



COMMUTER SERVICES

FY2009-2010 Base Augmentation Request

COMMUTER SERVICES BASE AUGMENTATION REQUEST FY 2010

The University of Houston (UH) is a public urban institution located in the fourth largest city in the United States. As the flagship University of Houston System, UH enrolls approximately 36,000 students each year – more than 30,000 of whom are considered commuter students. With such a dense commuter population, the University Center and Associated Facilities (UCAF) at UH felt it was important to explore the possibility of implementing a comprehensive commuter student service program within the institution. This included not only the assessment of current commuter student services, programs, and initiatives at University of Houston, but also the evaluation of commuter student services and programs at selected colleges and universities across the country. A Graduate intern was tasked with conducting the benchmark assessment and making recommendations, one of which was the need to create a central location for commuter resources and dedicated programming efforts. As a result of focus groups conducted in the spring of 2008 and with the support of the UC Policy Board, the UC and Associated Facilities, the Dean of Students, and the Vice President for Student Affairs, Commuter Services was created less than a year later.

Commuter Services at University of Houston is dedicated to providing services and programs that aid commuter and nontraditional students in becoming more aware of University resources, which will foster successful college experiences and student involvement. Commuter Services aims to serve as a one-stop shop for commuter students at the University of Houston, working in partnership with other offices and departments across UH and in the surrounding community.

The Commuter Services team is committed to the development and implementation of services and programs, advocacy, and research that results in an enhanced collegiate experience for University of Houston commuter and nontraditional students. Since our inception in July, we have been able to establish a number of programs and resources:

- Our **website** and **commuter listerv** were launched in August 2008. The website has had over **500** page loads since November, with an average of 3 new visitors each day and the commuter listerv currently has a **225** subscribers.
- In September 2008 we implemented our **Commuter Services Advisory Board**, with students, faculty and staff from 16 different areas across campus. We have representatives from Academic Program Management, UH Wellness, Campus Activities, Parking & Transportation, UH Child Care Center, the UC Policy Board, and Student Program Board, just to name a few.
- ***The Navigator***, our monthly commuter newsletter debuted in October 2008. The newsletter is distributed via the listerv and available on the Commuter Services and UCAF websites. It contains campus information, helpful tips for students, and features a student organization and a university resource area each month.
- October also marked the beginning of our regularly scheduled **Commuter Breakfasts**. The breakfast program provides an opportunity to offer students free breakfast and inform them about Commuter Services, invite them to the lounge space, and educate them on other university resources. We also partnered with the Dean of Students Office to participate in **Evening Student Outreach** to educate students about services that are available on campus after normal business hours. We were able to reach out to **more than 650** students through these efforts.
- The ribbon-cutting ceremony for our **commuter-friendly lounge** took place on October 31, 2008. The 1,600 square-foot space is equipped with three computer kiosks, two private study spaces, large screen television, two microwaves, and comfortable lounge furniture for student use. Since opening we have had over **6,000 visits** to the lounge.
- On November 21, 2008 we were highlighted in Dr. Renu Khator's "***Message from the Cabinet***". In her email, she indicates that the university continues to create a campus that is friendly place for those who commute and noted the efforts of Commuter Services through the existence of our lounge and programming initiatives.

We have also had the opportunity to participate in a number of other initiatives such as the UCAF HallowFEST event with a **Guess for Gas** giveaway and award student winners with **\$25.00 gas cards**, hosting an audio conference on **Best Practices for Commuter Student Programs**, and co-facilitate for LifeSpan, a nontraditional student support and networking group with the Women's Resource Center.

We are busy planning for the future and have a confirmed schedule for the Spring 2009 semester, highlighted by the introduction of our inaugural Off-Campus Living Fair. The fair will serve as a chance for students to talk with properties on campus and from all over the greater Houston area. This event will also serve as the premiere of our Off-Campus Living Guide which will be full of essential information and helpful tips for students commuting to and from campus. In a collaborative effort with departments and units campus-wide, we will also have a Commuter Workshop Series on a variety of topics from How to Get Involved on Campus and What to Look for in a Child Care Provider to Healthy Relationships and Safety On and Off Campus.

Moving forward, Commuter Services would like to request funding from SFAC to assist with additional program dollars to benefit commuter and non-traditional students and to support a Graduate Assistant position.

Commuter Services' request for additional program dollars is to provide additional programs and resources that will not only make commuter students more aware of what their university has to offer, but to make them feel as comfortable as possible while they are on-campus. Commuter Services firmly believes that to enhance school spirit and pride amongst commuter students it is important for them to be greatly involved on campus and hence, in order to increase student retention, it is utmost necessary to offer programs and services that serve the needs of this very diverse population while fostering each person's individual college experience. Some of the added programming that Commuter Services intends to do includes: putting together a series of relaxing and engaging events during National Nontraditional Student Week (November 2009); establish a Commuter Appreciation Week (Spring 2010); and have a

more visible presence around campus through participation with large scale campus events (i.e. Cat's Back, Homecoming, Frontier Fiesta, etc.). In order to contribute to these events for the benefit of students, funding is needed to make that happen.

