

**STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)**

**FY2026 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE**

Submitted by:



**Department of Intercollegiate Athletics  
Eddie Nuñez, Vice President/Director of Athletics**

INSTRUCTIONS: *Please respond to all questions.*

***An electronic copy of your responses in PDF format should be sent to: SFAC Chair, in care of the Dean of Students Office, at [dlyoung4@central.uh.edu](mailto:dlyoung4@central.uh.edu) by 1:00 p.m., Friday, October 18, 2024. It should be noted that only electronic submissions will be considered. Only those requests submitted by 1:00 p.m., October 18, 2024, will be guaranteed full consideration.***

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 University of Houston Department of Intercollegiate Athletics ("UH Athletics") would like to thank the UH student body and the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) for its continued support of Cougar student-athletes and Cougar athletics as it seeks to engage, involve, entertain and grow students' affinity, pride and love for the University of Houston. Through the success of our student athletes and their competitive successes, we also desire to raise the profile of the University as it drives toward its long-term goal of being a Top 50 Public University.

**Mission Statement:**

The University of Houston Department of Intercollegiate Athletics inspires excellence today while preparing leaders for life by fostering a culture, which challenges student-athletes to achieve their highest academic, athletic, and personal aspirations.

**Core Values:**

Excellence – Integrity – Inclusivity – Loyalty – Accountability – Sportsmanship

**Accomplishing the Mission**

In challenging and inspiring student-athletes to succeed, we strive to provide engagement opportunities where students and others (alums, faculty/staff, donors and sports fans) can participate, be entertained, and become increasingly connected to each other and the University of Houston. Through our daily activities, Athletics seeks to grow Cougars for Life inside the athletic department, on-campus among students and faculty/staff, and outside the University in the greater Houston community.

At the core of any successes Athletics can deliver with respect to growing engagement is the student athlete. For student athletes to be successful, to have opportunities to deliver increased engagement and affinity, student fee dollars allocated to the Athletics Department are invested directly into student athlete wellness, growth, and success. Consistent with our mission, all student fees (100%) are invested into areas directly affecting student athletes and student experience.

Through the success of our student athletes and our responses below, Houston Athletics requests a full allocation of SFAC support.

2. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the DSA strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide a method for collecting this data.

The building blocks of student athlete success within college athletics are rooted in three identifiable areas, academic success, personal development, and athletic success. To this end, support areas funded by student fees (in addition to student employment) are:

				FY24	FY25	
				Budget	Budget	
FUND			Description	Totals	Totals	
	various		Student Employees	610,712	629,400	
	3056 H0002 I0606		Sports Performance	75,000	80,000	
	3056 H0002 I0607		Mental Health/Wellness	202,425	213,008	
	3056 H0002 I0608		Sports Medicine	1,151,746	1,275,483	
	3056 H0002 I0621		Ath Student Services	702,415	785,027	
	3056 H0002 I0745		Medical	1,125,000	1,250,000	
	3056 H0002 I0746		Nutrition	320,024	360,018	
				4,187,322	4,592,935	*
*FY25 increases to be covered by dept funds (non-SFAC)						

Related, inside these support areas, approximately 266 students were employed or gained experience working in various areas of the Athletics Department. The expenditure total in FY24 for student workers was over \$1.02M for payroll and direct tuition payments.

Unit	Paid employee	Volunteer/ Class Credit	Grad Asst	Total
Ticket Office	35	-	-	35
Academics	34	-	-	34
Equipment	24	2	2	28
Content Solutions	27	-	-	27
Marketing	23	-	3	26
Cougar Productions	20	2	-	22
Sport-Specific Managers	5	8	6	19
Football Video	12	5	-	17
Facilities/Event Management	13	-	-	13
Nutrition	3	9	-	12
Cougar Pride	10	-	1	11
Sports Medicine	6	-	-	6
Business Office	3	1	-	4
Ath Media Relations	3	-	-	3
Sports Performance	1	2	-	3
Info Tech	2	-	-	2
Grounds Services	2	-	-	2
Student Athlete Development	-	-	1	1
Compliance	1	-	-	1
	224	29	13	266

### Measuring Success

Given the nature of athletics, tracking and measuring is inherent to most everything we do. Below, by support area, are narratives with respect to metrics/successes achieved.

#### Academics

From an academic success perspective, metrics surrounding grade point average, cumulative grade point average, team grade point average, hours attempted, hours passed, and graduation success rates are tracked, documented, and reported as components key to our overall success. Highlights for FY24 include:

- a. 93 student-athletes graduated in 2023-24.
- b. Grade Point Average:
  - Fall 2023 term GPA = 3.206. Fall 2023 cumulative GPA = 3.203 (each the highest excluding Covid terms)
  - Spring 2024 term GPA = 3.174. Spring 2024 cumulative GPA = 3.223 (each the highest excluding Covid terms)
- c. 3.0 to 4.0 GPA. For Fall and Spring 2024, there were:
  - 35 student-athletes with a GPA of a 4.0.
  - 211 student-athletes with a GPA between 3.50 and 3.99.
  - 245 student-athletes with a GPA between 3.00 and 3.49.
- d. 74% of all student athletes' grades were A's or Bs for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- e. For Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 our student-athletes had 23% less withdrawals from term to term.
- f. Zosia Bulhak (WTR) – 4.0 cum GPA and double majored in English and Economics. Zosia was also featured on UH Scholars Walk and was a 4 year UH student-athlete that graduated with a perfect GPA.

- g. Matt Byrnes (MFB) and Hedda Grell (WSW) received the 2023-2024 Big 12 Dr. Prentice Gautt Postgraduate Scholarship.
- h. Hedda Grell was named the Big 12 Women's Swimming & Diving Co-Scholar Athlete of the Year. She was also the Cullen College of Engineering's Outstanding Senior for the 2023-2024 academic year. Hedda graduated with a 3.9 GPA in Mechanical Engineering in Spring 2024.

Our office is committed to supporting Work Study students each semester, playing a vital role in the University's progress toward becoming a top 50 institution. One key metric in this effort is the retention and graduation of Pell Grant recipients. ACE significantly contributes by offering part-time employment opportunities to eligible UH students with financial need, helping them pursue their education. In addition to these efforts, we currently employ over 50 UH students as academic specialists, providing essential support for our student-athletes' learning needs.

### **Personal Development/Life Skills**

Academic and athletic success are often measured by tangible results, but it is the personal growth and life skills gained through student-athlete development that truly define success in life. Athletics management plays a vital role in shaping not only strong athletes, but strong individuals who are prepared to thrive in all aspects of life. By focusing on leadership, time management, teamwork, and resilience, these programs equip student-athletes with skills that extend beyond the field or classroom, benefiting them in their careers and personal lives. Student-athlete development fosters a balance between academic, athletic, and personal growth, ensuring that they are not just successful in their current roles but are also prepared for long-term success and the challenges of life ahead. Successes of student athlete development include:

#### **Student-Athlete Advisory Committee:**

1. Student-Athlete leaders with representation for every sport – 33 members with at least two from each sport.
2. Empowered by being the voice of UH student-athletes for our department, on campus, in the conference and among the NCAA membership.
3. Serve as counsel on matters of time management – an enhanced focus within the NCAA construct.
4. Provide feedback to National Division I SAAC (Student Athlete Advisory Committee) on proposed legislation that directly affects the student-athlete experience.
5. Populate review committees which evaluate scheduling performance of student-athlete commitment in compliance with NCAA guidelines.
6. On the forefront of raising awareness of mental health issues affecting student-athletes.
7. Hosting and promoting student-athlete events within the department and community to engage the student-athlete population.
8. Through mutual interest, SAAC to engage SGA for a more active role in SGA by student athletes.

#### **Career Development:**

Professional development workshops and hiring events are provided each semester to assist our student-athletes with resume building, professional networking, internships, and job opportunities, to help them in attaining career success post-graduation. Exposing student-athletes to a variety of career fields and work experiences helps them to a career path decision. UH Athletics initiates relationships with employers in the Houston community to further aid them in their job search. Student-athletes also have daily access to one-on-one career advising, both virtually and in person, for major exploration and selection, career planning and job search strategies. We continue to grow the network of our student-athletes by collaborating with career services, and alumni networks to enhance such tailored workshops, internships, and mentorship programs mentioned. These resources would use their expertise to further address the unique challenges athletes face in balancing sports with their career preparation. By working together to create events such as networking nights, and career fairs, athletics and the broader campus can ensure that student-athletes are well-equipped to transition successfully into their professional careers. Such partnerships allow for our student-athletes and general students to learn from one another and leverage their diverse skills sets and share insights and expand their professional networks. s will foster well-rounded personal and professional growth for all involved.

1. Resume/LinkedIn Workshops – From Spring 24 – Fall 24, 150 student-athletes have attended workshops to create, or improve their resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

2. Professional Communication Workshop – Successfully partnered with Mike Pede from the Alumni Association to lead over 75+ student athletes in a session over the significance of clear, concise, and effective communication in professional settings.
3. Mock Interview Workshop – Successfully worked with 40 student-athletes in 1 on 1 sessions working through different scenarios of an interview to equip participants with useful interviewing skills.
4. Networking Night – Hosted multiple opportunities to build professional relationships, exchange ideas and expand career interests through Networking nights, Student-Athlete Industry Mixers, and student-athlete career fairs.
5. Major Exploration – Continuous partnership with the UH Career center guiding our freshmen student-athletes in the Focus 2 assessment within their first year at UH.
6. Job Site Visit – Summer programming allowing our student-athletes to explore job sites and learn from professionals within the career fields interested.
7. Held 50+ 1 on 1 student-athlete meetings focusing on their professional development.

