

Student InterCouncil
Monday, October 18,2021
WebEx Meeting
6:00 pm- 8:00 pm
Meeting Minutes

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

1.Call to order, Quorum, and Approval of MinutesNiharika Neela, SIC President

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM. Niharika established the quorum and welcomed all the SIC members to the official SIC meeting. A motion to approve the minutes of the previous SIC meeting was established and passed and the meeting, thereby, commenced. Niharika invited Dr. Scott Patlovich, Assistant Vice President of Environmental Health and Safety, to brief the SIC about the latest updates with regards to the health, safety and risk management protocols being employed by UHealth and also to talk about the feasibility of conducting in-person events at UHealth.

2. Health, Environment and Risk Management Q&AScott Patlovich, Assistant Vice President of Environmental Health and Safety

Dr. Patlovich remarked that that UHealth has been strictly adhering to CDC guidelines throughout the COVID pandemic while simultaneously considering the executive orders coming from the State government's office. As UHealth is a health institution, President Colasurdo has been strongly encouraging masking at campus, social distancing, sanitizing and washing hands, and getting vaccinated against COVID. Dr. Patlovich mentioned that the fourth wave of the COVID pandemic brought in by the Delta variant had pushed back the recovery step towards full return to in-person events that was planned during summer.

However, all of the schools at UHealth are slowly returning to in-person classes as the fourth wave seems to be behind us, in light of the lower levels of hospitalizations and transmission rates. Nevertheless, UHealth is currently prohibiting large gatherings and events and is following the CDC's guidelines. The CDC recommends having events and gatherings outdoors and if the event is conducted indoors one should wear masks and socially distance themselves, even fully vaccinated individuals. UHealth is, thus, committed to adhering and complying to the aforementioned CDC guidelines and is waiting to hear with regards to the latest guidelines that shall be issued by CDC. Charlie briefed us further, about guidelines that one needs to follow while arranging for food for events that shall be conducted at UHealth and also, thanked Scott for his efforts. Eric Solberg mentioned that the COVID numbers had drastically reduced. However, things are yet to return to normalcy as the COVID transmission rates are considerably high and the SIC needs to keep that in mind while organizing future events. Niharika, further,

added that it would thus be best to avoid any large in-person events at least until the end of the Fall semester.

Clayton inquired if UTHHealth plans to hold in-person graduation event this coming year. Eric replied to the question by stating that the executive leadership had decided to conduct the graduation ceremony at Minute Maid Park, in exactly the same manner as was done last year. The event shall be held for three schools on one day and for the other three schools on another day. The reservation for commencement has already been made at Minute Maid Park for May 13th and 14th.

3. SIC Events..... Niharika Neela, SIC President

A. Salutation Recap:

Niharika stated that she felt that Salutation went incredibly well and was smoother than last year. However, she felt that the prizes that could be won at the Salutation ought to have been advertised in a better manner and the description of prizes been given out during Salutation should have been repeatedly mentioned on the broadcast emails about the Salutation event. Niharika also thanked all the SIC members for attending the Salutation event and representing SIC during the event. Eric mentioned that a lot of credit for the success of the Salutation event goes to Nedra, Yuliana, Niharika and the Central IT team, that the event was conducted smoothly and the transition between breakout rooms was quite convenient.

B. Sports and Wellness week:

The SIC Wellness Week shall be conducted from November 8th to 13th and a lot of prizes shall be given out this year. Niharika requested Kate to inform the SIC about the budget for Wellness Week. Kate stated that there were parking passes, raffles, bookstore gift cards and other prizes have been planned for events like the fastest run/walk prize and the Wellness cooking events. Niharika requested Kate to send the Wellness Week budget to the entire SIC. Niharika also mentioned that the Wellness Week prizes should be well advertised through our social media platforms by the PR team and the Student Activities Committee and by informing the individual UTHHealth schools to also broadcast the event. Additionally, Charlie advised that Auxiliary would donate five parking passes to be gifted out during Wellness Week and the winners shall have three months to choose as to which month they would like to avail the free parking.

C. Speaker Series:

Jayanta thanked Yuliana and Nedra for sending out surveys with regards to the Speaker Series and mentioned that 10 SIC members opted to be a part of the newly formed ad-hoc Speaker Series committee. Jayanta also mentioned that Sharmeen and Sonia would be serving as the co-chairs of the ad-hoc committee and he would be chairing the committee. Jayanta also had touched base with the ad-hoc committee members through an email and that the ad-hoc committee plans to meet within a week's time to discuss further about organizing the first speaker series event by end of November/first week of December.

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

Niharika mentioned that the people who have been selected for the prizes during the Salutation event shall be emailed this week with regards to the details about receiving/collecting their prizes. Kate mentioned that the SIC had received one project funding application from the School of Nursing Association they want to host a headshot photo session for all the six UTHealth schools. The event is being funded by the Student Nursing Association (SNA) and the CSON SGO and last year 96 people from all the UTHealth schools attended the event. The SIC members agreed to vote on the proposal once the members had gone through the proposal in its entirety.

5. Advisor Announcements.....Eric Solberg, Vice President for Academic & Research Affairs; Charlie Figari, Vice President and Chief Auxiliary Enterprises Officer

Eric Solberg mentioned an app for students to inform them about the services that UTHealth provides and information about/from student organizations and that Nedra is leading the efforts towards this direction and is coordinating with student services about the same.

Charlie mentioned his conversation with the UT Police and requested us and all the students to be vigilant and be safe. Charlie also mentioned that the UT Police is taking considerable steps to maintain security inside the UTHealth housing. Also, that students must say something when they see something suspicious and inform about the same by calling the UT Police. Sonia also mentioned that the UT Police provides free drop-offs to one's car parking area during the night too.

6. SIC Business.....Tanedra Booker, SIC Advisor

Nedra mentioned that photo sessions have been scheduled for all of the SIC members for their headshots and the photo session shall be conducted on the 17th floor of the University Center tower just outside of Dr. Blackburn's office. Also, the next SIC meeting shall be conducted on Monday, November 15th at 6 PM onwards. Nedra mentioned that she is also working on getting the SIC Scholarship announcement call out by the first half of November Nedra advised that in the past the announcement would go out in the Spring, but last year the SIC voted during the January 2021 to have the scholarships be given at an earlier time.

Lia Olim also inquired if it would be possible for UTHealth SIC to conduct any religion or culture- specific events like an Islamic awareness event or speaker series to dispel myths surrounding the Islamic religion and/or events to educate people about Eastern cultures. Eric mentioned that since SIC is a student-governance organization, he wasn't completely aware of what the rule stipulates and that he would look into it. Eric mentioned that SIC has previously supported and funded student organizations who have previously wanted to organize events for educating others about a specific culture/heritage and for the promotion of diversity, equity and

inclusion. Eric also stated that the SIC had previously funded the SPH organized Annual Diversity Fair and that the event used to be a huge success and used to draw huge crowds too.

Nour also thanked everyone for sending across their photos and videos for the Salutation event.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the SIC meeting was proposed, seconded and approved at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jayanta Mondal.

