Center For Student Media

Student Fees Advisory Committee (SFAC) Program Questionnaire for FY 2015 -2016

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UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON
CENTER FOR STUDENT MEDIA

1. **Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.**

In its first year, the Center for Student Media (CSM) has positioned itself to realize the vision to become a cutting-edge multi-platform laboratory that prepares collaborative, innovative and creative students for real-world leadership.

In January, the CSM opened its doors in the University Center North, ushering in a new era of collaboration and synergy between student media organizations. In summer 2014, center staff and student leaders with the Cougar worked intensely to develop and implement a comprehensive overhaul of the Cougar's editorial strategy, design, advertising and distribution models.

At the same time, new coordinators were hired to assist in the development of student media organizations and facilities, and a new advertising manager was recruited and charged with rebuilding the advertising program from the ground up. With a completely new team hired, the CSM is now undergoing a period of transition.
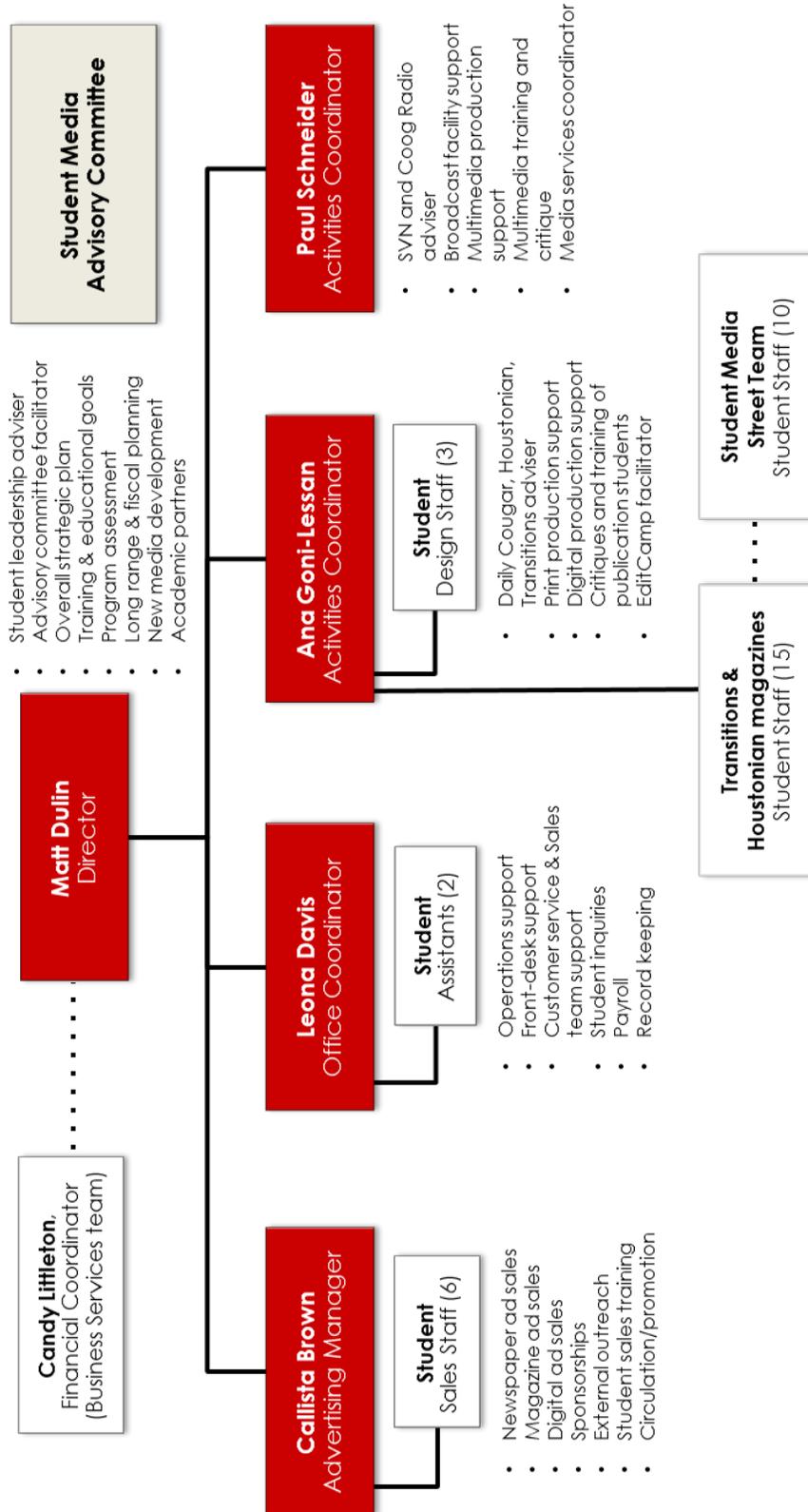
The center accomplishes its mission by providing professional media advising and training, creating opportunities for students to learn about and create media, and by generating revenues to support these efforts. The CSM creates a framework for media production, distribution, audience measurement, and assessment.

