Budget crisis will not create tuition hikes

Chancellor Renu Khator does not expect tuition increase for UH System

CHRISTINA RODRIGUEZ
Assistant Editor

As many people already know, the country and our state have encountered a huge problem with budgets as far as deficit and spending are concerned. While citizens understand that education budgets are being cut in half in some places, the situation appears to be especially dire when the orders are coming from your own state, cutting funding for your own university.

In an email to all University of Houston System administration and faculty, Chancellor Renu Khator made it clear that budget cuts will have to be made, but also, thankfully, that the last resort will be raising tuition. In her email, Khator broke down the amount that will be cut to $1,949 per student for every two years. Khator also reminded her readers about the great achievements of the UH System and stressed immediately that the students should not be the ones to pay for this gap in the budget. Instead, she asked each faculty member to think of creative ways to cut costs and that communication between the various colleges in the UH System was necessary to making the best changes System-wide.

As far as her suggestions for thinking of new ways to cut costs, Khator provides these tips:

“First, look at operational efficiencies. Second, maximize the value of auxiliaries by enhancing revenue or reducing subsidy. Third, save costs by consolidating units, both academic and administrative. Fourth, increase productivity. Last, reshape the workforce by delayed hiring and/or position elimination.”

While it seems that most of these ideas can work with minimal damage to the general attitude on campus, it is hard to forget that for years now, UHD has been in a gridlock over whether to change our name to Houston City University and why we’re paying for the change in the first place. The most common questions when the suggestion was made was usually “What’s the point?” or “Who’s going to pay for it?”

According to President Bill Flores’s blog, as of last April, the contract with STAMATS, a higher education marketing company, was worth about $60,000, not including marketing the new name and any efforts made after the new name was decided on. This issue will continue to be argued upon for years, at least in living rooms, but the fact remains that students saw a risk in spending so much money. But there is another thing to put this $60,000 into perspective— if each student is worth $1,949 in the budget cut, and the UH System has nearly 64,000 students, then the total amount of the budget cut comes to $124,736,000. A staggering amount that makes the cost of the name change sound like pennies. If the name does get changed and the school markets aggressively and positively at the same time, then the influx of new students would make up for the cost of the name change and then some.

One frank understanding that Khator stated was, “We cannot pass this reduction along to our students because they simply cannot afford it.”

A refreshing statement like this one shows that the UH System both understands their student body and that they are smarter than to start a riot with massive tuition hikes.
White House budget battle continues

President Barack Obama has signaled a shift in the White House’s fiscal policy, unveiling a plan to reduce spending and raise taxes.

Obama released the details of his plan in a speech in Washington D.C. in an effort to counter a very conservative plan presented by Republican Congressman Paul Ryan. The President’s plan would cut the federal deficit by over $4 trillion over the next 12 years by eliminating the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, closing some individual tax loopholes, and with some minor changes to federal healthcare programs. Ryan’s proposal would trim the deficit by $4.4 trillion over 10 years, with the majority of those cuts coming from reductions in social programs.

The president’s more moderate plan would make the most sense.

The Bush tax cuts are simply unaffordable at this point. Americans pay some of the lowest taxes in the West, and the country’s wealthy enjoy the lowest tax rate in generations. There is a huge gap between rich and poor, and as the middle class shrinks the gap grows larger.

Obama’s plan also avoids major changes to Medicare and Medicaid, and Social Security goes largely untouched.

Representative Ryan’s plan is expected to pass the GOP controlled House and it includes sweeping reforms to Medicare and Medicaid, basically turning the social safety net into a voucher program. Ryan’s plan would also cut some taxes for the rich and would include tax breaks for corporations. The progressive plan outlined by the president would be a more balanced approach; Ryan’s approach would put the weight of the deficit on the backs of the middle class.

The speech also signaled a change in strategy for the White House.

Obama came out swinging and his tone was much more partisan than in weeks past. Of course the opposition responded in kind, with House Majority Leader Eric Cantor calling the plan unserious and unacceptable.

