

**The Urban Experience Program**

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

URBAN EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

**Student Fees Advisory Committee  
2013-2014 Report FY 2014**

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Director**

## SFAC REPORT

FY 2014

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 are potentially encumbered by a multiplicity of factors, to list two: unmet financial need and ethnic minority status. In addition, those who seek upward mobility through higher education without FASFA determined financial stress are represented in the UEP population. The majority of the UEP students are the first in their families to attend college. This reporting year approximately 83% received the federal Pell Grant; this is a 13% increase over last year. 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 adversities. The Horatio Alger story is indicative of most of the UEP students and of the UEP program itself, especially this year. The lines of reporting for UEP have changed seven times over the last 18 months making it difficult to secure approvals for purchases, hiring or continuing to function as an office. Nonetheless, UEP staff and students have persevered and remain optimistic. Our UEP culture is to work hard, work smart and work together. Our motto is "Lift as you climb."

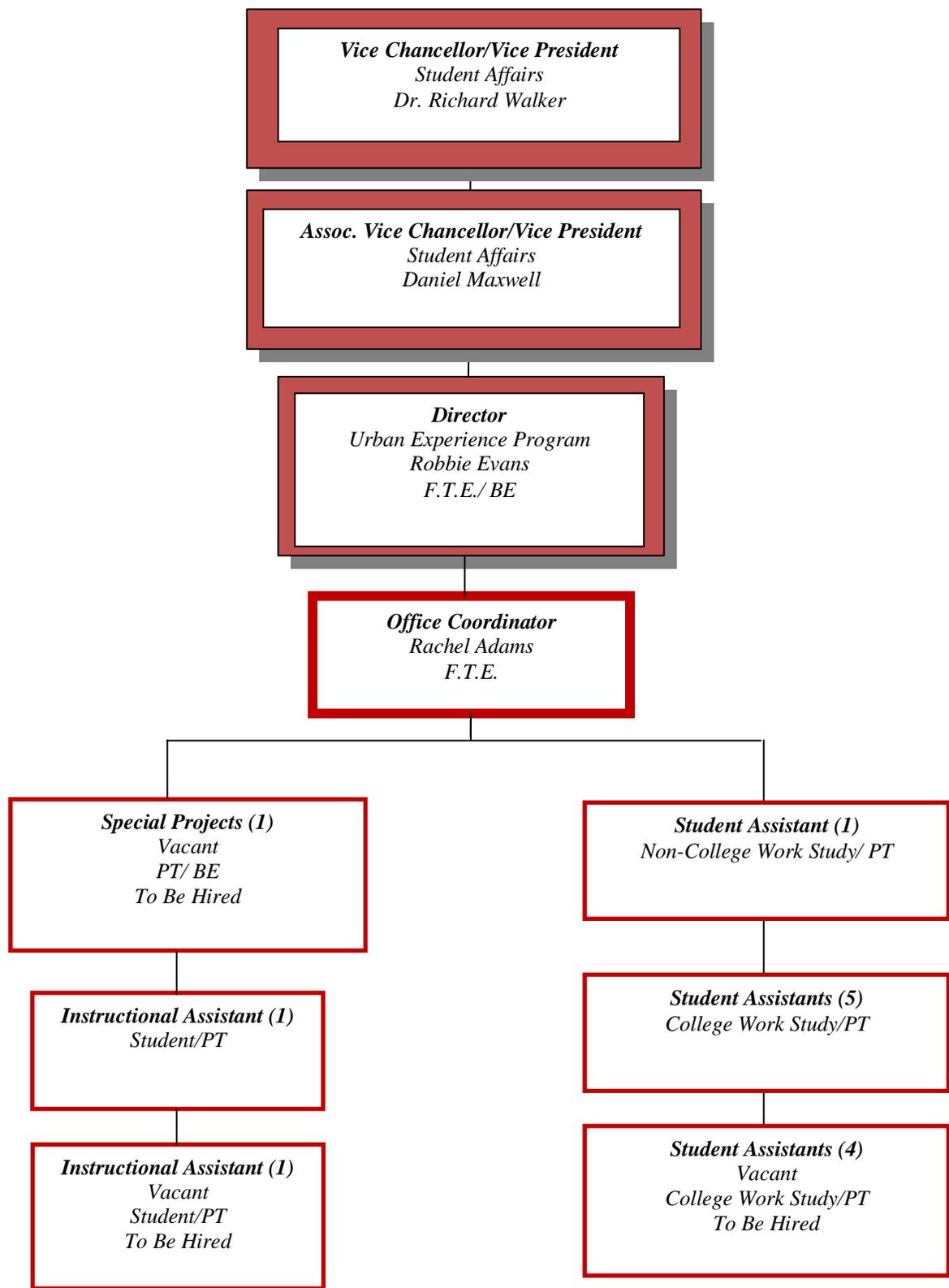
*The existence of the Urban Experience Program depends on the funding provided by SFAC.* Services offered through UEP includes providing academic tutorials without time restrictions, career development workshops, academic monitoring, individualized counseling, assistance navigating financial aid programs and processes, providing grants, exposure to cultural and academic programs, guidance with course selection, and enrichment activities which enhance persistence and promote retention. Students are offered individual attention and receive support according to their wishes.