#### **Student Athletes engaging in the Community:**

Community engagement is vital for student-athletes as it encourages engagement with students on campus and fosters a sense of responsibility, leadership, and connection beyond their athletic pursuits. By actively participating in community service, student-athletes learn the value of teamwork and empathy, skills that complement their performance on the field. Engaging with the community helps them develop a well-rounded identity, recognizing that they are role models for younger students and local supporters. It also strengthens the bond between their school and the surrounding area, creating a support system that benefits both their personal development and the collective well-being of the community. We are committed to being involved in more campus activities to help with volunteering with student groups. Some engagement opportunities from 2023-24 include:

1. Kids University – outreach
2. The Women's Home – donated personal items.
3. A canned food drive for the Covenant House.
4. A Turkey Drive with HEB – delivered around the Houston community.
5. Civic Engagement Day with Texas Rising.
6. Sock Drive – local elementary schools
7. Football - NMDP Get in The Game – Bone Marrow donation
8. Football – Project Move-In
8. Men's Basketball – Hope Lodge
9. Men's Basketball – Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital Visit
10. Men's Basketball BARC Animal Shelter – Adoption Awareness

Student-Athlete Community Service as initiated by student-athletes.

1. Best Buddies – Engaging with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Third Ward Street Clean-Up
3. University of Houston Campus Wide Clean-Up
4. Kids Meal Inc. Food Packing
5. Cuney Homes Donation Drive
6. Third Ward Street Clean-up
7. Special Olympics TX - Engaging with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
8. YMCA Paint the Fields
9. FCA Alumni Appreciation
10. FCA Youth Sports Camp
11. Forge for Families Community after school tutoring
12. Project Christmas
13. Youth to University College Tour
14. Help organize and stock at the Houston Food Bank.
15. Blackshear Elementary reading hour.
16. Prepare snack bags and cards for Kids Meals Houston.
17. Zurrie Park clean-up – Third Ward community initiative.

18. Stock Cougar Cupboard – UH Health and Wellness
19. Best Buddies partnership for UH Field Day.
20. Student-Athlete Day of service – refilling local food cabinets in Third Ward.
21. Continue to promote voter registration and census awareness initiatives.
22. Partnership with Team Impact which matches children facing serious illnesses or disabilities with collegiate sports teams.
23. Clothing drive for Star of Hope.

#### **Student-Athlete Mental Health & Wellness Services - Summary of Services (Spring '24, Summer '24 & Fall '24)**

Consistent with needs on campus with respect to students' mental health needs, Athletics need for mental health services have also increased. In response, over the past year, funded, in part, by student fees, Athletics has worked to add its first full-time embedded mental health professional to assist student athletes as they face live challenges as well as the pressures of being a student athlete associated with social media, increased gambling and wagering influence and pressure applied by those in that world. With only a partial year of services to date, some of the metrics/successes reported include the current fall semester.

Over the first seven months Student-Athlete Mental Health & Wellness Services (SAMHWS) conducted 180 individual, virtual, and/or drop-in appointments serving student-athletes with mental health challenges ranging from performance anxiety to bipolar disorders. As one example of effectiveness, over a two-week period in September and October (2024) SAMHWS averaged 20 appointments per week, managed by two clinicians (one full-time and one part-time (16 hours/week). In onboarding our program we're pleased our students are using our services and in so doing, providing some bandwidth relief to support services on campus.

Seeking to be clinically sound, SAMHWS began the '24-'25 academic year by distributing and assessing 416 mental health assessments of UH student-athletes. Completing and reviewing each assessment has allowed our team to develop a caseload based on risk which allows us to be proactive and help our student-athletes with skill building prior to mental health crises.

Much of our success in completing appointments is by making connections with student-athletes and staff during walk-arounds. Over our same initial seven-month period we have made 242 student-athlete connections (conversations lasting at least 5 minutes or more) and 54 coaching staff connections. Further, expanding awareness and understanding of what we do is important to growing our program. To this end, SAMHWS has conducted 18 team presentations/meetings on issues including resilience, identity development, and conversations about food and started to use social media as a positive awareness tool, with 138 followers on Twitter and 222 on Instagram. Our coaches and athletic staff have been tremendous in terms of providing support to SAMHWS and with providing student-athletes with access to SAMHWS.

We depend on our colleagues/peer departments for support and referrals, and they have been tremendous - between academics and sports medicine there have been 30 referrals over the last seven months. Likewise, our UH student-athletes are intentionally investing in their mental health and as of October 2024 there have been 101 self-referrals by student-athletes.

A new unit, our work has not been limited to individual, group, and social media work, SAMHWS has also been busy creating and crafting needed policies and procedures. Over the initial seven months we have developed athletic department mental health policies, an array of mental health forms (i.e., consent forms, intake forms, etc.), and a mental health emergency and communications plan. Fortunately, SAMHWS has benefited from the development of a nine-member mental health multidisciplinary team with representatives from each major athletic department unit (i.e., academics, sports medicine, sports performance, nutrition, and administration). Currently SAMHWS meets all four areas of the NCAA best practices for mental health.

Originally, SAMHWS consisted of one clinician, but since then we have hosted three graduate level social work interns, one undergraduate level intern, one doctoral level sports performance intern, and one Certified Mental Performance Coach. Collectively, these translate into at least an additional half-time person each semester and this semester (Fall '24) it equates to an additional full-time "person". Creating these professional intern opportunities has served us well in meeting the needs of our student athletes.

Lastly, in athletics being a good teammate matters, and to this end we routinely participate in recruiting visits, assist student-athlete development in teaching classes, conduct check-ins with injured athletes, serve on committees to interview coaches, and of course attend practices and games.

Although we have achieved a great deal, as evidenced by the number below, we will continue to get better, Mental health, like other areas of student life, requires funding. To this end, we are appreciative of the student funding that supports our unit/work.

#### SAMHWS by the Numbers

Student-Athlete "Connects"	242
Individual Counseling (IC)	157
Training/Practices (Sports)	122
Student-Athlete Self-Referral	101
Notes/Resource Dev/Prep Time	72
Follow-Ups (IC's Only)	62
Coach Connects	54
IC Cancellations	48
Meetings with Academics	45
Drop Ins	25
Team Meetings	25
Meetings with Coaches	23
Games Attended (Sports)	20
Referrals from sports medicine	18
Intra-MH team Referrals	9
Affinity Group Meetings	6
Referrals from academic staff	6
Referrals from coaches	6
"Crises"	5
Virtual Sessions	3

#### **Engagement**

As a core component of our mission, Athletics has primary focuses on engagement and on raising awareness, affinity, and pride in and among the University's many communities. Central to these goals is engaging students to become more actively involved in UH Athletics.

#### **Student Body Engagement**

Providing programming, entertainment, and opportunities for the general student body to engage in athletics is a core focus of what we do. Through SGA and other student organization interactions, UH Athletics Marketing & Promotions strives to increase awareness and participation opportunities for students. College athletics play a significant role in enhancing the overall identity and culture of a university, creating opportunities for developing a sense of belonging, enhancing the college experience, and creating a sense of community.

## **On Campus student engagement**

Before we engage students at games, UH Athletics works to engage students on campus to encourage attendance. Wanting to meet students where they spend the majority of their time, below are strategies we use in an effort to increase campus engagement:

### **Tabling**

- **Student Center:** We set up tables at the Student Center during high-traffic times throughout each semester to provide students with information about upcoming games and giveaways. UH Marketing staff and interns work at the table to provide information and answer questions. Approximately 100 students stop by for each tabling event at the student center. Encouraging interaction, we run raffles where students can win UH Prize Packs consisting of a t-shirt, hat, cooling fan, souvenir cup, and a pom-pom.
- **Dorms:** We also table in residence hall lobbies. By making our presence known, we actively promote sporting events, distribute flyers, and engage students where they live. This proves an effective tool as ~50-100 students attend our table per event.
- **Events:** We will also table at on-campus and off-campus events at different locations. As one example, we worked with other campus departments by attending the Houston Convention Center for their annual Mayors Back to School event enhancing the impact of UH in our community. We heavily promoted UH football season while also working to excite the children about UH and our other sport teams.

### **Weekly Student Emails (The Cage Weekly)**

- An information/awareness tool, every week we send an email to the student body, titled "The Cage Weekly." This email highlights key athletic events that week, special promotions, and provides important updates on UH Athletics.

### **Posters in Residence Halls**

- At the beginning of each month, posters are provided to Resident Assistant (RA's) for placement on their respective floors. These posters highlight upcoming games, encouraging student attendance. Placed in shared areas like hallways, elevators, and laundry rooms, the posters serve as a visual reminder aware of what's happening on campus with respect to UH Athletics.

### **Orientation Sessions**

- During the summer, athletics marketing gets heavily involved at student orientations to provide incoming students with how they can get involved with UH Athletics. We promote our student ticket claim process, distribute Schedule posters and hand out prizes at these sessions. We also promote student workers and internship opportunities as well. Each orientation services around 500 incoming students.

### **Graphics on Screens in Student Center/Residence Halls**

- We take advantage of the digital screens throughout the campus, particularly in the Student Center and residence halls. These graphics promote upcoming games, provide information about student tickets, and seek to create excitement for UH Athletics.

### **Yard Signs on Campus**

- Yard signs are strategically placed across campus in high traffic areas. These signs have team's schedules and a QR code that leads to the student ticket claim page.



## UH Athletics App

- Last year we launched the UH Athletics App which was developed primarily for students. We have the ability to give students prizes specifically for them and when we launched the app students were awarded 100 points to sign up for the app and they could redeem those points for a t-shirt.
- In the 2023-24 school year, nearly 1,200 students used the app to either check in to an event, enter in a code from our student emails, or read a story about our athletic teams. Nearly 500 students spent their points on one or more of the various prizes we have on the app.
- For our app, we offer various prizes, ranging from Nike hats to giveaways from various sporting events, all the way to autographed equipment. Point totals needed to purchase range from 500 points to 5,000. Some sports offer “punch cards” for their sporting events - the more events you attend, the more prizes you earn. As students, admittance to sporting events is free, giving each a straightforward way to earn prizes.

