

University of Houston

Student Government

Association



FY25 Questionnaire & Report

Submitted By:

Diego Arriaga, Student Body President

Austin Craig, Student Body Vice-President

Daniela Gonzalez, Chief of Staff

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

SGA Mission Statement:

“The Student Government Association exists to serve as the official voice through which student opinion may be expressed and empowered in the overall policy, decision-making process, and services offered at the University of Houston. As such, the Student Government Association is committed to understanding the needs of students and advocating on their behalf. Through continuous interaction with students, faculty, staff, and administration, the organization works to improve and enhance the quality of the student experience.”

How the 61st Administration Accomplishes Our Mission:

The 61st Administration accomplishes this goal by being the voice of the students in the policy-making process with university officials as well as being advocates for change in support of the students. This is done in a few ways, by meeting directly with University officials regarding certain policies, passing legislation creating or supporting new policies as well as appointing students to University Committees to continue to support the student voice in a wide variety of areas. Furthermore, we continue to support the student voice by listening to students in a variety of ways including Public events, social media, and direct communication. The 61st administration continues to work with the University Administration on crucial issues for students such as Parking, Mental Health, Safety and Security, and College Affordability.

Justification of the Student Governments's Fee Allocation:

The Student Government Association is a student-led organization that advocates for the voice of the student body to University officials and works in tandem with University partners to make sure their voices and opinions are heard. As a result, the Student Government Association budget is utilized to (1) facilitate the normal function of the organization and (2) fund programs and initiatives to enhance the student experience at the university. SGA continues to stand by there mission by advocating for changes, policy creation, events, and collaborations with organizations. Some of those initiatives include hosting the End The Stigma event, Voter registration/get-out-to-vote events, as well as continued relationships with parking and transportation to find ways to save students money in parking passes and parking efficiency.

2. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the DSA strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting this data. (Dani)

Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps 2024-2025

Internal Initiatives

Main Goals:

- SGA Training
- Emerging Leaders Program
- Data-Driven Decisions

University Goals:

#1 “Increasing retention of first-time college (FTIC) students

#7 “Increasing Student Engagement”

Action Steps

- Hosted SGA training one week prior to the beginning of the fall semester where the Senators and SGA leadership received training in topics of communication, leadership, internal affairs, constitution and bylaws, amongst other topics.
- In the current SGA leadership, out of the four members of the Executive Branch, half are First Time College Students. This goes to show SGA creates a space where students can become leaders and become engaged in the university.
- Promoted the Emerging Leaders to students during Weeks of welcome events increasing engagement with incoming freshman and having 40 emerging leaders apply.
 - Party in the Park: We were volunteers and had the chance to table at the event reaching a total of 940 students.
 - Speed Friending: We were co-hosts of this event in which President Arriaga was the MC and our Senators and other student leaders assisted in Check-in, Check-out, and making sure transitions occurred smoothly. Here we interacted with 463 students.
 - Cougar Con: For Cougar Con, SGA had the opportunity to assist with check-in and serve boba to every student coming in allowing us to interact with 2,020 students.
 - Cats Back: Both days of Cats Back, SGA had a tabling where we recruited most of our emerging leaders, university committee appointees, and even senate positions. Here we interacted with approximately 6,000 students.
 - Glow Party: During Glow Party, all USOs had the chance to volunteer and interact with students mainly made up of freshmen and international students. Attendance to this event was 1,949 students.

- Healthy Tailgate: SGA, UH wellness, and DOS partnered up to have a healthy tailgate in which students were provided food before continuing with the tailgating. Here we reached approximately 247 students.
- Mixers: SGA also tabled, volunteered in the food, and gave a speech in every single mixer this year reaching approximately 2,875 students.
- In total, SGA was able to engage with approximately 15,000 students.
- In the times since our administration began, we have mainly focused on establishing a balanced shared governance model between SGA, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and the President's Office
- By having meetings with all these groups, we have been able to make better, more informed decisions for our initiatives and organization.

