

# Guide to Collaboration at the University of Houston System's Teaching Centers

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## Preface

This Guide represents a still shot of structures, processes, policies, and procedures that remain in motion. Although revised periodically, it may fall behind developments in one area or another. The Provosts Council is the driver of the collaboration process; all policies and changes are approved by that body, which oversees the entire process. Responsibility for updating the Guide rests with the Council. Corrections and updates should be called to the attention of Council members.

## Protocol

Because collaboration takes place among separate and to some extent competing entities, it is important that protocol be established, understood, and observed. Both the prerogatives of the individual institution and expectations of the collective entity must be duly respected. The policies and procedures elaborated in this Guide are intended to be comprehensive but cannot be exhaustive. Thus, each institution should develop a habit of consulting in advance before taking actions that may be perceived as affecting the interests of other participants in the collaborative enterprise.

The underlying assumption is that the purpose of the UH System is to serve the educational needs of the greater Houston region as efficiently and effectively as possible through the combined resources of the four institutions-- whether on campus, at off-campus centers, or by distance learning technology. To do so, we must collaborate not only in the delivery of programs but in assisting students to make choices about their programs and where they might best pursue them. The following are general principles intended to guide actions, promote understanding, and enable students to make well-informed choices.

1. Each UH System institution has the same right as any other institution to promote its programs and recruit students wherever it wishes. However, institutions must respect the lead institution concept when recruiting in the service areas of the UHS centers.
  2. Promotion and recruitment activities arranged by the center and therefore funded through the contributions of all four institutions will feature only the programs offered at the center. Staff should, however, inform students of programs available on the campuses when such information may serve the students' best interests.
  3. Institutions are individually responsible for funding promotion and recruitment activities that are intended to attract students to their campus or that are not part of the collaborative marketing effort.
  4. Distance education courses offered by distance learning technology will not be listed in the center schedule unless they are an approved program for the center or are part of a collaborative lead/support agreement.
  5. Insofar as space and resources permit, the needs and activities of an individual UHS institution will be accommodated at the centers.
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## **I. Mission and Goals**

### **A. Overall Mission**

The mission of the UH System Centers is to “facilitate effective academic and administrative collaboration among partner institutions to provide efficient delivery of quality academic courses and degrees to area residents” (Coordinating Board proposal, 1996).

### **B. Strategic Goals for Collaborative Delivery of Programs**

1. Provide access to complete degree programs throughout the greater Houston metropolitan region.
2. Collaborate to spare costs and ensure quality—
  - a) In delivery of programs
  - b) In technological infrastructure and support
  - c) In on-site facilities, staffing, and services
  - d) In marketing, training, and coordination
3. Use a pragmatic mixture of in-person (F2F) and electronic delivery—whichever most efficiently and effectively responds to the need.
4. Provide facilities and services that are adequate to meet student and instructional needs but do not unnecessarily duplicate those available at each university’s main campus.
5. Focus on regional marketing and delivery of programs, relying on the competitive advantages of familiarity, proximity, and price.
6. Maintain market share, as well as administrative control, in programs offered by UH System institutions.
7. Maintain organizational structures and decision-making processes that are inclusive and effective, that respect the autonomy of each participating institution, and that reflect commitment to a common purpose.
8. Maintain sound relationships with community college partners participating in the collaborative delivery of courses.
9. Develop and maintain community support of collaborative delivery as the most efficient, effective, and innovative way to meet emerging educational needs of off-campus constituencies.
10. Become not only a presence but also a participant in the life of the community served by each center.

## **II. Structure and Process**

### **A. Description**

The UH System Centers represent a commitment on the part of the four universities to collaborate in the delivery of degree programs off campus. The purpose of the collaboration is to expand access, while maintaining quality and containing costs. At the centers, programs, facilities, services, and staffing are shared. Each institution contributes to the center budget in proportion to credits generated that are attributable to its use of the center.

The centers offer upper-level and graduate courses leading to bachelor's and master's degrees in a variety of fields.

The centers have on-site staff that serve all four UH System institutions. Their salaries and support are provided by the common budget. Additional staff members who serve a single institution also may be located at the centers on a space available basis, as determined by the managing institution. The institution bears the cost for such staff.

