

University of Houston Clear Lake

To: Dr. Richard Walker; President

Dr. Tina Powellson; Vice President for Student Affairs

Dr. Laquala Dixon; Assistant Vice President, Dean of Students *Laquala Dixon*

Via: Matthew Perry; Associate Dean of Students and SFAC Advisor

From: Jocelyn Smith; Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) Chair

CC: Student Fee Advisory Committee Members

Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs

Date: May 1, 2025

Re: SFAC Special Funding Priorities with Rationale for FY26 and FY27

I. General Process and Considerations

The Vice President of Students Affairs, Dr. Tina Powellson, presented special funding requests concerning the Division of Student Affairs to the FY2025 SFAC on **Friday, April 25, 2025**. Deliberations were held the same afternoon.

SFAC deliberated three key requests:

1. **One-Time Funding Request** – The VPSA recommended providing Orientation and New Student Programs with funding not to exceed \$40,000.00 for FY26 and FY27 (\$20,000.00 per year).
2. **Central Funding Reduction** – The VPSA requested a reduction in central funding, with no reduction in core student services.
3. **Student Service Fee Reduction** – The VPSA requested a reduction in student service fee allocations with set funding priorities: (1) reinvesting and restructuring departments based on DSA priorities and central funding reduction, (2) creating base budget reserves to support UHCL mandates and initiatives, (3) right setting operations based on student enrollment forecasting, and (4) continuing to invest in the student experience and student success initiatives at UHCL.

II. SFAC Committee Attendance

SFAC Members in Attendance: Jocelyn Smith (SFAC Chair), Sanika Dutta (SFAC Vice-Chair), Kennedy Ezeani, Dr. Jason Murasko, Dolce Perez, Miguel Venegas, Dr. Laquala Dixon, Matthew Perry and Sirena Birkeland.

Presenters and Guests in Attendance: Dr. Tina Powellson and Dr. Andrew Wiemer

III. SFAC Executive Summary

SFAC is committed to advocating for UHCL to remain focused on affordable tuition and fees while continuing high-quality programming initiatives and student well-being. SFAC recommends that all departments be diligent in finding effective ways to engage students while ensuring that core functions remain supported during the adjustment period. SFAC encourages departments to provide detailed breakdowns of how funding is utilized and how students were impacted and benefited from the one-time funding requests and fee-funded support services.

While holding deliberations, significant themes and areas of concern emerged including the following topics:

- SFAC's commitment to ensure that students are supported with adequate resources to meet their physical, mental, and social needs.
- To ensure the future success of UHCL students and services offered, SFAC deems it appropriate and necessary to realign budgetary practices to work towards operational efficiency and accountability.
- SFAC strongly recommends student voices to be at the forefront of any decisions affecting their experience at UHCL. Whether it is in matters of policy, campus infrastructure, or educational offerings, students must have a clear and accessible platform to express their opinions and advocate for their needs.
- SFAC is concerned about the students and professional staff who may be impacted by budgetary adjustments.
- The committee's desire to support students and amplify student voices and concerns when deciding how to allocate financial resources remains the primary goal of SFAC.
- Data should be gathered after each semester to assess how each department or area has supported student success with intentionality and care.

IV. Funding Decisions for FY26 and FY27

A. One-Time Fund Request

Of the one request for FY26 and FY27, SFAC voted by consensus to one-time fund the requested initiative within Orientation and New Student Programs (up to \$40,000.00).

Approved Requests

1. Orientation Model Support (Orientation and New Student Programs)

Requested for FY26: **Up to \$20,000.00**

Approved FY26: **Up to \$20,000.00**

Requested for FY27: **Up to \$20,000.00**

Approved FY27: **Up to \$20,000.00**

SFAC has approved the request for one-time funding (up to \$40,000.00) to support Orientation's Model for FY26 and FY27 (up to \$20,000.00 per year). SFAC approved the request based on several key factors. First, Orientation and New Student Programs are a key contributor to establishing a sense of belonging on-campus. It is notable that the first-time incoming Hawks have a chance to connect and build new relationships with peers, faculty, staff, and the campus community. Orientation has implemented strategies to lower costs and barriers, thereby preventing students from attending orientation sessions by establishing the one-day model. However, with Executive Orders mandating a freeze on tuition and mandatory fees, the Orientation fee does not currently align with the current

need, nor can it be increased at this time. SFAC finds these factors sufficient to support the approval of the increased expenses, while maintaining the quality and accessibility of the Orientation experience.

B. Central Funding Reduction Request

1. Central Funding Reduction (Office of the Vice President) – Approved

SFAC has approved the request to reduce central funding for FY26 and FY27. SFAC agrees that over-utilization of fund reserves to account for budget deficits is not a strong or sustainable long-term model. SFAC agrees that a 16 to 18% reduction at the institutional level to meet the requirements set by the UH System and UHCL, and to maintain operational efficiency while supporting DSA's mission and student-focused initiatives is necessary. As this adjustment will impact several areas within the DSA portfolio, SFAC would like to acknowledge that these adjustments are a necessary step to ensure long-term financial stability. We urge everyone to be mindful and considerate of those impacted by these changes. It is important that we approach this process with empathy and care for the individuals and programs that will be affected.

C. Student Service Fee Reduction Request

1. Student Service Fee Reduction (Office of the Vice President) – Approved

SFAC has approved the request to reduce student service fee allocations/funding for FY26 and FY27. This will include reductions in force as well as M&O funding. The SFAC Committee understands that this request is necessary to realign funding due to several pressing factors. The initial funding allocation was based on anticipated enrollment of students; however, based on the current revenue, there is a significant budget shortfall. With reinvestment and restructuring of departments based on DSA priorities and central funding reductions, this will help to ensure that core functions remain supported. Considering this, there is an urgent need to adjust divisional budgets and operations according to updated enrollment forecasts to ensure financial stability. As always, continued investment in the student experience and success initiatives remains a priority to maintain a high-quality, impactful student journey despite fiscal constraints.

SFAC would like to note, though the committee understands the importance of adjusting business practices to match the current financial climate of campus, we embolden campus administrators to look at all available resources to avoid the removal or elimination of current job positions on campus. SFAC feels that the support and assistance to daily operations on campus by these individuals should not be penalized for the misalignment between anticipated revenue and the current revenue trends.

V. SFAC Committee Signatures

Jocelyn Smith, Student Chair	Jocelyn Smith
Sanika Dutta, Student Vice-Chair	Sanika Dutta
Kennedy Ezeani, Student Appointment	Kennedy Ezeani
Emir Fernandez, Student Appointment	Emir Fernandez
Fernanda Zamora, Student Appointment	Fernanda Zamora
Dr. Jason Murasko, Faculty Appointment	Dr. Jason Murasko
Dr. Kent Divoll, Faculty Appointment	Dr. Kent Divoll
Dolce Perez, Staff Appointment	Dolce Perez
Miguel Venegas, Staff Appointment	Miguel Venegas
Zachary Sheriff, Student Government President	Zachary Sheriff
Matthew Perry, Associate Dean of Students	Matthew Perry
Sirena Birkeland, Student Affairs Business Administrator	Sirena Birkeland