educational mission of the University of Houston, while providing programs, services and facilities that focus on learning and student development while enriching the campus life experience; and
- WHEREAS: As an auxiliary operation of the University of Houston, the University Center receives no funds from state appropriations and is financially responsible for all costs associated with general upkeep, maintenance, renovations, improvements, utilities for facilities, as well as an administrative charge on all expenses from the University Center budgets; and
- WHEREAS: The University Center Fee at the University of Houston is the lowest in a comparative analysis of large and public peer institutions in the State of Texas, the Urban 13 Plus and in Region 12 of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI); and
- WHEREAS: As the UC Fee was introduced in 1988, the UC and Associated Facilities has consistently worked to identify a minimum of \$200,000 each year to support renovation and maintenance initiatives to fulfill an "informal agreement" between the UC, the Student Government Association, and the Student Fees Advisory Committee; and
- WHEREAS: When inflation is calculated in comparing 1988 to the present day economy, the required funding allowance to match \$200,000 in 1988 is approximately \$346,332.97 in the year 2007; and
- WHEREAS: The University Center Complex and UC Satellite Master Plan of Renovation Project was conducted over the last eight months, and called for review/action in four (4) main areas: Market Analysis, Facility Assessments, Feasibility Recommendations, and Cost Estimates for each identified project recommendation; and
- WHEREAS: The University Center Complex and UC Satellite Master Plan of Renovation Project

Executive Committee has identified three (3) specific opportunities to be evaluated by Holzman Moss Architecture) during the project, which include:

- Creating an addition to the University Center Complex and/or the UC Satellite, the optimal location of an addition, and the types of services or access to facilities that students would want in an addition.
- Adding space for components such as student organizations, other campus services and/or retail services, additional lounge or study spaces, mid-sized meeting rooms (200-500 capacity) and/or a multi-purpose theater (movies, performances and lectures).
- Keeping a part(s) of the facilities open for extended or 24 hours, with limited access to selected components by stakeholders; and

WHEREAS: The University Center Complex and UC Satellite Master Plan of Renovation Project Executive Committee was composed of students, staff and administrators; and

WHEREAS: The current University Center Fee is \$35 per student for each long semester (Fall and Spring) and \$17.50 per student per each term of summer sessions; and

WHEREAS: Section 54.526 specifies the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System may levy a student union (university center) fee not to exceed \$35 per student for each long semester (Fall and Spring) and not to exceed \$17.50 per student per each term of summer session for the sole purpose of financing, operating, maintaining and improving a Student Union (University Center) Building for the University of Houston; and

WHEREAS: The University Center Fee is at the ceiling allowed by State of Texas V.T.C.A. Education Code § 54.526.

**Therefore, be it enacted by the Senate of the 45<sup>th</sup> Student Government Association of the University of Houston:**

Hereby Assembled authorize a Student Fee Referendum be conducted to ascertain student support for an increase in the University Center Fee in order to provide additional funding for facility transformation and/or facility expansion options (based on recommendation options provided via the University Center Complex and UC Satellite Master Plan of Renovation Project).

LET IT FURTHER BE ENACTED the Senate of the University of Houston Student Government Association Hereby Assembled recommend the University Center Student Fee Referendum include specific information related to a phased-in approach for University Center Fee increases to provide adequate funding to support each of the facility transformation and/or facility expansion options

LET IT FURTHER BE ENACTED the Senate of the University of Houston Student Government Association Hereby Assembled recommends this University Center Student Fee Referendum be conducted on two week days during the week of November 17, 2008.

LET IT FURTHER BE ENACTED the Senate of the University of Houston Student Government Association Hereby Assembled, based on a successful result in the University Center Student Referendum, will endorse a fee increase to the University Center Fee dedicated

exclusively to supporting a University Center facility transformation and/or facility expansion option that has the support of UH students (via the University Center Student Fee Referendum) which would result in a dramatically expanded and improved center of campus life and activities on campus

LET IT FURTHER BE ENACTED the Senate of the University of Houston Student Government Association Hereby Assembled recommends all such fees shall be deposited to an account known as "The University of Houston University Center Fee Account" and shall be placed under the control of and subject to the order of the student fees advisory committee established under Section 54.5062.

LET IT FINALLY BE ENACTED the Senate of the University of Houston Student Government Association Hereby Assembled recommends any increase additional in the University Center fee from one academic year to the next, beyond the current 2008 University Center Student Fee Referendum, must be approved by a majority vote of the students voting in an election called for that purpose or by a majority vote of the Student Government Association.