

**UNIVERSITY *of* HOUSTON**

**URBAN EXPERIENCE PROGRAM**



**SFAC REPORT**

**FY 2010**

**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 and graduation rate of the University of Houston by providing exceptional support and services to University of Houston students who choose education as the means for upward mobility and who commit to social justice values and community service as vehicles for making the world a better place. UEP serves an ethnically diverse mix of educationally underrepresented students, students who receive the Pell grant and students with challenges to their academic success. The Urban Experience Program makes a commitment to each student. Our state of Texas requires skilled and educated Texans who have a commitment to developing an area of expertise and applying their trained minds to solve a real problem or, at the least, take part in the solution. The problems of this great nation are multifaceted and the problem solvers can be as diverse as the problems we face. UEP offers an opportunity for students from varied circumstances to build a network of support, to achieve academically and to make a contribution to building a better world through obtaining a higher education, performing good works and becoming a model for excellence in character and personal values. Most of our students have limited educational resources and are typically the first in their family to attend a university. We at UEP expect to begin generational traditions of academic success with the expectation of high achievement. These days financial need is challenging enough, in addition, there are often other issues that hinder academic progress and preclude success. The UEP student often exemplifies the "Horatio Alger Story": the students who succeed do so by overcoming adversity. The UEP program in keeping with the mission of the University and the UH System Strategic Initiatives (Appendix I) promotes academic excellence (Strategic Principle 1), strives to provide broad access to higher education (Strategic Principle 2), and to maintain diversity (Strategic Principle 3). The implementation of the UEP Friends and Family initiative and the unique collaboration and exchange between the three UH programs of Challenger, FYRE and UEP are two mechanisms for achieving the goals set forth by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, The University of Houston, and The Urban Experience Program.

The UEP program offers students the researched-based elements of traditional student support for example, tutorials, referrals to academic and career development workshops, academic monitoring, and scholarships. The unique elements of the program are the nature and the intensity of the non-traditional support provided by UEP. 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 challenges (probation, warning, and suspension) and works with these students to develop successful graduates and loyal University of Houston alumni.