Campus

Main Goals:

- UH Makerspace Sustainability Task Force
- Turning UH into an HPI
- Centralized Student Worker Center

Univerisity Goals:

- #1 *“Increasing Retention of first-time in college (FTIC) students*
- #4 *“Increasing alumni engagement and giving to DSA”*
- #5 *“Increasing grants and donation to DSA”*
- #6 *“Lowering Costs for Economically Disadvantaged Students”*
- #7 *“Increasing Student Engagement”*

Action Steps

- With an executive order, the president created the UH Makerspace Sustainability Task Force aimed at ensuring the ongoing maintenance and sustainability of makerspaces for colleges such as engineering, arts, and architecture until the opening of the Innovation Hub in 2027.
- Several of the students that use these makerspaces came to the university because of the ranking of some of these colleges with the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design. Maintaining these makerspaces will improve retention for these students.
- During our time working on this initiative, we have decided to work on having a gala organized for university donors and alumni to discuss the importance of our makerspaces and their ongoing availability to students.
- We have been working with the Office of the Provost and the office of the Dean of Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design to expand funding for the Architecture School through their equivalent of a one-time request. This would increase funding by \$50,000 per year till 2027. Relieving the students from financing tools off campus and having a greater expense.

- Working with Health and Wellness and Chris Dawn we have been working on initiatives to promote health on campus.
- We have also began working on a proposal to present to the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost adding a requirement for all course work to be due at 10:00 pm latest. Helping encourage earlier sleep. This would push our HPI initiative forward and encourage student health and engagement.
- Finally, by creating a centralized student workers office, we would be able to increase student engagement and accessibility to work on campus. Questions, concerns, and anything else related to student jobs would be able to be found in a single location. This is something other universities have and has greatly benefited student workers.

Transportation and Parking

Main Goals

- Fort Bend County Shuttle
- Garage Parking Prices
- MOU Expansion

University Goals:

#1 *“Increasing Retention of first-time in college (FTIC) students”*

#6 *“Lowering costs for economically disadvantaged students”*

#7 *“Increasing Student Engagement”*

#8 *“Increasing Engagement for Students at UH Sugar Land and UH Katy campuses”*

Action Steps

- At the beginning of our administration, we worked with the Transportation and Parking Advisory committee to discuss topics regarding parking right when we signed with Fort Bend County to create a feasible transportation method for our students from the Sugar Land campus. With a cost of only \$4 per trip students would be able to use this transit.
- This new method of transportation has helped students be able to transport in an easier and more cost effective way.
- A lot of these students are low income and first time college students that can't afford an on-campus parking pass or even a car, this has helped bring another option to the table and offer a viable means of transportation for ALL students.
- In collaboration with Parking and Transportation and TPAC, we will be proposing freezing all garage parking prices for the next two fiscal years at the next Board of Regents meeting.
- This freeze will be of benefit to all students as we are only a 20% residential campus and most of our students drive and park on campus. Making parking more accessible to first-time college students and economically disadvantaged students.
- This will also encourage students from Sugar Land and Katy to come to the main campus as parking becomes more accessible.
- In negotiations with Parking and Transportation, we were able to expand the parking ticket relief program from once per year to two times per semester. Our citation food

drive is a program that helps many students get rid of their parking citations. This year, all four will take place during highlight home game weeks for football and basketball increasing engagement and economic relief.

Safety and Security

Main Goals:

- Partnership with District Attorneys Office
- Safety and Security Awareness Week

University Goals:

#1 *"Increasing retention of First-time in college (FTIC) students"*

#2 *"Increasing student credit hours and GPA for FTIC students"*

#5 *"Increasing grants and donations to DSA"*

#7 *"Increasing student engagement"*

Action Steps:

- In the past few months, we worked on a 20 page proposal for the District Attorneys office to request asset forfeiture finds for Sexual Assault Awareness.
- The proposal included the 4 different points we wished to target within sexual assault. Prevention being the one the Office of the District Attorneys Financial Team was most interested in.
- We received \$63,250 for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention to be delegated to different departments on campus such as Housing and Residential Life, Equal Opportunities Services, and Center of Fraternity and Sorority Life.
- This initiative helped support student engagement and allowed us to receive donations for different departments on campus.
- We believe Sexual Assault Prevention is one of the biggest issues in all college campuses leading to mental health and even physical issues. If we decrease Sexual Assault and Harassment students actually completing their degree rates will increase.
- Mental Health issues also lead to issues in the classroom from decreased GPA to loss of credit hours.
- Involving Housing and Greek Life helps us reach an audience SGA hasn't reached before and connect those students to resources.
- Safety and Security Awareness week is a week aimed at spreading all these resources to other students including a self defense course in collaboration with HPD.