The centers provide student services, learning support, and instructional quality similar to those provided on campus and adequate to meet student needs. They also provide shared office space and instructional support for faculty. However, the centers are not designed to duplicate the accommodations available at each university for students or faculty.

The collaborative efforts are coordinated through the UH System Provosts' Council, which has overall responsibility for the operation of the centers, including program and policy approval, as well as dispute resolution.

It should be noted that each institution has distance education offerings and partnership arrangements apart from the UH System collaboration. These are administered by the institution. UH System institutions also participate in centers administered by other institutions, such as "The University Center" in The Woodlands.

## **B. History**

In January 1996, the UH System received approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to award degrees in Fort Bend County through a partnership of the four UH System universities, the Houston Community College System, and Wharton County Junior College (WCJC). The multi-institution teaching center was located in Sugar Land in facilities leased from WCJC. The two community college partners offer lower-division courses, while the UH System universities offer junior, senior, and master's level courses. Courses leading to a degree may be offered by more than one university, but students register with the university that awards the degree.

During the first year of operation the Provosts Council met regularly with representatives of each institution's faculty to discuss issues and develop policy. Also, during this time a representative group of academic services administrators began to meet to address implementation and operational issues. This group evolved into the Academic Administration Support Council, or AAS, which continues to meet regularly.

As collaborative efforts expanded and the UH System considered the creation of further centers, it became evident that a central organizational entity was needed for coordination, marketing, and training. Thus, UH System CampusNet was formed.

In October 2000, the UH System received approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to open a second multi-institution teaching center, or "System Center," at Cinco Ranch. For more than ten years prior to the location's being designated a System Center, UH operated the site as the UH-West Houston Institute, offering courses and as many as ten degree programs. The Cinco Ranch center has been set up to run in the same way as

the Sugar Land center. The program mix and institutional responsibility for delivering each program are only slightly different.

In subsequent years, it became evident that further centers would be needed—notably at the Medical Center, in the Pearland area along the 288 corridor, and in the Cypress/Fairbanks area along the 290 corridor. The managing institutions for these were designated in the UH System’s Strategic Principles and Initiatives (2004) as UH, UHCL, and UHD, respectively. Later in 2005, Cinco Ranch was added to UHV’s responsibility since given its proximity to the Sugar Land center, services and resources could be shared. In that centers would be managed by the individual institutions, the centralized coordinating entity established as CampusNet was considered no longer necessary and was dissolved. Coordination as needed will be provided by the office of the Associate VC/VP for Planning and University Outreach in conjunction with the Provosts’ Council.

### **C. Key Features**

The universities voluntarily participate in the collaborative delivery of programs to the off-campus centers. In doing so, they agree to approved operational policies and practices. Some key ones are these:

1. **Home institution:** Each student has a home campus that does the academic advising and grants the degree. The student is governed by the academic and student policies of that institution, even when taking a course taught by a faculty member from another institution.
2. **Lead and support roles:** Program delivery is ordinarily a shared responsibility. For each degree program offered, one institution has the lead, making it the home campus for students in that program. Another institution, or more than one, may offer agreed-upon support courses for the degree. Scheduling is determined between the lead and support institution.
3. **Course Partnering:** Shared delivery of programs means that designated courses must be articulated (“partnered”) up front. I.e., courses from one institution are matched with similar ones from another institution, so that students may receive credit from their home institutions. Partnered courses are by consent and are worked out in advance by representatives of the institutions involved, usually deans. Enrollment credit, revenues and expenses are allocated between the partnering universities. The institution teaching the course receives the semester credit hours, formula funding, and tuition and fees generated. The student’s home institution receives the head count. Students pay the fees charged by their home institution.
4. **Grade rosters:** A consequence of course partnering is that a faculty member may have students from two to four different institutions in the same class. All students are to be treated and graded in the same manner. However, grade rosters must be completed separately, in that each must make its way back to the student’s home campus. Students are governed by the grading policies and grade appeal policies of their home campus.
5. **Shared facilities:** The sharing of classrooms, computer labs, telecommunications, faculty workspace, etc., creates other novel demands. The center staff works with the institutions to resolve scheduling conflicts and ensure equitable usage.

