

U N I V E R S I T Y of
HOUSTON

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ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Urban Experience Program

SFAC REPORT

FY 2013

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SFAC REPORT FYI 2013

1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.

The mission of the Urban Experience Program (UEP) is to improve the retention/graduation rate of UH by providing exceptional support and services to UH students who have unmet financial need and challenges that could hinder academic progress and preclude success. The majority of the UEP students are the first in their families to attend college. This reporting year approximately 70% received the federal Pell grant; approximately 10% are from the state foster care system. UEP represents a dynamic mix of abilities, academic preparation, social, ethnic, national origin, regional, age and gender diversity. Some of the UEP students have personal or family situations that present obstacles to success. Many of the UEP students held multiple jobs this year while maintaining a full course load. Overall, the students who succeeded did so by overcoming these adversities. Our UEP culture is to work hard, work smart and work together. Our motto is "Lift as you climb".

UEP was critical to our students' efforts. UEP accomplishes its mission by first offering students' program elements that research indicates enhance academic success: tutorials, academic and career development workshops, academic monitoring, and opportunities for engagement. Grants are available as well. The unique elements of the UEP program are the non- traditional support and the intensity of the support provided. For example, tutorials are not time restricted; students can work with a tutor for hours and call when questions arise. UEP accepts students with academic problems (probation, warning, and suspension) and works with these students to develop successful and loyal UH alumni. UEP makes a commitment to each student by providing personal, individualized support services. For example, students are free to call the Director anytime with issues large or small. There are UH faculty members who have sacrificed their personal time and energy to assist students with academic and personal issues. UEP Friends and Family network of volunteers from various disciplines and professions work with the UEP students altruistically. UEP also offers students the opportunities to develop and refine basic office skills, professional behavior and ethical standards via internships or work in the UEP office.

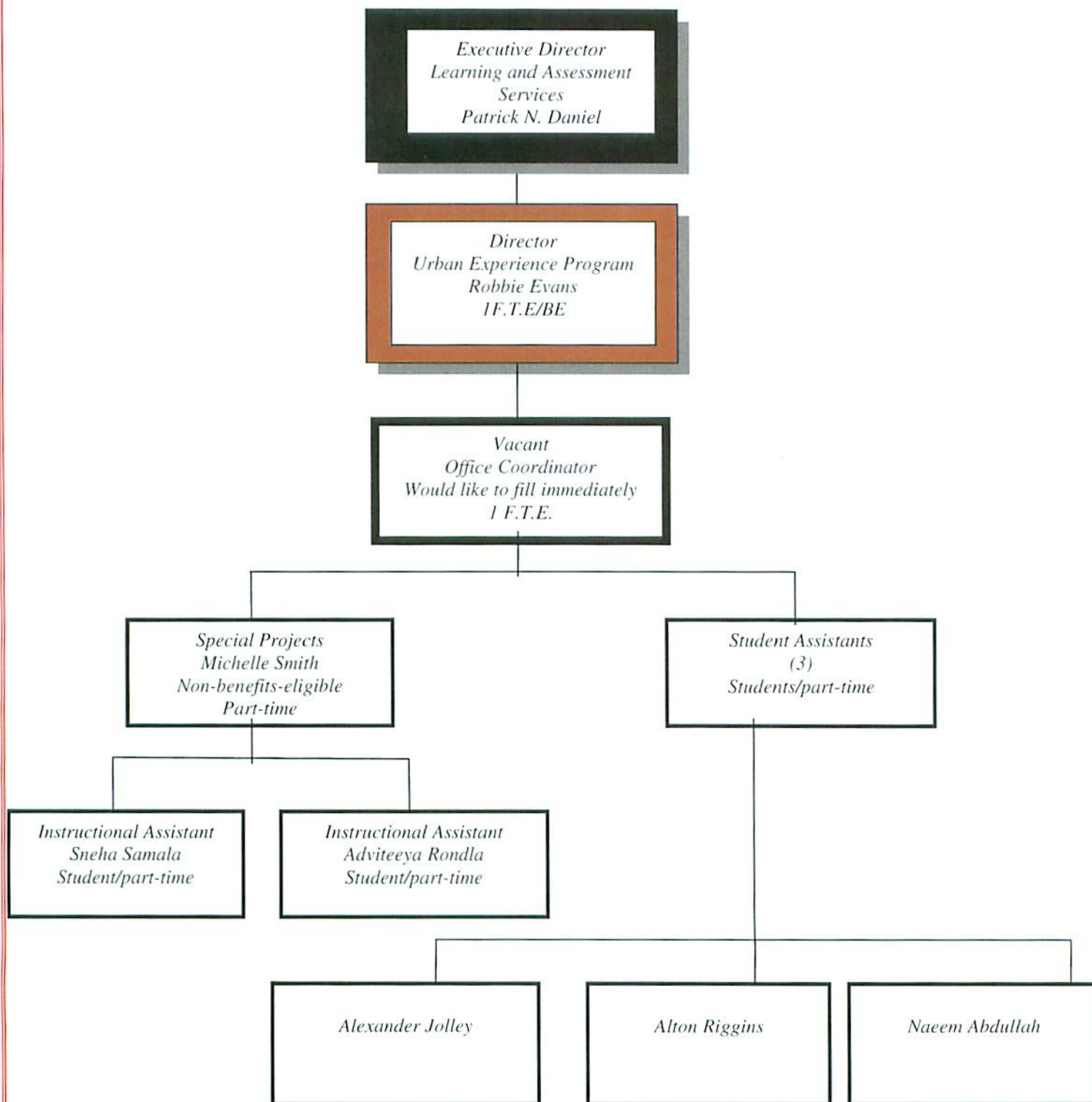
Because engagement enhances retention, UEP fosters opportunities for student engagement on and off campus. UEP students publish their own newsletter that covers campus and community events. They also participate in service projects on and off campus. In so doing, the students develop a sense of civic responsibility and knowledge on important public issues. These efforts provide opportunities for learning, networking and leadership. For example, UEP and CoAmerica Bank sponsored financial literacy workshops this reporting year.

