



SFAC Program Questionnaire



# CENTER FOR STUDENT ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY



FY 25-26



1. **Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, goals that support your mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.**

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community (CSAC) opened its doors on September 1, 2023. The department was formed after benchmarking Top 50 Institutions, Big XII schools, and identifying programs and services that help address unmet student needs and improve the overall student experience on campus.

**The CSAC Mission:** The Center for Student Advocacy and Community reduces barriers that inhibit academic and personal success by identifying areas of need, providing connection to resources, and supporting student-led programs and initiatives that strengthen our community.

**The CSAC Vision:** We envision a future where every student feels like a valued member of the UH community, has their essential needs addressed, and are supported to achieve their academic and personal goals.

With student success as our top priority, this past year the CSAC team actively worked to develop a strong foundation for the department, making significant strides in operationalizing our mission and turning our vision into a reality.

#### **Key Services:**

**Resource and Support Hub:** The CSAC team creates a home away from home type environment and actively grows vital support networks and partnerships that include campus and greater Houston community partners to help students successfully navigate their collegiate journey. We offer customized 1:1 resource appointments to help students navigate campus and community resources and connect them to the support they need.

**Essential Needs Support:** Support for students include community food distributions through two Cougar Cupboard locations, availability of hygiene products, and the creation of comprehensive campus and community resource listings for UH students, faculty, and staff. The list includes health, food, and social services available for students and more. As the department continues to grow services, we plan to also offer support for students in need of emergency financial-aid, transportation obstacles or un-housed students who are parents and more.

**Supportive and Engaging Community-Building Programming.** Examples of events include programming related to cultural celebrations and heritage months and efforts to better serve our students as part of our Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) federal designations. We also host the annual Martin Luther King Jr. and Juneteenth Celebrations, the WOW student Mixers, a weekly "Together Thursdays" program, and a toybox in the department for the children of student parents. Collaborations with student organizations is also a core part of our programming.

**Educational Workshops:** Our workshops promote skillset development, learning in a global environment and community building. Student workshop topics may include, self-advocacy and resiliency, budget friendly nutrition and diet tactics, emotional intelligence, and conflict-resolution skill building. Faculty and staff workshops may include, "supporting today's student", and trauma-informed supportive behaviors in advising and working with students

After only one year on campus, the Center for Student Advocacy and Community the work of the department is already regarded as a necessity for student success. Many students rely on the food provided by the Cougar Cupboard which allows them to focus on their academics. Student groups find community, support, and representation from our staff and in the physical space of the center. We bring people together and work to fill gaps in programming and support efforts on campus. CSAC contributes to the culture of care across campus for all students, staff, and faculty.

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 the method for collecting this data.

A key performance indicator for the department is the utilization of our programs and services. We track the attendance of all students who attend each of our programs, and how often, and why students use the physical office space.

**Events:** Listed below is center operational data as well as our WOW Mixers. This data reflects the level of engagement and year-over-year increased student engagement with our programs.

FY24 Attendance and Utilization	
<b>Utility</b>	
Number of Guests Visiting Center	3719
Number of Unique Guests	1039
Number of Bookings	33
Number of Student Appointments with Staff	69
<b>Cougar Cupboard Utilization</b>	
Number of Visits	12,578
Number of Unique Visitors	2,904
Number of New Enrollments	2,096
Total Enrollment	22,108
Pounds of Food Distributed	287,775
<b>Volunteer Tracking</b>	
Total Volunteers	817
Number of Unique Volunteers	521
Total Volunteer Hours Completed	1,366
<b>Programming</b>	
Number of Programs	52
# of events Center hosts annually	39
# of collaborations between Center & departments	11
# of collaborations between Center & student organizations	2
Total Program Attendance	7,088

Mixer Name	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024
Black & African American Student Mixer	88	*	326	380	511	841
Hispanic/Latine' Student Mixer	57	*	143	258	256	509
Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Student Mixer	23	*	74	326	343	510
LGBTQ+ Ice Cream Social	55	186	291	291	458	462
First Generation Student Mixer			20	140	125	335
Middle Eastern North African Student Mixer					149	204
TOTAL Attendance	223	186	854	1395	1842	2861

\*Data unavailable

**Cougar Cupboard:** The cougar cupboard plays a vital role in the department's efforts to lower costs for economically disadvantaged students, and to improve the retention of Pell-eligible students. The department collects valuable self-reported data through the intake form that students complete to register for Cougar Cupboard. We can obtain information on student needs, such as their access to various resources, household size, financial concerns, and more. Student data and visit data are stored in Excel tracking documents for easy viewing. In addition, surveys are conducted among Cougar Cupboard users 1-2 times per year to determine how students utilize the services, such as which items they prefer, times they use the pantry, other services they use, and to collect student feedback. Data is also collected each visit since students must record their PeopleSoft ID# and pounds of food taken before leaving each visit. Volunteer shifts are tracked through a volunteer sign-in form that is completed at the beginning of each shift.