6. Shared services: The center staff serves students and faculty members from all four institutions, providing admissions, registration, and program information, as well as assistance with proctoring and communications. Library resources are also shared. Each institution provides academic and financial aid advising, plus any tutorial assistance, for its students.

#### **D. Organization**

Since four separate universities are involved in the collaborative delivery of programs, the organization has been designed to respect their autonomy, to allow participation in decision making that affects the common enterprise, and yet to provide effective focus and direction.

1. The designated managing university manages site operations at each center.
2. Faculty members of the lead university for each program deliver the instruction, along with faculty members from any support institution.
3. Deans of the different campuses, or their designees, work out partnering arrangement and propose any new programs to be offered.
4. The Academic Administrators Support group (AAS), composed of distance-education administrators from the universities and center administrators, addresses emerging needs and issues and makes recommendations to the managing university and to the Provosts' Council.
5. Other System-wide administrative groups, such as directors of libraries and directors of information technology also address emerging needs and issues.
6. UFEC, which includes the chairs of the faculty senates, serves as a communications conduit and advisory group on System-wide concerns of importance to faculty (as noted above in "History," faculty representatives participated with the Provosts' Council in developing the initial understandings and agreements that defined the centers and underlie this Guide).
7. The office of the Associate VC/VP provides System-level coordination.
8. The Provosts' Council serves as the oversight body for planning, program approval, policy making, and dispute resolution.

#### **E. Personnel and Reporting Lines**

Different kinds of employees are involved in the operations of the off-campus centers:

*System Center employees* serve the students and faculty of all four institutions; are on the managing institution's payroll; and report to the center director. They are officed at the center.

*Other UH System employees* help to coordinate collaborative efforts; are on the UH payroll; and report to the appropriate System administrator. They are officed at the center, if space is available, or on the UH campus.

*Institutional employees* advise the students of one institution related to the programs offered at the center; are on that institution's payroll; and report to that institution. The

institution has responsibility for their support, but the center provides office space, if available.

*Faculty-support employees* provide secretarial or program assistance to faculty members of one institution, mainly those assigned to the center as their primary work site. These staff members are on that institution's payroll and report to the appropriate administrators at that institution. The institution is responsible for their support and office space.

*Other institutional employees* may be assigned to the area to work with campus programs, as well as center ones (e.g., for student recruitment purposes). They report to their institution, which is responsible for their office space and support.

The center administrator and staff operate the site and serve the students and faculty of all four institutions. Although institutional employees report back to their institutions, all staff located at the centers are under the general supervision of the center administrator in matters of center policies and operating procedures.

Faculty members teaching at the center report to the department head and/or the dean of their college or school.

## **F. Key Processes**

1. Programs: In order to initiate a program at the center as the lead institution, that institution submits a proposal, as usual, through the approval process of the institution. The proposal is then placed on the agenda of the Provosts Council. Proposals describe the program, the need, the role of the supporting institution(s), and any special resources required. Proposals need not be lengthy.
2. Course Partnering: Course partnering is initiated through discussions between appropriate representatives of the institutions (normally department heads or deans), and is coordinated through the UH System administration. Upon execution of signed agreements based on course rotations, the course(s) will then be reflected on the inventory of partnered courses.
3. Discontinuance of partnering: Course partnering is discontinued through an established process of regular review by the appropriate representatives.
4. Requests: In order to request space or support for additional staff, the institution contacts the center administrator. In case of a space, budgetary, or policy concern, the request may have to go to the Provosts Council.

## **G. Accreditation**

The UH System Centers are not free-standing institutions and therefore do not have accreditation separate from that of each collaborating university.

On initiating the System Center at Sugar Land, the four universities submitted a joint Substantive Change request to SACS; subsequently, a visiting team from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reviewed the operations of the Sugar Land center on November 4-6, 1998. It issued the following two commendations:

1. “The Committee commends the institutions of the University of Houston System for the outstanding way they have approached meeting the bachelor’s and master’s degree needs of the citizens of the Fort Bend County area. The development of the Multi-Institutional Teaching Center (MITC) is a creative and efficient way of providing quality educational programs and services through the cooperative use of the combined resources of all four institutions.”
2. “Because of this and other significant developments, the Committee commends the institutions of the University of Houston System for the development of a significant level of community and corporate financial support to enhance the facilities of the Multi-Institutional Teaching Center (MITC) in the city of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County.”