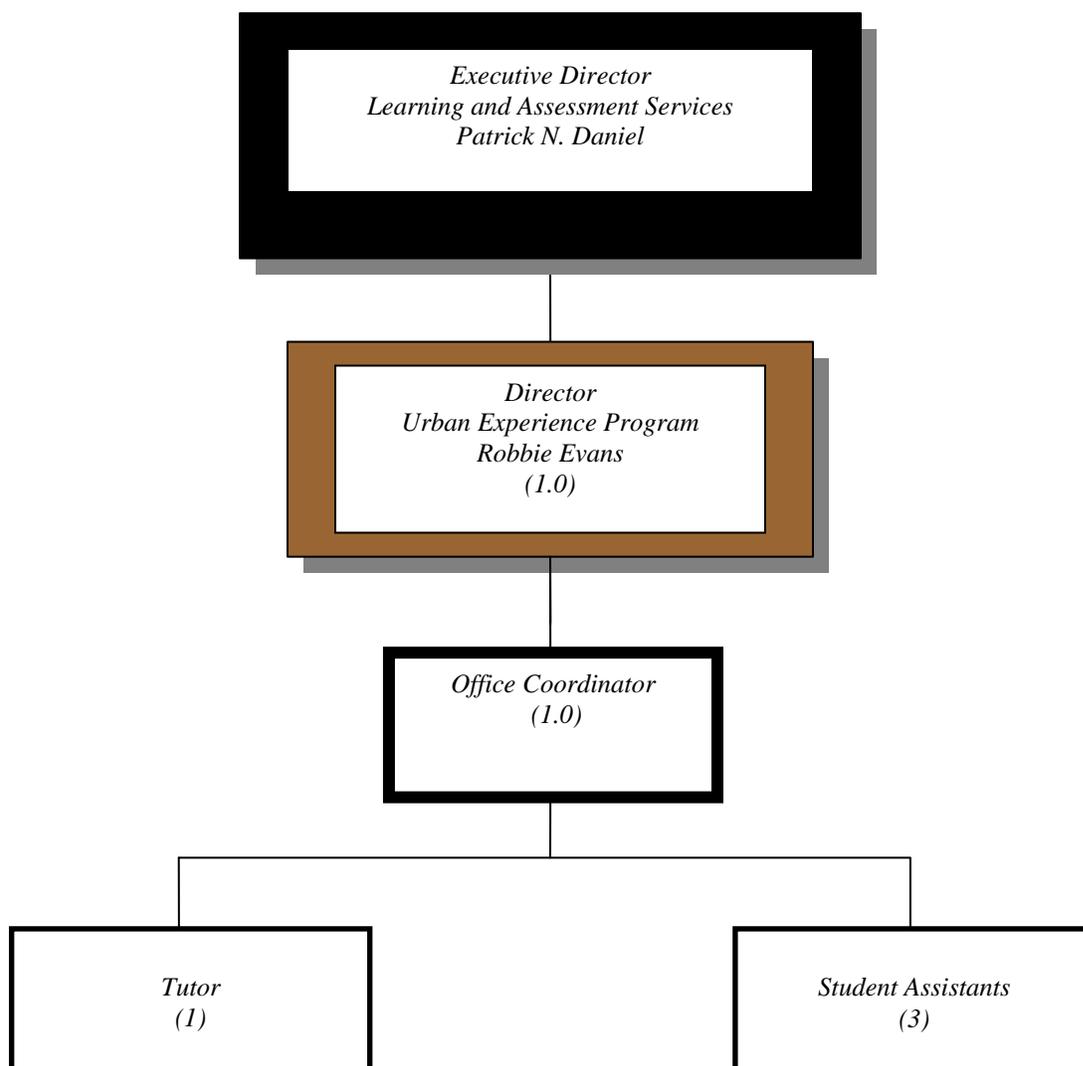
UEP provides personal, individualized support services. For example, students are free to call the director anytime with issues that need to be addressed. UEP has a Friends and Family network of volunteers. There are UH faculty members, staff, administrators and community partners who sacrifice their personal time and energy to assist students with academic and personal issues. UEP Friends and Family work with students altruistically. Many of the UEP students held multiple jobs this year and kept their commitment to advance their academic careers despite adverse circumstances.

In spite of the need to work multiple jobs, the vast majority of UEP students are achievers. In this reporting year 15 of the 89 UEP students graduated. The cumulative GPAs for the graduates are as follows: 73% in the 2.5-4.00 range and 27% in the 2.00-2.49 range. More than 30% of the UEP students boasted GPAs between 3.00 and 4.00.

This year, UEP has continued to garner support and establish relationships with organizations that provided compensated internships, networking, and career opportunities for UEP students. With the continued support of SFAC, UEP expects to thrive and produce outstanding graduates who are proud alumni that give back to not only the University of Houston and UEP, but also the community and the world.

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 2009-2010 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, as in every preceding year, 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, adopted August 2007, is in perfect synergy with the spirit in which UEP was established and the mission of UEP (Appendix III). The UEP program appreciates SFAC funding. 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

##### Promotion of Civic Responsibility and Leadership in UEP Participants

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 volunteered and served as hosts at several UH Alumni Association events. UEP students were the featured speakers at two of the Alumni events. UEP students participated in the health insurance reform debates and block walked for their chosen political candidates. UEP students organized and presented a panel discussion with a Q&A period for Project Grade students. UEP students volunteered with FUUSA, recently renamed "Change Happens". Students also participated in various voter registration drives. There were group discussions and students shared examples of their community service and volunteerism. Characteristically, our students rose to meet the needs of our collaborative partners and answered the call to serve our university and others in the Houston community who required assistance. UEP students also assisted in a myriad of activities this reporting year, as in past years, as dependable and efficient volunteers. UEP students have been a regular feature of the UH Event staff for over a decade. The Event is a recruitment initiative that this year hosted approximately 900 high school students at the University of Houston main campus for a day of activities designed to promote the university.