## In-game student engagement

Led by student attendance at football and men’s basketball (please see the student ticket claim numbers below), once at the game venue, UH Athletics wants to ensure students feel valued, included, engaged, and most importantly have a lot of fun. As evidenced by the many examples referenced in Appendix A – Sport by Sport student engagement, engraining students into the game atmosphere is top of mind.

### Student Ticket Claims

Sport	2022-23	2023-24
Football	26,141	34,554
M's Basketball	23,524	23,726

### Media / Viewership

When not able to attend games in person, or for when Cougar teams are on the road, the opportunity to watch or engage via social media are important ways UH Athletics prioritizes staying engaged. Viewership, on par, viewership increased nearly 20% year over year. Some viewership takeaways for 2023-24 include:

- a. 42 million minutes watched by viewers across 114 home events on in-house Big 12 Now on ESPN+ programming, representing a 55 percent increase from the previous season.
- b. Football: All 12 Houston Football games were nationally televised or streamed over various platforms including four games on FS1 and two games on FOX.
  - i. At 2023 Big 12 Football Media Days, University of Houston registered 708 million earned media potential reach from 208 media sources across 40 different states. For context, as part of 2022 American Athletic Conference Football Media Days, the University of Houston totaled 120 million reached media potential reach.
  - ii. In total, 7.15 million viewers tuned in to the Cougars during their 2023 season including 3.08 million vs. Texas on Sept. 21, 2023 – the most viewers for a UH Football regular season contest since Sept. 23, 2017.
- c. Men’s Basketball: A total of 26.98 million viewers tuned in to 37 Houston Men’s Basketball games during the 2023-24 season.
  - i. The Cougars’ 9.07 million viewers during regular season Big 12 games on linear networks ranked second among league schools and topped all in-state Big 12 programs (Baylor, TCU, Texas, and Texas Tech).
  - ii. The Cougars appeared on ESPN 10 times, CBS three times and TNT two times among other networks.
  - iii. Houston’s three-game NCAA Tournament run garnered 12.48 million viewers.

Social media gains include:

- a. An 11.5% increase in social media engagement (likes, comments, shares, retweets, etc.) across Houston Cougars’ Twitter, Facebook, Instagram year in 2023-24 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024) compared to 2022-23 – 842,236 total up from 755,396.

- b. An 18.9% increase in impressions (times content shows up on user device screens) across Houston Main Athletics platforms – 15.3 million up from 12.8 million.
- c. A 23.5% increase in video views across Houston’s Main Athletics platforms – 1.3 million up from 1.0 million.
- d. An 8.16% increase in social media followers across Main Athletics platforms
- e. A 45.2% increase in all social media engagement (all team accounts and main athletics) – 10.4 million up from 7.2 million.
- f. A 106.3% increase in video views across all social media accounts – 31.7 million up from 15.3 million.

For additional information related to viewership and media exposure, please see Appendix C.

#### Visitors to Campus for 2023-24

Understandably our best opportunity to grow brand affinity for UH is to have as many visitors to campus as we can possibly earn. Attendance metrics for 2023-24 were:

- Football: 252,145 total attendees at TDECU Stadium across seven home games (36,021 average).
  - The 252,145 total attendees marked the fourth-highest attended football season in school history.
  - Houston’s 36,021 average marked the eighth-best average attendance in school history, including second best in 10 seasons at TDECU Stadium.
  - Houston Football’s 25,000+ season tickets in 2023 set a TDECU Stadium record highlighted by 7,800 new season tickets. Houston increased its ticket sales year-over-year by 41.84%.
- Men’s Basketball: 124,966 total attendances in Fertitta Center across 17 home games (7,351 average).
  - The Program sold out 16 of 17 games in Fertitta Center in 2023-24.
  - The program has sold out 37 of the last 38 games in Fertitta Center, dating back to the 2021-22 season.
- Baseball: 46,949 total attendances at Schroeder Park across 32 home games (1,467 average).
- Volleyball: 24,290 total attendances at Fertitta Center across 12 home matches (2,024 average).
  - Includes the first two volleyball sellouts in Fertitta Center history (Texas) along with three other 1,000+ crowds.
- Women’s Basketball: 23,468 total attendances at Fertitta Center across 17 home games (1,380 average).
- Softball: 16,017 total attendances at Cougar Softball Stadium across 30 home games (534 average)
  - Includes three sellouts against Texas.
- Soccer: 4,675 total attendances at Carl Lewis International Complex across 10 home matches (468 average).
  - Houston’s match vs. Texas on Oct. 15 drew 915 fans, ranking fifth on the all-time attendance for the facility.
- Track & Field: 4,300 total attendances at Yeoman Fieldhouse and Carl Lewis International Complex across seven home meets (614 average).
- Swimming & Diving: Hosted the NCAA Zone D Diving Championships which brought student-athletes and fans from Texas A&M, Texas, TCU, Incarnate Word, Minnesota, Little Rock, Arkansas, Iowa, Iowa State, Nebraska, Omaha, LSU, Tulane, UIC, Mizzou, Kansas, and Wisconsin to campus.

#### Tickets sold/number of attendees recorded.

Football	252,145
Men's Basketball	124,966
Women's Basketball	23,468
Volleyball	24,290
Soccer	4,675
Softball	16,017
Baseball	46,949
Track & Field	4,300

### **Athletics/Competition**

Athletically, competitive Team success is key to increasing engagement, passion, and pride in being a Houston Cougar. Routinely tracked, won/loss records, Conference standings, and national rankings are metrics by which we measure athletic success. Further, within each sport itself, an endless number of individual statistics are measured to analyze and improve performance. Athletic successes, by team, are:

### **All Sports**

During UH's inaugural Big 12 Conference seasons ...

- a. 132 total team wins.
- b. 11 of our 17 sports programs represented in the NCAA postseason.
- c. 61 All-Big 12 Conference selections
- d. Three sport programs ranked inside the final Top 25 polls.
  - #3 – Men's Basketball
  - #6 – Men's Track and Field
  - #21 – Volleyball
- e. 45 student-athletes participated in individual NCAA postseason events.
- f. 22 All-American honors earned.
- g. 2 student-athletes earned medals at the 2024 Summer Olympics.

For much more detail associated with the accomplishments of each Team, please review Appendix B – Team Accomplishments.

3. **Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2025) 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.**

Since our last SFAC request (FY2025), there has been change both inside the Athletics Department and nationally for Power 4 athletic programs across the country.

Inside the Department, UH officially stepped up and into the Big 12 Conference. While exciting and long overdue, the move up has been challenging from a budget and operations perspective. Pleased to have increased our self-generated revenues (year over year) by \$19.189 million, the reality is UH Athletics as of FY23, remained the smallest budget among all Power 4 conference schools. From an operations perspective, while accepting the ongoing challenge to do more with less, remaining competitive with our Big 12 competition is challenging. In these thoughts, our continued efforts to earn more self-generated revenues remains a prioritized focus.

From an organization/structure perspective, 2023-24 brought impactful leadership changes within the Department. In August, the University was pleased to welcome Eddie Nunez, from the University of New Mexico to the Vice President / Director of Athletics role. Within the first several days, Mr. Nunez emphasized the importance of a strong partnership with our campus community and specifically our student body. Since arriving he has met with student leaders as a welcome but also as a listening opportunity to strengthen the relationship between students and student-athletes. His focus to support the Cougar Cupboard, attend numerous student events including cage rage to student tailgating at football games. In just under two months in his tenure, he has focused on being more engaged with campus, growing our brand, rightsizing our budget, growing and reshaping our revenues with a sense of urgency. Our administration is evaluating the best structure and courses of action to address NIL, revenue generation and brand awareness/growth for the Department.

Nationally, college athletics is undergoing once in a lifetime change in organizational structure and revenue distribution. Through legal challenges to the NCAA, transfer portal opportunities having expanded for student athletes, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) monetization is legal from an NCAA bylaw perspective, and Revenue sharing with student athletes will happen (via House vs. NCAA). As a result, there has never been a more challenging time for the future of the college athletics enterprise. Like all other Power 4 schools, over the next months, UH will engage/develop models to cap rosters, incorporate NIL, and determine a pathway forward for revenue sharing through additional revenue generation.

**4. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2025 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY2026 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

For Intercollegiate Athletics, a 5% reduction in our student service fee income (equal to \$209,362) would have a notable impact on our Operations for FY2026. UH Athletics, already challenged to compete in comparison to our new conference partners in the Big 12, would fall further behind with respect to dollars spent. For the most recently completed fiscal year (for which peer data is available (FY2023), the average total spending among Big 12 public school peers was \$115.56 million. Total spending for UH during this same fiscal year (FY2023) was \$81.52 million. With this funding gap, and the competitive disadvantage it creates, the loss of any additional student support would be detrimental.

Contemplating the accommodation of a 5% reduction, Athletics management would first seek to remain consistent with its goal of safeguarding the student-athlete in pursuit of academic and athletic success while also working to enhance our self-generated revenue growth in pursuit of a more sustainable financial future. From a practical perspective, Athletics management would seek to protect resource allocations for those people and areas that directly impact student-athlete welfare on a daily basis. In this lens, people/areas to safeguard would include:

- Coaches
- Sport specific support personnel
- Sport Operating Budgets
- Academic Services
- Mental health support services
- Medical Services
- Sports Performance
- Nutrition Services

Similarly, driving more self-generated revenues is both key to our ability to compete and key to our desire to move toward a greater degree of self-sustainability over the longer term. As a result, Athletics management would make effort to safeguard front-facing areas to include:

- Cougar Productions (ESPN+ broadcasts)
- Cougar Pride (Athletics fundraising)
- Marketing, Promotions, Advertising
- Sponsorship - Sales
- Ticket Office – Sales
- Concessions – Sales
- Merchandising - Sales
- Communications/Media Relations
- Branding

Unilaterally protecting the above areas would prove difficult with some limited reductions likely to be taken within them. Areas remaining to absorb the majority of any proposed reduction would generally include back-of-house support units whose work, while important to success, does not directly impact student-athlete welfare or revenue generation. A listing of those areas/units who would be targeted for reduction include:

- Equipment Services
- Video Board Operations
- Athletic facilities Management/maintenance
- Events Management
- Compliance
- Business Office
- Administration
- Ground Services
- Information Technology
- Small Projects/Capital Outlay

5. 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.

