UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2015

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UH SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

❶ Tuition Revenue Bond Projects (TRBs)

Maintaining quality in our classrooms, laboratories, libraries and equipment remains critical to achieving the UH System's goals of academic and research excellence. As enrollment and the number of faculty at our institutions grow, so too does the need for expanded and better infrastructure. Funding capital construction projects through direct appropriation and tuition revenue bonds is vital to address these needs.

❷ Higher Education Fund (HEF)

The State of Texas and its universities are in a period of tremendous growth and are therefore in need of expanded facilities. The UH System recommends the Legislature re-authorize the Higher Education Fund (HEF) for the next 10 years with a 50 percent increase (from $262.5 million to $393.75 million) – a percentage consistent with increases for the past two 10-year allocation cycles.

❸ State Coverage for Hazlewood Exemptions

In FY 2014, the UH System universities funded $9.8 million in Hazlewood exemptions to help veterans and their families attend college. Absent full state coverage, the UH System universities must fund these exemptions through other institutional resources, including tuition paid by other students.

❹ Base Formula Funding

As demands on our universities grow, so does the need to provide adequate resources for basic educational services through the formulas. For the upcoming biennium, the University of Houston System encourages the Legislature to provide sufficient funding to cover current services (growth plus inflation) at the state's universities.



❺ State Funding Programs for Tier One Universities

Combined, the Research Development Fund, Texas Competitive Knowledge Fund, Texas Research Incentive Program and National Research University Fund constitute an innovative and powerful tool to develop more nationally-competitive Tier One research universities. Further, they serve as primary resources through which UH and other universities not supported by the Public University Fund (PUF) pursue their national competitiveness/Tier One goals. The University of Houston recommends increased appropriations to each fund.

❻ Financial Aid/TEXAS Grants

State funding for financial aid is essential for Texas to expand access to higher education and ensure student graduation. This rings especially true at the UH System institutions, where the education of many students is not paid by their families.

❼ Special and Exceptional Items

The Legislature funds numerous programs at the UH System universities that fall outside the scope of formula funding. These programs have a tremendously positive impact on our academic programs, research endeavors and the communities we serve. The UH System recommends continuation of special item funding and consideration for exceptional item funding.



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS (in Priority Order)

❶ Hobby School of Public Affairs (Biennial Request: $4,000,000)

The University of Houston requests start-up funding to support the development of a new Hobby School of Public Affairs (HSPA) that will leverage the City of Houston's diverse population, its status as an economic leader in the global economy and its ability to serve as a laboratory for policy innovation.

❷ College of Pharmacy Equity Funding (Biennial Request: $8,928,000)

Pharmacy programs funded through the formula for General Academic Institutions (GAI) receive less funding on a per student basis than Pharmacy programs funded through the formula for Health-Related Institutions (HRI). Funding for this exceptional item will provide the UH College of Pharmacy the resources needed to operate on an even playing field.

❸ Tier One Initiative – Health Science Center Expansion (Biennial Request: $6,000,000)

Over the past two years, the University of Houston consolidated its health-related programs into a Health Science Center (HSC). UH is developing new programs in nursing, adding a doctoral program in Physical Therapy and a Primary Care Clinic in partnership with a Federally Qualified Health Clinic (FQHC). Start-up funding is requested to provide support in launching and developing these programs.

❹ Tier One Initiative – Intelligent Oil Fields (Biennial Request: $4,000,000)

The University of Houston seeks exceptional item funding to expand its energy portfolio in the area of intelligent exploration and production of hydrocarbons with the aim of increasing the ultimate recoverable reserves (i.e. intelligent oil fields). Recent developments in smart materials, sensors and devices along with advances in micro and nanotechnology, data storage, analytics and large-scale computing provide the basis for the design of intelligent oil and gas fields.

❺ Small Business Development Center (Biennial Request: $980,000)

The UH SBDC proposes maximizing new job creation by creating a High Growth Stage 2 Business Team. The SBDC will expand services to include a specialty team focusing on Stage 2 businesses that employ 10-99 employees, earn annual revenues of $500K to $50 million, provide substantial products and services outside the company's geographical location and commit to growth.

TUITION REVENUE BONDS (in Priority Order)

❶ Health and Biomedical Sciences Center 2 ($165,000,000)

This building will provide state-of-the-art infrastructure to support students, faculty and research activities in the university's health sciences programs. The new center will include a primary care clinic, nursing and physical therapy programs, the College of Pharmacy, the Center for Drug Discovery/ Research and the Division of Research. The programming and project design began in May 2014 with an anticipated completion in November 2016.