Tx. Rep. Jeb Hensarling was quoted after the speech: “I don’t know about my colleagues, but I thought to myself, ’Did I miss lunch for this?’ This was not a speech designed to win the future. This was a speech designed for the president to attempt to win re-election.”

Battle lines have been drawn since Obama took office.

His administration has constantly reached out to the GOP, much to the dismay of progressives, and the Republican Party quickly became the party of “No.” Any posturing from either side should not come as a surprise and the political drama will only intensify leading up to next year’s election. Bickering and fighting amongst the legislators and Obama comes as no surprise, but the result has to end in compromise. One side, probably both, will have to blink. The GOP controls the House and Democrats hold the Senate and the White House, so someone has to give.

The smart money is on Obama winning this round for several reasons.

Medicare and other social programs are pretty much off-limits. People simply like having a safety net, but more importantly they like the programs they use. Older people do not want to see Social Security seriously altered. Minor tweaking is to be expected, but privatization or other radical reforms are not options. Poor people do not want to see welfare and Medicaid go away, and millions depend on Medicare for healthcare. Social programs are political career killers. Farmers want to keep agricultural subsidies in place. Citizens generally are all for cutting other people’s benefits, but not their own.

The problem Republicans have with this is simple. They stirred up their home base into an anti-tax hysteria and then preached a new policy of small government. Now that home base expects results, but again, not at their expense. Older people that were afraid of HealthCare Reform were a large part of the fight against it because they were afraid it would endanger the care they enjoy under the current system. They are not going to support a plan to privatize that system now. The rest of the conservative base that fought “Obamacare” and rallied around the Tea Party banner are simply too small of a faction to have Congress cater to and GOP leaders know that. They simply cannot afford to be that radical in the lead up to the 2012 election. The Republican Party has essentially backed themselves into a corner by creating the Tea Party movement. Now they cannot abandon the home base without risking primary fights and a push to the right in the presidential race.

Middle America knows that and does not want to see government shut-downs and other dramatic political ploys. They also do not want to see the government default on loans, so the debt ceiling will have to be raised very soon, and Republicans promised not to do that without major spending concessions from Obama and the left. Obama does not have to give those concessions. If the House, under GOP leadership refuses to cooperate, they will pay in the next national election. Politics like that may win you a few votes in the Republican primaries, and it may work in pockets during a large election, but contentious politics do not win presidential races.

Obama and Senate Democrats have the leverage right now, but the Republicans have their base firmly entrenched behind them so retreat will be difficult. In the end, a more moderate budget with a mix of tax cuts and spending reductions will probably pass and neither side will be very happy. Ideally, somewhere in the middle, Obama and both chambers of Congress will come up with a budget that truly does what is best for the country.
Student Voices

Here is what these students think of campus-hosted events...

Adolfo Lara, junior: The events are fun, but they should have more music and food. Also, they should schedule the events at times when most people are out of class.

Jill Morin, senior: For a school this size, the events are really well done. They offer a lot of variety and there is always something fun and exciting going on.

Jackie Nguyen, junior: Most of the events are fun, but some events are inappropriate, especially those where alcohol is being served. This is a learning institution, and serving alcohol doesn’t send a very good educational message.

Flor Castro, senior: The events are a great opportunity to socialize with friends. Timing and music could be improved though.

Marco Hernandez, freshman: The events are interesting, but not well advertised. Adding a table to promote the event and to get student opinion would really improve these events.

All photos by Tanu Uppal
Employers seek Spanish speaking employees

Lucha Morales
Staff Writer

Spanish is not one of the most popular courses on most college campuses, but learning the language is beneficial in today’s job market.

Dr. Paul Mandell, University of Houston–Downtown (UHD) assistant professor of Spanish, said employers seek employees who are adapted to the current market. The demand for bilingual workers is a response to a rising Hispanic population in the United States.

“It’s encouraging the notion of being bilingual, because if the market going to the market is bilingual, then being bilingual will give you an edge,” said Mandell.