Consistent with other Power 5 athletic departments around the nation, UH Athletics has the ability to generate additional funding by increasing self-generated revenues to offset a portion of our annual operating costs. Self-generated revenue categories (as defined by the NCAA) along with the amounts earned during FY23 and FY24 are listed below:

Self-Generating Revenues		
Revenue	FY23	FY24
Ticket Sales	\$4,928,290.06	\$9,774,519.00
Guarantees (Received)	\$206,500.00	\$15,000.00
Contributions	\$7,415,756.22	\$13,879,423.00
NCAA/Conference Distributions	\$9,091,325.87	\$17,955,822.00
Program, Novelty, Parking and Concession Sales	\$1,444,268.70	\$1,243,668.00
Royalties, Licensing, Advertisement and Sponsorships	\$4,951,687.08	\$5,074,091.00
Other Operating Revenues	\$1,542,090.32	\$1,507,482.00
Bowl Revenues	\$681,487.00	\$0.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$30,261,405.25</b>	<b>\$49,450,005.00</b>

The opportunity to compete in the highly and nationally competitive Big 12, affords, over time, the opportunity for UH Athletics to secure more self-generated revenues in each of these categories. Having just completed our first year in the Big 12 (Power 4 conference), we were able to demonstrate improvement in this regard.

From a student and fan perspective, the opportunity to play more games more routinely against nationally relevant Big 12 opponents brings heightened excitement and also provides the opportunity to improve the quality of the experience and improve the value of the UH brand. A more detailed description of self-generated revenue opportunities is below:

**Sources of Funding:**

**1. Ticket Sales:**

- **Source:** Self-Generated Revenue opportunity. Sales opportunities exist in 9 of our sports, with primary revenue/sales focus on football, followed by Men's basketball.
- **Purpose:** Funds generated through ticket sales are primarily used to offset costs associated with Team operations and related support services.
- **Duration:** Annual/Ongoing.
- **Results (FY24):** please see the chart above.

**2. Guarantees (Received):**

- **Source:** Self-Generated Revenue opportunity. A limited opportunity primarily in the sports of football, men's basketball, women's basketball, volleyball, baseball and softball.
- **Purpose:** Funds generated through Guarantees received are primarily used to offset travel expenses associated with appearing at a road game.
- **Duration:** Annual/Ongoing.
- **Results (FY24):** please see the chart above.

**3. Contributions/Donations:**

- **Source:** Self-Generated Revenue opportunity. Donations are first categorized into two categories: Restricted (defined purpose of the gift) and Unrestricted (undefined purpose of the gift)

- **Purpose:** Funds generated through Restricted gift efforts are used according to donor intent. Donor intent examples would include a capital gift toward new facility construction, renovation of an existing facility or a gift directed to an endowment. Unrestricted gifts (those without specific donor intent) are first used to offset the annual cost of scholarships for our student athletes and then, if any amount remains, these unrestricted funds are used to offset the general operating expenses of the Athletics Department. An example of a restricted gift would be a capital gift to our Football Operations Center (FOC) construction project. An example of an unrestricted gift would be a seat donation (tied to the purchase of a football season ticket) used to cover the cost of student athlete scholarships.
- **Duration:** Annual/Ongoing (unrestricted) and Fixed/Duration (restricted).
- **Results (FY24):** please see the chart above and please see some highlight callouts below:

DESCRIPTION	FY22	FY23	FY24
Major gifts closed (\$25k+ or more)	24	38	81
Annual Giving	\$ 5,357,538	\$ 6,012,440	\$ 8,373,406
Football Per Seat donations	\$ 2,137,732	\$ 2,837,035	\$ 4,345,103
M's Basketball Per seat donations	\$ 335,436	\$ 503,009	\$ 975,264

4. **NCAA/Conference Distributions:**

- **Source:** Self-Generated Revenue opportunity. Two primary sources of revenue associated with this category, NCAA for things associated with the number of sports sponsored and scholarships issued, and Conference (Big 12); The primary driver of conference revenue distribution is the Big 12's television contract with ESPN.
- **Purpose:** Funds generated from these, while there are a few smaller earmarked amounts, are used to offset general overall general operating costs of the Department.
- **Duration:** Annual/Ongoing.
- **Results (FY24):** please see the chart above.

5. **Program, Parking Novelty, and Concessions:**

- **Source:** Self-Generated Revenue opportunity. The primary sources of sales revenue are Parking and Concessions at and around our athletic events.
- **Purpose:** Funds generated in these areas are used to offset the general operating expenses of the Department.
- **Duration:** Annual/Ongoing
- **Results (FY24):** please see the chart above.

6. **Licensing/Merchandising and Sponsorship:**

- **Source:** Self-Generated Revenue opportunity. Primary sources of revenue for this category are Licensing (use of university marks for the purposes of 3<sup>rd</sup> party sales), Merchandising (the sale of UH branded apparel/goods at, in and around athletic events) and Sponsorship sales (the sale of brand awareness/activation opportunities to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties interested in having their brand associated with the Houston brand).
- **Purpose:** Funds generated in these areas are used to offset the general operating expenses of the Department.
- **Duration:** Annual/Ongoing
- **Results (FY24):** please see the chart above.

6. **Please use the following file naming conventions when submitting your pdf files to the Dean of Students:**

FY26Q_DepartmentName	Questionnaire
FY26AOT25a_DepartmentName	Add 'I One time request - change "a" to "b", "c", etc. for additional one-time requests

FY26WS_DepartmentName	Excel worksheet
FY26BA_DepartmentName	Base Augmentation request
FY26OTa_DepartmentName	One time request - change "a" to "b", "c", etc. for multiple one-time requests
FY25PRES_DepartmentName	Presentation

**NOTE:** *The totality of your responses to these questions should give the members of the Committee a comprehensive understanding of the role and function of your unit(s). To the extent that your responses do not accomplish this, please revise them accordingly.*

**Questionnaire completed by Monty Porter, Deputy Athletic Director/COO, [mmporte2@central.uh.edu](mailto:mmporte2@central.uh.edu), 713-743-7964.**

## APPENDIX A – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

### Sport by Sport, Cage Rage, Student Intern program

UH Athletics prioritizes creating an inclusive, vibrant environment that fosters student engagement and supports their sense of belonging, well-being, and success. Our games and matches serve as a vehicle for students to engage one another, experience the excitement of college life, and develop a deeper connection to UH. Sport to sport examples include:

#### Football

- Each game, UH Athletics provides at least 5,000 student tickets, and due to high demand, we regularly exceed that number. For the first two home games of the 2024 season, we had over 7,000 tickets claimed. By offering ample access to our games, we ensure that students from all backgrounds can participate in these pivotal community events, deepening their connection to the university and its culture.
- In collaboration with the Dean of Students Office and the Student Government Association (SGA), we host a shared student tailgate at every home football game. This inclusive event provides free food, beverages, tailgate games, video games, and more, creating a welcoming space for students to bond before the game. Every week, approximately 400 students participate, building camaraderie and fostering a spirit of community among their peers.
- Student organizations are actively involved in our game-day experience. Groups have the opportunity to set up their own tailgates along Cullen Boulevard, allowing them to showcase their organizations and create belonging opportunities for their members. Each game, ~15 student organizations participate, with approximately 1,000+ students enjoying and taking ownership of their game day and tailgate experiences.
- In game, students are central to touchdown celebrations, raising the “Whose House” Tifo banner across the student section to “let ‘em know” it’s always the Coogs House! This tradition improves students’ pride and provides energy for the stadium.
- T-shirt tosses in the student section remain a very popular game day promotion. New Cougar gear is always a hit.
- We collaborate with numerous client partners to elevate the pre-game environment. These partners engage students through large activations where they can enjoy free food, beverages, promotional items, and interactive games. Students also have the chance to sample new products, and get a lot of promotional items, adding to the overall excitement. Additionally, many of our partners distribute items like rally towels, T-shirts, and other giveaways as students enter the game, further enhancing the game-day experience and building school spirit.
- We provide a unique opportunity for students in UH’s American Sign Language Interpreting Program to perform the national anthem in sign language. This is good experience for the student chosen and highlights our commitment to inclusiveness.
- UH ROTC students play a role on game day. Assisting to unfurl the on-field American flag during the national anthem, performing push-ups alongside Shasta after every UH touchdown, and managing the field goal nets, ROTC is vital to our game day operations and to our in-stadium energy.
- During each game, students are selected to participate in various on-field contests like the Whataburger Bucket Toss and Field Goal Frenzy, where students compete to win. We also feature the Raising Cane’s Row Race, offering rows of students the chance to win free meals. Providing students with fun, these in-game assets enhance the game-day experience.
- Often students also part of providing entertainment throughout the game, participating in fun elements like Dance Cam, Helmet Shuffle, and various other hype and legendary moment videoboard opportunities.
- One example of sponsor promotion aimed at students, Athletic staff collaborated with Lewis Jewelers to create the Diamond Dig, where student couples competed during the final home game of the season to win a diamond wedding ring.
- Affordability and accessibility are always important, through our food and beverage provider (Chartwells), we are pleased to offer various \$5 student exclusive deals at concession stands.
- Each year a significant portion of our halftime during the Homecoming football game is dedicated to honoring the Homecoming Court. The court is introduced to the audience, with the crowning of the King and Queen taking



place at the 50-yard line, providing a memorable moment for all the students involved. This tradition connects students to the broader UH legacy and strengthens the sense of community during one of our most cherished events.

