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 UTHealth[®] Houston

Editors: Amber Chen, Xiao (Lilac) Li, Ruchira Gundlapally, Logan Bliss, Gloria Contreras, Devanshi Majeethia

Farewell message to Figari's journey at UTHealth Houston

Saying goodbye is often a difficult moment. Charlie Figari, after serving 28 years and 10 months, retired as the Vice President and Chief Auxiliary Enterprises officer at UTHealth Houston. The Auxiliary Enterprises Department is responsible for running a range of university-related businesses, including parking, shuttle, and recreation center services, as well as the management of University Housing. With its wide range of essential services and support for students, faculty and staff at UTHealth Houston; Auxiliary Enterprises plays a crucial role in to the operation and productivity of the university community. Which has enabled extremely competitive pricing as well as value added services through these departments. This has been incredibly beneficial for our fellow students.



Figari had always dedicated himself to improving service quality and always placed the students' benefit as the top priority and treated Auxiliary Enterprises like his own business. His key passion is to build a learning community for students in a way that encourages their growth and development by providing a high-quality living and learning environment.

Figari, has devoted to the cost containment initiative, by striving to maximize the productivity of every penny in improving the quality of service and the operation of the facilities, thereby maximally supporting the students. As we all know, Auxiliary Enterprises operates under an enterprise funding structure, which means it receives no state funding. Instead, it is funded solely by its activities. Upon the completion of a budget year, any surplus will be used to support university operations, including student scholarships.

Auxiliary Enterprises has also been a solid partner of the Student InterCouncil (SIC) for many years, thanks to the leadership of Figari. In his remarks, Eric Solberg,



the Senior Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs and SIC Advisor, referred to Figari's work as a rock, the bed rock, that supports the students at each of the six schools.

Great leaders always make a difference. There is no doubt that Figari has made a big difference at UTHealth Houston, and we are confident that he will continue to excel in his new endeavor after retirement.

Xiao (Lilac) Li,
School of Public Health

SIC Salutation 2022

For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, the Student InterCouncil (SIC) was able to welcome new and returning students to UTHealth Houston with an in-person Salutation. The 24th Annual SIC Salutation was held on October 5th, 2022 at the Cooley Center. This event is an opportunity for students from all six schools to network, meet school administrators, and learn more about university student services.



Students were able to learn about the various resources UTHealth Houston has to offer at their own pace and interest. Various booths were set up throughout the Cooley Center to inform students of the available resources at UTHealth Houston. Auxiliary Enterprises, Office of Alumni Affairs, Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO) / Title IX and ADA, Student Health & Counseling Services, RideMetro, and many more services were represented at each booth. In addition, various deans and administrators

from UTHealth Houston were present to mingle with students for the duration of the event.



Attendees had the opportunity to commemorate the night with the photo booth hosted by *BH Photo Images*. You can see the amazing pictures taken by students and attendees by searching #ManyFacesofUTHealthHouston on social media. Dinner was also provided for all attendees from *Basilio Grill Catering & RG Grill*. Finally, students were able to enter in various giveaways with some of the prizes including month-long parking passes, UberEats gift cards, Bookstore gift cards, and Amazon Echo Show devices.

We would like to thank all of the speakers that attended Salutation. Eric Solberg, Senior Vice President for Academic and Research Affairs, started off the event, fol-

lowed by Neel Mutyala, Student Regent for UT System Boards of Regents, and Dr. Kevin Morano, Senior Vice President & Chief Academic Officer of UTHealth Houston. The President of the Student InterCouncil, Kate Wall, moderated the event and welcomed students, staff, and dean attendees alike.

We had an amazing turnout for this year's Salutation, and we thank everyone that took part in making it a huge success. We hope to see many of you at the next one!

Gloria Contreras,
McGovern Medical School



Wellness Week 2022

The Student InterCouncil (SIC) held its annual virtual Wellness Week from November 7-12 to promote mental and physical wellness among UTHealth Houston students. Wellness Week is a great way for students to de-stress, be active and focus on their health. The SIC's Student Activities Committee organized various activities for the students as well as great prizes for their participation in the events.

To encourage students to be outside and get some exercise a virtual 5K and step count challenge was held. Students uploaded their runs or step counts online to compete for prizes for the fastest male and female as well as the participant with the highest step count. This year, the fastest male, Samuel Buske ran the 5K in 18 min, 49 sec and the fastest female, Ashley Shin finished in 27 min, 1 sec. Andrea Abeln had the highest step count with a whopping total of 68,039 steps over the entire week.

To promote healthy eating, a cooking challenge was held where participants created their own twist on a power bowl. The winner of this year's power bowl is Sarah Shin who created a delicious cayenne maple BLT bowl with a fried egg and smoked gouda



Photo courtesy of Sarah Shin

Another event included a fun photo scavenger hunt that promoted self care and togetherness among UTHealth Houston students. Participants were asked to take a picture with a friend from UTHealth Houston, a pet, simple pleasure and/or hobby that brings them joy. Some of these pictures can be found on our Instagram @UTHealthSIC!



Fariha Hameed, a medical student from McGovern, and her friends showcasing their beautiful paintings.