**Focus Groups:** As an office that believes in the importance of creating responsive programming and services as well as not duplicating efforts of other departments on campus, in addition to significant benchmarking efforts to create the department, this year we conducted five (5) focus groups to get in-depth feedback on our programs, marketing, vision, and direction of the department's programs and services. Two focus groups were hosted in the fall. Spring had three 1-1.5-hour focus groups, each focused on a different topic: 1) Advocacy Services 2) Cultural Heritage Months and Programs and 3) Marketing. Feedback was taken, qualitative data were reviewed, themes were assessed, and action steps were decided. Some of this data informed our SFAC requests for this year. The focus group feedback sessions helped us stay proactive in our approach and helps us refine our programs to make sure we are listening to the student voice and meeting student expectations.

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.

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community base funding is no longer provided by the Student Service Fee from SFAC. As of FY25, base funding is provided by the University/Student Center fee. The Cougar Cupboard, which is a program within the Center for Student Advocacy and Community does receive a portion of its funding from the Student Service Fee from SFAC. The Center for Student Advocacy and Community does continue to have the opportunity to request One-Time funding from the SFAC-Recommended Student Service Fee.

CSAC received \$24,425.27 in carry forward funds from FY24 to FY25. These funds were approved to pay for goods and services received in FY24 where expenses were processed in FY25 as outlined below.

1,262.24	CSAC Notebooks - Items ordered with FY24 funds in preparation for FY25 and was not paid out of FY24
608.16	CSAC Pens - Items ordered with FY24 funds in preparation for FY25 and was not paid out of FY24
2,310.05	CSAC Umbrellas - Items ordered with FY24 funds in preparation for FY25 and was not paid out of FY24
3,178.72	HSI Day Marketing - Creation Station - Voucher submitted by deadline; budget for event was calculated to have marketing completed and billed on FY24
2,533.75	CSAC Heritage Calendar Design - Design work that wasn't able to be paid in FY24
275.00	CSAC Letterhead - Supplies bought in FY24 for the center general operation, unable to paid in FY24
300.00	CSAC Parking Passes for guests and vendors at WOW mixers and general events
2,340.50	IAMUH T-shirts - Items ordered with FY24 funds in preparation for FY25 and was not paid out of FY24
1,029.80	CSAC Towels - Items ordered with FY24 funds in preparation for FY25 and was not paid out of FY24
84.94	CSAC Office Supplies - Tejas - Voucher submitted before deadline, not paid in FY24
2,677.50	HSI Day T-shirts - purchased early because FY25 budget is limited and doesn't support the purchase of t-shirts for this event.
58.86	Office Supplies - label maker - Voucher submitted by deadline, unable to be paid in FY24
289.41	Standing Desk - Kevin Nguyen - purchased in FY24, submitted voucher by deadline unable to pay in FY24
1,800.00	MediaMate-UH Cougar Roar
2,500.00	CSAC Shell Gas Cards - purchased emergency gas cards to give to UH students - Voucher submitted by deadline, not paid in FY24 (4 purchases of 625.00)
3,016	CSAC - Cougar Cash - Purchased Emergency Meal Cards to give to UH Students - Voucher submitted by deadline, not paid in FY24
160.34	Sam's Club - Stress Free Finals Event Supplies - Event took place in FY24, submitted by deadline, unable to be paid in FY24

From September 1<sup>st</sup> through mid-December, we had a vacant Assistant Director role. Since late July 2024 we have vacancies in our Program Manager I and Program Manager II positions. The salary savings, fringe and admin from these positions is \$199,864.