A letter was also submitted to SACS regarding the UH System at Cinco Ranch site; the multi-institution teaching center was approved pending a possible site visit.

Each institution is independently responsible for ensuring that its offerings at the centers comply with accreditation standards.

## **H. Advisory Groups**

Community, faculty and student advisory groups for each center may be formed as appropriate.

## **I. Student Organizations**

### **POLICY ON STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AT THE UH SYSTEM CENTERS**

1. Students taking courses at any UHS Center may form organizations for students enrolled at that center. Student organizations registered at a particular center will be governed by the student organization policies of that center.
2. Students participating in organizations registered at the center are subject to the policies of the center with regard to use of facilities. They remain subject to the policies and procedures of their home institution with regard to disciplinary processes and appeals.
3. Student organizations operating at the center must first be approved by the Provosts’ Council and must be registered annually at the center. At any time, upon request, the center will inform a home institution of organizations registered at the center and will provide a list of members for any of them.

## **III. Operating Policies and Procedures**

### **A. Collaborative Programs: Lead and Support Institutions**

#### 1. Proposing Program Offerings

In accordance with the collaborative mission of the centers, degree programs may be created and delivered by two or more UH System universities. Ultimately, however,

one of the universities must serve as the lead institution, which, by agreement with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, will award the specific degree. At the centers, the universities may only offer degrees (1) that they are currently offering at their home campuses and (2) for which they have been approved as lead institution at that center.

A degree program may be proposed for delivery at an off-campus center by any university within the System. The particular degree proposed should be relevant to the surrounding region. The proposal should include a needs assessment; brief description of the degree, evidence of capacity to offer the program, commitment to develop a three-year course rotation delivery plan demonstrating that the entire degree will be offered at the center, and verification that the program's faculty, chair, dean, and provost approved the proposal for submission. This initial proposal may or may not outline collaboration with other UH System universities.

After the proposal has cleared the campus protocol, the Provost submits the proposal to the Provosts Council for a first reading. The center administrator should also be apprised of the proposed program offering. Following opportunity for the other System institutions to review the proposal, it is considered for approval by the Provosts Council. Depending on the nature of the proposal, the Coordinating Board staff and SACS/COC may need to be informed prior to implementation.

## 2. Responsibilities of the Lead Institution

As stated above, if the degree is a collaborative degree, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board awards specific degree authority in the given discipline to the UH System university designated as the lead institution. Students at the center will receive their degree from the lead institution. The curriculum and degree requirements for the center students will be equivalent to the on-campus program of the lead institution. The lead institution will develop, with the support institution, a plan for delivering courses to the center so that students can graduate within a reasonable period of time. (See Appendix IV. A. UH System Course Partnering and Rotation Agreement.) The lead institution is expected to develop a course rotation plan showing the delivery of the complete program over a three-year period. The lead institution will enforce its academic and student policies and comply with its educational decision-making processes, just as it does on campus. The lead institution agrees to comply with the policies and procedures adopted for operation of the center.

The lead institution is responsible for notifying SACS/COC of the off-campus delivery.

In the selection of the lead institution, certain criteria are evident. First, a given academic unit must be willing to take on the role of lead institution. This willingness is essential to guarantee faculty ownership. Second, the lead institution must have the capacity to deliver the program off-campus without diminishing the quality of the on-campus program. Finally, the nature or quality of a program may favor one campus over another.

### 3. Responsibilities of the Support Institution

The support institution (or more than one) agrees to work with the lead institution to maintain the standards of the program so that they are equivalent to the on-campus standards of the lead institution. These standards include ensuring that the credentials of teaching faculty meet the criteria of relevant accrediting bodies. The support institution agrees to develop a plan to deliver courses to the center and commits, along with the lead institution, to offering enough courses for students to graduate within a reasonable period of time. The support institution agrees to manage its academic efforts in compliance with its campus educational processes. The support institution agrees to comply with the policies and procedures adopted for the operation of the center.