UEP creates a critical link between students, alumni, resources, mentors and activities to encourage students to pursue academic excellence and to stay on course to complete a first degree and to pursue graduate degrees. 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. This fiscal year UEP expects to offer 50 UEP Grant opportunities. 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. 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 functions as an incubator for skill development. The UEP program offers students the opportunities to develop and refine basic office skills, professional behavior and ethical standards via internships or work in the UEP office.

The array of academic support, advising, individual attention, engagement and internships results in great benefits to the students. This year 20 of the 100 UEP students graduated. The Retention/Graduation rate, as calculated this year is 95% for this reporting year, one of the highest on campus. **UEP is grateful and appreciative for the support of SFAC.**

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 2011-2012 academic year. 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 2011-Summer 2012, 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, a FERPA and a needs assessment.

Academic Advising

All participants were asked to attend a mandatory academic advising session with their major advisor at least once each semester excluding summer. The objective is to ensure 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 an 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 was offered and should be a benefit offered and a mandatory requirement for every UEP student.

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.

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 Professor. Students used the CD's in the UEP office.

### Productive Collaborations

Dr. David Small, Director of UCS offered UEP participants the opportunity to again identify possible career interests through exposure to the Strong Interest Inventory provided by University Career Services (UCS) free of charge.

### 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.

In this reporting year, fall 2011-Summer 2012, the office coordinator position will be staffed. This position and the new Special Projects position are both needed in order for the UEP office to function optimally. Once the office coordinator position is filled, 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 2011-Summer 2012, one CCB student graduated and one returned to UH. 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 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 friendly conversation 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 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 in the past, 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 academics were likely to drop classes or to stop out (leave for a time, typically less than a year). 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 2011-Summer 2012 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 20 to 40 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 and participate in opportunities for high school students to visit the campus for tours and activities. This reporting year *Aspire to Be Great* and *First Goal/Project Grad* were hosted on campus by UEP. 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. Students feel empowered and important when they are allowed to express their views and gain recognition for good work.

#### 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. The *Urbanite* is a newsletter, *Nioletti* invites interesting speakers to the campus and *Cup and Chaucer* is a book club. Through these activities students develop self-confidence by developing leadership and organizational skills; they also 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.

### Support Success

UEP, First and Goal/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 11 (Aspire) and Spring 12 (First Goal/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 2012. 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

While the proposal was not successful, once the Special Projects position is in place we will apply again to become an AmeriCorps site. UEP in collaboration with new community partners continued to seek an opportunity to apply for an AmeriCorps grant. UEP can count major new public and private sector businesses as partners as a result of pursuing the AmeriCorps project. This would have provided 40 opportunities for employment and full or partial cancellation of educational loans for UEP students. UEP will continue to seek loan forgiveness opportunities.