Last year, staff was also being paid out of multiple cost centers. There is a surplus in dollar amount in our budget because they were actually paid out of other cost centers. For context, although the Cougar Cupboard student employees, program manager, and instructional assistants were working under the Center for Student Advocacy and Community, at the time of hiring (prior to FY24) they were under other department names and cost-centers. Because the Human Resources and Business Services systems don't always speak the same language it was difficult to get people's positions to match the correct cost centers. For much of the year, some of the cougar cupboard staff was still being paid out of the UH Wellness (Ho292) accounts. The Business Services team suggested that all changes be made at the start of a new fiscal year.

Last year's CSAC adjusted budget was significantly different than the base budget because we were approved carry-over dollars to support the establishing of a new center.

The remaining returned funds are due to several p-card transactions that were made in the month of August to pay for WOW Mixer expenses that were not able to get processed in FY24 due to the purchase being made after the business services early August p-card deadline. There were also \$6,266 in funds from the Cougar Cupboard for non-perishables, protein shakes, beans, spaghetti, lentils etc. and a couple of orders of planned milk orders that were not made due to Hurricane Beryl and the temporary closing of the cupboard for a couple of weeks.

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 FY2025 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community base funding is no longer provided by the Student Service Fee from SFAC. As of FY25, base funding is provided by the University/Student Center fee. The Cougar Cupboard, which is a program within the Center for Student Advocacy and Community does receive a portion of its funding from the Student Service Fee from SFAC. The Cougar Cupboard total SFAC Budget is \$89,317 and a 5% reduction, including related admin fees (\$268), would be \$4,465.86 (\$4,466).

To meet this budget cut, we need to cut most of the \$2,499 travel and business line, which currently goes towards required costs of food manager's certification, meals for trainings and retreats for the Cougar Cupboard staff and some of the operational costs of the cupboard such as gloves and plastic bags. Additionally, we would have to cut one non-college work-study student's hours from 20 hours to 8-9 hours/week which would save \$1,967. Unfortunately, both charges are vital to the cupboard's operations and would result in significantly reduced services to students. Our staff is currently very understaffed and the NCWS are essential to keeping the operation opened. There is very little waste in the cougar cupboard operations and the reduced expenses for business meals such as a once a semester recognition meal and an occasional perk for the student employees who work so hard throughout the year is so important to the culture of the cupboard.



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.

There are a number of grants related to the University's federal designations as a Hispanic Serving Institution and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving institution. However, most all those grants are for academic departments and are related to diversifying faculty and academic initiatives. There are not many student affairs related grants that we are aware of.

There are a variety of essential needs grants that exist. Though as a University our size with as many resources that the university has and with a focus on just UH students, we anticipate it being difficult to compete with other community organizations who are even more under resourced and open to all community members. Once we fill the Program Manager I position in CSAC, we hope to explore these options further.

The Cougar Cupboard currently has several community partnerships that support the cost of the food and general operations. We would not be able to function without these external partnerships. If we can get a Program Manager in the Cougar Cupboard, there will be more bandwidth to research and pursue additional grants further.

Funding Source	Amount	Purpose	Duration	Notes
<b>TDECU Annual Grant (Recurring)</b>	\$20,000	Rent and General Operations such as Metro Clean, small programs and marketing	Recurring	
AHA One-Time Grant	\$12,000	Sink Installation	One Time	
<b>Swipe Out Hunger</b>	\$3,000	Non-Perishables Purchase	One Time	Potential to reapply for grant but not guaranteed to be selected
Baytex Energy One-Time Donation	\$10,000	Construction and General Operations	One Time	
<b>CoogMoms</b>	\$500.00	Hygiene Products	One Time	Potential to reapply for grant but not guaranteed to be selected
ARPA/ECOP Grant	Up to \$20,000	Refrigeration Units	One Time	
<b>Online Donations</b>	Varies	Food Supplies; general operations	All Year	<a href="https://www.uh.edu/csac/cougar-cupboard/donate/#">Support Cougar Cupboard fundraiser page: https://www.uh.edu/csac/cougar-cupboard/donate/#</a>
Food Drives	\$200 (Variable)	Food Supplies	Recurring	\$1 = 1 Pound of Food (In-Kind Donation (not cash); Work with campus partners to have food drives for food donations
<b>Houston Food Bank</b>	\$285,000 (In Kind)	Food Supplies	Recurring	\$1 = 1 Pound is the industry standard for determining the value of donated goods. \$285,00 is only actual lbs distributed; HFB donated much more. If these items are purchased from a quoted vendor, this would be over between \$400,000 - \$500,000.