### 4. Collaborative Agreements/Course Partnering

#### *History:*

In the process of securing Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approval for the collaborations at UHS at Sugar Land and UHS at Cinco Ranch, deans of specific program areas agreed on roles as “lead” and “support” campus for the delivery of approved degree programs. These collaborations facilitate ease of student enrollment procedures and improve the ability of departments to deliver full programs.

#### *Definition & Purpose:*

“Partnered courses” are courses in a designated degree program agreed upon by a UH System university to be accepted and listed in its schedule as one of its own, although another UHS university in fact teaches it.

Example: UH-Downtown is the lead campus for the BBA at Sugar Land and agrees to accept and list in its schedule specific UH-Victoria undergraduate business courses as partnered courses with UHD course numbers carrying UHD credit. Sugar Land UHD BBA students enroll in the partnered course taught by UHV, and the course is listed on their transcript as a UHD course.

Course partnering (formerly called “articulation”) is an important means of enabling the institutions to expand access while maintaining quality and conserving resources. Sharing courses—along with space, technology, and support staff—lessens the investment and the risk involved in providing degree programs to off-campus clienteles. Course partnering is also a means of sharing enrollments when more than one institution demonstrates interest in delivering a particular program.

An institution may find that the number of its students enrolling in other institutions’ courses exceeds the number of other institutions’ students enrolling in its courses. This apparent imbalance should not be cause for concern. 1) It is inevitable, if students are to benefit from course partnering. 2) Each institution nonetheless generates more enrollments than it could expect if there were no collaboration. And 3) enrollments in other institutions’ courses must be viewed also in light of costs avoided. The efficiency achieved through partnering ordinarily results in either a gain or a savings for the institutions involved. The partners’ overall strategy in establishing the System Centers is to share rewards as well as risks. Thus, while each partner seeks to

increase its overall SCH at the centers, it also wants to minimize its risks by avoiding costs, such as instructional expenses for small start up programs.

Partnering agreements are ordinarily developed at the time a program is added to the array of offerings at a given center and are reviewed at specified intervals thereafter. However, partnering also may be used as a temporary expedient for responding to the scheduling needs of individual students, so long as both institutions are agreeable.

## **B. Course Partnering Policies**

1. UH System institutions are expected to partner courses and to allow their courses to be partnered when partnering is consistent with the academic standards of the program and serves student interests.
2. Partnered courses should be part of a planned three-year rotation of program offerings developed by the lead campus, in consultation with the support campuses, to be in effect for three years. This plan for rotation will be reviewed at the end of three years for any necessary modifications (unless the course is a special one-time offering).
3. Partnered courses must be agreed upon by the deans (or their designated representatives) of both the lead and support campuses.
4. Partnered courses may be specific to certain sites based on differing lead/support configurations.
5. All partnered courses follow the meeting calendar and times of the teaching university.
6. Students' enrollment in partnered courses is governed by the policies of their home campus in all matters.

## **C. Course Partnering Procedures**

### 1. Interdepartmental Meetings:

The UH System will coordinate meetings as appropriate between the institutionally designated representatives of the lead and support institutions responsible for delivery of programs at the System Centers. These meetings should include initial development and schedule review.

### 2. Initial Development Includes:

- a. Comparing course inventories to determine equivalencies for course-partnering agreements
- b. Providing opportunities for review of course syllabi
- c. Defining teaching and course responsibilities of the lead and support institutions  
Planning a three-year course rotation for delivery of the program to assist students in planning and completing degrees within a reasonable amount of time
- e. Creating agreements in written form, which are dated and signed by the representatives of the lead and support institutions.  
(See Appendix IV. A. UH System Course Partnering and Rotation Agreement.)

### 3. Schedule Review:

- a. Agreements remain in force for three years, to commence and end on the dates specified in the agreement.

