

Student InterCouncil
Monday, January 31, 2022
Zoom meeting
6:00 pm- 8:00 pm
Meeting minutes

Attendance: Niharika Neela, Kate Wall, Jayanta Mondal, Nour Alia, Sonia Patel, Lia Olim, Logan Bliss, Mabel Giselle, Mary Fuentes, Meghan Orsak, Melissa Liu, Ruchika Mahala, Ruchira Gundlapally, Sharmeen Hamid, Zaid Soomro, Swati Mohapatra, Amber Chen, Angie Hayes, Cem Dede, Clayton Culp, Elia Macha, Angie Hayes, Jordan Swan, Yuliana Nunez, Eric Solberg, Nedra Booker

**1.Call to order, Quorum and Approval of Minute.....Niharika Neela,
SIC President**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Niharika established the quorum and the SIC members approved the minutes of the previous SIC meeting.

2. SIC events

A. Crawfish Boil

Yuliana advised the SIC that due to the current COVID conditions the SIC needs to decide as to if they will proceed with Crawfish Boil as scheduled or cancel again this year. The decision is needed as today's meeting as Crawfish needs to be ordered by next week. Yuliana suggested to reallocate the funds for Crawfish Boil in a judicious manner. Eric suggested to repurpose the funds as Crawfish Boil won't be held due to the prevailing COVID conditions.

Niharika mentioned that the Crawfish Boil funds could be reallocated to provide scholarships for students in need. A motion was made to vote if the Crawfish Boil should be postponed this year and SIC members voted to cancel the Crawfish Boil. Furthermore, Ms. Booker advised that she would send out a survey to allow SIC members to submit options as to how they would like the funds of the Crawfish Boil to be reallocated. Charlie mentioned that he would match the \$16000 for SIC scholarships if the Crawfish Boil funds were repurposed for providing scholarships.

B. Deans' Dinner

Nedra mentioned that the Deans' Dinner would be held as scheduled at the IMM. Also, Nedra stated that the Deans' Dinner would be held at a considerable outdoor/indoor space and shall be attended only by a limited number of people, including the Deans, SIC advisors and SIC members. Niharika suggested that we monitor the COVID situation accordingly and invite the SIC scholarship recipients to the Deans' Dinner, if possible. Eric suggested we hold on until

March before extending an invitation to the SIC scholarship recipients to Deans' Dinner.

3. Budget/Project Funding updates.....Kate Wall, SIC Treasurer

Kate went over the SIC budget. She advised that currently there is \$4000 left for Community Outreach events, \$2600 for Diversity and PR events and \$3000 for Project funding.

4. SIC Alumni Association updates..... Sonia Patel, SIC Vice President

Sonia advised that Nedra and Eric had met and discussed the feasibility of the SIC Alumni Network. Sonia mentioned that there was an existing UTHealth Alumni database, via the Office of Development, for all six UTHealth schools and we could either form a new LinkedIn group or build on the already existing UTHealth Alumni database. Eric mentioned that the LinkedIn route would be a great way to stay connected and additionally, a few SIC members could monitor the LinkedIn group and maintain professionalism in the UTHealth Alumni group. A motion was established to vote for either a LinkedIn group for SIC alumni or build on the UTHealth Alumni database on the Office of Development platform. The majority vote was to move forward with a LinkedIn as the preferred mode of building an interconnected SIC Alumni database.

5. Committee Updates

A. Speaker Series:

Niharika mentioned that the Speaker Series was very well organized and the talk by Dr. Azzam was extremely insightful. Jayanta mentioned that the discussion and Q&A sessions with Dr. Azzam led to incredibly great discussions and the event was successfully organized and it was a step in the right direction, especially because it was the very first event of the SIC Speaker Series. Sonia advised that 90.9% of the attendees responded to the post-event survey and scored the event 10/10. The survey takers also mentioned that mental health wellness was a crucial topic for them and hence, they were very eager to attend the event. Almost 91% stated that they would suggest the event to their friends and post-event survey takers suggested topics like promoting diversity and inclusion; talks about how to be a great leader; interdisciplinary career panel; and advice on publishing/professionalism, etc. as potentially interesting topics that they would like to see in the future. Sonia mentioned that the feedback was pretty positive and gave us a lot of insights into how we could organize future events.