The array of academic support, advising, individual attention, engagement and internships results in great benefits to the students. Nine (9) of the 101 UEP students graduated. The Retention/Graduation rate, as calculated for UEP by the UH Measurement & Evaluation Center (MEC), is 94.1% for this reporting year, one of the highest on campus. Also, UEP students have polished their office, social and leadership skills while developing a commitment to service and civic responsibility.

This success mirrors success of the past. Former UEP participants are now engineers, pharmacists, teachers, dental students, and Ph. D. candidates. UEP has been held up as a program to emulate by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. It must be noted that this past year was extremely challenging because of UH staff changes and reorganization. The lines of reporting for UEP have changed four times over the last 10 months making it difficult to secure the sign off approvals for purchases and other matters. Nonetheless, UEP staff and students have persevered and remain optimistic. SFAC support is essential to the program. **UEP is grateful and appreciative for SFAC's past, present and future support.**

2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, custodian, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.

URBAN EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



3. List the objectives that you provided with your 2010-2011 SFAC request. Please comment on your success in achieving these objectives. If an objective changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new objectives, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these objectives.

The existence of the Urban Experience Program (UEP) depends upon the funding provided by SFAC. This past year, Fall 2010-Summer 2011, the UEP program served the mission of the university (Appendix I) and the mission of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Appendix II). The UH Mission Statement is in perfect synergy with the spirit in which UEP was established and the mission of UEP (Appendix III). The staff and students consider SFAC funding to be an honor and a responsibility. The allocations provided by SFAC allowed UEP to successfully accomplish the numbered objectives set forth below:

Objective #1: To ensure success of students by providing through UEP, a personalized and comprehensive support program for participants in order to maximize their academic potential

Activities Designed to Achieve Objective #1

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Applicant Evaluation

The application process to the UEP program begins with a Personal Data (first application) and at least one interview with the Director. Any financial, social, personal, academic, or medical subjects that the student felt comfortable discussing were reviewed. All UEP students have completed an initial Personal Data form and a Needs Assessment Profile so that they can be directed to the appropriate UEP and campus resources that will enhance their academic performance. UEP participants also identify possible career interest through career assessments such as the Strong Interest Inventory and Myers Briggs. Inventories secured through University Career Services (UCS) with the invaluable assistance of Dr. David Small, who heads up UCS.

Academic Advising

All participants were required to attend a mandatory academic advising session with their major advisor at least once each semester excluding summer. An integral part of the UEP program, this requirement ensures that the student is aware of department degree requirements and that the student adheres to a structured degree plan. In case the student had not seen an advisor, the student was asked to set a future appointment with an advisor.

Tutorials and Workshops

Along with the PROMES (Program for Mastery in Engineering Studies) program in the College of Engineering, UEP students and staff participated in a workshop designed to produce stellar grades and a system of mastery of challenging courses. The Guaranteed 4.0 workshop should be a benefit offered to every UEP student. I feel so strongly about the workshop, that I hope we can continue to offer it for free for every UEP student who wishes to attend.

UEP offered individual tutorials and supplemental instruction (assistance with taped instruction) to UEP participants. The same support was offered to any UH student if arranged ahead. The UEP tutorial sessions are individual tutorials and there is no time limit. Students were also referred to

outside tutorials. UEP also provided any UH student access to a bank of office computers on a first - come basis.

One UH faculty member who is a UEP Friends and Family participant continued to offer tutorial time for UEP students seeking mastery of specialized courses. Appointments must be prearranged. The request must be acceptable to the director and the faculty tutor. He has mentored and tutored UEP pre-pharmacy and pre-dental students, all of whom have been successful applicants to their chosen professional schools.

UEP participants were encouraged to improve their study skills by attending workshops and seminars on time-management, note and test taking. The UEP program owns an excellent series of Mathematics CDs by an award winning STEM instructor and mathematics professor, Dr. Freddie Frazier, Professor of Engineering Mathematics at Prairie View A&M University who is an award winning STEM teacher. Students used the CD's in the UEP office.