- b. Lead and support institutions may review the agreement after year two. Changes from reviews must be approved in writing by appropriate institutionally designated representatives. Changes to the existing agreement will not go into effect until the subsequent schedule at the end of each three-year term. Exceptions to this are changes necessitated by accreditation and certification requirements.
- c. At the end of each three-year term, course partnering agreements and rotation plans will be reviewed for any necessary modifications.
- d. Lead and support institutions must make reasonable accommodations for students enrolled in degree programs affected by modifications or termination of course partnering agreements and rotations.

#### **D. Revenues and Expenses**

Enrollment credit, revenues and expenses are allocated between the partnering universities. The institution teaching the course receives the semester credit hours, formula funding, and tuition and fees generated. The student's home institution receives the head count. Students pay the fees charged by their home institution.

The cost of instruction is covered by the institution delivering the instruction, whether lead or support institution. The cost of center operations is borne by each participating institution in proportion to the percentage of semester credit hours it generates at the center. The cost of housing and supporting institutional staff, apart from general student advisement, is borne by the individual institution in addition to shared support of the center.

#### **E. Assessment**

The universities are individually responsible for assessing the quality of instruction and services in accordance with their own institutional effectiveness plans.

#### **F. Space Assignment Policies and Priorities**

1. Students: Provision of classrooms, computer and library support, and essential student services must have the highest priority for space assignment at the center.
2. Faculty: Shared faculty workspace is provided at the center on a come-and-go basis. The spaces are generally unassigned and may not be claimed by individual faculty members. As a courtesy to their colleagues, faculty members must refrain from leaving course materials or personal possessions in the shared spaces.

It is assumed that faculty members have individual offices on campus or have made arrangements with their institution for off-campus office support. If institutions provide separate office or home-office support for faculty members assigned to the center as their primary workplace, the institution bears the cost of such support.

3. Staff: Staff workspace at the center is assigned in accordance with the priorities and provisions described in section II. F. Workspace must be shared in most cases.

## **G. Complaint Procedures Involving Staff of Different Institutions**

### Purpose and Principle:

The purpose of these procedures is to provide for the orderly and expeditious resolution of complaints and disputes that may arise among staff members who are located at the center but who report to different institutions.

In principle, problems in the workplace should be resolved with as little process and as little involvement of others as possible. I.e., they should be addressed in a timely way at the point of occurrence with the persons immediately involved.

When problems with another staff member cannot be resolved through a conversation with that person, the following procedures apply.

### Informal Procedures:

1. Problems that involve operations of the workplace, such as shared space and services, should be brought to the attention of the center administrator. Failing resolution, the administrator will bring the problem to the attention of the immediate supervisor of the persons involved. Should the problem persist, the administrator will apprise the provost of the managing institution.
2. All other problems should be brought to the attention of the complainant's supervisor, who will contact the HR administrator or other appropriate administrator of the other party's institution. The administrator will include the immediate supervisors of the staff members involved in an effort to resolve the matter.

### Formal Procedures:

1. If informal procedures have proven unsatisfactory, the complainant may file a grievance in accordance with the procedures of that person's own institution.
2. The institutional representative receiving the grievance will provide a copy of it to the appropriate representative of the other institution, ordinarily the HR administrator. Supervisors of the persons involved are to be informed of the grievance and the process.
3. The grievance procedures of the complainant's institution will be followed.
4. The hearing body's recommendations will be forwarded to the campus administrator designated in the grievance procedures, who will inform the appropriate representative of the other institution, ordinarily the HR administrator. The latter will inform the accused person's supervisor of the recommendation.
5. The institution of the person accused is to take such action as it deems justifiable in light of the recommendation and is to report that action to the complainant's institution.
6. If the person accused considers actions taken to be unjustified, that person has access to his or her own institution's grievance procedure.
7. Should the complainant remain unsatisfied with the actions taken and be supported in that sentiment by the complainant's own institution, the matter may be referred to the Provosts Council for a resolution.

## H. ADA Accommodations

Each university has adopted appropriate policies and procedures under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).

Each university has a continuing responsibility:

1. To investigate and respond to requests for reasonable accommodation made by students enrolled in its classes and/or faculty or other employees it assigns to the centers;
2. To utilize its own policies, procedures and processes to evaluate requests for accommodations, including all requests for accommodations to admissions standards or processes, academic programs or specific classroom requirements; and
3. To respond to complaints brought by a partner's students, faculty or employees pursuant to either Section 504 or the ADA.

