

## Question 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.**

The Frontier Fiesta Association (FFA) plans Frontier Fiesta; the three-day event unites University of Houston students, faculty, staff and alumni in addition to the Houston community. The FFA is committed to providing low-cost or no-cost family-friendly entertainment and programming events that encourage school spirit with the purpose of raising funds for scholarship money.

The primary mission of Frontier Fiesta 2009 is to raise enough funds to create an official University endowment so the commitment to scholastic excellence will be rewarded even if Frontier Fiesta ceases to exist. Following extensive research and discussion of the origins of Frontier Fiesta, previous attempts to reshape the event to more accurately reflect the times, an extensive period of nonexistence and eventual revival, the FFA of 2009 pledged to commit the organization solely to three fundamentals. Through scholarship, an appropriate reflection of the entire University student body and emphasis on a Family Fun Day that exhibits cultural, social and campus wide diversity, the FFA will revitalize the University's oldest and greatest tradition. A progressive approach to continually reshape Frontier Fiesta, while maintaining time-honored values, will sustain the organization and event.

To facilitate Frontier Fiesta, the FFA utilizes an Executive Board (compensated/non-compensated student leaders), student volunteers, Campus Activities staff, pertinent alumni and a Steering Committee. The Executive Board is appointed through an interview process every April and there are no stipulations to who is eligible to apply. The Steering Committee typically consists of staff with invested interest and/or direct involvement (Advancement, UHPD, DOS, Student Affairs and Plant Operations), dedicated University alumni and former Board members.

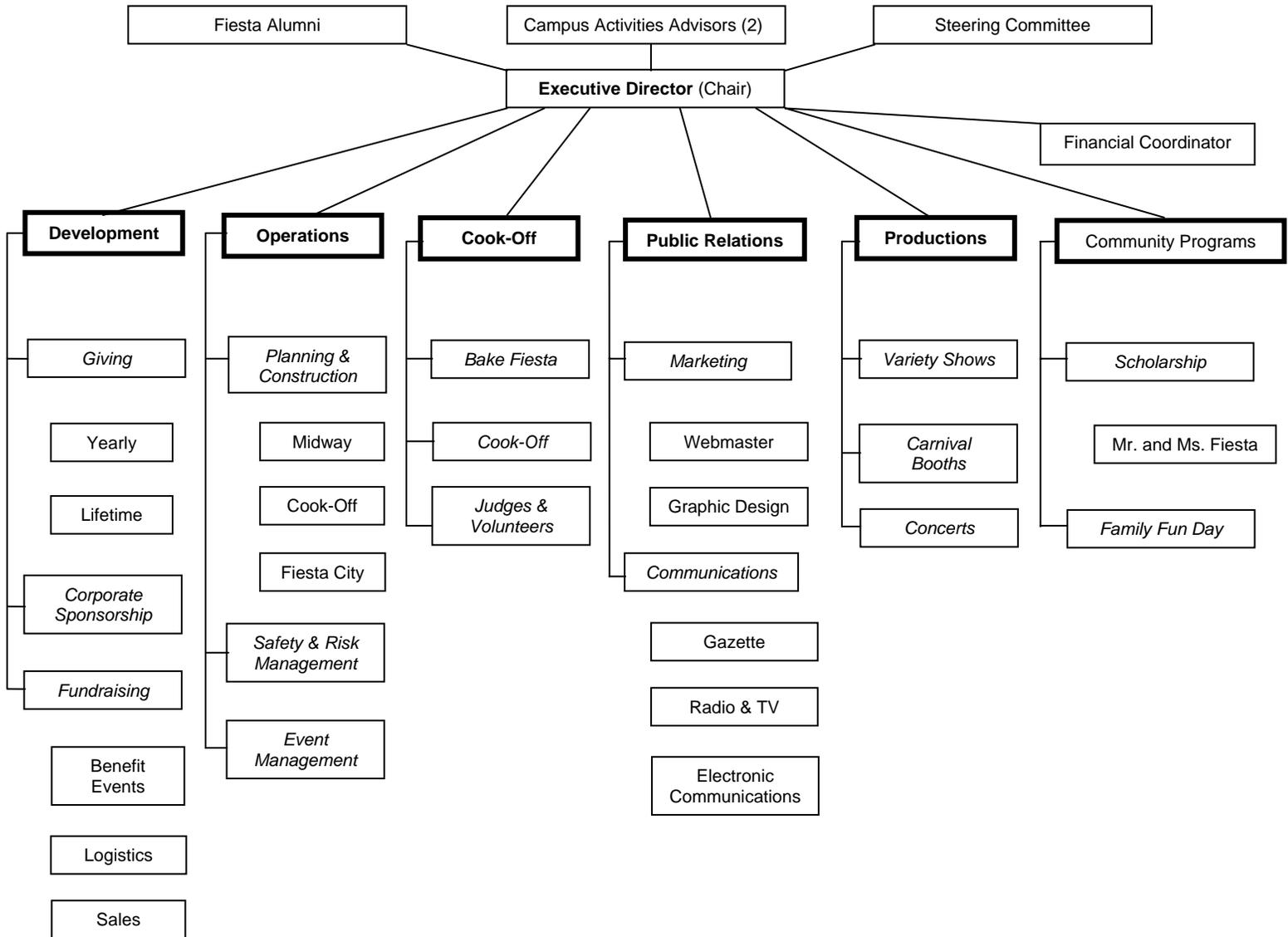
The event includes student conducted Broadway-style Variety Shows, Carnival Booths, Multicultural Performances, Student Organization Showcases and musical performances. A step show was added this year to include Greek-letter organizations that embrace stepping as an African, Caribbean and Black History tradition. Additional entertainment offered at low-cost or free includes local talent, and nationally syndicated hip hop, Latino and Texas Country performers. Educational exhibits include historical and roving setups (Inter-Tribal Council, American Cowboy Museum, ROTC), Mad Science, petting zoo, a magician and storyteller. Family Fun Day is the highlight of this year's event and includes a maze, train, face, three carnival rides and inflatables. Family Fun Day is marketed to surrounding high school, middle school and elementary school students in addition to organizations/programs focused on youth development (YMCA, Big Brother and Sisters, Girl and Boy Scouts).