- One football game each season is dedicated to promoting mental health awareness. In-game the videoboard features a video that provides students and fans with vital information about available mental health resources and the message that no one is alone. In addition, a mental health awareness booth is hosted in the student concourse area, providing information and resources available for mental health services.
- Each home football game, we take the opportunity to honor one of our athletic teams. Most often, these are teams that have won championships or achieved significant accomplishments. This year, in addition to honoring teams, we recognized student athletes who competed in the Summer Olympics. By highlighting these achievements, we provide student-athletes with a sense of pride in their contributions while also enhancing the collective pride of the student body in our university's success.
- Once per season, we collaborate with the Residence Halls Association (RHA) and Resident Assistants (RAs) to host a "Battle of the Dorms". This competition generates excitement and friendly rivalry, as RAs encourage their residents to come out and support their dorm. The dorm with the highest participation wins a catered lunch for the entire dorm. To add to the fun, we set up tailgate games and bring Shasta along to create a lively and festive atmosphere. This event provides students with another opportunity to build fellowship and community.

## **Men's Basketball**

### **The #ForTheCity Student Ambassador**

The #ForTheCity Student Ambassador program features 150 University of Houston students selected through an application process. Students were selected based on their academic standing, activism on campus, student organization affiliation, passion for the men's basketball program, and other qualities/traits. Emphasis was placed on putting together a diverse and inclusive group, reflecting the university and its values. Each ambassador was provided with a T-shirt for joining the program, courtesy of the men's basketball program.

Areas of Focus: The ambassador program was initially launched to help maximize the reach of gameday awareness for men's basketball, however, over time, the program has expanded to focus on a wide range of areas. Highlights are shown in the bullets below.

- **Grass Roots**
  - o Grass roots focused on finding outlets to promote upcoming men's basketball games on campus and in the surrounding community. Examples included handing out flyers in high foot traffic areas, placing promotional posters in classroom buildings, putting flyers underneath dorm room doors, and placing ads at bus stops.
- **Atmosphere**
  - o This area focused on creating a student section atmosphere that provides our team with a true home court advantage. Examples included providing a student generated music playlist, passing out/displaying big heads in the student section, leading chants, and urging students to stand/cheer the whole game through.
- **Social Media**
  - o Social media was a primary area ambassadors got involved in due to its convenience. A group of ambitious ambassadors even created an official Instagram and Tik Tok for the program, filling them with student created content. Ambassadors also shared graphics to social media and were urged to create their own content as well.
- **Student Engagement**
  - o This area focuses on connecting with the student body through engaging in men's basketball events. Some of the events this past year included student organizations hosting the pre-game tailgate in Cemo Plaza and away game watch parties.
- **Creative**

- o Ambassadors had the ability to show off their creative talents by submitting t-shirt concepts and laptop sticker designs.
- **Feedback**
  - o Ambassadors were frequently given the opportunity to provide feedback. Some examples included giveaway shirt designs, sing-along song choice, food at the student tailgate, and more.

#### **Men's Basketball:**

- Each game, UH Athletics provides at least 1,000 student tickets, and due to high demand, we regularly exceed that number. By offering ample access to our games, we ensure as much access as possible for as many students as possible.
- The Red & White Scrimmage in the Fertitta Center. This event created an opportunity for students and fans to generate a buzz for the upcoming season and formally introduce the 2023-24 team. This was the first opportunity for the students to get a look at this year's team in action before the exhibition. The event was free for students to attend.
- The Tip-off Pep Rally in the UH Student Center. The pep rally typically includes a performance by Cougar Brass with Director of Bands David Bertman serving as MC, speech from Coach Sampson, introduction of the team roster, t-shirt toss, and a performance by the UH Cheerleaders.
- The #ForTheCity Sticker Challenge and we used our #ForTheCity Ambassadors. The rules of the challenge were simple: our ambassadors planted a #ForTheCity sticker somewhere randomly on campus and the first five students finding the sticker won team issued apparel.
- Throughout the season marketing went on campus with Shasta to help promote an upcoming game. Each time Shasta went out we provided something to hand out to students or did a pop-up "Photos w/ Shasta" near our table in the Student Center.
- Every home game (classes in session) we featured a student tailgate at the Fertitta Center CeMo Plaza. Varying in content game to game, every tailgate featured a 20 x 10 tent, free catered food, drinks, music and tailgate games.
- For the three Saturday Conference home games, UH Student Organizations were able to purchase tailgate spaces near the student entrance for hosting their organization pregame activities.
- For winter break games, UH students were eligible to claim 2 tickets for any home game, bringing a friend to sit/cheer the Cougars from the student section. This promotion is an annual effort to promote attendance and allow students to share/grow the UH experience.
- The Dorm Challenge is an attendance challenge between the dorms on campus. Students sign in at the game and indicate which dorm they live in. The winner is announced at halftime. The winning dorm (last season Cougar Village 1) earned a pizza party during finals week.
- The Student Org Challenge was an attendance challenge between the UH student organizations on campus. Students signed in at the game and indicated which organization they were representing. The winner was announced at halftime and the winner was Coogs of CV3, who received free pizzas delivered to one of their meetings.
- We hosted a Greek Night during the conference season that consisted of an attendance challenge between Greek organizations on campus and a halftime scrimmage featuring the Sigma Chi's and the Alpha Sigma's. Members of the Greek organizations signed in at the game and Chi Omega won the grand prize of a \$500 visa gift card.
- The student appreciation game took place on Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>. Each student attending the game received a raffle ticket to win a prize during the game. We raffled off a total of 4 prizes including an Rtic Cooler, Team Issued Gear, Coach Sampson Autographed Basketball, and Air Pods. Additionally, students who signed into the game on the rewards app received double reward points.
- As an appreciation for the support all season long Coach Sampson provided the entire student section with free pizza at the second to last home game of the season vs Cincinnati. Overall, 800 students were given a free slice of pizza courtesy of Coach.

## **Women's Basketball**

- At Student Night we offered free boba teas and iced coffee for students. We also hosted a student raffle, offering more than ten prizes for students. Prize packs included a multitude of items, such as water bottles, insulated mugs, hats, t-shirts, and more.
- 713 Day was a celebration of our city, and we did a food drive that benefitted the UH Cougar Cupboard to help provide for students on campus.
- On Study Break Night we offered iced coffee for students. We also hosted a student raffle, offering more than ten prizes for students. This game provided a break and hopefully stress release for our students during finals week.
- For our Salute to Service game to encourage attendance we offered free pizza and had a student raffle as well.
- On Coogs Couples night, we offered free pizza for students and provided an opportunity for students to have a fun night out for Valentines Day. With the game being against a top 5 opponent and an in-state rival, we included our largest student raffle. Prizes for this raffle included two pairs of team-issued Jordans, team-issued apparel, and other larger prizes.
- Throughout the season, we had various in-game promotions for students to compete for prizes associated with the Whataburger Bucket Toss, the basketball shootout, the Takis Fuego Challenge, and basketball tic-tac-toe.
- A UH student served as our in-game host for every game.
- We tabled multiple times in the student center, offering free food and treats for students that stopped by our table.

## **Baseball:**

- At baseball every Tuesday we offer the first xx number of students (varies) free hot dogs.
- We do various giveaways at games to encourage attendance. Examples include free T-shirts, food items, and sponsor giveaways, and when the Cougars win, free Canes food coupons for a post-game snack or meal.
- During finals week we handed out free honey butter chicken biscuits to students that attended, providing them with a little break from prepping for finals.
- When students attend baseball games, they also have the opportunity to participate in several in-game promotions, where the prize is very often a meaningful gift card contribution from one of our sponsors.
- Themed nights, such as 713 Night and Bark at the Park, celebrate local culture and inclusivity, attract diverse audiences and make the events more engaging.
- Our in-game host was a student intern whose passion is to be an in-game emcee in her future career. Allowing her the opportunity to be a baseball emcee not only elevates the game experience for fans, but also allowed her to develop the skills needed for her future.

## **Volleyball**

- Our volleyball program goes to the student center 2 – 3 times per year to pass out cookies or pizza to students to promote their upcoming matches for that week.
- At the home volleyball match on Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, the first 100 students in attendance received a free slice of pizza to attend the match.
- On Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> our volleyball program hosted their annual Dorm Challenge match. The winning dorm, Cougar Village 2, received free pizza delivered by the volleyball team. At the match, we also handed out 50 red UH hats to the first 50 students in attendance.
- On Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> our volleyball team hosted the first annual “Blocktoberfest” match. At this match, we did a student organizational attendance challenge. The winning prize for the student organization that brought the most members was free pizza delivered to their next upcoming meeting. The winning student org was “Coogs of CV3”. In addition, we handed out vouchers to the first 50 UH students in attendance to redeem a free pretzel from the concession stand.
- The annual “Red Out” match is scheduled for Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 pm. The first 250 fans, including students, will receive a free T-shirt when they enter the match.

- Coogapalooza is the student appreciation match at volleyball. At this match the first 100 UH students in attendance will receive a free UH tumbler. There will also be a prize raffle during the first two set breaks. A total of 4 prizes will be raffled off including an autographed volleyball from Coach Rehr, Team issued swag, an Rtic Cooler, and Air Pods. Additionally, students who check into the rewards app will receive double points for attending.
- The annual “Black Out” match is scheduled for Saturday, November 16th at 2 pm. The first 250 fans, including students, will receive a free black T-shirt when they enter the match.

