

## 1. Executive Summary for Cougars in Recovery

Cougars in Recovery (CIR) offers students in recovery from addiction a smooth transition to the university, both socially and academically, by providing a safe and sober environment that assists and supports them as they pursue their academic and professional goals, walk the path of recovery, and participate in the diverse social opportunities available on campus.

CIR fulfills its mission by providing community members support and opportunities in the areas of academics, recovery, social activities, and community engagement. Academic support is offered through scholarships to alleviate financial burden, referring students to on-campus academic resources, and academic guidance through individual coaching. Recovery support is given through on campus sober housing, recovery coaching, twelve step meetings, daily peer lead Community Check-Ins and referrals to mental health resources both on and off campus. Social activities are promoted by sober tailgating, an outdoor adventure learning experience each semester, and twenty four hour access to the CIR lounge, a safe substance-free space, where students can gather and socialize. Community engagement efforts are achieved through the student organization Cougars in the Community (CITC), which is made up of students from the CIR community. CITC volunteers with Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen, Houston Food Bank, Houston Run for Recovery, and Houston Children's Charity.

CIR staff consists of a program director and a new program coordinator whose salary is supported through CIR's gift cost center. The intention of the gift cost center is to sponsor academic and housing scholarships, social activities, operations, and travel cost for outdoor adventures and conferences. Because the new coordinator's salary is being financed by the gift cost center it is retracting valuable resources that could be allocated for student success in academics and recovery. CIR closed FY16 serving 58 students, with 12 students graduated, and began FY17 serving 53 students. This growth is expected to continue as more prospective students learn about the services CIR provides to students in recovery. CIR respectfully requests of the Student Fees Advisory Committee to consider a one-time new request for FY18 to fund the program coordinator's salary and benefits as well as the base salary for the director position.

2. Organizational Chart of Cougars in Recovery

Floyd Robinson  
Assistant Vice  
President for  
Student Affairs-  
Health and Wellness

John A. Shiflet,  
LCDC-I  
Program  
Director

Leah Singer,  
LPC-Intern  
Program  
Coordinator

### 3. Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps for Cougars in Recovery

1. **Increase student participation at social activities and events by 20% through the implementation of activities developed and led by student leaders, incorporating their strengths and interests.**

#### **Related DSAES Initiative:**

1. Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement, and discovery.
- f. Develop new service learning initiatives that create opportunity for self-discovery and application of academic disciplines for students.

#### **Related UH Strategic Goal - Student Success:**

UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

#### **Cougars in Recovery Initiative Action Steps:**

- CIR, with the assistance of student leaders, hosted a sober tailgate for all of the UH Football home games.
- Cougars in the Community, a student organization made up of students within the CIR community, offered several opportunities for students to participate in volunteer community service work at Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen, Houston Food Bank and Houston Children's Charity.
- Students traveled to Pedernales State Park and Big Bend National Park to participate in the Outdoor Adventure Learning Experience component of the CIR program.
- Annually, CIR invites the new and returning students to engage and connect with members in the Fall Meet and Greet.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Accomplishments:**

Most social and community engagement activities are planned through CIR's student organization, Cougars in the Community (CITC). CITC leaders are working to increase the membership of this organization. A family was adopted for both the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Members of CITC raised \$1,100 to purchase a Thanksgiving meal for this family of five, as well as holiday gifts for the three children in the family. CITC staff and students delivered the food and took the mother shopping for the children's gifts. In spring 2016, CITC volunteered at Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen and fed approximately 1,500 homeless individuals. An average of six students volunteered each time CITC worked at Loaves and Fishes.

One of CIR's goals is to provide a complete college experience to students in recovery from substance use disorder. Sober tailgating captures this with pre-game activities such as games and food prior to walking to the stadium to enjoy Houston Cougars Football. Last year an average of nine students attended each tailgate event. It also offers a safe substance free environment for students in recovery to fully participate in all that the university has to offer for student life.

CIR staff and members traveled to Pedernales State Park and Big Bend National Park to participate in the Outdoor Adventure Learning Experience component of the CIR program. The benefits to these outdoor learning opportunities include enhancing personal and social development, improving problem solving skills, developing leadership qualities, enhancing teamwork and overcoming adversity. The goal is to implement a different activity each semester to meet the interests and skill levels of students over time.