According to an article published by the Wall Street Journal, “42 percent of employers expect proficiency to be in moderate or high demand in a decade; nearly 70 percent expect Spanish to be in demand.” This data was the result of a survey conducted by University of Phoenix Research, where over 400 employers and 500 workers were asked about skills in demand. Also, a press release by the U.S. 2010 census reported that, “More than half of the growth in the total population of the U.S. between 2000 and 2010 was due to the increase in the Hispanic population.” The rise in the Hispanic population is expected to continue.

Mandell feels such a continuous rise will allow the Spanish language to remain in our society.

“The increase and relative speakers of Spanish - that’s not going to go down,” said Mandell.

The demand for bilingual workers is mostly seen in translator positions, state, government and healthcare jobs. The growing market of Hispanic consumers is also affecting marketing strategies for big retail companies.

While the demand for bilingual workers will always be present, some students are not fluent in their native language, whether it is Spanish, Chinese or Vietnamese. Mandell sees this as a common trend among some native born Hispanic parents who wish to raise their children in an English only environment.

“It’s a natural pattern. Social linguists have shown that what language they are taught in grade school will lead children to primarily speak that language,” said Mandell.


The survey concluded there is no evidence to support that being bilingual is identified as a valuable skill that is in demand, but wages of bilingual workers are usually higher than workers who speak one language. This is a major contradiction to the University of Phoenix Research survey results citing that speaking Spanish will be a skill in demand over the next ten years.

Mandell feels that being bilingual is an asset, but being proficient in English will allow students to succeed in an academic environment.

“To be successful in a university setting, in a professional setting, in the United States you have to speak English,” said Mandell.

Mandell also feels that Houston is a great place to begin learning a second language because of the multicultural society. Mandell encourages early second-language development in children as well as exposure to different cultures to help “enrich their entire cultural and educational experience.”

UHD offers courses for students interested in learning Spanish, or as part of their degree. There are courses for non-native speakers of Spanish to learn and understand Spanish, as well as advanced course for native speakers of Spanish.

To learn more about the Spanish courses UHD has to offer visit the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Website at http://www.uhd.edu/academic/colleges/humanities/index.htm. Course descriptions are also available in the current course catalog.
The Career Services Center is not only to assist students who are on the cusp of graduation to prepare for the job search, but are there to help all University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) students and alumni. “For the student’s undecided about their major, career services can help them decide, and if students have a goal they are more likely to stay in school and graduate,” said Traci Mazzu, a Career Development Counselor.

Career Services can provide students who have not declared a major decide on a degree. The counselors help students by giving a set of assessments that highlight the student’s interests and skills, and this helps the student decide on a career path that would best suit them.

The three assessments are the Discover Assessment, the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator Test, and the Strong Interest Inventory Assessment.

The center offers a variety of workshops that are available to students. The Resume Workshop is available to students every day, but there are specialized workshops that are designed with students in mind.

The Interview Workshop helps students prepare for interviews. How to Work a Career Fair Workshop teaches students how to maximize their time at career fairs and at least once a year the Career Services Center has the workshop “Intro to Career Services: Choosing a Major and Career”, which assists students in choosing a major and helps students focus on a career path.

The Website, http://jobs4agators.com is open to all students and has an extensive list of jobs. Jennifer Waggoner, the Career Services Coordinator, hunts down jobs for UHD students and alumni. She personally connects with companies to find job opportunities, and some of the companies come specifically to UHD to recruit. The opportunities are full-time, part-time, internships and some are opportunities that require a Bachelor’s degree.

“A lot are UHD alumni who are coming back to UHD to hire for their employer,” said Mazzu.

Director of Career Services, Steve Market said it is important for students to broaden the horizon of their job search to include small and medium companies as well as large companies.

“Over 90 percent of the students in this country are going to go to work for a company you have never heard of,” said Market. The Career Services Center has three job fairs every year.

The Fall Career Expo which is held on campus every fall in September and is open to all students. During the spring, Career Services teams up with 14 other Houston area universities and hosts the Texas Job Fair as part of Houston Area Consortium of Career Centers And is usually held in March, but because there are sometimes more than 100 employers at the fair, it is not held at UHD because there is no area to accommodate the crowd. The Careers and Coffee fair, which was held last month, is a two-day fair. According to Mazzu, there were 40 employers each day, some employers overlapping and all were ready to hire.