❷ UH Sugar Land Academic Building ($91,350,000)

Through this project, the University of Houston will construct a new 150,000 square foot academic building at the Sugar Land campus. This building is part of a major UH effort to expand the programs in this rapidly growing area through active partnerships with the Sugar Land/Fort Bend County community which already contributed $20 million to existing academic endeavors. UH plans to add 22 new programs in Business, Education and Technology at Sugar Land. The College of Technology will serve as an anchor college at the campus. The additional space provided by this building is crucial to expanding degree and workforce programs at Sugar Land.



UH-CLEAR LAKE

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS (in Priority Order)

❶ Downward Expansion (Biennial Request: $6,500,000)

During the 82nd Legislature (2011), UHCL received authority to offer lower division courses to freshman and sophomore students. This authority for downward expansion is key to expanding access to higher education and enhancing student success, goals in the state's Closing the Gaps by 2015 higher education plan. Those state universities that expanded to four year programs prior to UHCL found it necessary to seek additional state operating funds to provide this new access point to students. Upper level institutions do not possess the structure to provide support for this new endeavor. Additional funds are needed until such time that full formula funding and enrollment grows to a self-sufficient size.

❷ Center for Autism & Developmental Disabilities (Biennial Request: $400,000)

Established in March 2008, the UHCL Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities (CADD) supports research on autism and developmental disabilities, trains current and future professionals to serve as leaders in psychology and education, and provides services to children and their families through partnerships with area school districts and community organizations. Requested funds for materials, equipment, student stipends and staff support will provide CADD with the much-needed infrastructure to attract additional federal funding and expand vital services to more individuals afflicted with autism and other developmental disabilities.

❸ Houston Partnership for Environmental Studies (Biennial Request: $600,000)

The Environmental Institute of Houston (EIH) supports research, professional development for teachers and professionals, and broad based participatory efforts for environmental issue resolution. EIH provides research funding for faculty and students in four focus areas: pollution prevention, natural resource conservation, environmental public policy and social/cultural issues related to sustainability. Additional funding is needed to establish database and GIS analysis capacity to support critical activities and remain competitive in the research community, procure critical research instrumentation and provide essential financial resources to attract matching agency funding. The addition of these resources will increase extramural funding of EIH research by 50 percent.

TUITION REVENUE BONDS (in Priority Order)

❶ STEM and Classroom Building ($120,000,000)

A 176,000 square foot facility will aid in the effort to continue our commitment toward student success and academic excellence. The University began admitting freshmen and sophomore students in Fall 2014 and needs to provide adequate and up-to-date facilities for the curriculum requirements for the new students. Specifically, this will include teaching laboratories for required natural and life science classes, faculty offices for instructors charged with conducting this curriculum, additional space to support research and academic excellence in the STEM fields, bigger classrooms to accommodate larger lectures and a multifunctional planetarium supporting diverse fields of education (Anthropology, Archaeology, Astronomy, Biology, Physics, etc.) to stimulate and elevate interest in STEM education and enhance community engagement through strategic partners such as NASA-JSC, the Lunar & Planetary Institute and Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership.



❷ Health Sciences and Classroom Building ($34,200,000)

The UHCL Pearland Campus has realized a 46.2 percent increase in headcount since opening in fall 2010. Therefore, the UHCL Pearland Campus needs to construct a 60,000 square foot facility for classrooms, special laboratories for health-related programs, chemistry and biology labs, faculty and staff offices, and student-requested support spaces such as a study lounge, study rooms, and a bookstore.

UH-DOWNTOWN

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS (in Priority Order)

❶ Engagement/Community Service (Biennial Request: $421,000)

Engagement with the Greater Houston Community is an essential element of UHD's mission and vision. These initiatives include partnerships with nonprofit and governmental agencies, neighborhood revitalization, voter registration, and K-16 initiatives to increase both high school graduation rates and college-readiness in the Houston area. Funding will also allow UHD to expand the Center for Public Service and Family Strengths, the Center for Public Deliberation and the Center for Critical Race Studies.

