Austin’s First Recovery High School: An Innovative System-Based Initiative to Improve the Lives of Adolescents who Seek Recovery from Substance Abuse
BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

• Studies show that over 66% of students with addiction problems who return to their former high schools after treatment quickly begin using drugs or alcohol again (Finch & Wegman, 2012).

• The first sober/recovery high school was founded in 1987 and the model was so successful that there are over 30 in the United States, including four facilities in Texas: one each in McKinney and Irving and two in Houston.

• At present, Austin youth who choose recovery often are left with the dilemma of whether to return to their hazardous high school environments or put their education aside to pursue their recovery.

• We are considering the successful and well-established Archway Academy in Houston, TX as a prototype, AND

• Our school will have a unique twist in its proximity and strategic partnerships with UTCSR, School of Social Work, the 12-Step community, APGs and Austin services to shift the milieu from drop-out prevention to college preparation.
Enable each of our students to fulfill his or her personal and academic potential within a supportive recovery environment.
VISION STATEMENT

• Our vision is to transform recovery opportunities for adolescents in America with an evidence-based recovery high school located on the University of Texas Campus in Austin, Texas.

• We will cultivate an innovative model community where students can receive quality college-preparation education, achieve academic success, and enjoy a genuine, pro-social high school experience free from alcohol and other drugs.

• With the support and guidance of successful models such as Archway Academy in Houston, the design, based in years of experience, is poised to be a model for the nation with regard to this innovative mode of wellness and education.
Our campus is at 21st Street and University Drive and on the second floor of the University Christian Church on the University of Texas Campus.
**Key Initiatives & Milestones**

- Location has been approved and enthusiastically supported by the Executive Board and Pastor of the University Christian Church on 21st and University, close to the Capital, AT&T Center, and the University of Texas at Austin’s Center for Students in Recovery (CSR)
- 501C3 finalized and submitted
- University High School, Inc. business is incorporated
- Budget has been proposed and Development Team is in action
- Executive Board and Advisory Council established
- Visits to and support gleaned from the experts at Archway Academy, Houston.
- The school plans to open in August, 2014 concurrent with local ISD calendars
- Event held Tuesday, April 8th 7-9pm public event at Blanton Auditorium (the speakers for the public event are David and Nic Sheff, authors of *Beautiful Boy & Tweak*)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL** [INFO@UHIGHHSCHOOL.COM](mailto:INFO@UHIGHHSCHOOL.COM)
UHS seeks to provide comprehensive academic and recovery programs to its students; consequently, there is a monthly program fee and a per semester drug testing fee. UHS is eager to offer these programs to all students in need, and provides financial aid on a sliding scale based on household income. UHS is a non-profit organization that does not base its admissions or financial aid decisions on race, creed, religion, or socioeconomic factors. UHS is grateful to its generous supporters for providing funds to bridge the educational and programmatic gaps and offer scholarships to families in need.
FUNDING

- A start-up grant has been received from the Baxter Foundation, Houston ($50,000)
- Dr. Holleran Steiker has received a UTVP of Research Special Research Grant to lay the groundwork for evaluation of the school’s effectiveness
- Private donations are being received including our first two large donations of $25,000
- Academic resources will come from grants, generous donations, and other strategic partnerships.
OUR STUDENTS

- Our students are young adults (grades 9-12) who have chosen the path of recovery and pledge to support each other in healthy, productive, drug-free living at all times.

- The milieu is based on the recovery principles of Honesty, Hope, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Fellowship, Justice, Perseverance, and Service.

- Small classes are a key factor in a student's success because they allow for individualized attention from teachers, counselors, and program staff; most recovery schools are quite small, ranging from six to 70 students (Finch, 2010).

- We will start with approximately 10-20 students and grow to our target of 30-40 in by year 3.
Our teachers, administrators, and staff are committed to the mission of the school and value attention to a holistic approach to education, attending to individual learning styles.

Our support staff provides an abundance of tutoring and other one-on-one opportunities to enable our students to graduate from high school with the opportunity to transition to college in a supportive recovery environment. Opportunities exist for a range of course options, from individual attention to AP classes.

We are beginning the national search for our Executive Director, Recovery Coach and Director of Development.

In addition to the formal mentors from the University of Texas CSR (Center for Students in Recovery) we will have on-site Recovery Coaches to help the students navigate academic success in early stages of recovery and a UT School of Social Work Intern.
A TYPICAL DAY AT UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

• 8-9 a.m. Check in
• 9:00 -12:00 Classes
• 12:00-1:00 Lunch in Fellowship Hall (plus 15 minute Mindfulness)
• 1:00 – 3:00 Classes
• 1:00-3:00 (Friday Fill-up) Community Building/Recovery Team Activities
• 3:00 Youth Leadership Council
• Students transition to APGs (alternative peer groups)
• Recovery Coaching, as needed and by appointment
• Service opportunities weekly (e.g., Cleaning UT Stadium with CSR 8am Saturday mornings; setting up chairs/coffee for AA Story-time meeting Saturday evenings)
• Evening 12-step meetings on and near campus (e.g., Tin Roof group, CSR Young People’s Meeting, Story-time, COR meeting)
FOUNDERS & LAUNCH TEAM

Lori Holleran Steiker, Ph.D., ACSW  
University of Texas at Austin Distinguished Professor  
Co-founder, Board Member and current President of University High School (UHS)

Laura Kelly:  UHS Chair of Operations; UHS Vice President and Treasurer

Bob Kaminski:  Legal Council

Anne McAllister, LCSW, RN – Co-Founder, Board Secretary, Chair, School & Recovery Program Team

Terri Frost  (Founder, Mom and Realtor, Caldwell Banker) and Jim Kruger  
(Founder, Dad, UHS Board Member and Owner of Kruger Jewelers, who has served on the CASA Board, the SafePlace Board, and Congregation Beth Israel) serve as Inaugural Co-Chairs of the Development Team

Hamilton Beazely – Chair, Advisory Council
**RECOVERY SCHOOLS NETWORKS ESTABLISHED**

- We are a projected school on the Asset Map of the *Stacie Mathewson Foundation*’s Association of Recovery Schools
- We are consulting with National Experts/Researchers
  - Dr. Andy Finch, Vanderbilt
  - Dr. Ken Winters, U. of Minnesota
  - Dr. John Kelly, Harvard
  - Dr. Paul Moberg, U. of Wisconsin
  - Dr. Eric Wagner, Florida Internat’l U.
  - Michael Botticelli, Director ONDCP
  - Peter Gaumond, Chief of the Recovery Branch of the ONDCP
  - Bestselling authors David & Nic Sheff
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

• The School of Social Work
• The UT Center for Students in Recovery
• Sanger Learning Center
• Educational Psychology, School of Education
• School of Undergraduate Studies (Drug & Alcohol Peer Advisors)
FILLING GAPS IN AUSTIN'S ADOLESCENT CONTINUUM OF CARE

Youth Alternative Peer Groups (APGs):
- Teen & Family Services
- Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- UT Center for Students in Recovery
- Young People in AA / Tin Roof

Austin Community Constituents:
- ATCIC, Memorial Herman IOP, Phoenix House, Eanes ISD, Austin Recovery, Communities for Recovery, Texas Recovery Initiative (DSHS), and Communities in Schools (CIS)