This past year, 2009, JUST B.R.I.D.G.E, a non-profit chartered by former UEP students, began fundraising efforts. Former foster care students of UEP were inspired by their participation in one of UEP's exemplary initiatives; leading them to take on leadership roles and transform a promising idea into a reality! Two charter members of The Mirror, a UEP peer support group organized to advocate for foster care alumni, created, JUST B.R.I.D.G.E, an organization developed to inform the public of the bleak prospects and dire outcomes in the lives of many foster youth. This organization is not affiliated with the University of Houston but was an idea that developed while students participated in The Mirror discussions.

Current and former UEP students remain committed to creating film documentaries regarding foster care and gentrification of the local community. UEP Students have the opportunity to create and implement programs and suggest equipment purchases. 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. Students are encouraged to transform their environment, create new directions, and reinvent aspects of UEP by contributing their time, energy, and creativity; students prepared the newsletter, helped in the office, mentored each other, and networked within UEP. UEP is a program of warmth and acceptance. 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.

##### Personalized Attention and Support

In partnership with the individual students who made requests, UEP Friends and Family composed of UEP staff, UH staff, UH administrators, UH faculty, and community and professional volunteers worked to relieve stressors in the lives of the students. This UEP Friends and Family team approach permitted the students to

concentrate on solving personal issues and attaining academic success. The UEP program in keeping with the mission of the University and the UH System Strategic Initiatives (Appendix I) promoted academic excellence (Strategic Principle 1.), provided broad access to higher education (Strategic Principle 2.), maintained diversity (Strategic Principle 3.). The implementation of the UEP Friends and Family collaboration and the long established informal collaboration between UEP, The Challenger Program, and the FYRE program worked synergistically to offer support and financial assistance for the entire academic career of the students associated with the three programs. These are two of the mechanisms for achieving the goals set forth by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, The University of Houston, and The Urban Experience Program.

#### Mechanism #1 Urban Experience Program, Challenger Program, FYRE

The Urban Experience Program, The Challenger Program and The First Year Residential Experience Program are all student success programs with niche target groups that share common values of a commitment to higher education and have limited resources. The issue of limited resources can be ameliorated by continuing to foster ties of collaboration and communication. While in the past the relationship developed between these three organizations was informal and casual, because of the desire for continuity and maximization of financial resources to benefit student success, a more formal structure has been discussed. The sharing of ideas and best practices resulted in greater access to education and financial resources. FYRE is a first year student success program for dormitory students; UEP has some limited housing resources and accepts students in all classifications as a result of a request from several SFAC committee members several years ago. The Challenger Program accepts first and second year students and gives priority to those two groups for funding. FYRE refers students to UEP, UEP and Challenger refer students to the other. The students benefit from additional resources and opportunities from all three organizations.

#### Mechanism #2 Friends & Family

This Friends & Family collaborative effort is impelled by socially conscious individuals who desire to develop and provide a network of support for individual students. 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 2009 reporting year include the following:

- This year, the weakening economy resulted in many layoffs, from jobs in retail stores to customer service positions.
- 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 calendar year 2009. The financial pressures remain difficult for even middle- income students who have a network of support. Many UEP students were employed full time. 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 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 foster care alumni, and other independent students.

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.

### Assessment and Evaluation

A successful applicant to the UEP program completed a comprehensive application and at least one interview with the Director. Any financial, social, personal, academic, or medical subjects that the student felt comfortable discussing were addressed. There was no limit to either conversations or contacts and no restriction regarding subject. The UEP participants continued to be informed of and advised to participate in programs and workshops offered by the University of Houston or other public and private offices that help students identify their skills, encourage their self-development, or meet other needs. All UEP students have completed an initial Personal Data form and a Needs Assessment Profile.