- 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. 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.

Assessment and Evaluation

Each applicant was asked to be assessed for career interest (Strong) personality and learning styles (LSI and LASSI).

Good Academic Standing for fall 2011 GPA (2.0 - 4.0): 90 90%

Retention and Graduation Rate: 95 95%

Total Student Participation: 100

Good Academic Standing	GPA 2.0 – 4.0	Total	Percent of Total UEP Students Fall 2012
UGRAD	67	77	87.00%
GRAD	18	18	100.00%
POST GRAD	2	2	100.00%
POST BACC	3	3	100.00%

Academic Advising

UEP participants were required to attend a mandatory academic advising session with their major advisor at least once each semester.

Academic Support

The Guaranteed 4.0 Learning System program offered during this reporting year will continue to be offered as a systematic method of study designed to improve the GPA of our students. UEP Tutorial Supplemental and Supplemental Instruction will continue to be offered. We will work to incorporate the system into the UEP culture.

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 experiences. 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 a partial count of 922 contacts of phone and office visits from Fall/2011 to March/2012. The students use a clicker to keep up with office visitors.

*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:**

- **Higher Dimension Church**
- **METRO**
- **Neighborhood Centers, Inc.**
- **Houston Food Bank**
- **Covenant Community Capital**
- **E-Stem Schools**
- **Nistransit**
- **Pressure man**
- **Westwood Community Association**
- **Godiva Chocolates**

- 5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes from your last (FY2013) 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 FY2012 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balances please describe the conditions which caused the fund balance.**

**Since November 2011, there have been staffing changes.**

The fund equity is \$45,031. The Full Time Benefits Eligible Office Coordinator position remained unfilled until late October 2012, and the lapsed salary went to fund equity. The position was unfilled because of the lack of support for filling the position initially, but reporting relationships have changed which allowed UEP to post and fill the position.

One temporary part time non- benefits eligible position ended in March 2012. This temporary position for Special Events went unfilled since that time in anticipation of hiring a permanent part-time Special Projects person to be hired in the fall of 2012. The money for this position went into lapsed salary as well.

The funds for permanent part-time Special Events position were approved by SFAC last year with the funds to be available on September 1, 2012. This position has not yet been posted due to the new leadership in Student Affairs reviewing the strategies for achieving the goals and objectives for units in Student Affairs. UEP is anxious to fill this position, as one strategic goal is to increase the number of students in the UEP program over the next two years to 300 students.

1. The terminology for responding to this item has been amended to be consistent with the strategic planning framework. Therefore, SFAC requests that you report your success measures in terms of strategic initiatives and action steps versus goals and objectives as previously requested. To this end, please list your 2013-2014 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) you implemented to accomplish your stated initiative.
- 6. Please list your 2013 - 2014 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.**

## Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps

### **A. Learning, Engagement, Discovery**

*To ensure success of students by providing exceptional Academic Support*

#### Guaranteed 4.0 Learning System

This private skill mastery system will be made available to UEP students. Those unable to attend the workshop sessions will learn from their peers and the Directors. This system involves innovative techniques for managing time and processes for reviewing subject matter.

#### 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.

### Co-Curricular Involvement and Leadership Experiences

#### Nioletti

This student group provides s opportunities to demonstrate leadership as they organize campus events such as the visits of role models such as the Mayor, former astronaut Bernard Harris. These speakers were open to the campus community.

#### The Urbanite Newsletter

Students demonstrate leadership by writing for the Urbanite Newsletter. This activity keeps the students involvement with current events and the campus community as they attend events that become the basis of their articles.

