

Bylaws of the Student InterCouncil at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
(Revised, November 29, 2023)

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PREAMBLE

The bylaws establish the Student InterCouncil at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston) and the procedures for the conduct of its business.

ARTICLE 1: Name

The organization shall be known as the Student InterCouncil (hereinafter referred to as SIC).

ARTICLE 2: Mission Statement

The purpose of the SIC shall be to improve the quality of student life at UTHealth Houston by providing an opportunity for the voice of the student body to be expressed and for student-based solutions to be advanced in coordination with administrative policies. The SIC also strives to promote communication across the six UTHealth Houston schools and the institution's administration in order to facilitate inter-personal and intra-professional development of students.

ARTICLE 3: Membership Qualifications

The SIC shall be comprised of UTHealth Houston registered full-time students in good academic standing; there shall be three representatives from each of the six UTHealth Houston schools. Special groups may be represented as decided by the SIC. It is recommended that each representative complete one semester of enrollment at their school prior to serving as a representative on the SIC. The SIC shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, gender identity or expression, veteran status or any other basis prohibited by law.

Section 1. School Representatives

Members must be elected by the student body or appointed by the elected student government organization of the school which they will represent. Election/appointment of members representing UTHealth Houston component schools shall be selected according to the bylaws of the school in which they will represent. Three representatives must be elected/appointed from each UTHealth Houston school. The elected school representatives must be enrolled full-time, and in good academic standing, at the Houston campus schools in order to meet SIC meeting and activity

requirements. If elected as a SIC officer, the member must be allowed to serve in that capacity for the duration of the term of office. It is recommended that at least one-third of the representatives serve a two-year term, and one-third should be new members, thus ensuring continuity of the SIC from year to year. SIC representatives may serve for two years without re-election from their corresponding schools. Students who wish to remain for their second year, must notify their respective schools of their intention to remain for the following year before the next round of elections.

Section 2. Member at Large Representatives

Three students will be registered as member at large representatives. To apply, a student must be enrolled at UTHealth Houston. A call for member at large representatives will be sent out by the SIC to all UTHealth Houston students in order to fill vacant positions under this group. Current standing SIC officers shall oversee the nomination and review process and report the ranked applications to the SIC President for final selection. These positions will prioritize applicants who add to the mission of equal opportunity within the SIC body. If a member at large representative is selected to a SIC officer position, he/she will be automatically appointed to the SIC as a member at large for the duration of his/her elected term. All representatives for the member at large position must be an American citizen or permanent resident.

Section 3. International Student Representatives

Three students registered as international students shall be appointed as representatives on the SIC. To apply, an international student must be enrolled at UTHealth Houston on a non-immigrant visa. The SIC will confirm this status through the Registrar's Office. A call for applications from international students will be sent out by the SIC to all UTHealth Houston students in order to fill vacant positions under this group. Current standing SIC officers shall oversee the nomination and review process and report the ranked applications to the SIC President for final selection. If an international representative is elected to a SIC officer position, he/she will be automatically appointed to the SIC as an international student representative for the duration of his/her elected term.

Section 4. The University of Texas System Student Advisory Council Representatives

The SIC will elect three current members to serve on The University of Texas System Student Advisory Council (UTSSAC). Two of the three representatives shall be elected for a one-year term, and the third member shall be elected for a two-year term with the first year serving as alternate. The UTSSAC representatives shall represent UTHealth Houston at UTSSAC meetings and present an oral report to SIC at the next scheduled meeting following the UTSSAC meeting.

Section 5. Election and Term of Office

Election/appointment of representatives shall be conducted once a year by each individual school unless a special election is needed. Schools without representatives in place by August 27th, shall forfeit representation until such time as representative(s) are elected/appointed.

In the event that representatives are not in place by October 31st, the SIC selection committee may call for applicants to fill the vacant position(s). SIC shall first notify the school governance President of a vacancy in written format prior to sending out applications. Applications will be sent out to the respective school's student body if no response is received from the student governance President within 30 days of receipt of written request. An appointed representative

must be a full-time registered student in good academic standing at the school that they represent and shall serve for the duration of the term. A given representative must begin and end their term on SIC while representing the same school or constituency. Representatives will not be allowed to represent a different school or constituency from term-to-term or within a term without first being elected/appointed to the new position. The term of office for SIC representatives shall begin on June 15th and end on June 1st of the following year.