Along with these activities, virtual workout classes were also held to get students up and active. Jeffery Mayo, a medical student from McGovern graciously hosted a beginners' boxing class and taught the fundamentals of boxing. Nathalie Heimeyer, a dental student from UTSD hosted a fun, upbeat barre class that allowed students to let loose after a long day of classes. These virtual classes allowed students a convenient way to get some exercise and try new workouts in their own homes.

It is easy to get overwhelmed with school and push aside one's health, so SIC hopes to encourage students to be active and prioritize both their mental and physical health. Hopefully, with Wellness Week we can get the ball rolling and remind students of the fun of being active. SIC would like to thank the SIC advisors and members who helped with the success of Wellness Week as well as all the students who participated! We hope to have more participants next year!

Ruchira Gundlapally,
School of Dentistry

The Return of UTHealth Houston Sports Day!

The Student InterCouncil (SIC) hosted UTHealth Houston Wellness Week from November 7-12. The festivities this year were held both virtually as well as in person. SIC's Student Activities Committee planned and implemented the week-long events filled with fun activities.



On Saturday, November 12, SIC held the return to an in-person Sports Day at the Auxiliary Enterprises Recreation Center and Sports Fields. More than 70 students and multiple faculty members joined this fun.

Due to the sudden change in weather that day, it was chilly and windy, but all who took part in the event were passionate and enjoyed themselves to the fullest.

There were seven teams who competed in the ping pong tournament, six teams competed in the volleyball tournament, and two teams competed in the kick-ball tournament. As an additional bonus, corn hole and spike ball games were also set up for participants to play at their own discretion. There was intense competition among all of the participants, and everyone strived to be winners.



SIC provided water, Gatorade, and various snacks throughout the event to cater to the needs of all partakers of the event. SIC also offered Jimmy John's box lunches to participants. Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to win priz-

es; such as Amazon gift cards, Bookstore gift cards, and Adidas gift cards.

There was a lot of gratitude expressed by participants towards UTHealth Houston and SIC. Many participants remarked that the Sports Day provided a great deal of relief for them ahead of their upcoming final exams. In addition, it provided a great opportunity to network with peers across different schools.

There was a lot of fun at the event. The SIC would like to particularly thank SIC advisors, the Student Activities Committee, Auxiliary Enterprises, and all SIC members who helped make this event a success. The SIC would also like to extend its sincere thanks to every participant. As always, SIC is looking forward to seeing all of you next year!

Xiao (Lilac) Li,
School of Public Health



SIC Sponsored Event: Healthcare Innovation Collaborative's "So You Think You Can Innovate?"

On Saturday October 22nd, 2022, UTHealth Houston's Healthcare Innovation Collaborative (HIC) put on an event open to all members of the UTHealth Houston student body titled, "So You Think You Can Innovate?"

In brief, HIC is a student organization comprised of students across all 6 UTHealth Houston interprofessional schools. The goals of HIC are to promote learning and innovation in healthcare, and challenge students to think about current healthcare problems and how they can be solved or addressed. HIC puts on two annual events, one in the fall, and one in the spring, as well as hosting a variety of speaker events and other workshops throughout the academic year.

This particular fall event, "So You Think You Can Innovate?" is the second iteration, but the

first year that the event was able to be held in person. This event is a one-day, interprofessional hackathon-inspired case competition that was held at the UTHealth Houston School of Biomedical Informatics. This event was made possible by UTHealth Houston's Center for Interprofessional Collaboration (CIPC) and the John H. Trolinger Lecture Series on Ethical Values in Healthcare Organizations.

A total of 27 students participated in this event, with students from four UTHealth Houston schools; McGovern Medical School, School of Public Health, School of Biomedical Informatics, and MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. At the beginning of the day, the students were randomly divided up into

teams of 3-4. After getting to know the team members, they were tasked with developing solutions to address the poor life expectancy versus health expenditure ratio in the United States.

Teams were allotted 30 minutes to identify and detail a novel program, app, initiative, or device for patients to use at various health organizations to reduce healthcare costs and improve patient outcomes. Afterwards, teams were each given opportunities to present a pitch for their group's idea, backed with evidence obtained from literature. Throughout the day, the teams were faced with new roadblocks that they had to innovate over and present those solutions in following rounds. Prizes were awarded for each of the rounds, including t-shirts, hats, and gift cards.

The grand prize winning team presented a "Pop-Up" clinic solution using data to understand some of the common but easily treatable ailments that land people in emergency rooms.

Amber Chen,
McGovern Medical School



UTHealth Houston Launches a Student App!

This past year, UTHealth Houston worked closely with app developers and students (including SIC student input!) to put together a brand new, UTHealth Houston student-centered mobile app!

Development for this mobile app has been a work-in-progress up until the beginning of this fall semester, where many students, including SIC members, became beta testers for the app to give feedback on its performance and aspects. Student input was valued strongly in determining what features of the app would be most useful to students. The development of this app always had students in mind, innovating new ways for students to



stay connected to each other and connected to the campus.

