

FY 24 One-Time Allocation Request – University Bands/Spirit Travel

The Spirit of Houston has been grateful for the travel funding provided by SFAC over recent years. This funding has permitted the Spirit of Houston to send the full Spirit of Houston to multiple football games as a full unit (full band, cheer, dance, and mascots), football games as pep groups (small mixtures of band, cheer, dance and mascots) including all away games in the 2019 season, two away games in the 2021 season, 5 away games in 2022, exhibitions at multiple marching contests around the city and state, and multiple other performances, parades, and community events.

The ability to attend these events has been a major factor for the Spirit of Houston, particularly in the last four years. The visibility of our ensembles and groups has been on par with programs in conferences such as the SEC and Big XII, setting us part from other groups in the American Athletic Conference. With the current transition to the Big XII, we are coming in on level with other programs as far as the expectations for our groups regarding travel. While the support of our athletic programs is the driving point for travel to football games and other athletic events, the visibility at both these events and other performances such as marching contests, cheer competitions, and other community events is one of the most valuable recruiting tools for both our organization and the University of Houston. Our organization has seen incredible growth due to our travel in both our student numbers and talent in all groups, as well as in our presence and visibility on social media platforms.

As we move into the Big 12 Athletic conference, the visibility of our groups will be at an all-time high. As an organization we intend to take advantage of these opportunities to represent and extend the reach of the University of Houston in every way possible. We will have both more travel opportunities within state, as well as new locations out-of-state that have not seen our organizations in recent times.

To this end, we request a one-time allocation of \$165,000 for travel related expenses during FY 2024. This allocation will help to both grow our presence across the state and nationally as well as make up for additional travel costs because of the move to a new conference including the conference basketball tournaments. The ability to do this will no doubt show great results in our recruiting for our own group, the University of Houston, and for the presence of our school in normally unseen areas and venues. The current plan would be to travel as much as possible, hopefully to all away games in some form (either full groups or smaller pep band and spirit groups). This amount would provide support for the organization in a way that we believe would pay great dividends for our students, their potential audiences, and for the University of Houston for which we are ambassadors.