Student Service Fee funding contributes directly to the CSM's mission to provide an unparalleled student experience and foster a vibrant portfolio of community-focused media that inform, guide and engage students, faculty and staff. The funding provided by SFAC allows the center to direct proper attention to education as well as invest toward revenue-generating activities, two priorities that can come into conflict.

While the CSM is poised to grow, declines in national newspaper advertising revenue and changing audience habits pose significant challenges. Remarkably, despite the turnover of professional staff and sales support, overall revenues for FY 14 fell only 2 percent. With new energy coming into the center's approach to advertising, it's realistic to expect revenue growth to come in future years, but it will take time to recover the estimated $75,000 decline in national advertising that was experienced between 2012 and 2014.

In the meantime, fiscal management of generated revenues over the last three years has resulted in fund reserves that can be used to balance the budget while new strategies are implemented. The CSM looks forward to continued SFAC support of the unit, its student organizations and their collective efforts to serve the UH community.

2. **Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, advisor, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.**

Student Media Advisory Committee

Matt Dulin
Director

- Student leadership adviser
- Advisory committee facilitator
- Overall strategic plan
- Training & educational goals
- Program assessment
- Long range & fiscal planning
- New media development
- Academic partners

Candy Littleton,
Financial Coordinator
(Business Services team)

Paul Schneider
Activities Coordinator

- SVN and Coog Radio adviser
- Broadcast facility support
- Multimedia production support
- Multimedia training and critique
- Media services coordinator

Ana Goni-Lessan
Activities Coordinator

Student
Design Staff (3)

- Daily Cougar, Houstonian, Transitions adviser
- Print production support
- Digital production support
- Critiques and training of publication students
- EditCamp facilitator

Student Media Street Team
Student Staff (10)

Transitions & Houstonian magazines
Student Staff (15)

Leona Davis
Office Coordinator

Student
Assistants (2)

- Operations support
- Front-desk support
- Customer service & Sales team support
- Student inquiries
- Payroll
- Record keeping

Callista Brown
Advertising Manager

Student
Sales Staff (6)

- Newspaper ad sales
- Magazine ad sales
- Digital ad sales
- Sponsorships
- External outreach
- Student sales training
- Circulation/promotion

3. **List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2013-2014 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.**

1. Establish training and quality enhancement programs for all student media groups, implemented through the new coordinator positions and developed with student learning outcomes assessment at its core. (Supporting DSAES Strategic Initiative 4.a.)
   a. Achieved: A pilot rubric was developed to guide the development of a nationally competitive student newspaper in terms of coverage, leadership, visuals and design. A new training model was developed for the CSM Sales Team with guest speakers representing multiple media formats and strategies.
2. Charge a task force to review the Center's business model and make recommendations for print strategy, advertising policies and procedures. (Supporting DSAES Initiative 2.b. & 6.d.)
   a. Achieved: Using data from surveys, interviews and student-led discussion groups, the CSM assisted the Cougar's complete transition from a print daily newspaper to a print weekly, digital daily news organization. In addition, the CSM negotiated the replacement of 50 news racks on campus, working with a national vendor that will help bring in more revenue from news stand posters. The CSM also negotiated a partnership with UH Printing & Postal to handle all campus delivery of the Cougar, creating a new strategic partnership that will provide a long-term, cost-effective solution for delivery. In addition, the CSM updated and redesigned its entire Media Kit to align with new UH brand guidelines and reflected the new pricing strategy for the Cougar.
3. Migrate all student media to a common web platform and enable advertising across the network to actualize more revenue opportunities. (Supporting DSAES Initiative 2.b.)
   a. Achieved: The relaunch of CoogRadio.com in Fall 2013 and the new Cougar design in fall 2014 showed that student media websites can function well as outside entities with a professional appearance. Development of a Student Video Network site was put on hold while the organization developed a new strategy for "Coog TV."
4. Enhance magazine products with mobile and/or web extensions to add value and test the mobile ad market. (Supporting DSAES Initiative 6.e.)
   a. On hold: The CSM's mobile app initiatives were suspended after the outgoing Student Government Association president agreed to transfer future development planning of Redline to the CSM in Summer 2014. To begin this process, the CSM Director established a Redline Advisory Group with members of UH IT Web Services, Division of Student Affairs IT Services, UH Web Communications, and student leaders. The group is currently working on a short- and long-term strategy for Redline as a student-focused app that drives engagement on campus.
5. Identify and develop new revenue streams through creative services that offer new student learning opportunities and activate a new pool of resources for program expansion. (Supporting DSAES Initiative 2.b.)
   a. In progress: The CSM developed plans for media services and held discussions with current video media services entities on campus (UH Marketing, Instructional TV) to begin discussing the need and impact of providing more services to the UH market.
6. Facilitate the restructuring of the Student Publications Committee into the Student Media Advisory Committee, charged with facilitating student, faculty, staff, and professional oversight, leadership selection and policy review for all student media. The board will also continue to encourage collaboration with academic programs in digital media. (Supporting DSAES Initiative 6.b.)
   a. Achieved: The Student Media Advisory Committee (SMAC) completed its first year of