Mazzu said one of the main misconceptions students have about career services is that students believe the counselors will place them in a job.

“We do not place students in a job; we give them the tools they need for a successful job search. The skills that we teach students are skills they can use the rest of their lives,” said Mazzu.

The Career Services office located in Room N-340 and the services are open to all students.

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**Editor for UHD student newspaper needed for 2011-12 academic year.**

The Student Publications Advisory Committee is seeking applicants for the position of editor for Dateline:Downtown, the student-run, bi-weekly newspaper at UHD. Position begins in later summer to prepare an edition for the beginning of the Fall 2011 semester, and candidates are expected to commit to the job for the entire 2011-12 academic year. Duties include working cooperatively with student business manager and faculty adviser, developing and managing a stable of day and evening student freelance writers to cover news and events on campus and in the campus neighborhood of NoDo and Washington St. Must know page-making software program Adobe InDesign and have the skills to post the newspaper and articles online and to maintain the Dateline:Downtown web site. The paper needs stories written both in advance of, and as follow-up to, events of interest to students, including student activities and organizations, academics, athletics and lifestyle, university administration, and student government, as well as cultural coverage of theatre, film, music, sports, and the arts. Typical commitment is 10 hours/week; pay is $450 per issue for a scheduled 14 issues. Qualifications include at least sophomore standing; at least one semester in residence at UHD; successful completion of basic writing and/or communications courses; and the maintenance of at least a 3.0 GPA. Applications are sought immediately and will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, download application and forward with writing samples via email to Dateline adviser, Dr. Anthony Chiaviello, at Chiavielloa@uhd.edu.

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**Business/Sales Manager for UHD student newspaper needed for 2011-12 academic year.**

The Student Publications Advisory Committee is seeking applicants for the position of business/sales manager for Dateline:Downtown, the student-run bi-weekly newspaper at UHD. Flexible beginning date, but candidates are expected to commit for the entire 2011-12 academic year. Job emphasis is on budget accounting and advertising sales, and successful candidate will have a strong orientation toward personal selling and developing advertising revenue to permit the growth of the paper. Duties include managing business and financial matters for the paper, in cooperation with the student editor and adviser, and expanding the sales of advertising space in the paper, including to businesses in the campus neighborhoods of NoDo and Washington St. Successful candidate will train on PeopleSoft accounting system for payroll and accounts. Typical commitment is 20 hours/week; salary is $750 per month, plus 15% commission on ad sales. Qualifications include at least sophomore standing; at least one semester at UHD; successful completion of basic business courses; and the maintenance of at least a 2.5 GPA. Applications are sought immediately and will be accepted until March 31 or until the position is filled. To apply, download application and forward with letter detailing qualifications via email to Dateline adviser, Dr. Anthony Chiaviello, at Chiavielloa@uhd.edu.
BRAGGING RIGHTS
WINNER TAKE ALL!

5 on 5 Basketball Tournament

Friday, April 29th
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

8 Teams (8 players max)

Contact Mr. Trevor Jones or Mr. Sherman Parker
713-221-8411 or 713-221-8423
JonesT@UHD.edu - ParkerS@UHD.edu
or visit the Academic Advising Center 370-S

Sponsored by the African American Male Mentorship Program

Outdoor Adventure

Friday - Sunday, April 29 - May 1
Cost: $60
Kayak and Hike through the Big Thicket
Paddle down the cool water & take in
Texas history, natural plant & wildlife,
& camp on the riverbed’s gravel bar

Saturday, April 30
Men’s Baseball vs Texas A&M Cadets
10 a.m.
Location: Texas A & M

Saturday, April 30
Men’s Baseball vs Texas A & M Cadets
12 p.m.
Location: Texas A & M

Sunday, May 1
Men’s Baseball vs Texas A & M Cadets
Location: Texas A & M

Tuesday, May 3
Lake Day
Cost: $35
Unwind & clear your mind before fi-
nals begin by spending a day at the lake,
including activities such as: swimming,
hiking, biking, kayaking, grilling, &
relaxing

Monday - Saturday, May 16 - 21
Ozark Mountain Experience
Cost: $225
Unwind from finals with Outdoor Ad-
dventure as we head to Arkansas to ex-
plore the Ozarks. We will backpack,
canoe the buffalo river, and climb in
horseshoe canyon ranch.