### 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 allowed to set a future appointment with an advisor.

### Academic Support

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 and note and test taking.

The UEP program owns an excellent series of Mathematics CDs by Dr. Freddie Frazier, Professor of Engineering Mathematics at Prairie View A&M University. Dr. Frazier agreed to conduct individual as well as group tutorials and information sessions, with the purpose of encouraging UEP students to master higher mathematics, to develop a love for the subject, and to follow a career in higher mathematics.

Students used the CD's in the UEP office.

### Informal Support Counseling

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.

Higher tuition after deregulation of tuition and fees and the lower percentage of need-based aid granted to students with financial need have converged to present middle-class and low-income students with a fiscal crisis. According US News and World Report College Edition 2002-2003, the University of Houston met 80% of a student's need with 7% of students receiving 100% of their need. Effective for 2007 (information compiled in 2006) those percentages as estimated by the University of Houston's Office of Institutional Research have drastically decreased.

First time freshman - full load of classes	56.8% of the students' need is met
All undergraduate- full load of classes	46.4 % of the students' need is met
Less than full load of classes	32.7% of the students' need is met

For the reporting year of 2009-2010, University of Houston now meets 67% of the FASFA determined need and 37% of students receive non-need based merit awards. Comparable statistics from University of Texas-Austin shows 90% of need met and 30% of students receiving merit awards. The data from Texas A&M College Station reveals 85% of need met and 23% of the students receive merit awards. Harvard University supplies 100% of the individual student's need and does not provide merit awards. The same is true for Yale University.

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.

#### 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 includes an on-call-by phone, weekend tutorial service that operates regularly through the week evening and night. 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.

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, 2009, student workers were given the opportunity to fill the vacant office coordinator position. Although this experiment did not and currently does not provide the stability and efficiency needed in the UEP office, the director sacrificed these essential elements to allow students to work. Students have suffered layoffs as the economy falters. The office coordinator position is needed in order for the UEP office to function optimally. The office coordinator position was posted and candidates have applied and are being reviewed. 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 research. The office coordinator position will be filled in 2010.

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 activity seem to negatively impact grades and GPA.

#### The Cougar Come Back Program

This reporting year 2009, two former UEP students returned to the University of Houston and the UEP program.

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 visit, call and volunteer with the program.

#### Committee Initiatives

Nioletti, The Urbanite, The Mirror, and Cup and Chaucer, share members and activities in a synergistic relationship designed to build self-esteem, positive values and principled leadership skills, team work, UEP

spirit and camaraderie. During the 2009 reporting year, the groups successfully engaged in the following activities:

#### An inspirational evening with Lisa Nichols

This life changing event began with live entertainment and Lisa Nichols (best selling author, inspirational and motivational speaker) engaged and charmed the adoring audience of over 600 guests. The inspirational evening took place in the auditorium of the Science and Research building. The UEP program hosted this best selling author at the University of Houston. UEP students served as moderators for the event and hosts. Lisa Nicholas donated to the UEP scholarship fund for the second time. (Appendix IV )

#### The Event

The UH Event brings 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. UEP students prepared the materials, compiled the literature for the students, and served as mentors and hosts for the approximately 900 high school guests who attended.

#### Support Success

UEP and Project Grad collaborated to provide high school students an opportunity to ask questions of a panel of UEP students. The student success workshop hosted 63 project Grad 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

The suggestion to approach churches as a primary strategy came from the Director of the Office of Development. The first priority of the University of Houston is to work with academic units, not programs in the Office of Student Affairs. Unlike the academic colleges and programs, the Division of Student Affairs does not have a development officer to work with programs in the Division of Student Affairs. UEP continued to seek support and direction from the Office of Development.

##### Design Unique Solicitation Efforts for UEP

In collaboration with two on campus partners and one community partner UEP will continue to seek opportunities for successful proposals.

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

As a result of the request by UEP to become an AmeriCorps site, the legal department of the University of Texas opened a pro bono case to assist in this effort.