## **B. Resource Management, Leadership, Facilities**

### *To identify and provide internship & employment opportunities*

#### Financial Stability Plans

UEP students will prepare Financial Stability Plans (FSP) for themselves that identify and explain financial options, timelines and available processes that will reduce financial uncertainty. UEP will continue to make available a financial literacy workshop as part of this effort, and provide resource material and counseling to assist in the process.

#### Employment Opportunities

Working with UH Career Services, UEP alumni, and communities partners UEP helps students secure job opportunities during the academic year and the summer. Typically, each summer UEP students are offered opportunities for paid internships with the Bernard Harris Science Camp and the Change Happens community group's Kids University. In addition, several students have an opportunity to work in the UEP office and develop technical skills and professional work habits. UEP plans to continue to expand these opportunities.

### *To secure grant and contributions*

#### Grant Applications

UEP has secured small contributions in the past. In 2011 UEP submitted an **AmeriCorps** grant seeking funds that would employ 40 students for three years working on beautification, and environmental projects such as pond restoration. While the application was not approved it was seriously considered and we learned from the experience. The Division of Student Affairs is implementing a centralized fundraising effort in conjunction with UH Advancement. UEP will participate in the effort by identifying possible grant opportunities and fully working with the leadership team.

## **C. Global, Education, Community**

### *Foster active civic engagement*

#### Voting

Democracy depends on an informed citizenry. UEP will prepare students to be active citizens by encouraging them to participate in the voting process by registering students to vote, even becoming deputized to register voters, and to participate in forums that illuminate the issues on the ballot and being debated.

### *Foster global learning and inclusion*

#### Expose students to diverse speaker and programs

UEP, through its student group, **Nioletti**, will continue to sponsor events (e.g. plays) and speakers who address cultural issues and issues of diversity. In addition, UEP will require, to the extent feasible, UEP students to attend each semester a certain number of the many global and inclusive learning experiences made available to the campus such as the programs sponsored by the Women's Resource Center, the LGBT center, the Center for Students with Disabilities and the many cultural

events sponsored by student groups and other campus entities. UEP plans to organize discuss groups to discuss what was learned at these experiences.

#### **D. Innovation, Transparency, Accountability** *Employing Technology*

##### Going Paperless

UEP will employ technology to “go paperless” which will be environmentally helpful and allow the timely retrieval and use of accurate information.

##### *Assessment*

Assessment Techniques UEP has identified and will employ several techniques for assessing learning outcomes and program objectives: (1.) UEP will assess the impact of its learning initiatives by identifying the impact of these initiatives on students’ gpa and graduation, especially as it relates to the impact of Guaranteed 4.0; (2) Interview drop-outs and students whose gpas drop to ascertain if financial instability played a factor and whether it could have been avoided; and ( 3) survey students to determine if their willingness to engage in civic activities increases over time.

#### **E. Communication, Brand, Initiatives**

##### *Branding and Marketing*

Branding – UEP will revise all of its brochures and marketing materials to convey a consistent image and brand. UEP will intensify its outreach and collaboration with Admissions to expand the number of UEP participants.

#### **F. Partnership, Strategy, Positive Impact**

##### *Partnerships for Student Success*

##### Campus Partnerships

UEP will partner with Career Services and Human Resources in expanding job and internship opportunities for students. On retention, UEP will collaborate with the Office of Community Relations & Institutional Access on initiatives designed to improve the retention and graduation rate of Black and Hispanic students, particularly the males.

##### Off Campus Partnerships

UEP will partner alumni and community groups that can offer internships or part-time employment to students. Alumni and community partners will be asked to serve as mentors and to provide services and resources for students particularly when crisis situations occur.

- 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.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.**

In Kind Gifts and Service Contributions

From time to time, particularly when events are planned, various companies and individuals will donate food, and other services to help the event be a success. For example, DK Media service videotaped two invited speakers without charge; the value of the services was approximately \$1,000. The Omni hotel donated food and beverages for another event. These contributions may be recurring but, only on a case by case basis in response to a specific request.

