

Additional FY 26 One-Time Funding Request

The Cougar – Spring 2026 College Media Association (CMA) Conference Travel

The digital revolution has transformed media outlets nationwide, introducing new opportunities and challenges. Today's journalists must navigate a rapidly evolving landscape of platforms—spanning social media, newsletters, and in-person outreach—while providing accurate, timely, and responsible reporting. *The Cougar* has responded to this shift by expanding its content distribution to platforms such as Reddit, Facebook, Instagram, its digital newsletter, and through regular campus tabling events. While these efforts have broadened audience engagement, they have also placed a significant strain on limited resources.

With its dual mission of **informing the campus community and training aspiring journalists**, *The Cougar* seeks additional one-time funding to ensure its staff can remain at the forefront of this dynamic industry. Specifically, this request supports student attendance at the **College Media Association (CMA) Conference in Spring 2026**.

Educational & Professional Impact

The CMA Conference, held twice annually, convenes hundreds of student journalists and professional news leaders nationwide. The educational value of these conferences is unmatched, providing:

- **Professional Development:** Training in reporting, editing, design, multimedia, and newsroom leadership.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Access to professional journalists and media organizations that frequently lead to internships and career placements.
- **Peer Collaboration:** A chance for *The Cougar's* editorial staff to connect with and learn from student newsrooms nationwide.
- **Institutional Recognition:** Establishing UH's student newspaper as a credible publication within the national college media community.

Previous CMA conferences have already resulted in tangible outcomes, including **internships and job placements** for *The Cougar's* editorial board members. As UH strengthens its reputation in the **Big 12**, investing in these experiences is critical to ensuring that *The Cougar* continues to evolve as a leading student newsroom, representing the University with journalistic integrity and innovation.

Why In-Person Matters

While previous committees have suggested exploring virtual attendance, the CMA does not offer a digital alternative or a comparable online option. Occasional online workshops exist but lack the comprehensive training, networking, and recognition opportunities provided at the in-person conference. Therefore, this travel request is essential to ensure that *The Cougar's* student leaders gain access to the full scope of CMA's professional development resources.

Funding Request

- Travel: \$5,200.00
 - Lodging: \$3,800.00
 - Food: \$2,000.00
 - Registration: \$1,400.00
- UH Administrative Charge (6%): **\$600.00**
Total: \$12,000.00