Dr. Flores’ Remarks
2013 Citizenship Week Luncheon – May 21
Willow Street Pump Station

WELCOME:

GOOD AFTERNOON AND WELCOME TO HOUSTON’S 2013 CITIZENSHIP MONTH LUNCHEON!

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THIS CELEBRATION OF HOUSTON’S DIVERSITY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT! HOUSTON TRULY IS A MELTING POT OF ALL CULTURES AND RACES – ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKE IT THE STRONG, VIBRANT CITY THAT IT IS.

CITIZENSHIP MONTH REPRESENTS THE BEST THAT HOUSTON HAS TO OFFER BECAUSE IT HIGHLIGHTS THE MANY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES OF HOUSTON AND THE INTEGRAL ROLES THEY PLAY IN MAKING HOUSTON GREAT.

EVEN LOOKING AROUND YOU TODAY, YOU SEE PEOPLE OF ALL RACES, CULTURES AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS. TO QUOTE ITS MISSION, CITIZENSHIP MONTH TRULY “CELEBRATES THE MANY FACES OF HOUSTON.”

AND EACH OF THOSE FACES CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS AND GROWTH OF HOUSTON. INDEED, EACH OF OUR VOICES – UNITED TOGETHER INTO ONE POWERFUL CHORUS – CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS FOR OUR CITY.

I’D LIKE TO EXTEND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MY WIFE, DR. NOEL BEZETTE-FLORES, WHO IS PROUD TO SERVE AS CO-CHAIR OF HOUSTON’S 2013 CITIZENSHIP MONTH. I ALSO WANT TO RECOGNIZE CLAUDIA ORTEGA-HOGUE, WHO ALSO SERVES AS CO-CHAIR OF THIS CELEBRATORY MONTH, AS WELL AS HOUSTON MAYOR, ANNISE PARKER.

THREE MISSIONS, ONE COMMON GOAL:

WE, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN, ARE EXCITED TO HELP SPONSOR CITIZENSHIP MONTH AGAIN THIS YEAR. IN FACT, OUR MISSION STATEMENT SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE OVERALL GOAL OF CITIZENSHIP MONTH.

AT UHD, WE AIM TO “REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF THE GREATER HOUSTON METROPOLITAN AREA AND ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND ADVANCE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION.”

IN ADDITION TO CLASSROOM LEARNING, UHD STUDENTS ARE INSTILLED WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY. STUDENTS IN EACH OF OUR FIVE COLLEGES PARTICIPATE IN HIGH-IMPACT
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES, IN WHICH THEY GO INTO THE COMMUNITY AND PARTNER WITH NON-PROFITS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS.

I’M PROUD THAT UHD’S STUDENT BODY SO CLOSELY MIRRORS’S HOUSTON’S DIVERSE COMMUNITY.

AND I’M ALSO PROUD THAT OUR MISSION ALIGNS SO CLOSELY WITH KEY COMMUNITY INITIATIVES, SUCH AS OUR CITY’S EXCITING “OPEN THE DOOR” ART PROJECT. OUR STUDENT ARTISTS WERE PLEASED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CROSS-CULTURAL PROJECT THAT BROADENED THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF FRENCH ART AND PAINTERS.

ART, LIKE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, OPENS THE DOOR TO NEW CULTURES AND INVITES STUDENTS TO SEE THE VALUES AND BELIEFS THAT DEFINE NATIONALITIES.

UHD IS COMMITTED TO NOT ONLY GIVING STUDENTS “REAL WORLD” EXPERIENCES, BUT ALSO GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH WE EXIST. UHD’S CENTER FOR FAMILY STRENGTHS, IN THE COLLEGE OF PUBLIC SERVICE, IS DEDICATED TO TRAINING CURRENT AND FUTURE SOCIAL WORKERS, COUNSELORS AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVANTS TO INFILTRATE OUR CITY AND IMPACT POSITIVE CHANGE.


OUR CITY WILL THRIVE WHEN WE RECOGNIZE THE MIGHTY IMPACT WE EACH CAN HAVE AND THE EVEN MORE POWERFUL CHANGE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH WHEN WORKING TOGETHER AS PARTNERS.

BUFFALO BAYOU RENOVATIONS:

AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THIS COLLABORATION IS THE BUFFALO BAYOU PARTNERSHIP.

UHD HAS A UNIQUE VANTAGE POINT OVERLOOKING DOWNTOWN HOUSTON, AND WE’VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SEEING THE MANY DEVELOPMENTS ALONG BUFFALO BAYOU IN RECENT MONTHS.

I’D LIKE TO APPLAUD THE EFFORTS OF THE BUFFALO BAYOU PARTNERSHIP AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR EXCELLENT VISION AND LEADERSHIP. I AM PROUD TO BE AN EX-OFFICIO MEMBER OF THEIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND WE CELEBRATE THE RENOVATIONS TO THE SUNSET COFFEE HOUSE THAT BEGAN
THIS SPRING. WE LOOK FORWARD TO OTHER REVITALIZATIONS ALONG THE BAYOU IN THE COMING YEAR.

CLOSING / RECENT UHD ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

IN CLOSING, I’D LIKE TO REAFFIRM UHD’S COMMITMENT TO ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF OUR CITY AND ITS CITIZENS. I’M PROUD TO SHARE THE RESULTS OF A RECENT STUDY BY COLLEGE MEASURES THAT EVALUATED THE INITIAL SALARIES OF GRADUATES FROM TEXAS’ FOUR-YEAR, PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.

IN THE STUDY RELEASED THIS MONTH, UHD RANKS NO. 3 IN THE STATE WHEN IT COMES TO UNDERGRADUATES WITH THE HIGHEST STARTING SALARIES. THAT IS A TREMENDOUS ACCOMPLISHMENT!

SIMILARLY, UHD RANKS NO. 1 WHEN IT COMES TO BUSINESS UNDERGRADUATES WITH THE HIGHEST INITIAL SALARIES.

UHD RANKS NO. 1 IN THE STATE WHEN IT COMES TO THE INITIAL SALARIES OF ALL MASTER’S DEGREE GRADUATES!

AND, TO TOP THIS OFF, UHD STUDENTS PAY THE SECOND LOWEST TUITION RATE IN TEXAS. THEY’RE GRADUATING WITH SOME OF THE HIGHEST EARNING POTENTIALS... ALL WHILE RECEIVING ONE OF THE MOST EFFICIENT EDUCATIONS AT ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE UNIVERSITIES IN THE STATE OF TEXAS. WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF THESE IMPRESSIVE STUDY RESULTS.

AGAIN, THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING TODAY AND FOR THE ROLE EACH OF YOU PLAY IN MAKING HOUSTON A PLACE OF GREAT DIVERSITY, CIVIC MINDEDNESS AND CULTURAL AWARENESS.