Productive Collaborations

UEP, The Challenger Program and The First Year Residential Experience (FYRE) Program are all student success programs that share common values of a commitment to higher education and limited financial resources. The issue of limited resources can be ameliorated by continuing to foster ties of collaboration and communication. While in the past the relationship between these three organizations was informal the groups are not obligated to accept any particular students., The sharing of ideas and best practices resulted in providing greater access to education and financial resources in order to benefit the students. FYRE is a first year student success program for residential students; UEP has grant awards and accepts students in all classifications as a result of a request from several SFAC committee members. The Challenger Program accepts first and second year students and gives priority to those two groups for funding. UEP offers Juniors and Seniors and certain groups of UEP Grad students a degree of preference. FYRE refers students to UEP, UEP and Challenger refer students to the other. The students benefit from the combination of additional resources and opportunities from all three organizations.

Monitoring of Academic Progress

UEP was the first program on campus and the only program for years to provide one-to-one unrestricted time tutorials to UEP students and to provide the same service to UH students not in the UEP program. UEP provided as in previous years an innovative service to students. This unique service included an on-call-by phone, weekend tutorial service that operates by appointment. This innovative approach permits students who work to participate in one-to-one unrestricted tutorials with the same tutor, this is an important point. The optimal tutorial relationship develops with time. UEP could use 3 additional tutors.

Progress reports were mailed and UH professors and instructors provided the director with feedback to identify students who might need additional academic support and also to recognize those who excelled. In addition, UEP students are encouraged to self-report their successes as well as areas in need of improvement.

In this reporting year, Fall 2010-Summer 2011, Students have suffered layoffs as the economy falters. The office coordinator position is needed in order for the UEP office to function optimally. Once the office coordinator position is filled (currently a temporary staff member is assisting) the program will begin to maximize its efficiency. In order to operate at full strength, UEP requires at least 4 tutors to provide the service that produces the best results for the students. Filling the office coordinator position will provide the assistance needed to compile and coordinate progress reports and grades,

monitor the projects of the student staff, compile the data and assist with the current research in progress.

Through self-identification, UEP staff observation, inquiry, and interview, students who worked in excess of 20 to 40 hours weekly were identified and options were explored with the students. This is especially important for students who were in their first two years of college. Working in excess of 20-40 hours weekly and involvement in other time consuming activities appear to negatively impact grades and GPA.

The Cougar Come Back Program

This reporting year Fall 2010-Summer 2011, one CCB student is scheduled to graduate Fall 2011. This student failed to register for the one class she needed to graduate Spring 2011 and decided to work thinking that she had graduated. I called her to inform her of the problem and she will complete the class during the Winter Break. There are 2 other students in the same situation that I am currently encouraging and working with in terms of the very important details.

The UEP director and staff made the effort to maintain contact with students from previous years who did not graduate. The Cougar Come Back effort encourages former UH students to return to the university. The director attempts to maintain a relationship with students who stop out and drop out. Former students are encouraged to return to this campus. If the former students relocate or other issues preclude that option, former UH students are encouraged to continue their academic careers elsewhere. Former students continue to visit, call and volunteer with the program.

PERSONALIZED ATTENTION AND SUPPORT

Informal Support

Students in the UEP program often turn to the staff for encouragement and guidance. Students need a stable support system, therefore we try to advocate for the students, establish rapport with each student, introduce them to role models and mentors and help them to navigate through the bureaucracy.

UEP staff does what is needed on a one to one basis. Daily interactions with students vary. Crisis interactions include issues such as evictions, loss of jobs, medical issues and leaves, death in family, missing an exam, financial aid, housing and roommate issues. Planned and unplanned meetings can also include discussions centered on the following: career exploration, family matters, how to obtain access to campus resources and just talk to maintain contact and share good and bad times.

UEP students continued to discuss the issues with the UEP director that affected their academic success and their university experience. Students continued to walk in, set appointments with the director or call. Individual discussions with the director led to suggestions for student appointments with mental health, healthcare, and other professionals. The UEP tutorial staff maintained a caring and encouraging atmosphere and actively supported the UEP students in problem solving. Students continued to develop peer support systems in and outside of the university.

Students have shared experiences and advice regarding the financial issues that have negatively affected their educational progress and financial stability. The result of informal discussion groups and meetings led to the students requesting assistance in making documentary films expressing their points of view on many unaddressed issues in their lives.

This year, as last year, financial issues overwhelmed many students. Financial matters are most often the topic of discussion and concern among UEP students. Many UEP students held multiple jobs at some point during the past year. Students attributed lower grades to work overload. Increasing

numbers of students reported that the resulting stress and frustration caused anxiety. Those students experiencing anxiety and stress over an inability to successfully support themselves and perform credibly in their classes choose to stop out. Students often compromise by choosing less rigorous programs or registering for fewer hours.