The CIR Fall Meet and Greet is an annual event where members come together to participate in community building activities. At this event new and returning students have a chance to connect with one another. Members learn what the expectations are for the CIR community and the lounge space.

2. **Strengthen the comprehensiveness of the program by annually incorporating support for a wider range of addictions and mental health concerns to better meet students' needs and increase community membership.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

3. Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

b. Establish co-curricular, globally focused initiatives that provide students with opportunities for engagement on campus, in our surrounding environments, and beyond.

**Related UH Strategic Goal - Resource Competitiveness:**

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Action Steps:**

- Fostered inclusion amongst CIR community members through offering greater opportunities for academic, social, and recovery support with five community check-ins per week rather than one.
- Administered the CIR Community Survey to collect data that will be used to implement programming to better accommodate students recovery and mental health needs.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Accomplishments:**

In a CIR student survey administered in May 2016, students reported that they would like to have more options for Community Check-In each week to generate more opportunities for support and to better accommodate their busy schedules. Students indicated a preference to reduce the number of students at Community Check-In's for more time to share and receive supportive feedback for their struggles. Also, students suggested that there be more structure added to the daily twelve step meetings offered during the week. This suggestion of greater structure will be developed and implemented in fall 2016.

CIR started FY16 with 44 members and finished the spring semester with 58 members on its roster. That is a 31% increase in CIR community membership in FY16. CIR increased

its student population by 57% from FY15 to FY16. CIR anticipates these numbers to continue to increase between FY16 and FY17 to approximately 75 students on its roster by the end of the academic calendar.

**3. Collaborate with community partners during the fall and spring semesters to develop students' marketable skills through internships, part-time jobs and outdoor adventure activities.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

3. Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

c. Explore and enhance multicultural-based collaborative programs with departments outside of the Division and in partnership with agencies in our surrounding environments.

**Related UH Strategic Goal - Community Advancement:**

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Action Steps:**

- The CIR director built connections between community partners at several local companies that offered students in CIR program internships.
- Served as a liaison between university resources, such as University Career Services, to foster career and professional development.
- Created on campus employment opportunities for CIR community members.
- Collaborated with a non-profit organization, "Hard Life Artist", and a group of homeless youth to paint in efforts to raise money for the organization.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Accomplishments:**

Discussions between the CIR director and community partners have led to both internships and part-time jobs for several students. One student was referred to the Career Services Center on campus where he met with a career counselor and reported to have received valuable information. A second student obtained an internship with the STAR

Drug Court. A third student secured an internship with an insurance company owned by a CIR parent. Two other students obtained part-time jobs at the UH Recreational Center.

CIR's director took seven students on a four day camping trip to Pedernales Falls State Park. The focus of this trip was on building and strengthening relationships in recovery. In May 2016, eight students and two staff members traveled to Big Bend National Park for a four day outdoor adventure learning experience. The central focus of this trip was team building and leadership development.

In August 2016, seven students and one staff member traveled to Tanzania, Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. In addition, CIR members collaborated with a non-profit organization, "Hard Life Artist," and teamed up with a community of homeless youth struggling with substance abuse to paint in efforts to raise money for their organization.

- 4. Advocate for individuals to maintain and sustain recovery by annually participating in platforms to exchange ideas, facilitate relationships, network and participate in educational opportunities on campus, in the Houston community and nationwide.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

- 5. Cultivate a collective identity that demonstrates a united vision.**
- c. Develop a comprehensive and integrated communications plan to increase awareness and understanding among the division, the campus community and the surrounding environments about who we are, what we do, and who we serve.**

**Related UH Strategic Goal - National Competitiveness:**

UH will become a nationally competitive public research university as measured by the Top American Public Research University and/or Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Action Steps:**

- CIR staff and select students represented UH and CIR at the Association of Recovery in Higher Education annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia.
- CIR staff represented CIR at UNITE to Face Addiction national rally in Washington D.C.
- CIR staff participated in the Texas Association of Addiction Professionals annual Health Fair Spectrum Conference.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Accomplishments:**

In October 2015, CIR staff participated in the Health Fair at the Spectrum Conference hosted by the Texas Association of Addiction Professionals. The volunteer program coordinator represented CIR at “UNITE to Face Addiction,” a national rally in Washington, DC. This event was the kickoff to begin changing the conversation from problems to solutions for addiction in America. In April 2016, one staff member and two students traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to attend the 7th annual Association of Recovery in Higher Education Conference. Students and staff gained knowledge of the newest trends occurring in the field of collegiate recovery across the nation.