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

One UEP student lived with Arise Transitional Living Center and two sought housing support through Agape Christian Living. These relationships promise to maximize the chance for students to pursue their education with a network of mentors and friends giving of themselves and sharing their resources with each student. Through internships and subsidized living in modern housing located in close proximity to UH, these new partnerships have presented exciting new directions for UEP.

Dr. Small, Associate Vice-President for Student Services continues to provide direction and expertise in the area of career planning and internships. In addition, he serves as a member of the UEP Educational Equity and Leadership Advancement Committee.

##### UEP Continued Currently Established Collaborations and Partnerships

The UEP Partnerships with Change Happens formally known as Families under Urban and Social Attack (FUUSA) provided 16 well-paid internships for the year.

The UEP partnership with The Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp for summer 2009 provided six well-paid internships for UEP students and former students.

The relationship with Inroads continued. UEP students and prospective students are encouraged to apply and to attend meetings regarding Inroads.

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 vote 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 UEP 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.

##### Personalized Attention and Support

The director continued to work closely with students who are free make contact during and after office hours.

##### Assessment and Evaluation

Each applicant was required to complete an application, be interviewed and assessed for career interest, personality and learning styles.

##### Academic Advising

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

##### Academic Support

Tutorial Supplemental and Supplemental Instruction was 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 will be encouraged to improve their Study Skills by attending LSS and CAPS workshops and seminars on time-management, note taking, and test taking.

##### Informal Support Counseling

UEP students were encouraged to walk in and talk to the Director about issues that may influence their academic success and their University experience. Discussions led to referrals to appropriate counseling, medical and academic personnel.

##### Monitoring of academic progress

The UEP tutors provided the Director with feedback of participants' progress in several cases that were cause for concern. Students are pleased with 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.

##### The Cougar Come Back Program

The UEP Director continued relationships with former students and worked with students to encourage a return to the University. Two students returned for Fall 2009.

Committee Initiatives

UEP students participated in a variety of societal changing issues. The Nioletti group worked diligently with the Lisa Nichols event fundraiser. 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 and manages the distribution the Urbanite newsletter.

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

Two unique fundraising efforts are being reviewed. The Vice President for Student Affairs and the legal department will have to agree to participation by UEP in these efforts.

The University of Texas legal department has supplied information and expertise to assist in establishing a new AmeriCops site in conjunction with UEP. This could provide opportunities for employment and cancellation of educational loans for UEP and other UH students.

- 5. Please discuss any budget changes from your last (FY2009) 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 FY2008 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balances, please describe the conditions, which caused the fund balance.**

There have been no budget changes.

The fund balance is due to lapse salary. The open position is posted.

6. Please list your 2010 - 2011 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 through UEP a personalized and comprehensive support program for participants in order to maximize their academic potential*

Activities Designed to Achieve Objective

Promotion of Civic Responsibility and Leadership in UEP participants

Continue to make a special effort to ensure that UEP students are aware of campus issues; vote in student government elections; become aware of community and local issues; vote in local and other elections; participate in community service projects; and are given opportunities to exercise leadership in UEP organizations.

Provide Personalized Attention and Support

Continue to support the mission of the University of Houston, the mission and vision of The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the mission, vision and spirit of the UEP program by providing exceptional support and services to participants of UEP and other UH students.

Assessment and Evaluation

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.

Academic Support

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 about 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.

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 will call, invite students to events, social gatherings, and to university functions.

Committee Initiatives

Continue to strive for UEP students to participate in selected activities such as Community Service and UEP Committee Initiatives.

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

Continue to pursue the following activities designed to achieve this objective

Design unique solicitation efforts for UEP.

Identify and research each company, foundation, agency and organization that will be approached.

Develop relationships with individuals, agencies, foundations and groups that have established philanthropic efforts.

Develop well- researched plans of action for instituting various support packages as well as internship opportunities.