❷ Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability (Biennial Request: $441,000)

This request will enable UHD to establish a Center for Urban Agriculture and Sustainability (CUAS). The CUAS will focus on ways to increase urban food production, reduce carbon emissions and create stable urban ecosystems. Funds will support the construction of a greenhouse to aid in outreach initiatives and research, including water conservation, pest tolerance and nutrition. The CUAS will be a hub for applied research, improve UHD civic engagement with Houston's sustainability organizations, and educate the community in urban agriculture and sustainability.

❸ Microsoft Innovation Center (Biennial Request: $800,000)

This request will support a partnership with Microsoft Corporation, enabling the UHD College of Business' Center for Entrepreneurship to provide budding entrepreneurs with a full suite of business-oriented products and easily accessible expertise. Students will benefit through exposure to a wide range of up-to-date technological products that will aid them in a competitive job market and/or as they move on to graduate-level studies. Faculty will benefit as they master technology that will enhance their teaching and research capabilities as well as their work with industry. Small and mid-sized firms in this area will have access to the Innovation Center, further strengthening the regional business community.

TUITION REVENUE BONDS

❶ Science & Technology Building ($108,700,000)

The University is requesting capital construction funding to build and equip a state-of-the-art 149,500 square foot classroom/lab building to serve as the home of the College of Sciences and Technology, one of five degree-granting colleges at the university. The college is home to all STEM academic programs and provides opportunities for students to work for and attain degrees in high-demand STEM fields. As the university's STEM programs have grown in size and recognition, deficiencies in existing science and technology classrooms and lab spaces are becoming increasingly difficult to manage. The lack of a properly designed, stand-alone science and technology building limits UHD's ability to offer a full range of STEM programs.



UH-VICTORIA

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS (in Priority Order)

❶ Academic Program Expansion (Biennial Request: $6,000,000)

To reach the goal of enrolling 6,000 students in Victoria by FY 2025, UHV must substantially expand its academic programs in order to meet the needs of its diverse student body and to serve the workforce demands of critical fields in the health professions, business and industry, and professional and social services. The exceptional item would cover the costs of establishing at least 12 new academic programs, which will prove necessary to implement the programs and support core curriculum requirements.

❷ Downward Expansion (Biennial Request: $1,800,000)

During the 2010-11 and 2012-13 biennium, UHV used significant institutional funds for start-up expenses directly related to preparation for and implementation of downward expansion. For the 2012-13 biennium, UHV requested $6.05 million for actual start-up expenses and received $4.2 million. Appropriations to other institutions of similar size that have undergone downward expansion, including Texas A&M-Corpus ($5.6 million appropriated 1994/95 biennium) and Texas A&M-Texarkana ($6.2 million appropriated 2010-2011 biennium), were considerably higher. UHV is requesting funding to assist defraying downward expansion costs.

❸ Small Business Development Center/Economic Development Center (Biennial Request: $400,000)

UHV is constructing a 63,000-square-foot academic and regional economic development facility. Expected to open by spring 2015, the facility will house the Regional Center for Economic Development, a business resource center, training areas, and UHV programs that focus on job creation and retention. The UHV Small Business Development Center will provide the management expertise and oversight for the operation. The SBDC's involvement will create valuable partnerships benefiting the entire 11-county region. The funds requested will be used for additional support staff, the expansion of training and regional conferences and the increased operational expenses associated with UHV's new Regional Economic Development Center.

TUITION REVENUE BONDS

❶ Campus Expansion/Land Acquisition ($166,000,000)

UHV is asking for authority to issue $166,000,000 in tuition revenue bonds for an academic expansion of 232,000 square feet of new space and renovation of 76,000 square feet of existing space, plus land acquisition of 80 acres. The additional space will allow the university to meet the needs of a growing residential campus. Available ground space for new facilities on the UHV campus traditionally has been limited. The main campus occupies two primary multipurpose buildings situated on approximately 19 acres with two nearby hotel-to-student housing conversions and one new student housing facility on eight acres. Only two locations available for expansion exist on the campus. As planned future growth takes place, current UHV buildings will be repurposed for student support and library space in accordance with the university's master plan.



UH SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS (in Priority Order)

❶ UH System Global Campus (Biennial Request: $4,000,000)

Through the UH System Global Campus, the UHS universities will make nearly 100 current online programs available to students throughout Texas and the world. Funds will be used to hire instructional designers, marketing professionals and admissions officers necessary to launch the program, develop and operate the web-based interface, provide service to students and establish four new programs per year. Funding is requested only until the UHS Global Campus is financially viable.