It is the responsibility of each university to provide to the director of each center the name, campus address, telephone number and e-mail address of a person employed by the institution to be responsible for handling the institution's student and employee disability issues.

The UH System, as owner of the centers, is responsible for ensuring that the centers are accessible to students, faculty and other users. In the event that an institution receives a complaint regarding the facility, the institution is responsible for bringing the complaint to the attention of the director of the center and to the UH System.

ADA classroom accommodations for partnered courses should follow four basic principles:

- a. The home institution is responsible for evaluating and determining the accommodation to be made.
- b. The determination of reasonable accommodation is to be based on the center facilities, staffing and environment where the course is being delivered.
- c. If classroom (distance learning or face-to-face) accommodations are being requested, the office responsible for accommodations on the student's home campus should forward copies of all necessary documentation supporting the accommodation request to the center and to the ADA office of the teaching institution.
- d. Costs of accommodation should be assigned as follows:
  - Whenever a requested accommodation requires an adaptation to the facility to shared equipment provided as part of the center facility, the costs associated with the adaptation will be borne by UH System. Center staff will assist in accommodations as appropriate.
  - The student's home institution should be responsible for any accommodation expenses that apply generally to the student's courses.
  - If an accommodation is specific to a particular course, the teaching institution should cover the expense.

## **I. Library Resources and Services**

UH System Director of Library Services for Distance Education is supported by all four universities and reports to the Dean of Libraries at UH (through the UH Associate Dean. The director works closely with the director of libraries at each of the institutions, as well as with the center administrators. System center librarians or library support staff report to the managing university. Each of the four participating institutions provides access to the individual online databases to which that institution subscribes. Students have access to the databases of their home institution. Otherwise, the cost of resources, services, and salaries is shared by the four participating institutions in accordance with the method established for determining each institution's portion of off-campus enrollment.

## **J. Information Technology Resources and Services**

Computer labs and interactive television rooms are available at each center. Support of the telecommunications infrastructure is provided by the UH System. Each center has its own equipment and staff to serve students and faculty. In addition to sharing technology resources and services, the institutions share a common provider for online course management—though each institution is free to have additional providers if it wishes.

Hardware and software available at the centers may not include all that is available at the home campuses. The hardware and software at the centers are chosen through the collaborative efforts of the technology support group for distance education, which has representation from each university.

If a university needs to have hardware or software on site beyond what is available at the center, that university is responsible for providing those resources, along with any licenses necessary. The appropriate university representative should first consult with the center administrator, if additional space or services will be required to accommodate the hardware or software.

## **K. External Use of Facilities**

### Policy:

Policy on the use of UH System facilities by external entities is stated in UH System Administrative Memorandum 01.B.06, available on the web at <http://www.uh.edu/sam/AM/01B06.htm>.

As stated in the memorandum, "Facilities owned or controlled by the UH System are to be used for the purpose of supporting the UH System's mission of teaching, research, and public service. UH System facilities are not available for unrestricted use for other purposes." Thus, the first and overriding priority for the use of center facilities is instruction and related activities. The second priority is other use by the UH System, including the individual universities. In the latter case, the centers may assess a fee limited to recovery of any center costs related to the event. The third priority is use by external entities—in accordance with policy provisions and

established procedures of the center. In the case of external entities, centers may charge a rental fee.

Procedures:

Procedures for implementation of policy are to be established for each center, as developed by the center administrator and approved by the supervising authority for the center, and are to cover at least the following considerations.

1. Process and time lines for scheduling of facilities and cancellation of requests
2. Structure and process for usage fees and deposits
3. Regulations on food and drink
4. Behavioral expectations and responsibilities
5. Liability coverage

#### **L. Terminology Guidelines**

The purpose of the approved communication guidelines [see Appendix IV.B. UH System Center Communication Guidelines and Procedures] is to ensure consistent communications about the UH System Centers and universities, and to enhance collaboration between the System Centers and universities in communications activities. The guidelines include boilerplate descriptions and definitions for the System Centers, and procedures for responding to inquiries and publishing articles or advertising.