Breakdown of additional program dollars:

Programs	FY 2010 Base Augmentation Request
National Nontraditional Student Week	\$2,000.00
Commuter Appreciation Week	\$3,500.00
Cat's Back participation	\$1,500.00
Homecoming programming	\$1,500.00
Family Day-Frontier Fiesta programming	\$1,500.00
FY2010 Allocation Requested	\$10,000.00

Marketing/Promotional materials	FY 2010 Base Augmentation Request
National Nontraditional Student Week	\$1,500.00
Commuter Appreciation Week	\$2,000.00
Homecoming	\$500.00
Family Day-Frontier Fiesta programming	\$500.00
Establishing a Commuter Student Association	\$1,500.00
General marketing materials for Commuter Services	\$500.00
FY2010 Allocation Requested	\$6,500.00

Programs Allocation Requested: \$16,500

The benchmarking assessments conducted in August 2007 revealed that nineteen (19) of the Commuter/Off-Campus programs employed student staff, and eight (8) of which had a Graduate Assistant as part of their team. Commuter Services at University of Houston has one full-time staff member and two part-time Student Assistants. A Graduate Assistant would offer great help in organizing and coordinating programs that enrich and add value to commuter students' overall collegiate experiences. Since August, Commuter Services has been able to utilize the talent of a UCAF Graduate Assistant who has been vital in aiding our area to achieve its current level of success. Commuter Services profits in terms of a fresh and slightly more experienced and seasoned perspective to arrange programs and offerings that better serve the needs of students in today's challenging environment. Not only has it been beneficial to Commuter Services, but the position also allows a graduate student to gain constructive and worthy professional experience. If funded, the Commuter Services Graduate Assistant would

work with the Commuter Services team and our on and off-campus partners to organize programs, establish new collaborative opportunities, promote events, and help to create new programming, among other job responsibilities*. The Graduate Assistant would also be instrumental in working with the Commuter Services Coordinator to create Passport to Houston (an online resource), coordinate Ride-Share opportunities, and the development, implementation, and assessment of advocacy and research initiatives. The experience would aid in their overall personal and professional development and provide an opportunity that would benefit them in their long-term career path.

Cost breakdown for Graduate Assistant Position:

Graduate Assistant Salary = \$11,580.00
 Associated Benefits = \$1,001.67

Graduate Assistant Funding Requested: \$12,581.67

FY2010 Base Allocation Requested

Area of Allocated Funding	Amount Requested
Programming	\$10,000.00
Marketing/Promotional materials	\$6,500.00
Graduate Assistant (with associated benefits)	\$12,581.67
Administrative charges	\$1,105.10
Division of Student Affairs	\$436.23
Total	\$30,623.00

Total FY2010 Base Allocation Requested: \$30,623.00

We would like to make SFAC aware that Commuter Services will continue to partner with other units, departments, and programs within the university community to offer our students and the UH community the best in terms of programming and services, and will demonstrate the utmost in fiscal responsibility upon the granting of our base augmentation request.

*Full job description attached.

Graduate Assistant, Commuter Services

Position Overview

The University Center and Associated Facilities (UCAF) UC Commuter Services Graduate Assistant will work with the Commuter Services Coordinator and additional UCAF staff as needed to support the department's needs in the relation to the development, implementation, and program planning for Commuter Services.

Position Responsibilities

Primary

- Assist with the implementation of the creation of a commuter services center.
- In conjunction with the Commuter Services Coordinator, develop collaborative partnerships (internally and off-campus) to enhance resource and referral services and programming opportunities for commuter and non-traditional students.
- Assist with the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of commuter and non-traditional student programs.
 - Working with the Commuter Services Coordinator, develop, plan, and implement new programming (i.e. Passport to Houston, ride-share services, etc.)
- Assist with the development of written materials and marketing efforts related to Commuter Services:
 - Advertisements, Brochures, Newsletters (listserv), Web Page Text, Press and Media Releases, and Specialty Items.
- Research model commuter and non-traditional student services and programs at peer institutions for possible implementation at University of Houston.
- Assist with the development of assessment tools (to include advocacy and research initiatives) for commuter programs and services.
- Develop components of the UCAF/Commuter Services Annual Report.

Secondary

- Participate in scheduled UCAF meetings or training sessions as assigned.
- Work on additional UCAF special projects and provide support for UCAF programs as assigned.

Qualifications

The individual must have completed a Bachelor's Degree. The individual must be currently accepted and enrolled in a University of Houston graduate program. It is preferred that the individual have an interest in pursuing a career in higher education field. Individuals pursuing career fields that may be related or require skills which are transferable will also be considered for this experience.

Terms of Position

The Graduate Assistant will serve for one academic year with a possible option to consider a summer term and/or second year experience pending successful reviews as well as career interests. Assistantship experiences and projects will be developed in

consideration of the individual's skills, interests, and career goals. The Graduate Assistant will work a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Supervision & Working Relationships

The Graduate Assistant will be supervised by the Commuter Services Coordinator. The Graduate Assistant will also work on a daily basis with all Unit Staff.

Remuneration

\$965 stipend per month (or the standard Graduate Assistant compensation for UH). Additional benefits include funding to attend a fall regional Association of College Unions International Conference.

Personal Development

- Develop personal goal plan to correspond with assistantship.
- Participate in ongoing personal evaluation and reflection.
- Attend the fall regional conference of the Association of College Unions International (ACUI).
- Read selected materials related to the field of student affairs and participate in components of annual UCAF Staff Retreats as assigned.