### **Soccer**

- We took UH soccer players to the student center, the RAD center and other places on campus to interact with students and give them cookies and flyers that promoted our upcoming match. This resulted in 58 students attending our first match.
- Student Welcome Match on August 22 we gave away school supplies to help get students ready for the semester and we provided pizza to students.
- We had UH soccer players pass out flyers to thousands of students before a UH football game, to welcome students to the football game and promote the upcoming match vs Texas Tech.
- Many of our other matches during the year had giveaways at the matches that students had the opportunity to receive, including hats, scarves, Hawaiian Leis, UH Mugs, Posters and t-shirts.
- Our Hispanic Heritage game was September 19, and we invited several Hispanic student organizations to come out. During that game we promoted those student organizations, giving them exposure for their groups and involved them with some of the interactive fan activities at the game. We gave away Los Cougars T-shirts at the game which students had an opportunity to receive.
- Go Pink for the Cure game was on October 13, and we had Susan G. Komen on site providing information to students and fans about breast cancer prevention and early detection. This was a great learning opportunity for our students.
- Senior Night is October 25 where we salute our seniors and their academic achievements. We featured our seniors, who are great representatives of the University and role models on the poster that will be giving out at this game. We also offered double point on the UH Pride app for our students and fans.

### **Tennis**

- During our Big 12 Home Opener on February 29, we gave away Tennis stickers and free Pizza for students.
- For our Tennis match on March 28, we gave away donuts to students who attended the match.
- The Tennis match on April 7 was Senior Day. We honored our seniors for their service to the University and their academic achievements. In addition, we provided donuts for our students attending the match.
- Throughout the semester, the UH tennis players went out to the student center three times to promote their tennis matches. They passed out cookies, flyers, schedule posters to hundreds of students who walked by. This allowed friendly interaction between players and students to continue to build a community and promote their matches.

### **Track and Field**

- During our indoor season, we partnered with the University of Houston Admissions office for our high school meets during the month of January, connecting nearly 2,500 current high schoolers and their families with the University.
- The outdoor season included the Cameron Burrell Alumni Invitational, which was used as a mental health meet and the founding of our “Pack the Track” initiative. In preparation for the meet, athletes (along with our staff) tabled at the student center, handing out cookies and flyers for the upcoming meet.

In addition to engaging students before and during games, UH Athletics is pleased to partner with campus and serve as host to Cage Rage.

### **Cage Rage**

Each school year, we kick off with Cage Rage as an important component of the University Weeks of Welcome! Athletic staff serve on the Weeks of Welcome committee to help develop programming for the Weeks of Welcome on campus.

Cage Rage is one of the largest events during Weeks of Welcome and attracts over 3,500 students from diverse backgrounds and grade levels, bringing together students, athletes, and the broader university community. Cage Rage not only celebrates school spirit but also fosters a sense of belonging among attendees. 90% of students who took the weeks of Welcome post-event survey thought that Cage Rage helped them to feel more connected to the campus and UH community and 80% thought that it helped teach them UH Football student fan traditions.

Cage Rage features a wide array of activities, including interactive games, free food and drinks, and opportunities to engage with Houston teams and Houston pro sports teams. Other highlights include raffles, performances by the marching band, and appearances by student-athletes. The event includes a pep rally that energizes the crowd and showcases the university's athletic teams. Complete with a DJ and emcee Chinedu, the evening culminates with a spectacular fireworks show.

Cage Rage exemplifies how sports and campus engagement enhance student experience. By fostering school spirit, creating connections, and providing a platform for expression, Cage Rage adds value to the university community, making it an anticipated highlight of the academic calendar.

### **Student Internship Report**

In addition to all the things we do to support our teams, student athletes and to build the UH community, we have a very important mission helping other UH students reach their goals by providing a robust internship program in the athletics marketing department. The UH athletics marketing internship program offers students a unique opportunity to gain real-life experience in the fast-paced world of sports marketing. This program equips students with essential skills and professional networks that are crucial for career development. By engaging with the community, promoting events, and assisting in game-day operations, interns gain valuable skills and insights that enhance their academic learning and career prospects. We have a group of about 20 to 25 student interns with diverse backgrounds who work with us to run live home events and any other event opportunities that marketing runs. Each semester we have anywhere from 5 – 10 interns who are seniors that go on to graduate, and some enter the sports world for careers while others go onto different career paths. There are numerous benefits of this internship for students:

- Our internship provides hands-on experience that is invaluable for students. By working directly with our department, students learn how we execute live events for home sporting activities. They help run student tailgates, kids' zones, and in-game promotions while engaging with our Houston fan base by distributing roster cards, posters, and other materials. This practical exposure allows them to understand the intricacies of sports marketing, including event promotion, sponsorship management, and audience engagement.
- The internship also helps interns cultivate essential skills critical for success in the sports industry. Engaging with fans and stakeholders enhances both verbal and written communication abilities. Assisting in the coordination of game-day operations and promotional activities builds important project management skills. Additionally, promoting events through their social media accounts allows interns to connect with fellow students and understand how to effectively market on digital platforms.
- Interns have the chance to connect with athletics marketing professionals, coaches, and fellow interns during our bi-weekly meetings. We invite guest speakers from various departments or other sports teams to discuss their careers and offer advice. This networking can lead to mentorship opportunities, future job prospects in the sports marketing field, and insight into various career paths within athletics.
- Our interns are also expected to provide feedback on current trends and fan engagement strategies. This involvement gives them a deeper understanding of market dynamics, as they create fun and engage in the theme nights for games during the season we will look to implement. This allows the students to work on a project and

put together a promotion to execute just like full-time staffers do. They help enhance the atmosphere at events with games, giveaways, contests, trivia, and music, while also gaining exposure to innovative marketing practices that resonate with target audiences. This real-world marketing experience demonstrates their ability to work collaboratively in high-pressure situations, making them more career ready.

- Our interns also play a pivotal role in promoting Houston Athletics within the campus community. Their responsibilities include distributing promotional materials and engaging fellow students, thereby enhancing the overall atmosphere at athletic events through interactive activities and contests.
- Interns are expected to maintain a positive attitude, strong work ethic, and professionalism. These qualities foster personal growth through challenges and team collaboration, while also facilitating professional development as students learn to navigate workplace dynamics and expectations. At the end of each semester, we host an appreciation event to celebrate their hard work, offering a fun activity along with dinner and gifts to express our gratitude for their hard work. We also give them gear throughout the semester as well.
- The Houston Athletics Marketing Brand Ambassador Internship Program offers significant value to students by providing practical marketing experience, skill development, and networking opportunities. Through their diverse responsibilities, interns not only enhance their understanding of the sports industry but also contribute positively to the Houston Cougar community. This internship serves as a vital steppingstone for students aspiring to build successful careers in athletics marketing, making it an essential component of their academic and professional journey.

## APPENDIX B – TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Men's Basketball

- a. Houston finished the 2023-24 season ranked #3 in both the final Associated Press poll and *USA TODAY Sports* Coaches polls. It was the seventh straight season the Cougars finished among the nation's Top 25 in both national polls and the fourth straight year to be among the Top 10 in at least one poll.
- b. With a 32-5 overall record, the Cougars posted their third straight 30-win season to set a school record. It stands as the nation's longest active streak among all NCAA Division I schools. Houston also enjoyed its ninth straight 20-win season for another school record.
- c. Competing in its first year in the Big 12 Conference, Houston overcame a 1-2 start in league play to win 14 of their last 15 league games on the way to the regular-season championship. It was the program's fifth regular-season title in the last six years and the seventh title of any kind under Head Coach Kelvin Sampson.
- d. For the fifth consecutive postseason, Houston advanced to the NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 or farther. That ranks as the nation's second-longest active streak, trailing only Gonzaga. The Cougars also competed in their sixth straight NCAA Tournament, setting another school record.
- e. Nearly 125,000 fans poured into the Fertitta Center to watch the Cougars post a perfect 17-0 record in front of the hometown fans. It was the 11<sup>th</sup> undefeated home schedule in school history and only the third since 1972-73. The Cougars enter the 2024-25 season with a 22-game home winning streak, the nation's longest active streak.
- f. For his team's performance throughout the season, Sampson was named the National Coach of the Year by the Associated Press, National Association of Basketball Coaches and *Field of 68* and received the Henry Iba Award, presented annually by the United States Basketball Writers Association to the nation's top coach, and the John McLendon Award for the second time in his career.
- g. Sampson was recognized as the Big 12 Coach of the Year by the league and the Associated Press. These were his ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> conference Coach of the Year awards from the fifth different league in his career.
- h. Senior point guard Jamal Shead became one of the most decorated student-athletes in school history in 2023-24. Shead was named the National Defensive Player of the Year by the Naismith Awards, NABC, *Field of 68* and Andy Katz and was a Finalist for the John R. Wooden Award and the Bob Cousy Point Guard of the Year Award.
- i. Shead was named the Big 12 Player of the Year and the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year. He became the first player in league history to receive both honors in the same season and was named a Conference Defensive Player of the Year for the second straight season in his second different league.
- j. Senior guard LJ Cryer joined Shead in earning All-America honors, being named to the Second Team by the USBWA. Cryer led Houston with 15.5 points per game and topped the Cougars and the league with 3.0 3-point field goals per game. With 112 3-pointers, he posted the fourth-highest single-season total in school history and became the eight different Cougar to drain 100+ treys in a year.
- k. Senior forward J'Wan Roberts led the Cougars and finished among the Big 12 leaders with 6.8 rebounds per game and was one of only three student-athletes to rank among the league's Top 10 leaders in both offensive **AND** defensive rebounding. An All-Big 12 Third-Team honoree, Roberts moved into the Cougars' Top 10 career leaders in wins, games played and rebounds and finished the season as the third-winningest player with a 117-19 record.