- 5. Increase sustainability by fostering strong, positive relationships with current donors/partners and networking to acquire three additional financial supporters.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

- 2.** Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience.
- d.** Create and implement a division-wide advancement and fundraising program in partnership with the Division of University Advancement.

**Related UH Strategic Goal - Resource Competitiveness:**

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.



**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Action Steps:**

- Host an annual CIR Graduation Celebration to honor graduating students and use it as a platform to raise money by inviting current and potential financial donors.
- Quarterly campaigning through social media to generate financial gifts to support efforts to provide CIR students with scholarships and outdoor adventures.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Accomplishments:**

All current and seven new individual financial donors were invited to attend the annual Graduation Celebration. Grant proposals were submitted to two new foundations; the Chick-Fil-A Foundation and the Leon Bromberg Charitable Trust. Decisions on both of these proposals are pending.

Every three months CIR uses its public Facebook page as a platform to generate financial support. These gifts go towards the annual CIR Recovery Scholarship and to fund biannual trips for the Outdoor Adventure Learning Experience component of the program.

#### 4. Evaluation of Strategic Initiatives for Cougars in Recovery

Patterns of growth are evident in several areas. Attendance at Community Check-in increased as did the total number of attendees at the Hope Dealers Meetings. Although overall attendance at the weekly Celebration of Recovery meeting decreased, there was an increase in the average number of CIR members attending. The Living the Dream meeting of Narcotics Anonymous will be removed from the meetings offered through CIR due to lack of student need. In the future, if students express a need for the meeting, CIR will provide the space and resources needed to support that meeting. Attendance was not taken at the sober tailgating events, but an average of nine students participated in each event. CIR provided three Outdoor Adventure Learning Experiences throughout the FY16 year. Students and staff traveled to Tanzania, Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, Pedernales Fall State Park and Big Bend National Park. CIR anticipates an increase in the participation of this component of the

program.

Programming	FY 15			FY 16		
	Total	Weekly Average	CIR Student Average	Total	Weekly Average	CIR Student Average
Community Check-in Attendance	556	15	15	764	24	24
Celebration of Recovery Attendance	719	24	8	436	14	11
Hope Dealers Daily AA Meeting	417	20	20	489	16	15
Living the Dream Weekly NA Meeting	39	3	2	8	N/A	N/A
Sober Tailgate	42	6	6	69	9	9
Sober Housing	3	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Adventure	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	1776	119	51	1792	61	57

The three assessment projects implemented in FY16 are described below.

- 1. Increase the number of students participating in sober social activities to foster positive, substance free relationships and build a sense of community through shared experiences.**

Over the FY16 year, the students involved in CIRC created a calendar of events that was open to the CIR community to participate in. These activities included two CIRC bake sales to raise money to provide meals to approximately 350 homeless individuals at the Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen, volunteered at Loaves and Fishes on six different occasions and feed over 1500 homeless individuals and provided Thanksgiving dinner as well as Christmas gifts to a needy family in third ward. CIR offered three outdoor adventure trip during FY

16. Staff and students traveled to Pedernales Falls State Park, Big Bend National Park and Tanzania Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro and participate in a community service project with the non-profit organization 'Hard Life Artist'. The focus of these trips was building relationships in recovery, team building and leadership. Between the three trips, twenty students participated.

**2. Better meet the needs of students; increase membership size; increase the percentage of active participants within the CIR community.**

The CIR Student Survey was emailed to 58 community members and 32 students responded. Students reported that the lounge space that is available to them twenty four hours a day is extremely important to their recovery and academic success. Students reported that they would like to see more structure within the community and structure around meetings. Students reported that they would like to see more consistency in the noon twelve step meetings. Students reported that they would like to have more options throughout the week to attend Community Check-In's to better meet their schedules. As a result of the survey, CIR will be restructuring the programming. In FY17 there will be four to five Community Check-In's offered during the week. Students will choose a Community Check-In that best fits their schedule and attend the same one each week. This will allow students to become better connected to their peers by becoming more vulnerable and comfortable in sharing supportive feedback with issues they are experiencing. In an effort to bring more consistency to meetings, members will be assigned a month in which they will lead the noon twelve step meetings and the Celebration of Recovery at each Community Check-In.