Eric mentioned that the event was well organized and the speaker gave a great talk. However, we must ensure a greater turnout of attendees through greater PR drives and publicizing the event. Eric mentioned that the first event was a great learning experience and should give us an idea how to organize and publicize the next SIC Speaker Series event in a more robust and time-effective manner. Sharmeen mentioned that for the next Speaker Series event we shall keep a greater amount of time reserved for marketing and publicizing the event. Eric mentioned that we should have the six UHealth schools be involved in publicizing the event through the student governance bodies of each of the schools. Also, incentivizing attendance and the schools with the highest attendance would make difference in the number of people attending the event.

B. Standing committees

Sharmeen gave a presentation about forming an International Student Committee and presented to the SIC the ideas that Jayanta, Cem and she had with regards to establishing a SIC sub-committee to address the crucial needs of the international student body of UHealth, like having a separate orientation and monthly meetings for the international students. Also, having peer-mentors and informative webinars for the international students was also proposed. Eric mentioned that having such a standing committee would require a change in the SIC bylaws and would need a formal approving vote of the SIC members. Jayanta mentioned that the SIC international student standing committee would ensure that the initiatives of the international student committee aren't lost. Eric mentioned that the international student body should present a charter for the standing international student committee, after which the SIC members shall vote on the same. Sonia and Nour mentioned that each of the six schools' newsletters could be used to publicize the next speaker series event.

C. Ad hoc committees:

The Mental Health Committee mentioned that the SIC could organize a therapy session with dogs for the upliftment of mental health. Charlie mentioned that the legal team had to be involved too and Sonia mentioned that GSBS had organized a similar event and it would be great to get in touch with them too for organizing such an event. There were no other updates from the ad-hoc committees as most of the ad-hoc committees don't have meetings over the winter holidays.

- 6. Advisor announcementsEric Solberg, Vice President of Academic and Research Affairs**
Charlie Figari, Vice President and Chief Auxiliary Enterprises officer

Eric and Nedra provided an update on the progress of the Ready Education app. The strategy and alignment call, and activation kick-off with UTHealth Information Technology began this month. At this time the meetings are all mostly technical, but once the shell of the app is built, and implementation team will need to be formed to meet regarding the app. This team will require one SIC student, one that will continue on through the next year. Nedra encourage those staying in the SIC to consider being on the implementation team. The development of the app is moving along fairly quickly. The app will be a great platform for connecting and engaging the entire UTHealth student community and would help in communicating and broadcasting information to all the students. The app would also inform us about our class schedule and our tuition due date/ payment plans.

Charlie mentioned that St. Thomas University approached Auxiliary Enterprises to use the swimming pool for competitions. Also, the contract with RG Grill might change and Charlie advised about challenges towards allocating UTHealth students in the UTHealth housing. Charlie asked us to connect him with any UTHealth students who weren't getting housing at the UTHealth housing. Charlie advised that by not renewing leases of residents who aren't UTHealth students, more housing options could be made available for UTHealth students.

7. SIC Business.....Nedra Booker, SIC Advisor

Nedra thanked the SIC Scholarship Committee for reviewing all the scholarship applications and she announced the recipients of the SIC scholarships. Nedra also mentioned that SIC members who are going to graduate at the end of this term or in the Fall should inform her about the same and that the SIC Officer elections shall be held in April meeting, Nominations will take place at the March meeting. Niharika mentioned that the IT team shall be presenting in the next SIC meeting.

8. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the SIC meeting was proposed, seconded and approved at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jayanta Mondal.