### Men's Track and Field

- a. Houston Men's Track and Field program won an NCAA Outdoor individual national championship, finished sixth in the nation, one USTFCCCA Scholar Athlete of the Year, 15 All-America honors, 24 NCAA Regional qualifiers and six conference titles.

- b. During the indoor season, the Cougars grabbed two individual conference titles as senior De'Vion Wilson won the first Big 12 title in program history in the 60-meter hurdles. Grant Levesque made a splash in his first season as a Cougar by winning the first heptathlon title since 2018.
- c. Houston made a splash at the Big 12 Outdoor Championship with Maswanganyi winning the 100, 200, 4x100-meter relay and the High Point award. At the conclusion of the Big 12 Championship, Maswanganyi was voted by the league as the Men's Outdoor Performer of the Year.
- d. The Cougars were well represented at the NCAA Outdoor Championships competing in seven events. Louie Hinchliffe converted himself into a household name as he won Houston Track and Field's first 100-meter NCAA Outdoor Track and Field title since 2018.
- e. Maswanganyi (South Africa) and Hinchliffe (Great Britain) represented their respective nations at the 2024 Paris Olympics as Maswanganyi won silver in the men's 4x100-meter relay and Hinchliffe took bronze in the same event.

### **Women's Track and Field**

- a. The Cougars spent countless weeks in the USTFCCCA rankings, taking bronze at the NCAA Indoor Championships, 12 All-America honors, six NCAA West Preliminary Round qualifiers, three Big 12 Conference Championships and one Big 12 Performer of the Year.
- b. At the Big 12 Indoor Championship, Kelly-Ann Beckford claimed the 800-meter title and broke the meet record. Beckford later joined teammates Iman Babineaux, Michaela Mouton and Sydney Townsend to win the 4x400-meter relay. Following her golden performance, Beckford was voted by the league as the Women's Indoor Performer of the Year.
- c. The Cougars closed out the indoor season at the NCAA Indoor Championships in stellar fashion as the 4x400-meter relay team brought home the bronze and improved their school record.
- d. During the outdoor season, the 4x400-meter relay team defended their Big 12 4x400-meter title.
- e. At the NCAA Outdoor Championships, Townsend scored the first points for the Cougars as she placed fifth in the 400-meter hurdles. Mouton earned her first career individual All-America honors with Second Team in the 400-meter. Townsend and Mouton later joined teammates Beckford and Babineaux in the 4x400-meter relay, where the group finished fifth with a season-best and school-record time of 3:24.73.

### **Cross Country**

- a. The Houston men started 2023 with hardware, winning the Lamar Early Bird Opener by 16 points. Led by Brandon Seagreaves' second-place finish, the Cougars won their first meet since 2019.
- b. For the first time since the 1993-94 season, a Cougar woman earned NCAA All-Region honors in back-to-back seasons with Claire Meyer finishing in the top 25 at the South Central Region Championships for the second time in as many years.
- c. Meyer led the women all season, highlighted by her individual meet title in the Lamar Early Bird Opener, crossing the finish line 10 seconds before the next competitor and finished her career pacing Houston in 11 consecutive meets dating back to 2022.
- d. On the men's side, three different Cougars paced the team across the team's five meets with senior Branch Cox leading Houston the final three meets of the season as the distances lengthened.

### **Volleyball**



- a. Houston Volleyball continued to succeed under Head Coach David Rehr in its first season in a new conference. A 19-10 overall record, including an 11-7 mark in Big 12 Conference play which tied them for fourth in its inaugural season, powered the team to its second consecutive NCAA Tournament berth and second straight appearance in the NCAA Tournament Second Round.
- b. Houston received national attention during the campaign with three matches (BYU, Cincinnati and Texas) getting picked up to broadcast on ESPN's linear suite of channels. In total, across the trio of matches that aired on ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNU, Houston had 417,000 viewers on average watching the team on national television.
- c. Houston tallied nine sweeps in conference play, including a streak of four straight, to add to its 19-10 overall record and 11-7 Big 12 record. The record and resume, which included cornerstone wins against Texas A&M, SMU, TCU and Kansas State, landed Houston an eight-seed in the NCAA Tournament.
- d. Kate Georgiades repeated for the third year as conference Libero of the Year, earning Houston's first Positional Player of the Year honors from the Big 12. The Cougars also placed three on All-Big 12 Conference teams, with Georgiades and Kenna Sauer earning First Team selections and Abbie Jackson being voted for the Second Team.
- e. Kenna Sauer earned Houston's first AVCA non-Honorable Mention All-America honor since 2011 by receiving Third Team accolades from the coaches association while Kate Georgiades received All-America Honorable Mention recognition. *VolleyballMag.com* flipped the two in its list of All-Americans, giving Georgiades Third Team honors and Sauer Honorable Mention accolades. The pair, along with Abbie Jackson, were also chosen as AVCA All-Region honorees.
- f. Announcing a pair of sellouts for the first time in program history, Volleyball broke Houston Athletics' record for attendance at a women's sporting event with 7,054 packing into Fertitta Center on Oct. 14 to see the team battle #7, and eventual national champions, Texas.
- g. After starting the season ranked at #19, its highest preseason slot ever, Houston was ranked in every AVCA Coaches Poll of the year for the first time in program history. After defeating #22 USC to open the season, Volleyball skyrocketed to its highest-ever ranking in the poll at #13. Ultimately, the team finished the year ranked #21 in the coaches poll.
- h. Kellen Morin broke the team's single season hitting percentage record with a .388 mark with 173 kills. Rachel Tullos broke Houston's career records in matches played, sets played, total blocks and block assists.

#### Men's Golf

- a. For the fourth straight season, the 10<sup>th</sup> time under Director of Golf Jonathan Dismuke and the 24<sup>th</sup> time in school history, the Cougars competed in NCAA Regional play. Houston finished sixth with a score of 870 at the NCAA Baton Rouge Regional at University Club in Baton Rouge, La. The Cougars fell only three strokes short of finishing among the Top Five leaders and advancing to the NCAA Championships.
- b. Playing as the No. 10 seed at the Big 12 Match Play Tournament, the Cougars knocked off No. 2 seed Oklahoma in the First Round and added a win over Cincinnati and a tie against BYU to finish fourth at the Clubs at Houston Oaks in Hockley, Texas in October 2023. Junior Wolfgang Glawe and sophomore Hudson Weibel led the way with three wins apiece.
- c. Following the season, senior Santiago De La Fuente was named the Big 12 Conference Player of the Year and earned a place on the All-Big 12 Team. This marked the second straight season in the second different league in which De La Fuente was named Player of the Year after receiving similar recognition from the American Athletic Conference following the 2022-23 season.
- d. De La Fuente was named to the PING All-America Second Team, earning All-America honors for the second straight season. His selection marked the highest All-America award for the Cougars since Roman Robledo in

2014.

- e. De La Fuente led the Cougars with a 70.20 scoring average, 20 rounds of par or better with nine in the 60s, four Top Five finishes and seven Top 20 showings. His scoring average was the second lowest in school single-season history and gave him two of the Top Three marks in that category, according to the best UH records. De La Fuente's career average of 70.50 ranked as the second best in Houston history.

### **Women's Golf**

- a. For the second straight season, Houston earned a bid to NCAA Regional play under the leadership of Carolyn Macow Leatherwood Head Coach Lydia Lasprilla. The Cougars tied for sixth at the NCAA Auburn Regional at Auburn University Club, falling only two strokes short of finishing among the Top Five leaders and advancing to the NCAA Championships.
- b. The Cougars earned a No. 7 seed at the NCAA Auburn Regional. It was the second straight season Houston earned a No. 7 seed and tied with the 2018 squad for the highest seed in NCAA postseason play
- c. Sophomore Moa Svedenskiold led the Cougars with a 71.47 scoring average, 20 rounds of par or better with 10 in the 60s, two Top Five finishes and five Top 10 showings.
- d. With a 71.47 scoring average, Svedenskiold broke her own school single-season mark, topping the 71.73 total from the 2022-23 season.
- e. Svedenskiold posted a three-day score of 1-under 212 at the Big 12 Championships at The Clubs at Houston Oaks in Hockley, Texas, to lead the Cougars and tied for fifth. She was named to the Big 12 All-Tournament Team, marking the second straight season in her second different league to be named to a Conference Championships All-Tournament Team.
- f. With a three-day total of 1-under 215, Svedenskiold led the Cougars and tied for fifth at the NCAA Baton Rouge Regional. The Halmstad, Sweden, native posted a 69 in the Second Round of that tournament.
- g. Following the season, Svedenskiold was named to the All-Big 12 Conference Team. It marked the second straight season in the second different league in which Svedenskiold was named to an All-Conference Team after receiving similar honors from the American Athletic Conference in 2022-23.

### **Swimming & Diving**

- a. After seven consecutive American Athletic Conference Championships, Swimming & Diving wasted no time in making a splash in the Big 12 Conference, finishing second overall at the team's inaugural conference championships.
- b. Three program records fell during the season, with sophomore Eden Humphrey clinching new top times in the 1,000- and 1,650-yard freestyles in a tri-meet with Rice and Miami while junior Henrietta Fangli recorded a new team-best time in the 100-yard breaststroke at the NCAA Championships.
- c. Henrietta Fangli earned Second Team All-America honors after finishing 14<sup>th</sup> in the 100-yard breaststroke at the NCAA Championships.
- d. After all six divers reached the NCAA Zone D Diving Championships, three Cougars (two divers, one swimmer) advanced to the NCAA Championships: Michelle McLeod, Chase Farris and Henrietta Fangli. McLeod and Fangli earned their first trip to the National Championship meet while Farris earned her third berth.
- e. Two swimmers, Elizabeth Jimenez (Dominican Republic) and Alondra Ortiz (Costa Rica), competed for their countries at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Additionally, Chase Farris and Evelyn Entrekin qualified for the

## 2024 U.S. Olympic Trials.

- f. Houston tallied 1,266.5 points at its first Big 12 Conference Championships with Michelle McLeod leading the way with a third-place finish in the platform diving competition. Overall, 11 student-athletes captured 17 all-conference honors by finishing in the top eight of their events at the conference championships.
- g. Hedda Grell was recognized as both the Big 12 Women's Swimming & Diving Co-Scholar Athlete of the Year as well as the Cullen College of Engineering's Outstanding Senior.
- h. Ten student-athletes were named CSCAA Scholar All-Americans for the season with 18 also earning Academic All-Big 12 honors.