Section 6. Vacancies

Given that an elected or appointed member of the SIC has chosen to serve his/her constituents and that said service cannot be adequately performed when the representative is absent from SIC meetings, a replacement will be chosen after any representative fails to attend at least 50% of meetings in a semester. Members must also attend all official SIC events in a given semester unless granted an excused absence. Excused absences may be granted by the SIC President at his/her discretion for emergencies or school scheduling conflicts and should be submitted as a written request to the SIC President no later than 72 hours prior to the event, when possible.

There is no limit to the number of excused absences a SIC representative may receive from the President for events. Any member failing to attend at least 50% of SIC events per semester without obtaining excused absences for any events missed will be removed from their position. In the event that the President removes a representative from SIC based on lack of attendance, he/she must promptly notify in writing the representative in question as well as the SIC officers. The representative in question shall have 14 days to appeal the decision before being permanently removed from SIC. If a member is removed, and decides to appeal, he/she must notify the SIC Vice President within 14 days of the President's notice of removal by sending a written request to be added to the next full council meeting agenda for an appeal. During the meeting, the appealing representative may discuss the circumstances of the removal and request the council to vote against removal. SIC shall take a confidential vote. The vote, decided by simple majority of those representatives present and voting, will be final. The appealing member shall retain the status of a voting representative until the appeal process is finalized by a full council vote. After 14 days, if an appeal is not made, the representative in question forfeits any right to appeal the decision and shall be permanently removed from council.

In the event that a representative is removed from council either after appealing or after waving the appeal process, the SIC President shall submit written notice to the representative and representative's school informing the dean or respective school's governing body of the need to replace said representative. Should a representative need to be replaced mid-term, the SIC shall advise the school's governing body President of the need to fill that position. The school student body then has 30 days from the date notice was received to fill the vacant position. If the position is not filled after 30 days, the SIC selection committee shall send out a call for applications to the school student body of the given school. If an international or member at large student representative should need to be replaced mid-term, the SIC Selection Committee shall appoint the next highest ranked applicant on file for that year.

Section 7. Committee Participation

Each representative shall formally participate in all assigned committees one of which must be a standing committee

ARTICLE 4: Officers

Section 1. Officer Positions

The elected officers of the SIC shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian. b. Non-elected Position: previous SIC President as a non-voting ex officio member. In the event that the previous President remains on council as a voting representative (either by election or appointment), the ex officio position shall not be recognized.

Section 2. Qualifications

- a. All officers shall be duly elected or appointed representatives of schools, a member at large student representative, or an international student representative of an UTHealth Houston school.
- b. The President shall have served as a SIC representative for at least one year prior to election.

Section 3. Election and Term of Office

All officers shall be elected to a one-year term at the March meeting of the SIC. UTSSAC representatives that have been elected as officers of the UT System Student Advisory Council will automatically remain UTSSAC representative status for SIC during their term as a UTSSAC officer. Election shall be by majority vote.

Section 4. Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs in any office of the SIC, the President shall call a special election to fill the office. When a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall fill the unexpired term.

Section 5. Duties of Officers

- a. The President shall: be the authorized spokesperson for the SIC in all matters pertaining to the organization and preside at the meetings. At the end of his/her term, the President is also responsible for compiling a binder of all pertinent information and correspondence during his/her term of office. This binder shall be given to the President elect by June 15.
- b. The Vice President shall: assume the duties of the President in his or her absence, prepare the agenda for SIC meetings, act as parliamentarian, and chair the SIC Operations Committee.
- c. The Secretary shall: Coordinate all scheduling, assist in recording, preparation, and distribution of meeting minutes, be responsible for maintaining records of attendance at SIC meetings and events, and shall serve as the chair the Scholarship Committee.
- d. The Treasurer shall: prepare a budget for the SIC based on the program activities, present a Treasurer's report at each meeting, and chair the Project Funding Committee.
- e. The Historian shall: serve as editor of SIC Student Pulse and oversee its publication at least once per semester, ensure photographs are taken at all SIC functions and events, compile the yearly slideshow for the Dean's Dinner, and co-chair the Public Relations Committee.
- f. All officers must be present at special meetings called for SIC officers.

ARTICLE 5: Administrative Advisor and Staff

Section 1. Administrative Advisor

This representative serves in maintaining communication between the UTHealth Houston President (and other university leadership) and the SIC. The administrative advisor shall have privileges of the floor with no voting privileges.

Section 2. Administrative Staff

An administrative staff member shall be appointed by the Office of Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer (EVP/CAO) to assist with preparation and distribution of SIC documents, and to provide administrative support necessary to support the work of the SIC. The administrative staff shall have privileges of the floor with no voting privileges.