UEP will continue currently established collaborations and partnerships.

**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.)?**

Solicitations

UEP has secured several small pledges as a result of the faith-based initiative.

Events

UEP will continue to sponsor and host events designed to support UEP students and bring in funds as a result of the collaborative effort. Lisa Nichols donated to the UEP scholarship fund.

The UEP program will continue to seek grants, donations, and in-kind contributions from corporations, foundations, and private individuals including UEP alumni.

*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.

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 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.

## APPENDICES

- Appendix I      UH Mission Statement & UH System Strategic Initiatives
- Appendix II      Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)  
Vision & Mission
- Appendix III     Urban Experience Program Mission Statement
- Appendix IV     An Inspirational Evening with Lisa Nichols

# UNIVERSITY *of* HOUSTON

## **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 non-traditional 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 Houston and Texas.

## **UH System Strategic Initiatives**

### **UH System Strategic Initiatives**

In accordance with its mission, the University of Houston pursues the following strategic principles established by the UH System Board of Regents:

#### **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 diversity of Houston.

#### **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



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### 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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# CLOSING *the* GAPS

THE TEXAS HIGHER  
EDUCATION PLAN



2030

2025

2020

2015



2010

2005

## A VISION FOR TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION

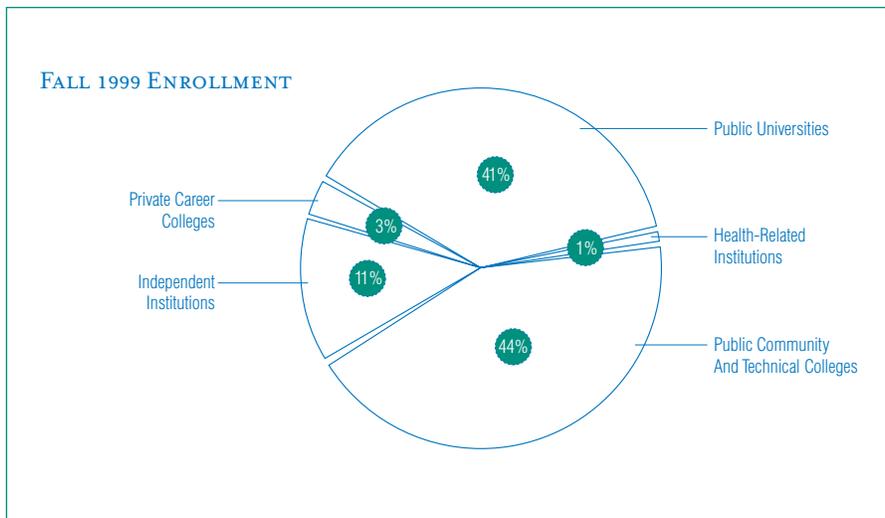
**Every Texan educated to the level necessary to achieve his or her dreams; no one is left behind, and each can pursue higher education; colleges and universities focus on the recruitment and success of students while defining their own paths to excellence; education is of high quality throughout; and all levels of education, the business community, and the public are constant partners in recruiting and preparing students and faculty who will meet the state's workforce and research needs.**

