

LEOH Trip

The University of Houston

October 3, 2023

LEOH travelers arrived on campus by bus, where they were greeted by tour guide Jim Parsons of Preservation Houston.



They learned that UH is a public research university which began in 1927 as Houston Junior College. Located on the San Jacinto High School campus, it operated as a night school for training of future teachers. In 1934 it was restructured to become the University of Houston. Its location changed several times over the years, until 110 acres were donated by heirs of J.J. Settegast and Ben Taub. In 1938, Hugh Roy Cullen donated money for the first building constructed. Named for him, it opened for classes in 1939. In 1941, UH shifted its focus to becoming part of the WWII war defense effort, by operating the US Navy Reserve Vocational School. The US Navy Electricity and Radio Material School (NERMS) opened on campus in 1942. Renu Khator is the current President of this third-largest university in Texas. It now spans 894 acres, including campuses in other cities as well as downtown Houston. UH has over 46,000 students, and over 1,000 tenured and tenure-track faculty.

The UH Mission: Connecting Potential with Opportunity
The UH Vision: Building a Top 50 Public University



One of our first stops was outside the Hilton Hotel on campus. This contemporary, full-service hotel includes a restaurant, and is home to the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership.

As we continued our tour, we enjoyed viewing landscaped grounds, fountains, and art installations, such as this 2019 installation of flags, entitled *Negative Space*, by Odili Donald Oditaon. The flag colors are at the opposite end of the color spectrum of red, white, and blue.

Robots were everywhere! Their primary function seemed to be transporting food to hungry students!



Weather was not a factor! Raincoats and umbrellas kept everyone dry during light to no rain, and the temperature was perfect for a walking tour.



The two cougar statues, particularly Shasta, are popular gathering places for photo ops, student events and other special events, including weddings. They even have their own *Instagram* account! Some students fretting over upcoming tests or life events have been known to rub the statue's nose for good luck.

We stopped for a time at the impressive cougar statues of Shasta and Sasha, as Jim explained the Shasta legend.



A cougar named Shasta became the UH mascot in 1947. The winning entry for her naming came from what she needed, such as “she has to have this”, or “she has to have that”.

Shasta I was injured in 1953 when a toe was severed after getting caught in a cage door. UT students heard about the injury, and at the UT-UH football game, imitated the injury by folding their thumbs over their ring fingers at their football game. UH lost the game, but gained a hand signal when UH fans embraced the gesture as a sign of school pride.

There have been 6 previous Shastas. The first 5 were female, while Shasta VI was male. The cub Shasta VII began his duties in fall 2022, and he and his brother Louie are housed at the Houston Zoo.





There are several Cullen buildings on campus.

The original Roy Gustav Cullen Memorial building is still in use.

The Ezekiel W. Cullen Building was named in honor of the grandfather of Hugh Roy Cullen.



In Ezekiel W. Cullen's words:
"Nothing is so essential in a free government as the general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence of every kind."

The MD Anderson Library is a modern, beautiful structure.





The Statue of Four Lies, 2010

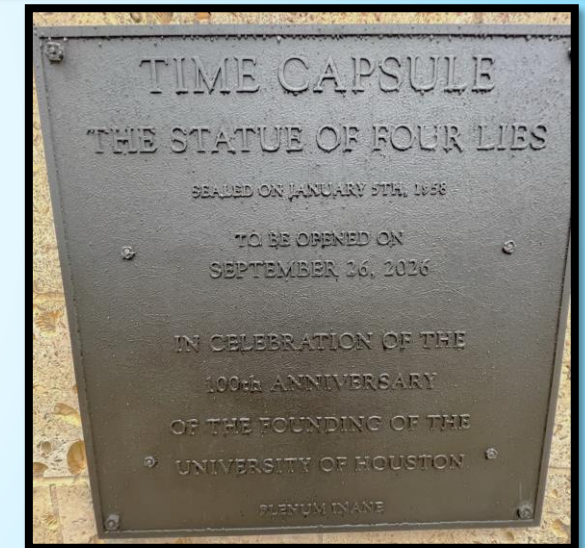
by The Art Guys,
Michael Galbreth and
Jack Massing, looks
suspiciously like the
sculptors. They were
inspired by the famous
Statue of Three Lies at
Harvard University. At
the statue bases you can
see items such as a
wrench and a
toothbrush.
There is also a suitcase,
off to the side.

In keeping with the
“lies” theme, there are
more than four lies
scattered throughout
the exhibit.



Translation:

False in one thing, false in everything, false in nothing.



The wall behind the statues
supposedly contains a time
capsule. The plaque states that
the capsule will be opened on
September 26, 2026. More lies!

Sarah Braman,
Here, 2019



Jim Sanborn, *A,A* from 2003



Sanborn's sculptures have included a wide variety of themes, including physics and cryptography.

His most famous cryptographic work *Kryptos* is on display at the CIA building in Langley, Virginia. Some of its encrypted messages have been solved, but not all.

The UH piece, appropriately located outside the MD Anderson library, contains literary quotes.

Peter Forakis,
Tower of the Cheyenne, 1972
(refabricated 2004)



Constructed of COR-TEN steel, it was intended to slowly rust, yet remain strong. Meant as a water feature for the once open ends, the plumbing did not work properly, so the water was shut off. Pigeons then overtook the ends for nesting purposes. The ends were then sealed off as part of the refabrication process.

Some of the art installations are permanent, while others are temporary. This piece will move to a new location in a couple of years.

The artist intended for viewers to walk inside this piece, to enjoy the variations in color.



No LEOH trip is complete without lunch!

The *Cosmo Eatery* menu had something for everyone. The large windows and bright wall décor added to the pleasant atmosphere. It always bears repeating - thank you, trip coordinator Ann Fairchild, for another great trip!