Monetary Contributions

Co-America Bank and the UH Black Alumni Association donated \$2,000 to the Urban Experience Program via check to support the UEP program. A member of the UEP Friends and Family support networks contributed another check for \$100.

**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.

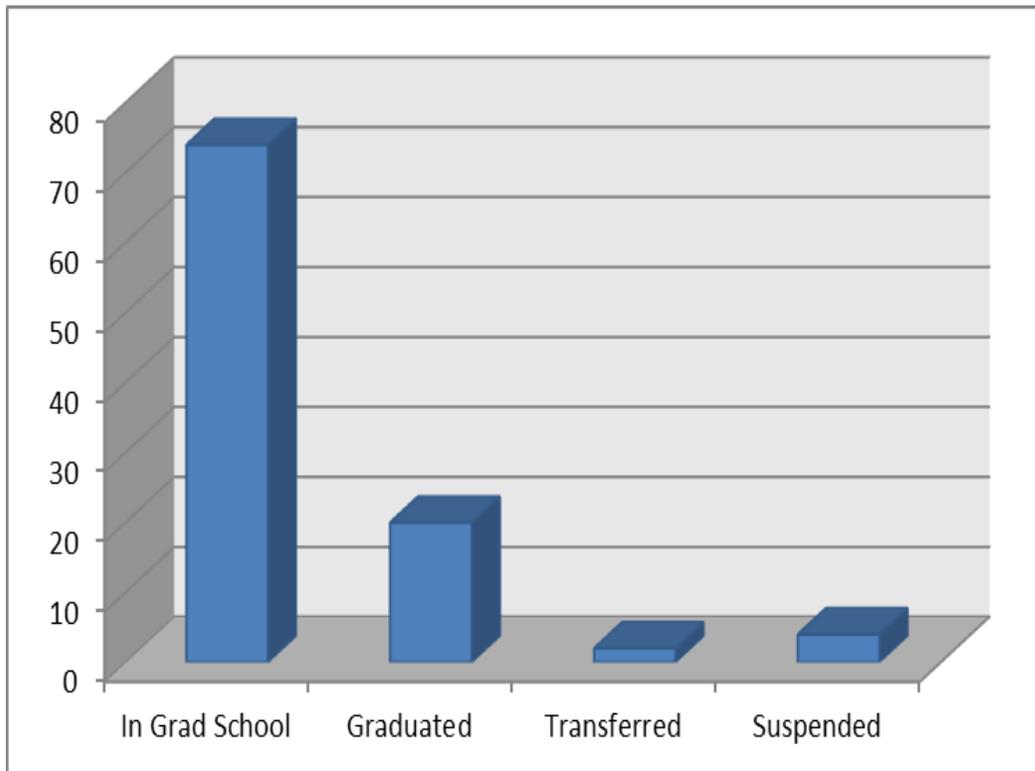
The UEP program accepts and assists students with academic problems. We wish to **encourage, enlighten, empower, and embrace the students**, our future leaders. The UEP program has developed a focus on students who are the most vulnerable in our society: foster care students, victims of dysfunctional 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.