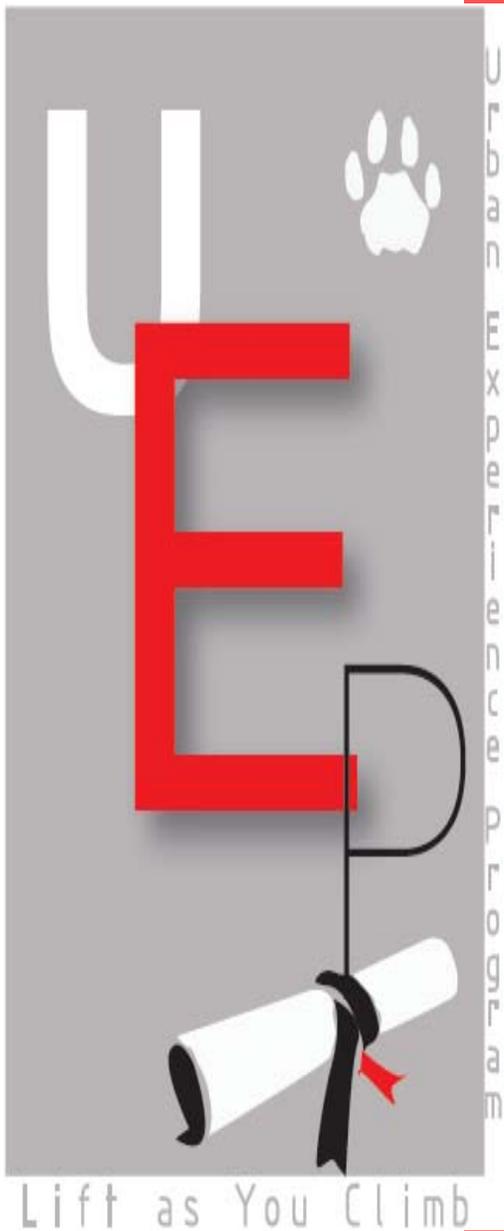
The vision arises from the strong higher education foundation developed by the state over recent decades. Since 1965, Texas has added 42 public community and technical college campuses, 12 public universities and four public health science centers. Public higher education enrollments have increased by 610,000 students. During the same period of time, the independent sector of Texas higher education added three universities and increased its enrollment by approximately 40,000 students; these independent institutions play an important role in educating the people of Texas. In total, Texas public higher education institutions include 50

community college districts with 74 campuses, four technical colleges with two extension centers, two state colleges and a technical institute, 35 universities, eight health-related institutions, plus 40 independent colleges and universities, one independent medical school, and 31 degree-granting private career colleges. Today, total enrollment exceeds 990,000 students.

Despite these additional institutions and students, much

work remains for Texas to develop its higher education system to meet the needs for the continued growth of the state's economic prosperity. Although the Texas educational system is reasonably successful, there is room for improvement. In comparison to California, New York, Florida and other large states, Texas falls short in higher education enrollment rates, degrees awarded, federal research funding and nationally recognized programs.





*Encourage*

*Enlighten*

*Empower*

*and*

*Embrace*

Program Director:

Robbie Evans

revans@uh.edu

**Urban Experience Program**

**University of Houston**

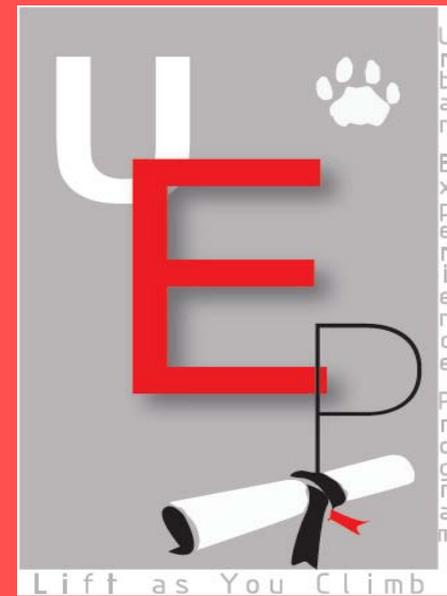
**250G Oberholtzer Hall**

**Phone: 713-743-6032**

**Fax: 713-743-5895**

*Student Affairs Division*  
Learning and Assessment Services

# *Urban Experience Program*



Urban Experience Program

Urban Experience Program

**UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON**  
Learning. Leading.



Te1: 713 743 6032

# Urban Experience Program

## Mission Statement

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.

## Student Profile

Participants are selected on the basis of demonstrated or potential ability for campus leadership, community service, and potential for academic achievement. The selection process includes an application, an essay, interviews with candidates and their parents or guardians, demonstrated financial need and exceptional life challenges in pursuing higher education. In addition, all participants must be full-time, degree seeking UH students who contractually agree to abide by the terms of the program and participate in all evaluation activities.



