

Label: UB-52001

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Committee: Academic Affairs

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Tier One Learning Abroad Initiative

Whereas, studying abroad greatly facilitates understanding of global issues and challenges and helps students develop cross-cultural interpersonal skills; and

Whereas, immersion in another language has been consistently shown to be the most effective way to acquire fluency in that language; and

Whereas, multilingualism is a highly desirable skill to employers that would improve UH graduates' employment prospects as well as the national and global perception of UH as a globally competitive institution; and

Whereas, UH prides itself on working to provide an education in a diverse environment that bestows students with skills necessary for the globalized job market of the 21st century, a goal that demands a more sizeable learning abroad program; and

Whereas, UH has agreed to participate in the IIE *Generation Study Abroad* initiative to at least double the number of students participating in learning abroad programs by the end of the decade; and

Whereas, an average of 35% of students at other Tier-One Universities participate in learning abroad programs, yet less than 2% currently study abroad at UH; and

Whereas, a UH student currently pays \$1 per semester as a flat fee to add to our learning abroad scholarship fund, a fee that has not been changed since its implementation in 2001, but has decreased in real value by over 24%; and

Whereas, even UH satellite campuses charge higher study abroad scholarship fees, including UH-Downtown and UH-Clear Lake, who respectively charge \$5.00 and \$2.00 per student per semester, despite having even fewer students studying abroad; and

Whereas, the current learning fee at UH is only able to support scholarships with a maximum value of \$1,000, while other Tier-One Universities easily provide scholarships with values ranging from \$1,500 to \$5,000; and

Whereas, the current fee for funding study abroad scholarships has proven to be so grossly inadequate and unsustainable that Provost Paula Myrick Short was forced to commit \$200,000 out of the Academic Affairs Division's budget just to keep the program solvent; and

Whereas, no socioeconomic data is currently collected on students who study abroad; and

Whereas, in the 2014-15 academic year, 75% of all study abroad program participation came from only three colleges: the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the Bauer College of Business, and the Honors College; and

Whereas, less than 1% of students enrolled in the Cullen College of Engineering, the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, or the College of Technology currently participate in study abroad programs; and

Whereas, students from in many academic programs who would otherwise be interested in studying abroad face structural obstacles such as course sequencing that prevent them from doing so; and

Therefore be it enacted by the 52nd Administration of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

That the current UH Learning Abroad Scholarship Fee be changed to \$6.00 per student per semester, allowing adequate funding for study abroad programs.

Further be it enacted, that this fee only be charged to students when enrolled in the fall and spring semesters.

Further be it enacted, that allocation of these scholarship funds be based on a combination of financial need and academic merit, allowing motivated students to study abroad who cannot pay for these costs themselves.

Further be it enacted, that in exchange for this new funding, the Office of Learning Abroad will work to greatly expand awareness of and participation in UH learning abroad programs, and work out common non-financial difficulties that prevent students from studying abroad, such as curriculum requirements.

Further be it enacted, that a new primary goal of the Office of Learning Abroad will be to work with all colleges that have seen low study abroad rates to establish programs within those colleges to facilitate their students' participation in learning abroad programs.

Further be it enacted, that a report be published by the Office of Learning Abroad at the end of each academic year to provide data on the performance of UH study abroad programs, including but not limited to: the total number of students studying abroad, the number of low-income students studying abroad, participation rates in various types of learning abroad programs, the costs of studying abroad, the distribution of study abroad scholarship funds, and the number of students studying abroad by college and major.

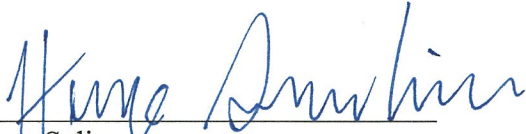
Further be it enacted, that maintenance of the Learning Abroad Scholarship Fee at the new value of \$6.00 will require a consistent, substantial year-to-year increase in the total number of students studying abroad, the number of low-income students studying abroad, and the academic diversity of students studying abroad.

Further be it enacted, that in conjunction with this increase in student fees, UH will seek to offset future costs via a good-faith effort to solicit funds from alumni and other donors with the goal of creating an endowment which will ultimately replace the need for the Learning Abroad Scholarship Fee.

Further be it enacted, that the Office of Global Strategies and Studies make clear the distinction between "Study Abroad" (for which these scholarship funds are to be allocated) and the more general term "Learning Abroad."

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

Student Government Association



Hugo Salinas
Speaker of the Senate
University of Houston – Main Campus

Date of Senate Approval: 9-23-16

No Action Taken

Shaun Smith
Student Body President
University of Houston – Main Campus

Date of President's Approval:

APPROVED

HOUSTON'S CARNEGIE-DESIGNATED TIER ONE PUBLIC RESEARCH UNIVERSITY