Sunday - Saturday, July 24 - 30
Colorado Fun Time
Cost: $325
Spend your summer vacation in Colora-
do! We will be heading to four national
parks to explore sand dunes, mesas, can-
yons and reservoirs. To top it off we will
spend a day Whitewater rafting.
Hanna offers natural high-tech action

WHITNEY BARRETT
Staff Writer

Hanna is a one of a kind action/thriller that simply pulls you in. Director Joe Wright (Atonement) gives an odd cross between a fairy tale and a high-tech action movie without all the glitz of computer-generated images (CGI).

The story revolves around a teenage girl that goes out into the world for the first time in her life, fighting foes that want her dead, and at the same time facing startling revelations about her existence and questions about her humanity.

Hanna, played by Academy Award nominee Saoirse Ronan (The Lovely Bones) is a 16-year-old bright, inquisitive and devoted daughter who seems content in her sheltered life.

But, Hanna possesses the strength, the stamina and the smarts of a soldier, having been raised by her widowed father Erik, an ex-CIA agent, in the wilds of North Finland. He brings her up as if she is a soldier herself, constantly training and preparing her to become the perfect assassin.

The turning point in Hanna’s life comes when she is separated from Erik as she embarks on the mission that she was always trained for. Before she and her father can reunite, agents instantly capture her.

The enemy is intelligence operative Marissa Wiegler, played by Cate Blanchett (The Curious Case of Benjamin Button). Marissa harbors secrets that tie her to Hanna and Erik.

Detained for observation and held beneath the Moroccan desert, Hanna soon flips the script on her captors and makes a daring escape, which is when things really heat up in the film. Hanna is now thrust into an unfamiliar landscape and into a world she must quickly learn to comprehend and navigate.

All the while, Hanna is targeted by a ruthless team of agents and Marissa, who will kill anyone that interferes in their pursuit of Erik and Hanna.

The fight sequences are so intense that you just can’t look away. No over the top fighting styles or slow motion, everything is accurate and simply flawless to watch.

The music of the film is amazing. The Chemical Brothers, Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons, perform their own music compositions, with electronic components, synthesizers and occasional vocals.

The roles of the entire cast are praise worthy, especially Ronan and Blanchett. Ronan really brings the role to life as Hanna and makes you believe that she is this teenage girl who is new to the world. She brings a sense of curiosity when the character is faced with things she doesn’t know about.

Blanchett’s role as Marissa completely transforms her into this cold, emotionless woman who has built her life around telling lies and holding secrets; giving her all only to her job. She is like an evil stepmother in the way she pursues Hanna, often doing much of the dirty work herself.

Hanna is a brilliant film is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat, and if you are a fan of The Bourne Trilogy, then this is sure to be a hit for you. It manages to capture that feel, but at the same time be its own film in the sense that it is unique.

Prostitution meets fantasy in Sucker Punch

ELFEGO CHAVEZ
Contributing Writer

Filled with visually stunning action scenes and contrasting the grim nature of reality, Sucker Punch is an edge-of-your-seat rollercoaster ride of emotions providing a sense of the uncanny, in which the viewer is led to decipher what is actually occurring and what the main character is truly experiencing.

The movie is the brainchild of award winning director Zachary Snyder (300), credited with creating the story and also co-writing the screenplay. This brilliant masterpiece visually reads as a graphic novel and tugs at your heartstrings as you sympathize with the characters.

After the death of her mother, Babydoll (Emily Browning) is institutionalized by her abusive stepfather after she thwarts his planned attempt to kill her and her sister to gain their inheritance. Upon arrival to the mental ward he bribes asylum orderly Blue Jones (Oscar Isaac) to forge psychiatrist Dr. Vera Gorski’s (Carla Gugino) signature on a document to schedule her for a lobotomy in five days, thereby guaranteeing her silence.