## Services

The University of Houston's Urban Experience Program (UEP) is a unique collaborative endeavor of the University of Houston, the Houston community and corporate sponsors. UEP is designed to simultaneously address the needs of the underrepresented student population and the changing dynamics of the American workforce. UEP prepares students for entry into the workforce by combining educational opportunities with valuable internship experiences. The program components include:

- internships
- community service
- tutoring
- mentoring
- cultural enrichment activities
- on-campus housing (in limited cases)
- academic success workshops
- career development activities
- personal development workshops
- monitoring to insure academic success

This endeavor results in improved grades and higher graduation rates for Urban Experience Program participants.

*Student Affairs Division*  
Learning and Assessment Services

## SUPPORTING OPPORTUNITIES

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Title\_\_\_\_\_

Company\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Fax\_\_\_\_\_

Contribution Deadline\_\_\_\_\_

Fiscal year\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_*Scholarship Levels*

⑤ The Doctorate \$5,000 per year  
(Sponsorship acknowledgment in all UEP literature, a plaque, and recognition at a banquet)

⑤ The Masters \$2,000 per year  
(Sponsorship acknowledgment in all UEP literature, two tickets, and recognition at a banquet)

⑤ The Baccalaureate \$1,000 per year  
(Sponsorship acknowledgment in all UEP literature)

⑤ Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_*Internships*

\_\_\_\_\_*Mentoring*

\_\_\_\_\_*Other/In-kind:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support!*

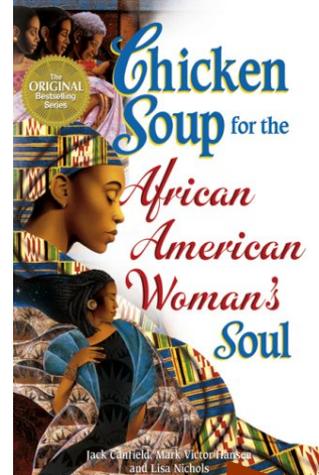
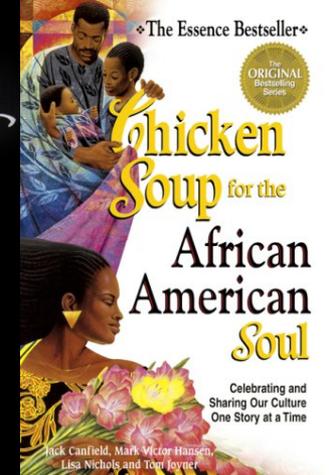
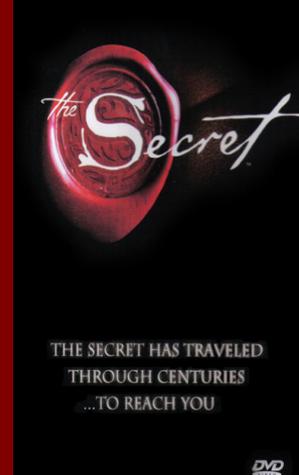
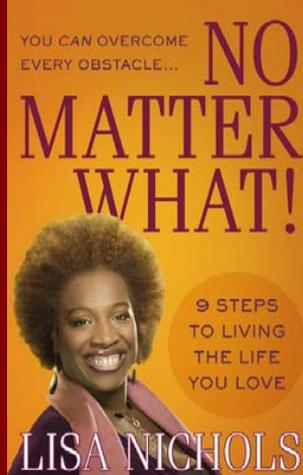
## Urban Experience Program

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Houston, TX 77204-3025

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**Lisa Nichols**

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Science Research and Engineering Classrooms  
(SREC) Auditorium 100 (Red Brick Building at the  
intersection of Cullen & Holman)

TIME : 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

DATE : Saturday , May – 9th

Contact the Urban Experience Program for RSVP tickets. 713-743-6032