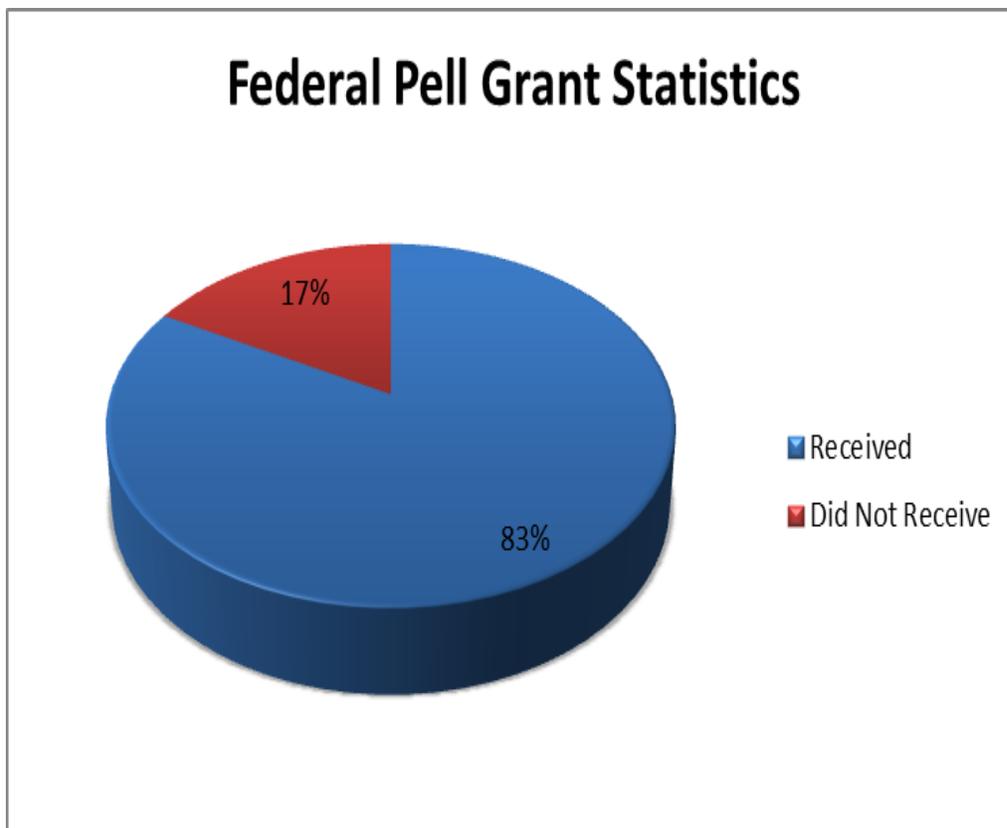
The belief that no student should be left behind, and the passion to find the support needed for each student is what really sets UEP apart from other student success initiatives. Many of our students have serious needs that must be addressed after 5 p.m. and often on the weekends. For example, it is not uncommon for some students to be without a home to visit for during the holidays, spring break or the summer; some even lack sources for meals during these same periods. Through networking and hard work, UEP strives to identify resources and people who can help to eliminate whatever obstacles stand in the way of student success. Due to this philosophy UEP can now count among its alumni entrepreneurs, lawyers, pharmacists, engineers and medical students.

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.

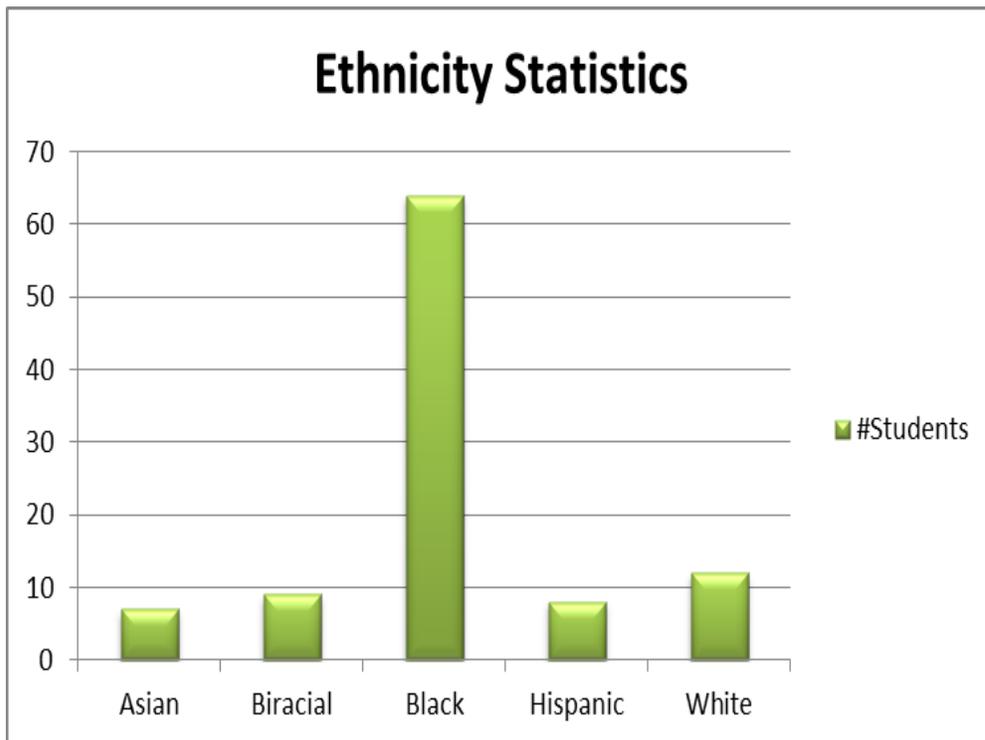
Student Status	#Students
Undergrad	74
Graduated	20
Transferred	2
Suspended	4