To promote scholarship, the FFA annually awards between \$5,000 and \$8,000 to incoming and current UH students. To promote the creation of an endowment and redirect focus on academic success, Frontier Fiesta 2009 will award \$10,000, which includes a newly created category for graduate students.

Frontier Fiesta relies predominately on SFAC funding to continue a tradition that remains the cornerstone of University of Houston history. The students, faculty and staff participate in and contribute to Frontier Fiesta as a declaration of pride- for the University, the community and the City of Houston. The name and theme is recognition of the region's western heritage, but the event is a source of spirited competition and celebration of the University's non-academic talent.

**Question 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, custodian, etc), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.**



Compensated student leaders indicated in **bold**.

Directors indicated in by Director

Associate Directors indicated in *italics*.

Assistant Directors indicated by A.D.

### **Question 3**

**List the objectives that you provided with your 2008-2009 SFAC request. Please comment on your success in achieving these objectives. If an objective changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new objectives, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these objectives.**

**The following objectives were attempted for Frontier Fiesta 2008.**

**Objective #1: Increase the amount of scholarships awarded by the FFA.**

The Frontier Fiesta Association did not succeed in awarded the projected \$13,500 and only raised \$4,500 in scholarship money. The Director of Development did attempt to raise money specifically for scholarship, however only limited funding was eventual available following unexpected Production and Operation costs.

**Objective #2: Alleviate the financial burden for student organization participation.**

Student organizations participating in Variety Shows and Carnival Booths saved money by purchasing building materials at a discounted rate. The registration fee for student organization participation (Variety Shows, Carnival Booths, Student Organization Showcases) did not decrease, which remains a significant hindrance to various smaller student organizations.

