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Sponsors:

Committee: Academic Affairs

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University of Houston Student Academic Bill of Rights

Whereas, the Education Amendments of 1972 Title IX states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..." ; and

Whereas, the University of Houston qualifies under the Educational Amendments of 1972 Title IX as an institution of education receiving Federal financial assistance; and

Whereas, the University of Houston System has acknowledged additional protections for other groups within their nondiscrimination statement: "The University of Houston provides equal treatment and opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status or sexual orientation except where such distinction is required by law..." ; and

Whereas, within the scope of UH, the current nondiscrimination statement should also be interpreted to ensure the protections of students in areas of academic endeavors; and

Whereas, University of Houston in-class and administrative procedures and practices should be clearly defined; and

Whereas, it is traditionally recognized that if a student completes assignments, attends class, participates, and performs well on tests and quizzes, then they will receive a fair grade that reflects their work; and

Whereas, owning a required textbook in a university course is not always imperative to each student's success in that course; and

Whereas, students have the right to unrestricted access to any course material which they have purchased until they choose to dispose of such material in any manner which they, as the owners of such material, see fit, and that is within the confines of any applicable law; and

Whereas, students should be guaranteed access to alternative academic resources outside the classroom such as the internet, books, tutoring help, as well as assistance from professors and/or TA's during office hours without incurring additional costs; and

Whereas, a student should have access to an appeals system to ensure academic accountability; and

Whereas, students deserve a voice in the determination, amending, and review of academic policy; and

Whereas, students should have access to their own private academic records for review.

Therefore, be it enacted by the 45th Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

Section 1: The Student Government Association at the University of Houston repeals UB44010.

Section 2: The Student Government Association at the University of Houston establishes the following as the Student Academic Bill of Rights.

Article 1: Academic Discrimination

Section 1: Students shall feel free to peacefully express themselves even to the extent of disagreement with figures of authority without fear of reprisals. This expression includes, but is not limited to speech, actions, academic endeavors, and rights for due process, grievances, and all forms of discourse (*Student Handbook, University Policies, Freedom of Expression Policy, p.61*).

Section 2: The core right and privilege of the freedom of religious beliefs shall be honored and protected in the classroom, recreation facilities, resource centers and all other institutions within the University of Houston; Students shall have the right to be excused from classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose; students shall be treated consistently with the instructor's policies and procedures related to other excused absences and shall be entitled the opportunity to make-up work and examinations; students shall have the right to appeal to the Office of Academic Program Management any disagreement between the student and instructor about whether the absence is for the observance of a religious holy day, or if they disagree about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations. (*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Religious Holy Days, p.18*).

Section 3: Students shall be held to the same standards equally without regards to status or position, ensured that all academic grading, evaluations, and mentoring opportunities are fairly based on the student's ability to perform, and that each student shall have the right to fair and reasonable treatment by other members of the university community (*Student Handbook,*

University Policies, Equal Education and Employment Opportunity; Student Handbook, University Policies, Title IX Grievances and Other Discrimination Complaints, p.78).

Section 4: A student who has disabilities shall enjoy the right to appeal an instructor's denial of an accommodation request to the academic department chair, college, and the Provost, in that order and/or by contacting the Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD). (*Student Handbook, Accommodations for Students Who Have Disabilities, p.15*)

Article 2: In Class Practices and Procedures

Section 1: A student shall have the right to receive a syllabus for each class at the beginning of each semester that highlights, but is not limited to: learning objectives, class expectations, required materials, grading procedures, posted professor and teaching assistant office hours and contact information, attendance guidelines and a calendar outlining the semester's assignments and exams.

(*2007 UH Faculty Handbook, Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures, Expectations of Faculty with Teaching Responsibilities, p. 42; Student Handbook, Attendance, p.15*)

Section 2: A student shall have the right to receive graded tests, quizzes, and homework assignments within a reasonable amount of time - preferably before the following test is given and quiz or homework assignment is due.

(*2007 UH Faculty Handbook, Responsibilities to Students, Return and/or Retention of All Evaluated Student Material p. 136*)

Article 4: Administrative Practices and Procedures

Section 1: All professors, instructors, and teaching assistants who are involved in the instruction of a university course shall offer regularly scheduled office hours and shall be available for consultation by any student enrolled in such course at said office hours.

(*2007 UH Faculty Handbook, Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures, Expectations of Faculty with Teaching Responsibilities, p. 42*)

Section 2: Students shall have access to academic advisors keenly familiar with the specific majors, minors, and any other concentrations to which they are assigned; these advisors shall be available and easily accessible to all students throughout the calendar year.

(*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Academic Advising, p.9*)

Section 3: Any academic audit which has been performed and verified by a University academic advisor, faculty advisor, and dean shall represent a binding and complete list of all requirements that must be fulfilled for completion of the major, minor, or any other concentration for which such audit has been performed and verified.

(*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Degree Plan, p.15*)

Section 4: Students shall be entitled to a total of six withdrawals throughout their college career at any time, and shall be entitled to drop both a class and its concurrent lab or recitation

simultaneously to count as one withdrawal together; students must adhere to University policies guiding withdrawal from a course. (*Student Handbook, Dropping A Course, p. 17*)

Article 5: Academic Appeals (Academic Dishonesty, Academic Accountability)

Section 1: Students shall have the right to a fair and impartial appeals process regarding course requirements and classroom procedures; grades may be appealed only if violations of university, college, or department academic policies or procedures can be shown to have affected that grade or evaluation.

(*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Undergraduate Grievances, p.14*)

Section 2: Students shall have the right to review and to advise changes in academic policy in an appropriate and civil manner.

(*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Undergraduate Grievances, p.14*)

Article 6: Student Records and Privacy

Section 1: Students shall have the right to review, to inspect, and to amend their records at their request in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

(*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Academic Honesty, Article 1, 1.11 Definitions, Permanent Record, p.10*)

Section 2: Students shall have the right to privacy of their academic records, and their information shall not be disclosed without their written consent as outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

(*Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Academic Honesty, Article 1, 1.11 Definitions, Internal Use, p.10*)

Article 7: Student Academic Bill of Rights Amendments

All amendments for this document must be made through the procedures outlined in the University of Houston Student Government Association Constitution.

Article 8: Distribution

This document shall be printed in the University of Houston Main Campus student handbooks.

Therefore, be it resolved by the 45th Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

Section 1: The Student Government Association will work to implement all applicable policies in UB44010 in separate works of legislation in the immediate future.