**3. Strengthen program by ensuring strong, competent leadership.**

Unfortunately, this initiative never gained momentum. When this assessment project was put into place, the director was the only staff member working for the program. CIR staff had a goal of bringing on additional staff and incorporating this initiative. The intention behind this assessment project was to incorporate leadership workshops and create self-evaluation and peer-evaluation

questionnaires. These questionnaires were to be completed and discussed among staff members to gain insight about where they could improve by setting goals and expectations for individual and departmental growth.

5. Budget and Organizational Changes in FY2017 in Cougars in Recovery

Changes that occurred for the FY17 budget and organizational structure include the addition of a program coordinator which was filled on October 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year. This positions salary and benefits are funded through the CIR Gift Fund Cost Center, totaling to \$49,870.35.

6. Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps for FY2018 for Cougars in Recovery

1. **Increase the number of students taking advantage of the substance-free residential component of the CIR by 10% allowing more students the opportunity to participate in the full collegiate experience.**

**Related DSAES Strategic Initiative:**

1. Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.
- e. Develop learning communities intentionally connected to academic and student affairs programs to enhance success in support of the growing residential campus.

**Related UH Strategic Goal - Student Success:**

UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiatives Action Steps:**

- Continue to recruit potential incoming freshman and transfer students at the sober high schools and adolescent/young adult addiction treatment facilities.

- Marketing the substance-free housing component at freshman/transfer student orientations and annual conferences that CIR is invited to.
- Incorporate additional male and female suites in Cougar Place, allowing more students to take advantage of on campus sober housing.
- Meeting with the Housing Department to discuss allocating substance-free housing for freshman in Cougar Village.

**2. Developing programming designed for incoming freshman to foster success in academia, recovery and student life on campus.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

1. Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.
  - a. Develop a comprehensive First and Second Year Experience program inclusive of sequential, intentional, and structured co-curricular involvement opportunities.

**Related UH Strategic Goal: Student Success:**

UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

**Cougars in Recovery Initiative Action Steps:**

- Incorporating a pathway for promoting a successful first year experience for all incoming freshman to CIR.
- Implement programming that focuses on time management, goal setting, prioritizing and self-discipline.
- Collaborating with University Career Services to provide incoming freshman Career Assessments to determine a career path that best suits them.
- Offering more on campus substance-free activities exclusively for freshman to acclimate to CIR and the university student life.

**3. Developing programming that prepares CIR members for a pathway towards employment during their final year before graduation.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

1. Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.
- b. Establish supportive and advocacy based programs and services for commuter, transfer, adult, non-traditional and graduate students.

**Related UH Strategic Goal: Community Advancement**

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

**Cougars in Recovery Action Steps:**

- Collaborating with University Career Services to provide graduating students assistance with professional development through resume building skills, mock interviews and attending career fairs.
  - Educating students on how to navigate networking events where there will be alcohol readily available.
  - Foster relationships with companies to provide CIR members internships in their field of study and post graduate employment opportunities.
4. **Strengthen professional development for Cougars in Recovery staff through actively participating in workshops provided by the DSAES Professional Development Committee.**

**Related DSAES Initiative:**

2. Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience.
- b. Execute an effective operating plan of existing fiscal, human, technological and facility resources in support of student success.

**Related UH Strategic Goal: Resource Competitiveness**

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

**Cougars in Recovery Action Steps:**

- CIR staff will attend annual Association of Recovery in Higher Education conferences to gain knowledge of current trends in collegiate recovery communities.
- CIR staff will incorporate diversity and inclusion training in weekly staff meeting to ensure cultural competency in interactions with members of the CIR community.
- CIR staff will attend university organized.