**Objective #3: Implement a more effective marketing campaign.**

The FFA did succeed in shifting the focus away from a western theme to market the event with greater generalized appeal. An increased emphasis with on campus guerilla marketing engaged the student body and created awareness with particular demographics that would otherwise be overlooked. Flashier, more vivid print and visual media was used to advertise Frontier Fiesta 2008 as "The Event of the Year." This campaign did generate a new buzz with students, faculty and staff.

#### **Question 4**

**Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and the satisfaction level of those served. Please provide the method for collecting these data.**

As an organization, the Frontier Fiesta Association conducts numerous post-event meetings with participants, the Steering Committee and Campus Activities staff. The summaries of the meetings provide an objective evaluation in order to create a comprehensive event overview. The use of several focused discussion groups with non-participating and participating students is compiled in a report.

The Executive Director is referencing the official “Overview and Comprehensive Review of the Event” for 2003 and 2004 (the two most successful events in recent years) when compiling the data to evaluate on the Frontier Fiesta 2009. Electronic and paper surveys have been conducted since October 2008 to specifically target problem areas for 2009 and the FFA will have surveys available at the event and in the weeks following. Students, faculty, staff, non-UH affiliated attendees, and both UH and Frontier Fiesta alumni will be asked to complete a thorough evaluation.

The inclusion of the Dean of Students office and the Division of Student Affairs has been critical in gaining a historical and objective perspective to “in and out” of Frontier Fiesta. Additionally, contact with numerous former FFA Chairmen and Campus Activities advisors has filled many gray areas in question that are not answered with the present resources.

#### **Participation**

Participation from University organizations and groups is an excellent method for the FFA to evaluate success. The following chart highlights organizational participation in past years:

| <b>Year</b> | <b># of Organizations</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 2002        | 23                        |
| 2003        | 30                        |
| 2004        | 33                        |
| 2005        | 33                        |
| 2006        | 34                        |
| 2007        | 22                        |
| 2008        | 21                        |

#### **Scholarship**

Scholarship is a fundamental element of the FFA. Scholarships are typically provided in the \$1,000 amount; however two categories include \$500 scholarships (Mr. and Ms. Fiesta). Incoming freshman, current and graduate students at the University of Houston are eligible to apply. The following chart illustrates the amount of scholarship dollar given in past years:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Scholarship Amount</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 2003        | \$6,000                   |
| 2004        | \$8,000                   |
| 2005        | \$8,000                   |
| 2006        | \$9,000                   |
| 2007        | \$10,000                  |
| 2008        | \$4,500                   |

### **Attendance**

Frontier Fiesta utilizes a daily attendance count, conducted by the security and University staff posted at the entrance to Fiesta City in order to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing and appeal of events/services offered. The following chart illustrates attendance in past years:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Attendance</b> |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 2003        | 15,000            |
| 2004        | 19,500            |
| 2005        | 30,000            |
| 2006        | 25,000            |
| 2007        | 21,000            |
| 2008        | 18,000            |

\*Some attendance figures are estimates. Frontier Fiesta 2008 received inaccurate feedback as a result of poor tracking by staff in charge of collecting data.

### **Income**

Any profits generated throughout the three-day event serve as insight to the success of the programming and Production aspect of Frontier Fiesta. The use of Fiesta Bucks in lieu of U.S. dollars is tracked by the FFA and Campus Activities staff.

In 2003, the event generated \$44,268.45, which was a \$5,168.55 increase from the previous year.

In 2004, the event generated \$67,574.87, less expenses.

In 2005, the event generated \$72,723.00, less expenses; it was a \$5,148.13 increase from 2004.

All profits will continue to fund the Frontier Fiesta Association scholarships.

The use of tickets sales for “main stage” concerts for Frontier Fiesta 2009, will more effectively allow the FFA to generate greater profits in addition to tracking the satisfaction of concert entertainment offered.

### **Question 5**

**Please discuss any budget changes from your last (FY2009) 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 FY2008 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balance, please describe the conditions which caused the fund balance.**

Both Frontier Fiesta 2007 and 2008 experienced serious financial difficulties due to a shortage of funds and unanticipated operational and production expenses. The failure to adequately fundraise also reduced the availability of funds projected for the budget. For FY2009 the FFA requested a onetime allocation of \$19,607 to cover operational expenses, which was not approved.