As a possible coping mechanism of her dismal state, Babydoll envisions a fantasy world in which she and the other girls at the asylum are workers in a brothel owned by mobster Blue Jones (Oscar Isaac).

See Sucker Punch (next page)
The girls are sex industry victims who must prostitute and dance for clients.

Dr. Gorski is the madam in charge of the girls and their routines. In the dance studio while the girls rehearse they are informed that Babydoll’s virginity is to be sold to a client known as “The High Roller” (Jon Hamm). Gorski instructs Babydoll to dance and as the music starts she is transported to her fantasy world of adventure where Wise Man (Scott Glen) tells her she would need to collect five items for an escape: a map, fire, a knife, a key and a fifth, unrevealed item that would require great sacrifice.

Determined to fight for their freedom, Babydoll urges the four other young girls: Rocket (Jena Malone), Blondie (Vanessa Hudgens), Amber (Jamie Chung) and Sweet Pea (Abbie Cornish), to band together and try to escape their terrible fate. Led by Babydoll, the girls engage in fantastical warfare against everything from samurais to serpents with a virtual arsenal at their disposal. Together, they must decide what they are willing to sacrifice in order to stay alive.

The film’s emotional impact on the audience is gut wrenching as one disturbingly observes the cruelty and abuse the girls must face as slaves in the sex industry while simultaneously rooting for their freedom and the process it entails.

The team unites under Babydoll’s leadership to acquire the necessary items to obtain their freedom, and their journey together is the heart of this movie, as is their bond.
Moderately Confused
by Jeff Stahler

Hello, it’s Easter Bunny. I know you need me to build up your courage to knock on my door. Pretend I’m the Easter Bunny.

Pearls Before Swine by Stephan Pastis

It’s been a tough year for Easter Bunnies.

Dilbert by Scott Adams

Topper

I’m in a bad mood. Maybe I need some sun to boost my vitamin D level.

That’s nothing. Exposure to my inner glow will give you a full range of vitamins and minerals.

You’re better than the sun? I don’t quit just because it’s night.

Sudoku

How to play:
Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

Look for the solution in the next issue of Dateline:Downtown
Invitations Arriving Now!

Check your mailbox.

Founded in 1897 at the University of Maine, Phi Kappa Phi is the nation's oldest, largest, and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines.

Membership is by invitation only to the top 7.5% of juniors and the top 10% of seniors and graduate students.

Each year the Society distributes more than $700,000 through national and chapter scholarships and awards.

Spring initiation
Tuesday, May 3  4 p.m.
Cullen Auditorium  3:30 pm check in

UH-Downtown

Classifieds

Sell your stuff
To place an ad, send an email with ad details to dateline@gator.uhd.edu

Ads are FREE!!!!

For Rent
One bedroom cottage with new central heat and air. Eleven foot ceilings and minutes from campus in the Arts District. $700 month.

Five bedroom, 2 bathroom in Historic District. Plenty of updates and perfect for roommates!

Call Bill Gay at 832-692-5789 to inquire about either of these properties.

FOR SALE
64GB iPod Touch, 3rd generation.
Includes case, screen cover and USB charger. Watch videos, listen to music or use as a Wi-Fi pocket computer. $200

Panasonic Home Theater System.

Willing to sell as a package deal: 64GB iPod and Panasonic Home Theater for $300.

Call or text 832-477-5094.

Solutions

From the previous issue of Dateline: Downtown

- KAPUT
- META
- KER
- URE
- METER
- CARES
- YEARS
- REPORT
- SATED
- VAPOR
- WHENS
- ONS
- EPOCH
- OPINE
- AFLAME
- VAIL
- INTEL
- LADED
- RINSE
- FEWERS
- OHARA
- ALINE
- BREVITY
- MOANS
- UNPEG
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- HASTE
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- AUGER
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- CORAL
- EPEE
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- PANEL
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Sudoku

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