Voter Registration

Main Goals:

- Registering more students to vote than previous years
- Registering Incoming Students

University Goals:

#7 *"Increasing student engagement"*

Action Steps:

- In the 59th administration, 2,000 students registered to vote, in the 61st 1,000 registered to vote, this year we registered 2,248 students to vote.
- As it is a presidential year, we have been focused on increasing civic engagement on campus by partnering up with several organizations such as Move Texas, Next Gen, amongst others.
- We estimate we have registered approximately 36% of the first year and transfer students this year.

Health and Wellness

Main Goals:

- End the Stigma
- Healthy Tailgate
- Expansion of Halal options

University Goals:

#1 *"Increasing retention of First-time In college (FTIC) Students"*

#2 *"Increasing student credit hours and GPA for FTIC"*

#7 *"Increasing Student Engagement"*

Action Steps:

- Mental Health is an issue in all college campus in the United States, which is why Student Government hosted the annual End the Stigma event where we lay out 1,100 shirts to represent each student in university campuses that commits suicide per year in the United States.
- College drop out rates/GPA are greatly correlated with mental health, which means that by targeting mental health issues in college campuses would help increase retention and academics.
- A lot of FTIC students deal with mental health problems and challenges, helping these students engage with the student body and student activities can help them adapt to college life a lot quicker and more efficiently.
- Our Healthy tailgate that we do every home football game in collaboration with the Dean of Students Office. Here our senators volunteer in check-in allowing them to interact with students during a fun engagement activity and while providing a resource, in this case it is food.
- This increases student engagement and retention as it creates a safe place for students during a high-risk activity and creates campus culture.
- Improving food options on campus has been an on-going initiative as one of the most diverse universities in the country. Therefore, in collaboration with the Food Services

Advisory Committee, we have been working on finding a replacement for the previous McDonalds in the Student Center and expanding food options in other places of campus.

Academics

Main Goals:

- CTAP Expansions
- Student Success Commission
- Syllabus Improvement

University Goals:

#1 *“Increasing Retention of First-year in College (FTIC) students”*

#2 *“Increasing student credit hours and GPA for FTIC”*

#6 *“Lowering costs for economically disadvantaged students” *

Action Steps:

- The Student Government Association is working with Faculty Senate and the BookStore Advisory Committee to expand the College Textbook Accessibility Program to graduate colleges.
- At the moment, it has been brought up to both committees to take into consideration and we are planning to apply it to one graduate school as a test-run, likely to be college of social work.
- This initiative would greatly support first year college students and encourage them to further their studies to graduate programs. In addition, with a lowered expense, economically disadvantaged students would be able to have less loan/federal debt as they wouldn't have to purchase extremely expensive books required by graduate courses.
- This would also help improve the amount of college hours and GPA as more students would be able to attend graduate school.
- The Student Government Association was also able to establish the Student Success Commission in partnership with the Office of the Provost, focused at improving the student academic experience in the university. This would greatly benefit students as it would tackle several struggles in different sectors that affect all of the DSA goals.
- One of the main issues this commission is tackling is the standardization of syllabuses for all classes and extending the requirement of a syllabus being released for a course to one week prior to the initiation of each semester or commencement of the course.
- This syllabus standardization goal would like increase student hours as students would have enough time to change between courses after dropping a class based on their learning style. This would also ensure first-year in college retention as students would have time to be knowledgeable about a course prior to classes commencing leading to less feelings of intimidation and heightened efficiency per course.

3. **Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2024) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them.**

The Student Government Association has had no organizational changes or budget changes since the previous fiscal year.

4. **Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2025 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY2025 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

In order to accommodate a budget cut of 5% roughly \$7,725 budget cuts would happen in a variety of places. First we would cut funding from the Senate's Budget by about \$2,000 as in previous years their budget is generally not spent or not much of the budget is spent. Next there would be a cut in event funding from the President's budget another \$2,000 as other parts of the budget may be able to pick up the loss and simply require tighter spending. Next would be a cut from the Director of Public relations and the Director of External Affairs both with a cut of \$1,000 as for External a lot of election expenses were covered by a one time request as well as with the dying down of elections less money will need to be spent. As for the PR Directors budget a cut of \$1,000 would be cut primarily from giveaway items as we tend to have extras left over from previous administrations that don't get used. Another cut would happen with the Director of Outreach budget of only \$725 once again regarding giveaway items for students. Finally the last budget cut would happen for the Banquet/Inauguration, a cut of roughly \$1,000.

5. **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.)?**

Occasionally, outside funding will be utilized by The Student Government Association which comes in the form of outside donations, off-campus foundations, civic engagement foundations, as well as other advocacy groups working in tandem for a shared goal