For FY2010 the Frontier Fiesta Association is requesting a onetime allocation of \$26,225 to cover operational and production expenses that would otherwise be paid for by funds now being recommitted to scholarship.

The expenses for Frontier Fiesta have increased over the last few years because of numerous economic reasons from rising gas and shipping costs to inflation. This increase is reflected in production expenses and difficulty in fundraising efforts. Corporate sponsorship is limited due to cost/benefit analysis determining that students are not effectively supporting local businesses or services that sponsor.

Frontier Fiesta experienced extreme cost increases to the event in external services and operations expenditures. These include security (\$22,000), lease equipment (\$36,000), warehouse rental (\$24,000), and an increase in basic operational expenses (\$17,000). These services are all necessary and absorb approximately one-third of the FFA annual budget. As prices continue to steadily increase, the Frontier Fiesta Association experiences greater strain in executing a quality event at low or no cost to its patrons. Without an increase in University funding, the Frontier Fiesta Association will face an unfortunate dilemma of raising prices across the board, charging admittance fees, or lowering the quality of services provided.

## Question 6

**Please list your 2009-2010 objectives in priority order. Larger units may wish to group your response by subprogram. Under each objective, state the specific programs, activities, and/or services that you plan to implement to meet your objectives.**

**The following objectives are presented by the Executive Board for Frontier Fiesta 2009.**

### **Objective #1: Restructure the scholarship aspect of Frontier Fiesta.**

The FFA has pledged \$10,000 to scholarship for 2009.

The failure to raise the projected \$13,500 and award a significantly lesser amount than traditionally provided in 2008 prompted the FFA to set a required minimum level of scholarship money available, not to fall below the traditional amount of \$8,000 per year. The inability to raise the necessary funds will result in budget cuts from Production and Operations in order to compensate.

Creation of a category for graduate students.

Due to the lack of available scholarship funds eligible to graduate students free of stipulations, the FFA determined that a portion of the \$10,000 awarded should fund the new category. As the University of Houston makes great strides to move toward Tier 1 status, it is critical that scholarship based programs do not overlook the financial difficulties experienced by graduate students that are unable to work during as a result of academic demands. Furthermore, as an increased number of international, out of state and non-UH undergraduate alumni matriculate into graduate programs, the FFA has the unique opportunity to market Frontier Fiesta to students unfamiliar or unaware of our time honored tradition.

Utilize all Committeemen money solely for scholarship purposes.

Previously, money raised through Committeemen (either sign-up fees or donations) funded the actual operational and production expenses of the event, however the 2009 Executive Board authorized the use of all Committeemen money directly to scholarship. This new measure will more effectively maintain the event's underlying focus on academics.

The Cougar Cooker Cook-Off team is composed of UH alumni, mostly Lifetime Committeemen and staunch Fiesta supporters. They have graciously created an annual \$500 scholarship, eligible to non-compensated students that illustrate leadership within the FFA. The 2009 Executive Board voted to require all non-compensated students involved to apply. There are currently 15 applicants, compared to 1 in 2008.

Create a University endowment for Frontier Fiesta.

Following Frontier Fiesta 2009, the FFA will allocate the initial funds required to begin an endowment in order to have all money successfully raised by Frontier Fiesta 2012. The creation of an endowment will ensure that University of Houston students continue to receive scholarship money annually, even if the FFA or event ceases to exist. Frontier Fiesta was founded by a group of young, World War II veterans that would not have received a college education without the benefit of the G.I. Bill, therefore it is extremely important to the FFA to continue rewarding academic success and excellence within the community above all else.

## **Objective #2: Increase campus wide participation in Frontier Fiesta.**

### Eliminate any unnecessary or burdensome fees.

The Division of Student Affairs sponsored the student organization registration fees for participation in Variety Shows, Carnival Booths, Student Organization Showcases and the Step Show for Frontier Fiesta 2009. Student organizations are only required to submit security deposits, thereby allowing the organizations to internally determine how much money to invest.

The reintroduction of the option to rent stages, tables and chairs through the FFA is also cost effective for student organizations, because the FFA can contract these items in bulk at a discounted rate.