Friends & Family

UEP Friends and Family is composed of UEP staff, UH staff, UH administrators, UH faculty, and community and professional volunteers who work to relieve stressors in the lives of the students. Friends & Family is populated by socially conscious individuals who desire to develop and provide a network of support for individual students. This UEP Friends and Family collaborative approach permits the students to concentrate on solving personal issues and attaining academic success. It has never been required that the issues addressed occur between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. The UEP Friends and Family network increases retention by helping the students deal with the various economic, social, personal, academic, or medical issues that they faced during the year. This year, as in the past, students could look to the UEP program for support, encouragement, acceptance, and action. For the Director, what must be done for any particular student is not scripted, nor limited by the hour or the day? UEP Friends and Family actively exemplify the spirit of the UEP program, which is to Encourage, Enlighten, Empower, and Embrace everyone.

Students required and received assistance in a multiplicity of areas, day and night. Examples of issues faced by students this Fall 2010-Summer 2011 reporting year include the following:

- During this reporting year several students lost or continued to be in danger of losing their housing on and off campus because of financial issues.
- Those fortunate enough to obtain employment or maintain their employment faced an increasing number of working hours in order to support increasing educational expenses and increasing living expenses. The students without parental support were disproportionately affected and these are the students with the fewest resources.
- Many students state that they cannot afford the meal plan. Those who applied for the state Lone Star Card report the process to be unnecessarily humiliating and time consuming.
- Many students ignore medical or dental needs until the problems become serious because they have no medical insurance. Students suffered from medical conditions that required transportation to medical facilities, personal support, and financial assistance.

These are but a sample of the myriad of complex and time-consuming issues that required creative problem solving during the year. The financial pressures remain difficult for even middle-income students who have a network of support. Many UEP students were employed 25 to 38 hours and lived off campus. A student working 30 to 40 hours or more per week faces difficult choices. Full time employment affects the time required for study, limits the hours one should attempt to carry, and often negatively impacts the GPA. Students who have no network of support (no parental contribution) are finding it more difficult to obtain a university education and do so with stellar grades.

Students who only depend on financial aid (even with work study) cannot support themselves sufficiently to finance their undergraduate education here at the University of Houston main campus. Financial support is a main issue impacting student success.

UEP Friends and Family provided clothing, financial support, transportation, attention, advice, and invitations to family and social events. Without guidance and encouragement, financial assistance and attention from UEP staff, UEP Friends and Family, many students could not have continued their studies. UEP Friends and Family play an integral role in the UEP program by providing the

necessary care and the family element not often available to international students, foster care alumni, and other independent students and students from out of state or from another city in Texas.

The Spirit of the UEP program is to Encourage, Enlighten, Empower and Embrace each student and each person who crosses the path of those involved with the UEP program.

This caring approach is the core of UEP and the primary reason UEP changes lives. This caring attitude followed by creative solutions and progressive action is beneficial for any student and critical for students who lack a support network. The program strives to arrange the environment in order for the student to maximize his or her opportunity to learn and achieve. The words of the UEP Spirit reflect the nature of the UEP Culture.

PROMOTION OF CIVICE RESPONSIBILITY, CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND LEADERSHIP

Since its inception, the UEP program has inspired students to advocate for positive change in our society. In an effort to enliven students' interests and heighten their passions, students actively engaged and participated in community, social and political volunteer efforts. UEP students regularly help to organize opportunities for high school students to visit the campus for tours and activities. This reporting year Aspire to Be Great and Project Grad were hosted on campus by UEP. UEP students organized the panel discussions with a Q&A after each presentation. UEP students also helped with tours and facilitated the discussion groups for both organizations. UEP works with Project Grad students every year. Students also participated in various voter registration drives. There were group discussions and students shared examples of their community service and volunteerism. UEP students participated in the MLK celebration in January. The 11 lunches for the event were donated by a member of the UEP Friends and Family Network. Students feel empowered and important when they are allowed to express their views and gain recognition for good work.

Under Grad the Musical

An All Student Musical, that was written, directed, choreographed and (he acted, sang and danced also) by Chris Davis and students from UH, Texas Southern, Houston Baptist and Sam Houston State took place at UH in April 2010. The UEP students held auditions, wrote the music, and lyrics, acted, danced and sang. The Musical used song and dance to teach core values of courage, thinking for oneself and always doing the right thing. The main idea is to treat people as you wish to be treated and don't be a gullible tag along. The appreciative crowd of 1200 gave the young artists several standing ovations. The students inspired others to write and present socially conscious (no profanity or sexually explicit content) plays and musicals. The UEP program hosted this inspiring, exciting Musical on the campus in the E. Cullen Performance Hall. (Appendix IV)

The second presentation of Under Grad The Musical in December 2010 was not hosted by UEP but a number of UEP students continued in the cast and worked the event in various capacities. Just as the April 2010 event was successful, this winter presentation had a full house at the E. Cullen Performance Hall. This outstanding All Student event was seen by 1200 guests. The musical promoted good values and student success through music and dance! This All Student Cast sang, danced, acted and wrote the lyrics and choreographed the entire production.