providing oversight and guidance to the department and its student organizations. For the first time, all three student media organizations went through a structured, competitive leader selection process that engaged members of Staff Council, Faculty Senate, School of Communication and professional media representatives in the selection process. The committee also reviewed plans for the Cougar's weekly transformation and recommended the formation of an advertising policy group to look at establishing a consistent ad policy that respected community norms while also encouraging robust advertising revenues.

7. Coordinated move to UC North, physical merger of student organizations and overhaul of IT infrastructure.

   a. Achieved: CSM staff worked with the UC to assist with the move of its three student organizations and the replacement of 30+ Mac workstations that were past their usable life. As part of the transition the CSM adopted Dell workstations, necessitating a conversion of all page design templates and font libraries to a Windows-compatible system. Once in place, the CSM began work with Student Affairs IT Services and building contractors to complete the functional build-out of the TV and radio studio spaces in the CSM suite. In anticipation of the new relationships that would be formed in the shared space, the CSM organized a team-building session in partnership with the Campus Recreation and Wellness Center.
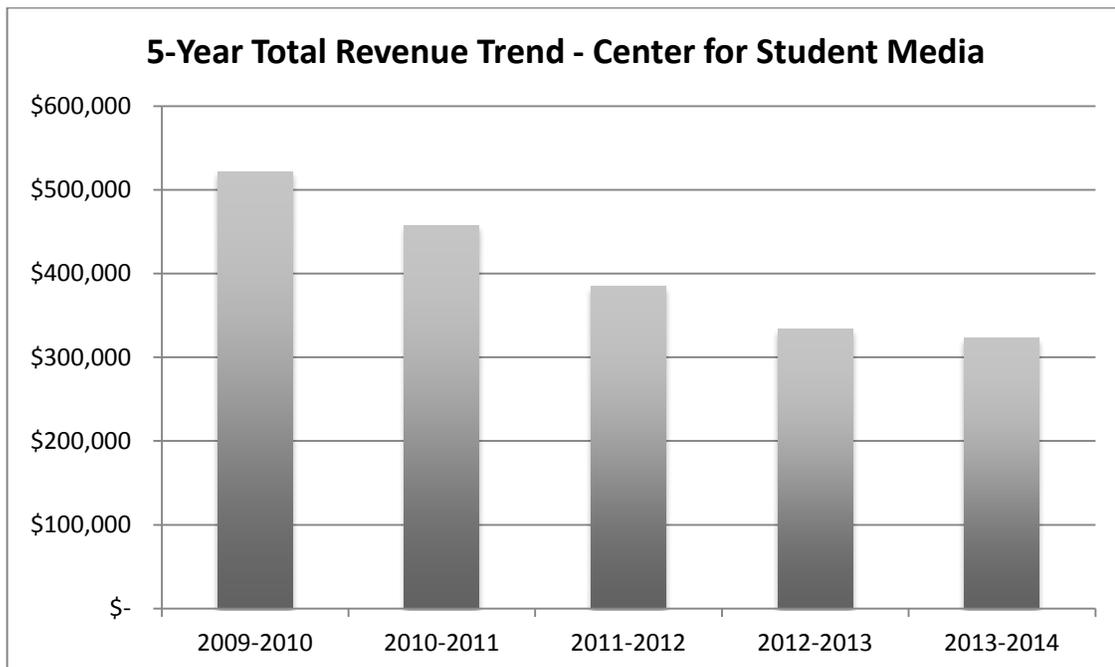
4. **Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/ or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data.**

Utilization: Both audience and revenue are significant measures of success for student media at large.