### Football

- a. Houston Football recorded four victories, including a pair of wild finishes as part of its inaugural Big 12 Conference season during 2023. The Cougars used a tip-drill, Hail Mary to defeat West Virginia (Oct. 12) inside TDECU Stadium for the program's inaugural league win and a game-winning 2-point conversion in overtime (Nov. 4) at Baylor as part of a thrilling victory inside McLane Stadium.
- b. Following the season, eight student-athletes were named All-Big 12 Conference by the league including four first or second team honorees – the most first- and second-team selections among the four league's newcomers. Offensive lineman Patrick Paul and defensive lineman Nelson Ceaser picked up First Team accolades.
- c. Houston running back Parker Jenkins, who was recognized as Honorable Mention Offensive Newcomer of the Year, burst onto the scene. On Sept. 23 against Sam Houston, Jenkins became the first Cougar in program history to rush for three touchdowns in his first start – with all coming in the first half.
- d. Paving the way for Jenkins, while cementing himself among the nation's elite, was Paul. The junior earned Second Team All-America honors by ESPN and The Athletic after leading the nation with a 92.8 pass block grade according to PFF. Paul became the program's highest drafted offensive lineman in three decades when the Houston native was selected in the second round of the NFL Draft by the Miami Dolphins.

### Soccer

- a. In its second season under the direction of Head Coach Jaime Frias, Houston Soccer closed out its first season as a member of the Big 12 Conference with six wins including five wins at the Carl Lewis International Complex.
- b. Houston outscored its opponents 28-7 in non-conference play, including five matches where they recorded four goals or better. The Cougars wrapped the non-conference slate with a 6-1-1 record, marking the best start in program history.
- c. The Cougars concluded the season with the conference's fourth-most goals (39) and assists (33). Seventeen Cougars recorded assists while 14 tallied at least one goal.
- d. Aryanna Jimison was named to the Big 12 All-Freshman team, marking the program and school's first Big 12 Conference postseason all-conference honor and fourth consecutive year with an All-Freshman selection for the program.

### Women's Basketball

- a. Houston Women's Basketball recorded 14 victories and including Big 12 Conference wins over BYU, TCU, Cincinnati, Oklahoma State and UCF.

- b. Laila Blair was named an All-Big 12 Conference Honorable Mention selection, for her fourth career conference accolade.
- c. Several Cougars reached milestones throughout the season including N'Yah Boyd and Bria Patterson who reached 1,000 career points. Blair reached 1,500 career points and concluded the season with 1,606 points for sixth all-time in program scoring history. Britney Onyeje concluded her career with 981 points and added her name to the Houston record books as second all-time in most 3-pointers made with 212.
- d. The Cougars' defense made its mark in the national standings as it ranked seventh in turnovers forced per game (21.13) and 10th in steals per game (11.2), 11th in turnover margin (+5.70). Houston's reserves led the conference in bench points per game (26.1) and ranked 14th nationally in the category.

### **Tennis**

- a. The sophomore duo of Sophie Schouten and Sonya Kovalenko paced the Cougars with eight wins on court one in doubles play, including victories over #32 Baylor, #55 UCF and #18 Oklahoma. The win over Oklahoma was against the nation's #20 ranked doubles pair.
- b. Laura Slisane and Maria Dzemeshkevich won five doubles matches, including tying a team-high with three victories in conference play. Slisane and Dzemeshkevich earned back-to-back road victories over #54 TCU and #32 Baylor before defeating #74 Kansas State to clinch the doubles point for the Cougars.
- c. Houston picked up its first point in Big 12 history when the Cougars secured the doubles point against #32 Baylor. Slisane and Dzemeshkevich dominated their match, winning 6-1, before Schouten and Kovalenko gutted out a victory on court one, 7-6(5).
- d. Six of the seven eligible student athletes were named to the Big 12 All-Academic First Team. Gabriela Cortes, Blanca Cortijo Parreno, Maria Dzemeshkevich, Elena Trencheva, Sophie Schouten and Laura Slisane all earned First Team honors.

### **Baseball**

- a. In its first season in the Big 12 Conference, the Houston Baseball team set the school record for strikeouts per game and won both the Silver Glove Series (vs Rice) and the Don Sanders Cup (vs Sam Houston) in the same season for the second straight year each series has been played in entirety.
- b. For the second time in three years, three Cougars were drafted in the MLB Draft with the selections of juniors Jaxon Jelkin and Cade Citelli and senior Owen Woodward. Jelkin heard his name in the ninth round while Citelli was drafted in the 11th round and Woodward in the 15th.
- c. Five Cougars played their way onto All-Big 12 Conference teams headlined by seniors Cary Arbolida and Justin Murray earning Second Team honors. Citelli and senior Harold Coll earned Honorable Mention nods while freshman Ace Reese was named to the All-Freshman team.
- d. Arbolida paced the Cougars in average (.359), home runs (17) and slugging (.847) in 2024, while his slugging percentage ranked sixth nationally in regular season play. The outfielder led the Big 12 with 11 home runs and posted the highest slugging percentage in games against Big 12 teams (.846), nearly 100 points higher than the next league hitter. The senior produced four multiple home run games for Houston with 13 multi-hit games and 10 multi-RBI games.

### **Softball**

- a. After opening the season with back-to-back run-rule victories, Houston earned a 10-1 record in the season's first two weekends, its best 11-game start since 2008. The team's 94 runs in the same time period tied the program

record for most runs to open the season and included five run-rule victories.

- b. After an opening-weekend loss to Rutgers, Houston rallied for eight wins in a row, its longest win streak since 2020 when it won 11 games in a row.
- c. Houston's offense led the way in 2024, claiming the second most runs scored and most runs-per-game in program history.
- d. Opening its inaugural Big 12 Conference slate by hosting #2/#1 Texas, the Cougars surged in their first Big 12 game, downing the top-ranked Longhorns, 12-10 for the team's highest ranked win in program history. The win also extended Head Coach Kristin Vesely's streak of eight seasons with a win against a ranked opponent and was Houston Athletics' first win against a #1 ranked team since Baseball defeated #1 Rice on May 12, 2006.
- e. Following the win against #2/#1 Texas, Houston received votes in the USA Softball coaches poll for the first time since 2020.
- f. Junior Turiya Coleman earned the program's first All-Big 12 honors, clinching a spot on the second team after leading the Cougars in average (.374) and hits (58) throughout the season, including a .320 average in league play. Freshman Bethany Aguilar also earned a spot on the All-Big 12 Freshman Team.

## APPENDIX C – VIEWERSHIP AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### Additional details

- a. Big 12 entry: As part of a month-long celebration (June-July) of UH's formal entry into the Big 12, the University of Houston generated 1.36 billion earned media reach featuring 528 web clips across 145+ media entities.
- b. Big 12 Celebration week: Houston's week of Big 12 Celebration (Sept. 13-17), featuring its Hall of Honor induction ceremony, Memorial Hermann partnership announcement, Big 12 Homecoming events, and culminating with football's first on-campus Big 12 event (vs. TCU), generated 2.07 million earned media potential reach from 193 media sources from 41 different states.
  - i.
- c. Volleyball: 27 Volleyball matches were streamed or broadcast nationally including 21 on ESPN+, two on Big 10 Network+, one on ESPN, one on ESPN2, one on ESPNU and one on SEC Network+.
  - i. For 12 home matches, 134,781 viewers streamed the matches on ESPN+, watching a total of 3,680,188 minutes (the equivalent of over seven years) and averaging 11,232 viewers per match, a 176% increase from 2022.
  - ii. Additionally, 418,000 viewers watched volleyball across three linear televised matches.
- d. Baseball: Baseball's average viewership grew by 9% in 2024 with an average of 5,968 fans tuning in for each game.
  - i. In total, 191,419 fans watched a sum of 7,709,679 minutes during the 2024 season.
- e. Track & Field: Track and Field was featured on ESPN and ESPN2 during the NCAA Outdoor Championships.
  - i. The Cougars were on ESPN+ for five different meets, three days at Texas Relays, two days for the NCAA Indoor Championships, both Big 12 Indoor and Outdoor Championships and one week during the NCAA West Preliminary Round.
  - ii. Houston appeared on SECN+ three times at two Texas A&M indoor meets and at Florida's Tom Jones Memorial Invitational.
- f. Softball: 47 softball games streamed on ESPN+ with three additionally on SEC Network+ and one on Facebook live.
  - i. For 30 home games, 305,118 viewers watched the games streamed on ESPN+, watching a total of 12,677,452 minutes (the equivalent of over 24 years) and averaging 10,171 viewers, a 99% increase from 2022.
- g. Soccer: 34,706 viewers across 10 home matches (2,470 average); totaling 539,458 minutes watched.
- h. Women's Basketball – 29 total games streamed on ESPN+ and another on Pac-12 Washington.
- i. Swim/Dive: Three home meets streamed on UHCougars.com while also streaming all three days of the NCAA Diving Zone Championships for a total of six events streamed on UHCougars.com.
  - i. In total, 2,100 viewers watched the streams, averaging 350 per stream.
- j. Tennis – All home matches were streamed on UHCougars.com.