**5. Increase sustainability by maintaining positive relationships with current donors while acquiring two additional foundation supporters, and building the base of individual donors.****Related DSAES Initiative:**

6. Create and engage in strategic partnerships.
  - c. Partner with the Division of University Advancement and the Alumni Association to nurture an alumni base to support the Division's initiatives.

**Related UH Strategic Goal: Competitive Resources:** UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

**Cougars in Recovery Action Steps:**

- Foster strong relationships with current donors.
- Continue collaborating with Office of Foundation Relations on grant writing.
- Identify and seek funding from two new foundations.
- Bring awareness of the CIR program to the Alumni Association.
- Research additional fundraising opportunities.

7. Possible Funding Sources for Cougars in Recovery

<b>Funding Sources for Cougars in Recovery</b>	<b>FY16 Actuals</b>	<b>FY17 Projected</b>	<b>16-17 Actuals</b>	<b>FY18 Projected</b>
<b>Foundations</b>	\$85,000	\$110,000.00	\$77,500	\$125,000.00
<b>Corporations</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Individuals</b>	\$38,989	\$10,000.00	\$0	\$5,000.00
<b>In-Kind</b>	\$0	\$5,000.00	\$0	\$2,500.00
<b>Total</b>	\$123,989	\$175,000.00	\$77,500	\$132,500.00

In collaboration with the UH Office of Foundation Relations, seven grant proposals totaling \$148,000 were submitted on behalf of CIR in FY17. Three proposals totaling \$77,500 have been awarded. The John P. McGovern Foundation, an organization that contributes to local health charities, supported CIR with a gift of \$50,000 for the fourth consecutive year. The Hildebrand Foundation supports faith-based organizations serving the poor and needy in Houston. This generous organization gifted \$25,000 to CIR, for the second consecutive year. The Jackson Foundation, an organization that seeks to support new programs that will enhance and expand the well-being of individuals, with a focus on children, in the Houston area by granting funds for the purpose of health and education, awarded CIR and the university \$2,500 for the first time. The Trull Foundation, which strives to help those affected by substance abuse, in previous years has gifted \$10,000 to CIR. This Grant submission is still pending. Seven students and one CIR staff raised \$37,381.00 to fund an outdoor adventure to Tanzania, Africa to participate in a community service project and climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. The second annual Graduation Celebration Breakfast held in December 2015 raised \$1,975.

8. Rationale for Overlap Between Similar Units and Cougars in Recovery

CIR is the first and only collegiate recovery community in the Houston area; and as such, is setting the standard for collegiate recovery in Houston. This program is open to all students in



recovery from alcohol and other addictions who are enrolled throughout the University of Houston System. The services CIR offers to students at the University of Houston are unique and the first of its kind, as such, facets of CIR do not overlap with any existing departments or services on campus.

The CIR program offers many resources and activities to community members. Utilizing sober housing provides students with the opportunity to fully experience college life while living on campus in an environment where their peers have committed to live substance free. Students are offered eight opportunities to attend twelve-step meetings each week to maintain stability and accountability in recovery while participating in campus life as a student. The CIR lounge is available to students 24 hours a day to study, watch television, play games, and socialize with others in recovery between classes and in the evenings. Accountability is achieved primarily through the weekly check-in meeting where students receive peer feedback after sharing their feelings, successes, struggles, recovery program status, gratitude, and affirmations. Students learn skills for facing their struggles and receive referrals to helpful resources, with the reassurance that others are on this journey with them. Celebration of Recovery is an all recovery meeting that recognizes all twelve-step programs. Camaraderie and community service are integral components of the program.

With open enrollment, CIR has continued to grow at a rapid pace. FY16 began with 37 members; 24 of which were returning students from FY15, and closed with 57 members, which is a 35% increase in participation from FY15 to FY16. At the close of FY16, 12 students graduated either with their bachelor's or master's degree. FY17 began with 33 returning students from FY16 and started FY17 with 53 student members. The cumulative GPA of the CIR community members for FY16 was 3.218 which is a .097% increase from FY15. CIR had an 83% retention rate among its community members for FY16. The diversity of the group has increased with more variety as evidenced by ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, classification and addiction. This increased diversity among the student population is adding to the cohesiveness of the program as students support one another, focusing on the similarities of their struggles rather than their differences.