Audience metrics, Sept. 1-Aug. 31	2012-13	2013-14	% change
Average daily pickup rate, The Daily Cougar newspaper	82.3%	81.9%	-0.49%
Total page views, thedailycougar.com	648,035	975,560	+50.54%
Total users, thedailycougar.com	241,087	396,790	+64.09%
Total email subscribers, The Daily Cougar (as of Aug. 31)	2,574	3,246	+26.11%
Total unique listeners, Coogradio.com	n/a	5,288	n/a
Average listener time (minutes)	n/a	26.4	n/a
Revenue metrics, Sept. 1-Aug. 31			
Total revenue, The Daily Cougar print	$231,416.79	$224,477.64	-3.00%
Total revenue, The Daily Cougar online	$24,448.89	$29,393.17	+20.22%
Total revenue, CSM projects	$74,139.00	$69,701.19	-5.99%
Total generated revenue	$330,004.68	$323,572.00	-1.95%

The CSM does not currently have a method for accurately measuring Student Video Network viewership on a large scale.

Revenue trends: The CSM tracks every dollar of generated revenue based upon the source: local, campus, national, classified and online. These charts look at our aggregate FY 14 performance by merging all revenues from Daily Cougar, Transitions, Houstonian and any other CSM project, compared to the previous four years.

5-Year Total Revenue Trend - Center for Student Media

Year	Revenue (approx.)
2009-2010	~$520,000
2010-2011	~$455,000
2011-2012	~$385,000
2012-2013	~$333,000
2013-2014	~$323,000

Training/involvement impact: A survey to students involved in CSM in Spring 2014 yielded a rich set of outcomes about involvement and development opportunities at the CSM. A total of 41 students

submitted responses to the survey. 70% of respondents had been involved for a year or less. The survey asked students to rate their agreement with outcome statements about their involvement. These percentages reflect the proportion that indicated "strongly agree" or "agree" –

o 85% CSM involvement makes me more connected to and aware of the University community.
o 83% CSM involvement makes me more confident in myself and my abilities.
o 86% CSM gives me a support network and a place to make contacts.
o 87% At CSM, I am learning how to be more professional in the workplace.
o 79% At CSM, I am learning about media ethics and best practices.
o 75% At CSM, I feel like I am making an impact on UH and the community at large.

Results of this survey are being used to guide the design of professional development opportunities moving forward. Specifically, the role of ethics and best practices will be emphasized as well as the role that student media plays in the UH community.

Customer service: The CSM surveyed existing advertising customers to measure satisfaction and gather feedback about their use of CSM services. The survey generated 32 responses. The majority of responses were positive, with 2/3 or more indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with the CSM's pricing, customer service, communication and return on investment. One area with slightly fewer satisfied responses was after-sales follow-up. Roughly 2/3 said they would recommend CSM as an advertising service. For media services, 26 respondents rated their interest levels for potential service offerings. Services receiving the most interest were video production and street team/distribution. Finally, when asked how the weekly print format will affect projected advertising expenditures, 65% said they would maintain their spending, 23% said they would increase their print spending, 12% would increase online spending and 0% would decrease their spending.

Newspaper quality: A rubric based upon national collegiate journalism standards was applied to eight issues of the Cougar, four in November and 4 in December. The analysis showed that overall, the newspaper lacked an advanced level of forethought, depth and presentation that would be seen in a nationally competitive student newspaper. Use of visuals was another area for improvement identified through the rubric. A huge area lacking was editorial leadership: taking a stand for community issues, representing readers' voices and taking on a public-service role in terms of investigations and story choices. The second half of this assessment was not completed, due in part to the departure of the newspaper adviser.

Insights from the rubric assessment were used during a mid-year meeting with editors to discuss areas of focused improvement in the spring. Findings also were used to generate discussions about how a weekly print format could encourage editors to focus on public service journalism, incorporate more reader feedback and take more time to think through their decisions about coverage. In addition, the rubric will be carried over into FY 15 with an expanded panel of professional reviews and an expanded scope to include web/social media aspects of the news organization.

5. **Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2014) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections. In addition, if your unit concluded FY2013 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity, please describe the conditions which caused the addition.**

Lapsed salary

The CSM ended with a positive fund equity of $54,021.57. These funds were transferred to the CSM Reserve cost center as they resulted from generated revenue. The primary factor contributing to this savings was lapsed salaries and benefits from multiple vacancies.