A revision of the judging rubric for competitive categories (Variety Shows, Carnival Booths and Student Organization Showcases) reduces the emphasis on costly elements such as constructed fronts. Traditionally, the fronts cost approximately \$4,000 and increases in the cost of raw materials (wood and metal), electricity and gas to operate fronts/stages/sound/lighting required the FFA to explore other avenues.

### Avoid deterrence from academics due to Frontier Fiesta commitments.

A diligent review of grades is conducted by the FFA advisor to ensure that all participating students are in good academic standing. Member of participating student groups found violating the policy will be automatically disqualified from consideration for any awards.

The building time for Fiesta City construction is shorter this year than in previous decades. Frontier Fiesta previously demanded upwards of six weeks to complete all construction; however the building period is only 12 days for 2009. The week of Spring Break vacation is included so there is minimal construction time that overlaps with academic hours or class. The FFA is discouraging extravagant construction and increasing awareness to the fact that the early years of Frontier Fiesta were hugely successful because the display of student talent was impressive.

Variety Shows, which typically require the greatest time commitment, have been shortened by 20 minutes to a required period of 25-30 minutes. Student organizations will perform more shows rather than longer shows during Frontier Fiesta.

### Recruit new student organizations to participate.

Six new organizations are participating in Frontier Fiesta and the FFA is committed to helping new groups execute an activity that is relevant to the participating organization's mission statement/values. Ideas unorthodox to the standard productions are highly encouraged and all proposals are approved so long as they do not violate or contradict any State law, University policy, FFA value or promote a philosophy that is not family-friendly.

### Provide student friendly services at Frontier Fiesta.

Expanding the concert line-up at the event to include more regionally and nationally recognized artists is a primary goal for the Director of Productions. Well known artists market themselves through word-of-mouth buzz and students are eager to enjoy a free concert that would otherwise cost \$50 or \$75/ per ticket. Productions is also working to create a line-up that appeals across a spectrum of musical genres including Country, Rock, Latino, Hip Hop and local favorites. The

FFA is maintaining an open door policy for submitting music samples for possible approval to perform on the Fiesta City stage during day hours. Student and local bands are encouraged to contact us if seeking a venue to showcase musical talents.

The FFA is requiring non-UH students to pay a ticket fee to enter all “main stage” concerts in 2009, however students will continue to enter at no cost. Utilizing the effectiveness of athletic events, student need simply to show a UH Cougar1Card for entry. Students can option to purchase a ticket to guarantee seating at the concert(s), rather than standing general admission.

Ensure that the all-UH tent/area provides adequate food, non-alcohol beverages and entertainment to all people, but specifically students. Cook-Off tents are private and the Directors of Cook-Off and Operations are working collaboratively to post more visible signage regarding when to go for food/drink purchasing or for a place to simply sit and relax. There will be continuous entertainment (video games, karaoke, etc.) in the all-UH tent, but the FFA is committed to creating an atmosphere that is enjoyable, but not overbearing.

### **Objective #3: Provide more food options at lower cost.**

#### Encourage Aramark to lower food costs.

In 2008 Aramark provided food services for the all-UH tent, which included hamburgers, hotdogs, BBQ and chicken tenders. Prices varied between \$3.5 and \$7, which is comparable to other similar style events (HLSR, Chilifest, International Festival), however the quality and variety of food is of concern. The FFA only receives a 10% return, which makes the cost for the FFA to contract with Aramark a non-profitable endeavor.

The all-UH tent ran out of food (contracted through Aramark) in 2008 and did not sell any soft drinks. Numerous student organizations/groups sold “Fun Foods,” (popcorn, cotton candy, funnel cakes) at reasonable prices, but quickly ran out after attempting to provide for a greater amount of students seeking actual meals, not snacks.

#### Utilize outside vendors for variety.

To accurately reflect the diversity of the UH student body, the presence of non-traditional festival food i.e. vegetarian, kosher and halal is being explored. The FFA has contacted numerous food companies and restaurants in Houston seeking food vendors. The event is hoping to duplicate the ‘food strip’ of numerous vendors at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo.