Student Organizations

Students have the opportunity to create and implement programs through student organizations started and maintained by UEP students. Students are encouraged to transform their environment, create new directions, and reinvent aspects of UEP by contributing their time, energy, and creativity. Through the Urbanite students prepare a newsletter every three months. The Nioletti organizations

invite interesting speakers to the campus. And Cup and Chaucer is a book club. Through these activities students develop self confidence by using leadership and organizational skills; they also get to practice team work and mutual support. The UEP motto is "Lift as You Climb". The spirit of the program is explained by the following words "Encourage, Enlighten, Empower and Embrace" those we meet. In addition to the help provided to others, UEP students are asked to commit to at least one hour per week in the UEP office

Support Success

UEP, Project Grad Houston and Aspire to Be Great collaborated to provide high school students an opportunity to ask questions of a panel of UEP students attend concurrent sessions of workshops, lunch with college students and have a tour of the campus. UEP students worked with the groups in Fall 10 (Aspire) and Spring 11 (Project Grad) to bring high school students from the Houston metropolitan area to the University of Houston for a day of discussion, tours of the university, introduction to the university, college-prep workshops, and mentorship by college students.

Objective #2: To expand corporate partnerships and community partnerships with respect to increasing three-to-5 year commitments

Activities Designed to Achieve Objective #2

Work with UH Development and other agencies in Traditional Solicitation Methods

UEP is working with UH Development on the AmeriCorps grant proposal. *See below.*

Develop Relationships with Individuals, Agencies, Foundations, and Groups that have established Philanthropic Efforts

See below.

Develop Well-researched Plans of Action for instituting various support packages as well as internship opportunities

See below.

Change Happens

All UEP students are expected and encouraged to have at least one career related internship prior to graduation. The UEP Partnership with Change Happens provided 4 internships for the summer of 2011. However the relationship has resulted in full time employment for 2 current students and many other employees in various positions on shorter tours of employment.

AmeriCorps

UEP in collaboration with new community partners continued to seek an opportunity to apply for an AmeriCorps grant. This current opportunity developed in May 2011. UEP can count Major new public and private sector partners as a result of pursuing this current AmeriCorps project. For example the City of Houston Parks and Recreation, Neighborhood Centers and Metro have agreed to provide internships for 40 UEP students if the grant is funded. Metro wants 20 of the students for itself. This could provide opportunities for employment and cancellation of educational loans for UEP and other UH students.

4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and the satisfaction level of those served. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

Objective #1: To ensure success of students by providing through UEP a personalized and comprehensive support program for participants in order to maximize their academic potential

Activities Designed to Achieve Objective #1

Promotion of Civic Responsibility and Leadership in UEP participants

Typically, office staff and the UEP network use phone contact, office flyers, verbal reminders, emails, discussions, social gatherings and personal contact to ensure that UEP students were aware of campus issues, voted in student government elections, become aware of community and local issues, and voted in local elections. Students were encouraged to go to the polls together and many did so. UEP students engaged in informal surveys. UEP Students have always expressed enthusiasm and pride in community service. Students are given opportunities to exercise leadership in organizations, for instance, the editor of the newsletter and the officers in Nioletti are UEP students. Voter registration information was made available in the UEP office. Rides were provided to polling places for the local and national elections and the importance of participating in the UH elections of various positions and offices was discussed. Each student was asked to provide a list of activities for this past reporting period. The majority of students participated in more than 1 group or organization. To date we have over 113 organizations listed as volunteer sites this past year.

Assessment and Evaluation

Each applicant was asked to be assessed for career interest (Strong) personality and learning styles (LSI and LASSI). We will begin to compile the data as soon as we stabilize our line of report and secure the proper permissions that are needed.

Determined by UH Measurement and Evaluation center

Good Academic Standing for Fall 2011 94 93.1%

Retention and Graduation Rate: 94.1%

Good Academic Standing	GPA 2.0 – 4.0	Total	Percent of Total UEP Students Fall 2011
UGRAD	69	76	90.7%
GRAD	9	9	100.00%
POST GRAD	5	5	100.00%
POST BACC	4	4	100.00%

Academic Advising

UEP participants were required to attend a mandatory academic advising session with their major advisor at least once each semester. Of the 101 students we can identify 84 who completed this process.

Academic Support

The Guaranteed 4.00 program offered during this reporting year will continue to be offered as a systematic method of study designed to improve the GPA of all of our students and contribute to the mastery of their subjects. UEP Tutorial Supplemental and Supplemental Instruction were offered.

UEP students are informed of campus and off-campus academic support and referred to Learning Support Services (LSS) for academic support. UEP and other UH and High School students are informed of resources for books, counseling, test preparation and other student support services at the University and else where. The participants were encouraged to improve their Study Skills by attending LSS and CAPS workshops and seminars on time-management, note taking, test taking and overcoming Math Anxiety.