ARTICLE 6: Faculty Advisor

A faculty representative and advisor to the SIC shall be appointed annually by the EVP/CAO based on the recommendation of the Interfaculty Council (IFC). His/her function shall be to maintain communication between the SIC and IFC faculty at SIC proceedings. This faculty representative shall serve a one-year term and have privileges of the floor with no voting privileges

ARTICLE 7: Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held monthly from September to April. It is recommended that Officers meetings also be held May through August with the SIC Administrative Advisor, but attendance at summer meetings will not count towards attendance requirements.

Section 2. Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the SIC President or by written request of four or more members of the SIC to the SIC President, but must be scheduled at least 72 hours in advance and on a regular school day. Attendance at special meetings is recommended, but will not count towards attendance requirements.

Section 3. Agenda

The agenda for regular meetings shall include call to order, determination of the presence of a quorum, introduction of guests, approval of minutes of previous meetings, committee reports, unfinished business, new business, announcements, and adjournment. The Vice President of the SIC shall be responsible for preparing the agenda for each meeting. The President of the SIC shall be responsible for final approval and distribution of the agenda.

Section 4. Quorum

A quorum shall be called when the majority of all voting eligible SIC representatives are present or if the rules of order are suspended (see Article 11). Meetings may be held without a quorum but no motions may be made and no binding action may be taken.

Section 5. Voting

Voting may be by voice or by written ballot. Alternatively, a public vote can be conducted electronically as needed.

Section 6. Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority, but may be suspended by the SIC

President with a two-thirds vote of concurrence by the representatives present.

Section 7. Minutes

The SIC Secretary shall keep record of meeting minutes and distribute them after the meeting to council for approval in a timely manner. If the Secretary is not present, he/she must appoint someone prior to the called meeting to record the minutes in his/her place.

Section 8. Visitors

Visitors may attend meetings, make presentations, and have the privileges of the floor (but may not vote) upon invitation of the SIC. Visitors wishing to present or to propose a motion as well as those requesting privileges of the floor must be included on the agenda.

Section 9. Motions

Motions that come out of SIC committees or that are presented by any student or outside student committee must be sent via email to the SIC President at least two working days prior to a general meeting and added to the meeting agenda. Written versions of the motion must be supplied to each SIC member at the meeting. Procedural motions and motions concerning new business may be presented from the floor at a general meeting.

ARTICLE 8: Finance and Budget

Operating funds for the SIC shall come from a portion of the Student Services Fee collected each term through the registration process. The portion designated for use by the SIC shall provide the source of funds for the budgetary planning and fiscal operation of the SIC. No financial obligations shall be incurred by any officer or committee except as authorized within annual budgets, or under authority of special interim action, approved by the SIC. The fiscal year shall conform to the academic year. Because the operating funds for the SIC come from a portion of the Student Services Fee, the Treasurer of the SIC shall publish an annual summary report in the SIC Student Pulse, giving an account of how funds were distributed during the course of the year for SIC events, scholarships and project funding. At a time no later than the first regularly scheduled meeting, the SIC Treasurer shall present the proposed budget to the general membership. The budget shall be accepted by a two-thirds majority vote of the representatives.

ARTICLE 9: Committees

Section 1. Ad Hoc Committees

The President shall be empowered to appoint from time to time ad hoc committees. All functioning committees shall be automatically dissolved at the termination of the last meeting each year but may be reappointed by the incoming President.

Section 2. UTHSC-H Committees

The President shall respond to requests from the President of UTHealth Houston seeking names of SIC representatives to sit on standing and special committees.

Section 3. SIC Standing Committees

a. The Operations Committee: This committee oversees the administrative operations of the SIC. The duties of this committee should include, but are not limited to, planning the meetings, overseeing, amending and upholding the bylaws of the SIC, and receiving nominations for officers. It shall be chaired by the SIC Vice President.

b. The Scholarship Committee: The duties of this committee should include, but are not limited to, overseeing the planning and implementation of special projects to support student scholarships and making recommendations to the Auxiliary Enterprise Financial Advisor regarding SIC scholarship funds. It shall be chaired by the Secretary of the SIC. Any SIC member is eligible to receive SIC awards/scholarships with the exception of SIC members serving on the SIC Scholarship Committee. Scholarship Committee members may only apply for the Shohrae Hajibashi Memorial Leadership Award, in which the SIC Advisors will select the award recipient. The SIC President is eligible to apply for any/all SIC scholarships and awards if he/she removes his/herself from the scholarship committee for the semester the award/scholarships are selected.