The presence of a Cook-Off competition warrants the availability of good quality BBQ that must be available for purchase. Coupled with the events western theme, many patrons to Frontier Fiesta are surprised at the lack of BBQ vendors. The FFA is presently in discussion with Pappas, Goode Company, Mikeska’s, Demeris and Gabby’s barbeque companies.

Beverage kiosks throughout Fiesta City only sold alcoholic beverages; soft drinks and water were only available through Aramark in the all-UH tent or in private Cook-Off tents. Frontier Fiesta 2009 is a family-friendly event therefore the FFA is contracting kiosks to sell non-alcoholic beverages.

Invite promotional food/beverage companies to distribute.

Beverage companies licensed under the Coca-Cola brand product list are contacted to distribute at promotional vendor tables. Coca-Cola Zero, Dasani, Full Throttle, Minute Maid Juices, Nestea and Powerade are all being pursued for distributional setups.

Blue Bell Ice Cream is being sought to setup during the hours of Family Fun Day on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>.

## **Question 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.)?**

The Frontier Fiesta Association actively seeks other sources of funding and systematically approaches these avenues. This is accomplished through four primary areas. The most consistent area is the Frontier Fiesta Committeemen program. This program encourages prominent alumni and community members to sponsor the event through small donations. This can be done on a yearly basis or for a larger fee, committeemen may become "lifetime" members. Lifetime Committeemen are highly regarded for their outstanding financial contributions to the FFA. For Frontier Fiesta 2009 the FFA has increased Committeemen sponsorship amounts for both Yearly and Lifetime levels under the premise that the donors are contributing to the creation of the Frontier Fiesta Endowment. Increased sponsorship levels in a declining economy are offset by the creation of a payment plan that allow Committeemen one full year to pay the required membership fees. Additionally, any individual sponsor that contributes long term and reaches the amount required for Committeemen membership will be automatically inducted.

The creation of a student sponsorship program is in effect for Frontier Fiesta 2009, which allows any University student to contribute \$100 to become a member. Modeled similarly to Student Alumni Connection, the new program will encourage students to invest in Frontier Fiesta and hold ownership before graduating; this will filter an increased amount of students into the Lifetime Committeemen program upon becoming alumni.

The above programs require extensive record keeping into a master database, thus the creation of a Financial Coordinator is established as the FFA does not follow a fiscal calendar. The 2009 Chair and Director of Development worked extensively with Nancy Clark in Advancement to acquire an accurate list of past Committeemen and other donors that were possibly lost following a loss of records after Hurricane Allison.

Frontier Fiesta also pursues corporate sponsorships in exchange for naming rights and advertising at the event. Some of our past sponsors include Five Star, Target, HEB, Silver Eagle Distributors, Dodge, and Toyota. Confirmed corporate sponsors for Frontier Fiesta 2009 include Silver Eagle Distributors, American Campus Communities, Pepper Lawson, Houston Auto Auction, the UH Bookstore, AT&T and the Princeton Review. For Frontier Fiesta 2009, Silver Eagle Distributors have provided a free concert and stage gift-in-kind valued at \$20,000.

The FFA has programmed three benefit events prior to Frontier Fiesta 2009, by which restaurant are contributing 25-30% of all profits to the FFA.

Finally, the Frontier Fiesta Association sells advertising space in our Frontier Fiesta Gazette. In order to do this, Frontier Fiesta solicits companies interested in advertising to the University of Houston and surrounding community. The gazette is available throughout Fiesta City and contains a complete listing of all events during Frontier Fiesta as well as a map, artist information and history of Frontier Fiesta.

**Question #8**

**Please describe any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.**

There is no overlap between the Frontier Fiesta Association and any other University unit. The FFA provides a unique event for the University of Houston and surrounding Houston community. The FFA has maintained long-standing relationships with various fee-funded organizations, rebuilt ones that were weakened due to personal conflicts and created new ones in an effort to provide collaborative programming and support from diverse interests. However, Frontier Fiesta remains an event that has no comparison at the University of Houston.