Personalized Attention and Support

Students approach the Director about issues that may influence their academic success. UEP students were encouraged to walk in and discuss their University experience. Discussions led to referrals to appropriate counseling, medical, academic and personal. The director continued to work closely with students who are free to make contact during and after office hours. The UEP program is not an 8 to 5 program. We support our students and treat people as we wish to be treated. This reporting year the office staff logged 2,544 contacts of phone and office visits from 9/2010 to 8/2011. The students use a clicker to keep up with office visitors.

Monitoring of academic progress

The UEP tutors provided the Director with feedback both positive and negative. Students are often pleased to have positive feedback from the grade reports when there are comments. Grade progress reports were completed and mailed to instructors in order to identify students who might need additional academic support. This past year tutorial contacts were reported to be 70.

The Cougar Come Back Program

The UEP Director continued relationships with former students to encourage a return to the University. There were 5 Cougar Come Back Students this reporting year.

Committee Initiatives

UEP students participated in a variety of societal changing issues. The Nioletti group worked diligently with *Under Grad the Musical* to ensure the success of this event. Students make presentations, attend meetings and participate in peer support activities designed to bolster self esteem and build leadership skills. The Urbanite newsletter staff takes photos, writes articles, interviews individuals, formats the newsletter and manages the distribution of the Urbanite newsletter.

Objective #2: To expand corporate partnerships and community partnerships, with respect to increasing 3-5 year commitments:

This year, UEP has reached out to new community and corporate partners encourage community engagement among Houstonians and strengthen the impact of service. New partners include:

- METRO
- Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
- Nature Heritage Society
- Bayou Land Conservancy
- Brays Bayou Association
- Houston Parks & Recreation Department
- City of Houston Volunteer Initiatives Program
- Pressureman
- Sterling Bank
- Friends of UH Women's Studies
- Omni Hotels and Resorts
- KHOU-TV, Channel 11

- 5. Please discuss any budget changes from your last (FY2012) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections. In addition, if your unit concluded FY2011 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balances please describe the conditions which caused the fund balance.**

There have been no budget changes.

Ledger 3—The \$9,478 in Lapsed Salary due to the Office Coordinator's position being unfilled. A part-time person who has no benefits is being paid from that salary line.

6. Please list your 2012 - 2013 objectives in priority order. Larger units may wish to group your responses by subprogram. Under each objective, state the specific programs, activities, and/or services that you plan to implement to meet your objectives.

Objective #1: To ensure success of students by providing exceptional Academic Support

Activities Designed to Achieve Objective

Applicant Evaluation and Career Search

Continue to require each applicant to complete an application, be interviewed and assessed for career interest, personality and learning styles.

Academic Advising

Continue to require participants to attend a mandatory academic advising session with their major advisor at least once each semester.

Tutorials and workshops

Continue to offer tutoring and supplemental instruction.

Continue to encourage the participants to improve their Study Skills by attending workshops and seminars on time-management, note taking, and test taking.

Informal Support Counseling

Continue to encourage UEP students to walk in and talk to the Director regarding issues that may influence their academic success and their University experience.

Monitoring of academic progress

Continue to request written and verbal feedback of participants' progress.

Continue to request that Grade progress reports be mailed to instructors by mid-semester to identify students who might need additional academic support.

Collaborative Partnerships

Continue the campus partnerships and collaborations with the Challenger Program, FYRE, PROMES, Change Happens, Center with Students with Disabilities, University Career Services, and many more.

The Cougar Come Back Program

Continue to follow-up with those who do not graduate.

The most effective method is intermittent personal contact using mixed methods. The director and staff invite students to events, social gatherings, and to university functions.

Objective #2: To enhance student success through Personal Attention and Support

Continue Unrestricted Tutorials

Continue Extended Access to the UEP Director

Continue Friends and Family

Objection #3: Promotion of Civic Responsibility, Campus Engagement, Community Service and Leadership in UEP participants

Campus Engagement --UEP students are required to keep abreast of campus issues. UEP will organize attendance at various campus events during the year. As good campus citizens UEP students will be encouraged to write about campus issues in their newsletter.

Create relationship with Friends of Women's Studies and facilitate participation in monthly events on campus

Community Service – As a group UEP will be encouraged to participate in the many service projects available on and off campus. These include fundraising walks for charities, clean-ups and volunteering to assist various non-profits.

Civic Activities – UEP will introduce students to presentation on and off campus on public policy issues of importance. Additionally, opportunities for direct involvement in voter registration will be promoted.

Leadership – Have the UEP students organize and/or sponsor events and activities that required them to lead. Encourage UEP participants to seek campus leadership positions.