## **IV. APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: UH System Course Partnering & Rotation Agreement

The University of Houston \_\_\_\_\_ as lead and the University of Houston \_\_\_\_\_ as support are responsible for delivering the \_\_\_\_\_ degree at UHS at \_\_\_\_\_ (Teaching Center). To facilitate delivery of that program in a timely manner so that students may make reasonable progress pursuing their degree, UH \_\_\_\_\_ and UH \_\_\_\_\_ agree to partner the following courses (the lead campus agrees to accept as its own the course of the teaching campus):

Lead University Courses		Support University Courses	
UH __ Number	UH __ Title	UH __ Number	UH __ Title

The courses listed above will be offered consistent with the degree program rotation shown below. If requested, the university teaching the partnered course will provide to the partnering university the course syllabus and/or faculty vitae at the beginning of each semester it teaches the course.

This agreement is in effect for a term of three years beginning at the start of the \_\_\_\_\_ semester of 20\_\_ and ending at the close of the \_\_\_\_\_ semester, 20\_\_.

### Program Course Rotation

Lead University Course #	Semester								
	F02	S03	SS03	F03	S04	SS04	F04	S05	SS05
Ex. BA 3301	UHD			UHD			UHD		
MKT 3301	UHV		UHD	UHV		UHD		UHV	UHV

### **Guidelines:**

1. Courses to be offered in semesters as indicated.
2. University in semester column indicates teaching responsibility.
3. If semester column is blank in course row, course is not to be offered at that location for the semester.
4. Partner universities should not deviate from the rotation without prior consultation with each other.

The purpose of the rotation is to provide a planning tool to the students and to develop sufficient enrollment pool for each course to facilitate cost-efficient delivery of the program while meeting student need.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LEAD UNIVERSITY DEAN DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
LEAD UNIVERSITY CHAIR DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SUPPORT UNIVESITY DEAN DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SUPPORT UNIVERSITY CHAIR DATE

NOTE: THE ACTUAL DOCUMENTS WILL HAVE SEPARATE SIGN-OFF SHEETS FOR THE LEAD AND SUPPORT UNIVERSITIES TO FACILITATE EXECUTION. Additional lines may be added.

## Appendix B: UH System Center Communications Guidelines & Procedures

Purpose: The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure consistent communications about the UH System Centers and universities, and to enhance collaboration between the System Centers and universities in communications activities. *These guidelines also apply to class schedules.*

### Written and Verbal Communications Guidelines:

1. *News Release Boilerplate*—this statement is the description of one or both of the System Centers
2. The University of Houston System Centers provide top-quality higher education to those who live or work in Fort Bend County and the Katy/west Houston area. Students may complete bachelor's and master's degree programs from the four institutions of the University of Houston System: University of Houston, UH-Clear Lake, UH-Downtown and UH-Victoria. The UH System Centers offer courses at the junior and senior level in partnership with area community colleges, which offer freshman and sophomore courses.
3. *System Center Definitions*
  - a. *Lay Definition:* The University of Houston System Centers are a collaboration of the University of Houston, UH-Clear Lake, UH-Downtown and UH-Victoria that partner to deliver courses and degree programs in a facility serving specific metropolitan areas.
  - b. *Coordinating Board Definition for official communications:* A System Center is a specialized multi-institution teaching center whereby each participating university is from the same system.
4. *System Center Names*
  - a. Preferred on first reference: University of Houston System at Cinco Ranch (or Sugar Land).
  - b. Second reference: UHS at (location) or UH System at (location); multi-institution teaching center; and the System Center.
  - c. Parenthetically after second reference: UHS-CR or UHS-SL (note: hyphen helps avoid typing errors and makes acronyms more readable).
  - d. Unsuitable names: satellite, extension, branch, campus, off-campus center, offshoot, division, arm, a center for one university and any other similar names.
  - e. The name System Center(s) is capitalized when referring to the University of Houston System Centers.
  - f. The proper location names for the System Centers are Cinco Ranch and Sugar Land. The use of West Houston Institute and Fort Bend is to be discontinued.