c. The Public Relations Committee: The duties of this committee should include, but are not limited to, managing the Student Pulse and ensuring its publication at least once per semester. It shall be chaired by the Historian of the SIC. The committee shall publicize SIC activities and events and improve communication between UTHHealth Houston constituents. It is responsible for coordinating with the EVP/CAO office in updating the SIC website content. The committee also is charged with the duty of overseeing that projects funded by the SIC include recognition of SIC support. Public Relations Co-Chair shall: promote the SIC's role at UTHHealth Houston, assist the Historian in publicizing SIC events, facilitate communication between SIC and each UTHHealth Houston school student governance organization, and promote SIC awareness among the schools.

d. The Project Funding Committee: The duties of this committee should include, but are not limited to, making recommendations regarding the disbursement of SIC funds for student-sponsored activities. It shall be chaired by the Treasurer of the SIC.

e. The Student Activities Council (SAC): This council is charged with promoting social life at UTHHealth Houston with an emphasis on inter-school interactions. It shall be co-chaired by two members of the SIC.

f. The SIC Selection Committee: The committee is responsible for reviewing applications from UTHHealth Houston students for The University of Texas System Student Regent position and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board student position. The committee shall select the appropriate number of individuals to nominate from UTHHealth Houston for both positions and submit the recommendations to the UTHHealth Houston President in accordance with The University of Texas System requirements. It shall be made up of the officers of the SIC. Any SIC officer wishes to submit an application for these positions must first remove themselves from this committee. Additionally, this committee will be responsible for reviewing applications for the international and member at large positions and shall make a final recommendation to the SIC President.

g. The Student Resource Committee: The duties of this committee are to bring awareness to students of all six UTHHealth Houston schools about their access to student support services. The committee shall focus on raising awareness among students about the support services and resources available to them to succeed academically, emotionally, and socially during their educational journey. The committee shall partner and collaborate with central student services offices to actively assist students during their education; through events and activities including

but limited to workshops, information sessions, and targeted outreach. One of the SIC Member at Large Student Representatives will serve as the chair of the committee. The chair of the committee will also serve as a student member of the Student Services Council.

Section 4. The Texas Medical Center - Student Affairs Advisory Council (TMC-SAAC)

This council is made up of representatives from institutions within the Texas Medical Center.

The SIC shall select one SIC representative to serve on the TMC-SAAC for a one-year term. The representative will serve for a term of 12 consecutive months.

Section 5. The University Student Fees Advisory Committee

The duties of this committee will be to provide student input into all proposed fees from all schools, incidental fees, lab fees, and any changes to student services fees or general use fees. The EVP/CAO will call for student representation from SIC members as needed.

Section 6. The International Student Committee

The duties of this committee are to support and represent all international students while promoting equal opportunity. The committee shall act as the voice of all the international students while collecting and addressing student opinions and concerns from the six UTHealth Houston schools. The committee shall strive towards providing students with informed advice and guidance on areas within but not limited to education, research, career opportunities, and housing/adjusting to life in USA. The committee will interface and collaborate with the Student Governance Organization at each UTHealth Houston school to support the needs of international students and shall also actively assist during the onboarding/orientation of new students during their transition to the United States from their home countries. One of the SIC International Student Representatives will serve as the chair of the committee.

Section 6. Committee Accountability

The chair of each committee will present a written report on the committee's activities to the Chair of the Operations Committee at the end of each semester. Each committee member will be held accountable for reporting on issues related to committee findings during official SIC meetings. It is the responsibility of the committee members to stay informed on topics relating to their committees and to submit by May 1 an annual end-of-the-year report to the President summarizing the committee's work throughout the term.

ARTICLE 10: Jurisdiction

The SIC shall be the advisory body, reporting to the President of the UTHealth Houston. It may elaborate a position or positions on matters within any of the constituent schools, or on matters generated within the SIC. Its recommendations, if any, shall be forwarded to the President of the UTHealth Houston in writing through the EVP/CAO.

ARTICLE 11: Amendments and Adoptions

Proposed amendments to the bylaws must be submitted for to SIC officers and Advisors for consideration and approval.

ARTICLE 12: Student Referendums

A SIC representative, or any student through his or her representative to the SIC, may request a

referendum on issues pertaining to students. The issue of a referendum shall be placed on a SIC agenda and a majority of the voting representatives present shall vote to hold the referendum. SIC representatives shall be responsible for polling their respective schools. The referendum shall be passed if approved by a two-thirds majority of those students voting. Representative will serve for a term of 12 consecutive months.

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