	Projected	Actual	Difference
Total salaries/wages	$326,406.00	$278,617.48	$(47,788.52)
Total benefits	$89,994.00	$77,040.43	$(12,953.57)
Total	$416,400.00	$355,657.91	$(60,742.09)

Transition expenses

In addition, roughly $45,000 in M&O budgeted for the CSM was not utilized because these expenses were taken from the Cougar's cost center. This occurred while the Business Services team was transitioning expense procedures from the old Student Publications account. Therefore, an anticipated $51,578 in income from fund reserves was not used. The expenses that should have been charged to the CSM account have been itemized in The Cougar's budget spreadsheet.

National advertising revenue reduction

It is important for SFAC to be aware of a recent and critical challenge that the CSM is facing: a continued drop in national advertising, which was anticipated last year. The decline is not unique to UH; most college newspapers have sustained a reduction in national revenue. Because this has become a volatile revenue source, the CSM is strategically seeking out more local businesses for revenue.

National ad revenue per year:

FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014 Actual
$80,553.79	$66,315.93	$85,686.73	$91,256.71	$27,977.18	$18,230.53

National revenue is not generated directly by CSM efforts; all that is required of CSM to receive these ads is to provide ad agencies with its publishing schedule, ad rates and deadlines. In turn, these advertising agencies represent the Cougar along with hundreds of other college publications in selling campaigns to major national brands. Ultimately, national advertising spending is impacted by market trends, the ad agency's strategies and by the UH distribution and readership rate.

6. **Please list your 2015-2016 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.**

1. Implement recommendations of the internal/external program review process. (DSAES Initiative 4.a.)
   a. Action items will be determined through the program assessment process, in partnership with Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services leadership.
2. Grow revenues from publications in print and online to drive overall revenue growth. (DSAES Initiative 2.b.)
   a. Explore feasibility of expanding Houstonian magazine to a twice-annual publication marketed to grads and alumni.
   b. Work with UH Alumni and Printing and Postal to determine feasibility of a Cougar subscription program to mail newspapers to alumni in exchange for an annual donation.
   c. Increase overall publication-based revenues with a focus on local business advertising, leveraging special sections in The Cougar and magazine-style publications.
   d. Create a Digital Media Think Tank to discuss next stage of development of web, mobile and tablet-based media and potential for revenues in this area.
3. Fully implement a media services unit offering photography, video and audio production for campus departments and local businesses. (DSAES Initiative 2.b.)
   a. Consolidate and centralize equipment storage and checkout under the authority of the CSM and develop consistent policies and training regarding access and usage.
   b. Recruit, train and develop media services team members in partnership with Student Video Network.
   c. Implement a marketing plan to stimulate interest in contracting CSM for media projects.
   d. Assess service through follow-up surveys.
4. Facilitate transition from Student Video Network to Coog TV. (DSAES Initiative 1.d.)
   a. Provide support to students to produce weekly broadcast-quality, studio-based programming focused on the UH campus and college life.
   b. Develop content partnerships with School of Communication and other on campus video providers to supply UH content to the channel.
5. Commit to a regular schedule of multimedia workshops, field visits and other professional development opportunities. (DSAES Initiative 1.f.)
   a. Plan and implement a semester-based training calendar that offers at least two (2) hands-on media workshops per week for 10 weeks of each semester, open to all CSM students, which develop fundamental skills as well as multimedia competencies, and one (1) field visit opportunity such as a guided tour of a media facility or other professional environment.
   b. Implement an effective assessment strategy for measuring the impact of CSM professional development opportunities.
6. Expand co-curricular credit opportunities with the School of Communication and Bauer College of Business. (DSAES Initiative 2.c.)
   a. Identify courses that could support regular TV content production.
   b. Propose formal Independent Study opportunities for special projects.
   c. Identify opportunities for formal internship credit programs offered through the CSM.
   d. Become a recognized sales internship provider with the Program for Excellence in Selling.
7. Achieve national, state and local recognition for effective student media advising, programming and media production work from student organizations. (DSAES Initiative 4.d.)
   a. Submit student work to college-level contests hosted by the following:
      i. College Broadcasters Incorporated
      ii. College Media Association

iii. Columbia Scholastic Press Association
iv. Associated Collegiate Press
v. Society of Professional Journalists
vi. Texas Intercollegiate Press Association
vii. Houston Press Club
viii. College Media Business & Advertising Managers

7. **What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.**

In 2013-2014 the majority of revenue continued to come from print and online advertising associated with publishing the newspaper and magazines.

The department raised $2,000 to offset expenses related to hosting the first Student Media Banquet and Awards Ceremony.

In FY 2015 the CSM will seek out event sponsorships and media services to add new sources of revenue to the department.

8. **Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.**

No overlap exists.