Objective #4 To expand corporate and community partnerships that lead to internship opportunities and mentoring relationships for UEP

The AmeriCorps project is a complementary fit under the mission of both partners. The University of Houston Urban Experience Program (UEP)'s mission expands opportunities for educationally and economically underserved students promoting scholarships, community services, mentorship and internship as conduits for the development of well-trained professionals. Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD)'s mission is to enhance the quality of urban life by providing safe, well-maintained parks and offering affordable programs for the community. AmeriCorps members will maximize the power of service and volunteering to improve lives in Houston through these two main organizations. Our AmeriCorps project focuses service on the unmet environmental needs of the City impacting urban parks and neighborhoods with education, volunteerism and community service. The project provides economic opportunity for financially vulnerable students while engaging them in meeting national service goals. It directs the power of national service to solve local environmental challenges while expanding opportunities to enable underserved students to enlist in community-based efforts to make a difference. UEP and HPARD have come together to embrace innovative solutions. We seek to build the enduring capacity of students, organizations and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve our community problems. Deploying AmeriCorps members and community volunteers will produce a significant impact for our parks, our neighborhoods and our City.

AmeriCorps members will ensure the long term health and preservation of our open spaces through a public education and stewardship program for our city. Investing AmeriCorps efforts in environmental education and stewardship activities for our children provides long term support and responsibility toward natural areas, our local urban park system and other open spaces. AmeriCorps members will educate our community members about their individual responsibilities towards the health and preservation of our urban parks creating conscientious consumers who can reduce or eliminate their personal pollutant activities while contributing to the creation and expansion of natural spaces within our City. Two main activities take place to achieve this. First, AmeriCorps members will involve children and youth in environmental activities, education and volunteerism. They will

develop an informal, hands-on environmental education program for children participants of HPARD's After-School & Summer Enrichment Program securing long-term commitment towards the protection of our parks. This Program is provided in 40 community centers across the city targeting inner city, low income children. AmeriCorps members will work with HPARD recreation staff to implement an environmental education program targeting at least one community center per week. Each program will impact 20 children ages 6 to 13 years old for three hours filled with interactive, age-appropriate educational activities. Over 800 young participants will benefit from this program. Secondly, AmeriCorps will work with community partners to assist them in promoting and recruiting at least 40 additional volunteers for each monthly community beautification project. Community partners will present twelve projects per year and will train members on how to best address their promotional and recruitment needs. AmeriCorps members will train a total of 480 volunteers on clean up, planting and restoration efforts throughout the year. These volunteers are trained to become stewards of our urban park areas, their natural habitats, gardens and trails. They also become key resources maintaining and protecting our natural areas to support bird and urban wildlife communities. Environmental stewards can help with educational activities, habitat restoration and de-littering, as well as invasive species removal. AmeriCorps members will assist the City of Houston create, maintain and enhance natural open spaces and habitats for migratory birds and urban wildlife while helping develop environmental stewards for tomorrow.

7. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)?

UEP will continue currently established collaborations and partnerships.

We have an open dialogue with our alumni UEP graduates and many have expressed interest in funding scholarship opportunities for our current students. We have three students who have pledged \$1,000 scholarships for the coming year.

UEP continues currently established collaborations and we active network to expand corporate partnerships. We have developed relationships with individuals, agencies, and foundations, such as the Honey Brown Hope Foundation that have established philanthropic track records.

We have developed comprehensive plans of action for instituting various support packages as well as internship opportunities. This year, we have added Channel 11 and KHOU-TV as a partner. Examples of donations include:

Alumni and Friends and Family have donated the following:

Geraldine McWilliams donated \$100 for the refreshments for the January EELAA meeting in the Elizabeth D. Rockwell Pavilion. Marriott Hotel South donated 24 box lunches and drinks for the EELAA meeting on January 14, 2011, valued at \$324.

An anonymous Friends & Family member donated \$120 for lunches for the Urban Experience Program table at the Martin Luther King birthday event at the University Center in January, 2011.

Dr. David Small and his wife donated dinner for more than 40 UEP students in his home in February, 2011, valued at priceless.

Elizabeth Bradford and her mother, Rebecca Trevino, owner of The Texas Club, donated a \$500 lunch for the Hay Partners meeting in the Media Room, Oberholtzer Hall.

UEP Friends & Family member Mighty Inyang donated \$200 for the use of the World Affairs Lounge at the University Center.

An anonymous Friends and Family donor provided lunch for one of the AmeriCorps grant working lunches in Dr. David Small's office.

Tyrone Obesaki, a UEP Friends & Family member, generously donated \$400 for the refreshments at the Mentoring Series Kick-off event with Houston Mayor Annise Parker.

Two UEP graduate students donated \$800 for full page ads in the Daily Cougar supporting wider visibility for our mentoring series.

DK Media donated \$1000 in videotaping services for the UEP Mentoring Series kick-off event with Houston Mayor Annise Parker.

Corporate and in-kind donations include:

Bobby's BBQ donated food and beverages totaling \$200 in September, 2010.

Aramark donated a \$245 coffee bar for our of our EELAA committee meetings.

Robert Kiyosaki's Rich Dad, Poor Dad corporation donated team-building games for UEP students, valued at \$800.