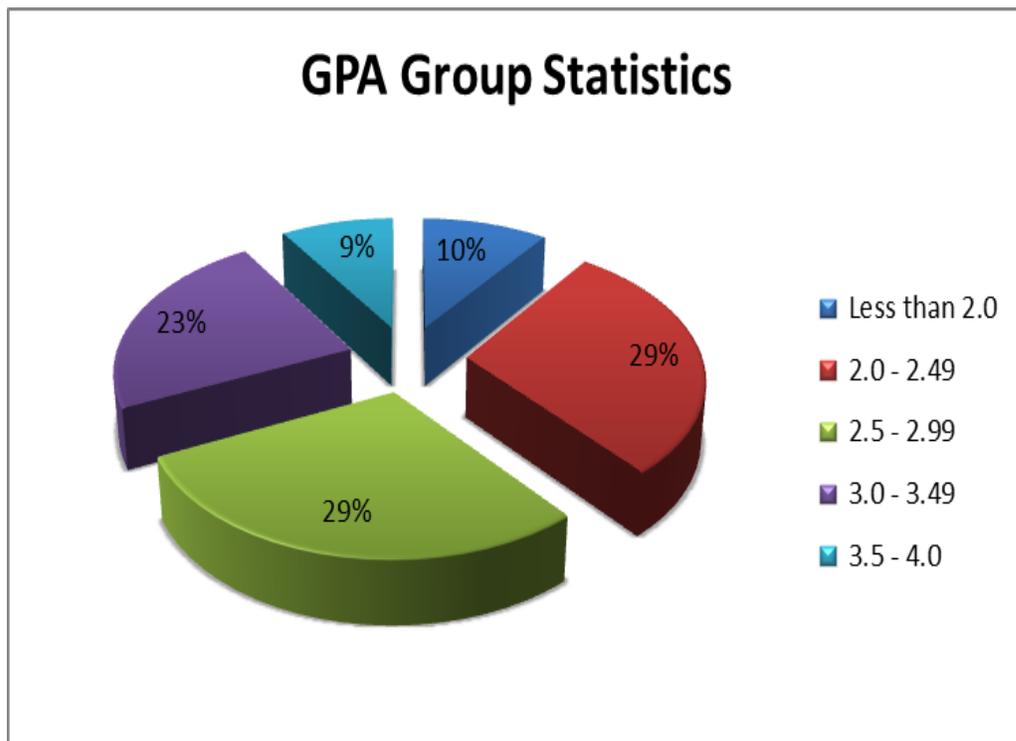
Federal Pell Grant	#Students
Received	83
Did Not Receive	17



<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>#Students</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Biracial</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>12</b>



GPA GROUPS	#Students
Less than 2.0	10
2.0 - 2.49	29
2.5 - 2.99	29
3.0 - 3.49	23
3.5 - 4.0	9



Graduated Year	#students
Fall'11	14
Spring'12	6
Summer'12	0