❷ Timely College Completion Initiative – Guided Pathways to Success (Biennial Request: $1,572,410)

Through Guided Pathways to Success (GPS), the UH System universities partner with regional community colleges to launch strategies that improve student retention and graduation, reduce time to degree and minimize excess credit hour accumulation. Essential components of the GPS strategy include creating undergraduate degree maps, ensuring informed student choices and majors, requiring that prerequisite courses be taken in a recommended sequence, intrusive on-time advising and requiring at least 30 credit hours of study per academic year.

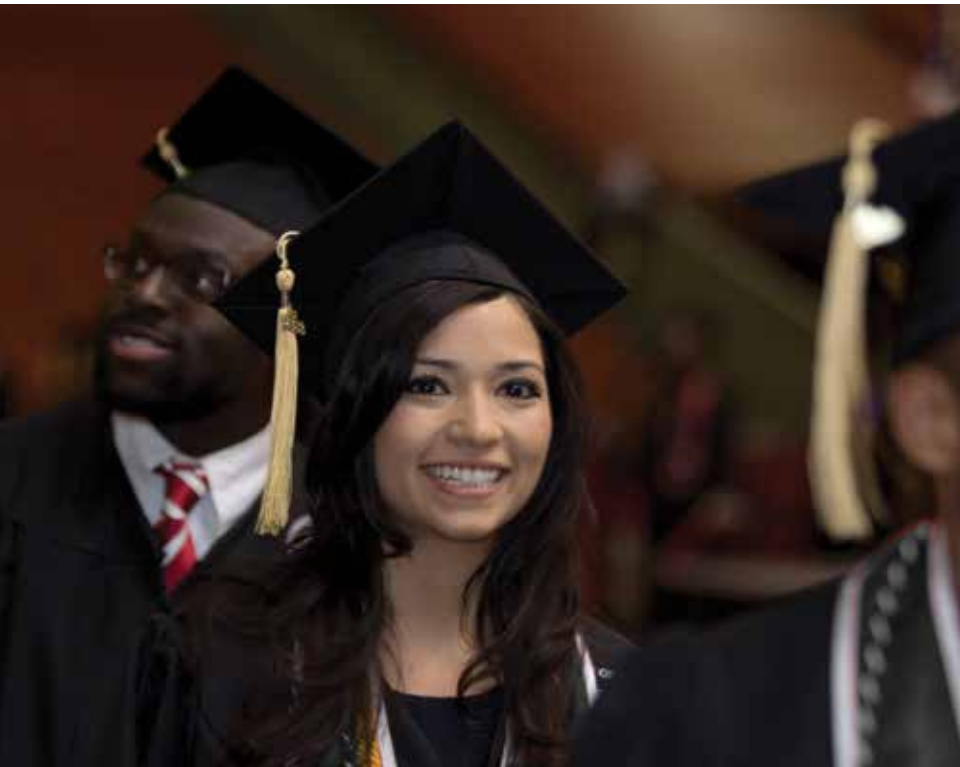
❸ NASA Aerospace Scholars & Technology Outreach Programs (Biennial Request: $636,000)

Through the Aerospace Scholars Program, public school and community college students participate in internships and other educational activities at Johnson Space Center in order to increase their interest in pursuing academic study and careers in STEM disciplines. Through the Technology Outreach Program, NASA technology and expertise in science and engineering are leveraged to launch and grow small businesses. Funding will expand both programs.

TUITION REVENUE BONDS

❶ UH System at Cinco Ranch Building and Land Purchase ($58,540,000)

Through this project, the University of Houston System will purchase land and construct a new 60,000 square foot academic building in the West Houston/Katy region. This project is part of a major UHS effort to expand academic programs to address the workforce needs in the region. Currently, students in West Houston and the Katy area have the opportunity to complete more than 20 undergraduate degrees and more than 12 graduate degrees in high-demand fields in business, education and nursing. The UH System partners closely with growing local community colleges that provide freshman and sophomore level coursework prior to transferring to the undergraduate degree programs offered at the Cinco Ranch campus. The additional space provided by this building is crucial to the expansion of degree programs needed to serve the rapidly growing population of West Houston/Katy.



Mission of the University of Houston System

The University of Houston System provides access to comprehensive higher education programs and services. The UH System's research and scholarship are globally significant, nationally competitive and serve as an engine for economic development, while its public service activities enhance the quality of life.

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