Godiva Chocolates donated three gift bags for Mayor Annise Parker and other speakers at the Mentoring event.

In cooperation with community partners, UEP will continue to pursue federal grant opportunities, for example, the AmeriCorps grant through One Star Foundation.

The UEP program considers support from SFAC an honor and a privilege. This show of support is a significant statement of student priorities.

8. Please describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

While the UEP program collaborates with many other units, programs and departments on this campus and UH Downtown, there is no other program of this kind in Texas. This unique program gives personal attention, support and comprehensive services to educationally underserved and economically disadvantaged students. Our purpose is to increase retention and academic success on the UH campus. Our objective is to produce a high achieving student with a social conscience. In order to accomplish these goals UEP must provide the missing elements that successful students have had all their lives. We will continue to provide access to education, and encourage students to educate themselves to the highest level possible.

As educational expenses rise, students of modest means find it difficult to afford to attend the colleges and universities, UEP helps to bridge that gap. Students who are the first in their generation to attend college require advice, personal attention to spoken and unspoken needs, and the network of support that families and good contacts would ordinarily provide.

UEP strives for a family like atmosphere. Our students are most likely to be without the resources to obtain an education. UEP strives to create an atmosphere and environment for academic success, for mastery of the subject and triumph over less than optimal circumstances. Our students are most likely to be without parental support or other familial support systems. UEP students come from diverse backgrounds. The impetus to address the needs of students from the Foster Care system came from The Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Elwyn Lee. UEP actively recruits and supports students from the foster care system.

The UEP program accepts and assists students with academic problems. We wish to **encourage, enlighten, empower, and embrace the students**, our future leaders. The UEP program has developed a focus on students who are the most vulnerable in our society: foster care students, victims of dysfunctional families, students without traditional parental and family support, and students facing academic status problems.

The Urban Experience Program strives to meet critical unaddressed needs. There is tremendous need for a comprehensive program to provide for the needs of our students who seek to educate themselves and find it challenging to do so without a system of support. UEP provides that support system missing from many large universities. The need to serve educationally underserved and economically disadvantaged students is great as explained by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Plan and the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. This agency oversees the Child Protective Services Division. The Texas Foster Care System is a part of this agency.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Houston is to discover and disseminate knowledge through the education of a diverse population of traditional and nontraditional students, and through research, artistic and scholarly endeavors, as it becomes the nation's premier public university in an urban setting. In this role, the University of Houston applies its expertise to the challenges facing the local, state, national and international communities, and it establishes and nurtures relationships with community organizations, government agencies, public schools and the private sector to enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the city of Houston and the state of Texas.

UH System Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Principle 1: Institutional Excellence

The UH System universities will continue to strive for academic excellence in all undergraduate, graduate and professional programs, as well as in research and public service.

Strategic Principle 2: Student Access

The universities of the UH System will continue to provide broad access to higher education opportunities in the upper Gulf Coast region and Texas.

Strategic Principle 3: Diversity

The diversity of the UH System universities is a strength that distinguishes us among universities nationwide. Increasingly, the faculty, staff, administration and students of our universities will reflect the city of Houston's diversity.

Strategic Principle 4: Research

The cornerstone of higher education is the creation and dissemination of new knowledge, through which the UH System universities will enrich the educational experience of students, enhance the cultural life of our constituents and contribute to economic development.

Strategic Principle 5: External Partnerships

Partnerships with business, industry, government, the community and alumni are critical to achieving institutional goals of excellence and ensuring the financial health of the UH System universities.

Strategic Principle 6: Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention

Faculty and staff constitute the most valuable assets of the UH System universities. As such, they must have access to career opportunities that are competitive with those at other universities.

Strategic Principle 7: PK-16 Partnerships

Partnerships among the UH System universities, public schools and community colleges are critical to increasing the college-going rates of Texas students to the national average.

Strategic Principle 8: Accountability and Administrative Efficiency

The universities of the UH System will be accountable for student learning and for the effective use of resources.



Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Mission Statement

Mission Statement

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work with the Legislature, Governor, governing boards, higher education institutions and other entities to help Texas meet the goals of the state's higher education plan, Closing the Gaps by 2015, and thereby provide the people of Texas the widest access to higher education of the highest quality in the most efficient manner.

Philosophy

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will promote access to quality higher education across the state with the conviction that access without quality is mediocrity and that quality without access is unacceptable. The Board will be open, ethical, responsive, and committed to public service. The Board will approach its work with a sense of purpose and responsibility to the people of Texas and is committed to the best use of public monies. The Coordinating Board will engage in actions that add value to Texas and to higher education. The agency will avoid efforts that do not add value or that are duplicated by other entities.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

College for all Texans

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Appendix III

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | UEP

The mission of the Urban Experience Program (UEP) complements the larger mission of the University of Houston and the State of Texas by expanding opportunities for educationally and economically underserved students. The multifaceted components of the program promote scholarship, community service, personal and professional development, mentorship and internship as conduits for the development of well trained professionals.