Some of the key features of the app is that it allows students to access class schedules, grades, financial aid, and payment plans. Each student's home page can be personalized to make what's most important to you on the front page of the app. Also be sure to check out the calendar, which includes both academic dates relevant to you and your courses, as well as campus events that you may want to add to your personalized schedule. One of my personal favorite usages of the app is to view the different organizations of each school! I found out about student organizations that I did not know existed through this page! With a list of all student organizations for a school, I was also able to see who the contact person was to get more information, and get added to a listserv, etc.!

Another key feature of the app is the Campus Guide, which is a virtual resource hub for students. From here, students will easily be able to access information regarding services offered by UTHealth Houston, including campus recreation, campus services, etc.



The community feed is where you can stay connected with other students and UTHealth Houston as a whole! Make friends here, ask questions, and share updates with each other through this platform.

The app is currently available for download on both the App Store and the Google Play Store! Please search "UTHealth Student" or scan the QR codes above to download! If you have any questions or feedback for the app developers, please let us know by emailing support@readyeducation.com.

Devanshi Majeethia,
*School of Biomedical Informatics,
School of Public Health*

Things to Know: Upcoming Events at UTHealth Houston

UTHEALTH HOUSTON STUDENT MOBILE APP CONTEST

A new mobile app is available for students to download. This app will help students keep track of their class schedule, grades, financial aid, student services, and more! If a student downloads the app between January 9th, 2022 and February 6th, 2022, they will be helping their school to win a \$1,500 budget for an event/party for students! Download the app today by searching UTHealth Student in the App Store or Google Play.



SIC ANNUAL CRAWFISH BOIL

The SIC Annual Crawfish Boil is planned to take place this Spring in the Cooley Courtyard! Auxiliary Enterprises and UTHealth Houston look forward to hosting students from all 6 UTHealth Houston Schools each spring to fellowship and enjoy some crawfish! Mark your calendars for Wednesday, April 5th, 2023. For more information about the crawfish boil event, check out our website: <https://www.uth.edu/sic/events/crawfish-boil.htm>.

COMSCICON

ComSciCon, a science communication conference will be held at Rice University on February 25th, 2023. Email houston@comscicon.org for more info!

Logan Bliss,
School of Dentistry

HEALTHCARE INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2023

Registration for UTHealth Houston Healthcare Innovation Challenge for 2023 closed on January 16th, 2023. Students who registered to join will receive their case by January 21st, 2023. They will have until February 19th, 2023 to work together to come up with an innovative solution for their case with their interprofessional team. Winning teams can win up to \$200 in prizes!

Apply for SIC Funding!

- Are you interested in receiving funding from SIC? Each year SIC helps make student-driven ideas come to life.
- SIC provides up to \$500 of funding available for inter-professional ideas at UTHHealth.
- Selected projects must benefit the student body and should be educational in nature. Projects should aim to enhance students' knowledge, educational experience and/or promote cultural exchange.



Link to the application here:



2022-2023 SIC Officers



President:
Kate Wall,
School of Public Health



Secretary:
Melissa Liu,
School of Dentistry



Treasurer:
Cem Dede,
*Graduate School of
Biomedical Sciences*



Vice President:
Jayanta Mondal,
*Graduate School of
Biomedical Sciences*



Historian:
Amber Chen,
McGovern Medical School

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What is the Student InterCouncil?

The Student InterCouncil (SIC) is the official UTHealth Houston student governance organization. It is a recognized forum of student opinion and the primary vehicle for student participation in the governance of UTHealth Houston. The organization is comprised of three representatives from each of the six UTHealth Houston schools, three representatives from underrepresented student groups, and three representatives from international student constituencies.

The SIC contributes to student life at UTHealth Houston by participating in developing and implementing policies and procedures affecting students. SIC also provides funds to support other UTHealth Houston registered student organizations' special projects and represent student interests on external and internal committees. The SIC promotes communication and collaboration among the UTHealth Houston schools by the publication of the official SIC newsletter- *Student Pulse*, facilitating planning, and implementing activities that encompass all students across UTHealth Houston.

We are here to be your voice, so feel free to contact us anytime at sicgov@uth.tmc.edu.

2022-2023 SIC Representatives

2022-2023 Officers:

Katherine Wall (President)
Jayanta Mondal (Vice President)
Melissa Liu (Secretary)
Cem Dede (Treasurer)
Amber Chen (Historian)

McGovern Medical School:

Gloria Contreras
Clayton Culp
Jordan Swan

School of Dentistry:

Logan Bliss
Ruchira Gundlapally
Melissa Liu

Members at Large Representatives:

Chijindu Diopka
Amber Chen
Katherine Wall

Graduate School of Biomedical Science:

Mary Fuentes
Joan Jacob
Pragya Sinha

International Student Representatives:

Cem Dede
Jayanta Mondal
Akhila Parthasarathy

School of Public Health:

Xiao (Lilac) Li
Ruchika Mahala
Devanshi Majeethia

School of Biomedical Informatics:

Halimat Ajose-Adeogun
Sharmeen Hamid
Jabria Pittman

School of Nursing:

Elnora Awatt
Jaren Salazar
Naomi Mata

