



# Cat's Back

Base Augmentation Request for FY 2011-12  
from the University Center/UC Satellite

**UC**  
UNIVERSITY CENTERS  
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UNIVERSITY of  
**HOUSTON**  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

THE CAT'S BACK  
BASE AUGMENTATION REQUEST FY 2012

The University Centers (UC) is presenting this base augmentation request to the Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) to provide financial assistance for the annual Cat's Back event. Entering its ninth year, the Cat's Back has annually boasted crowds often in excess of 6000 students in a single afternoon. The Cat's Back is one of the University of Houston's largest single events with a wide array of activities and services occurring throughout the event, including:

- A large pep rally traditionally filling the UC Arbor to the brim
- Countless activities and attractions over the last few years including an outdoor beach, a roving magician, a caricature artist, laser tag, and much more
- Complimentary food and t-shirts while supplies last for actively enrolled students
- The largest student organization fair of the academic year

As the event grows and evolves, a number of areas of growth have been identified including the following:

- Improving turnout for and the overall quality of the "Cat's Back Preview" event held on the Sunday before classes start
- Enhanced advance publicity for the event including publicity to incoming freshmen during orientation or other events
- Improved volunteer identification through identifiable badges and/or uniforms
- Continued "off the beaten path" attractions like the "beach" during the Cat's Back 2009 event
- Larger quantities of food and t-shirts to allow a greater percentage of attendees to experience all The Cat's Back has to offer

In the past, The Cat's Back has relied primarily on donations from on-campus departments to fund the event. Last year, over 80% of the money donated came from on-campus departments, and many of the events hosted (such as laser tag and the Cougar Lounge) were donated by fee-funded student organizations. Off-campus donations have been received, but they are not a reliable source of revenue despite significant development efforts on the part of University Centers staff. Between the budget cuts of last year and the impending cuts for FY2012, the revenue from other departments is no longer a reliable and viable source of guaranteed revenue and off-campus donations cannot be expected to "bridge the gap" between last year's level of funding and the upcoming year.

Given that many of these participating departments are already SFAC-funded and contribute extensively to this event, moving toward a direct allocation from SFAC simplifies the process significantly and provides The Cat's Back with dedicated cash reserves well in advance of when

contributions tend to come in traditionally. While university departments would still be welcome to donate, having certain fixed costs completely covered by SFAC would allow any contributions that do come in to be used in a manner to improve the overall quality of the event from year to year, as opposed to simply being used to provide a static level of service.

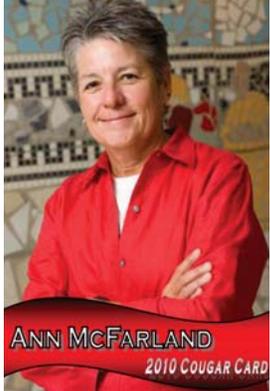
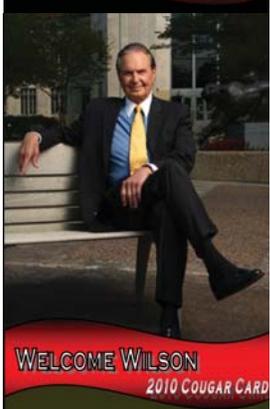
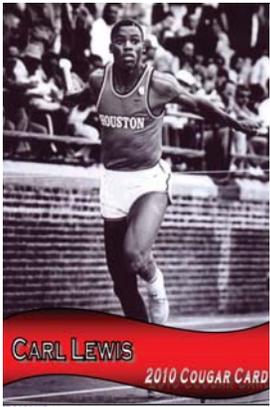
For the 2010 Cat's Back event, primary expenditures from the Cat's Back fund (not including staff hours or donated events such as laser tag) were as follows:

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Food                       | \$10,000.00        |
| T-Shirts                   | \$9,769.70         |
| <u>Marketing Materials</u> | <u>\$4,464.74</u>  |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>\$24,234.44</b> |

In order to continue to provide the same or greater level of service that this event has provided in the past, the University Centers is asking that the Student Fee Advisory Committee provide financial support for the above listed expenses. Each of these items accounts for a base cost which will remain relatively static from year to year (with any differential in the upcoming year being easily covered by the University Centers annual contribution to The Cat's Back). Having SFAC cover as many of these costs as is financially tenable at this juncture only serves to enhance the overall quality of what is easily one of the strongest events at the University of Houston—and for many students, the first real taste of what life at the University of Houston is all about.

# Cougar Trading Cards Program

Base Augmentation Request for FY2011-12  
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COUGAR CARD PROGRAM  
BASE AUGMENTATION REQUEST FY 2012

**Trading Cards** (<http://www.uh.edu/tradingcards/>)

Cougar Trading Cards started in Fall 2009 as a project designed to increase student involvement on campus and thereby have an outcome to aid in increasing retention and graduation rates.

In the first year, the project was entirely funded by the Office of Academic Affairs.

5,400 each of 54 different trading cards featuring prominent current or former Cougars were printed (list at <http://www.uh.edu/tradingcards/Cards.pdf>). In addition, there were a limited number of a 55<sup>th</sup> card (that of Dr. Khator).

These cards were handed out at different events around campus. As students collected cards, they could turn them in for prizes. The ultimate prize for having all 55 cards was a \$1,000 scholarship (12 awarded).

There were over **1,200** “Cougar Card Events” during the academic year. These included workshops, athletic events, plays, concerts, lectures, seminars, and student group meetings (over **50** student groups distributed cards, ranging from the American Chemical Society to the Vietnamese Student Association). In addition, students received cards at advising sessions, tutoring, and for certain activities at the library.

Over 210,000 cards were given away to students at these events.

116 students turned in cards for prizes in the Fall semester. 115 of these students were enrolled in classes on the ORD of the Spring semester (**99.1% retention rate!**)

A total of 422 students had turned in at least 25 cards by the end of the Spring semester. Over 390 of these students are still enrolled or have graduated (**92.4% retention**). Included among these students are 12 scholarship winners (all 55 cards) and another 29 students who had 54 cards. There were 2 identified and 8 unidentified students who had “Khator Cards” who did not have all of the remaining cards.

Virtually every group involved in the program reported a significant increase in attendance at their events. Unfortunately many of these events were not documented terribly well, but the Career Center report offers a snap-shot of the effect of the Cougar Trading Cards:

*Fall 2009 (Compared to Fall 2008)*

Campus Recruitment Workshop - 43% increase in attendance  
Resume Writing Workshop - 16% increase in attendance  
Interview Workshop - 9% increase in attendance  
How to Work a Career Fair Workshop - 16% increase in attendance

*Spring 2010 (Compared to Spring 2009)*

Campus Recruitment Workshop - 10% increase in attendance  
How to Work a Career Fair Workshop - 50% increase in attendance

For the 2010/2011 Academic Year, \$8,000 was supplied by SFAC through one-time FY 2010 funding to UH Wellness to purchase the cards. 56 sets (5,000 of 55, 100 of the 56<sup>th</sup> “rare” card) were obtained over the summer.

Last year, the focus was on athletics and university leadership. This year, while the Regents, Dr. Khator, and SGA leadership are still included, among others, winners of the Alumni Association Awards and Teaching/Advising Awards have been included to highlight distinguished faculty and alumni. This has led to increased faculty participation in the project ☺

Results for the year to date,

- a) 600+ events have occurred or are listed as Cougar Trading Card Events. At this stage last year, we had 400 events;
- b) Cards were distributed at orientations for both Freshmen and Transfer students over the summer;
- c) 42 student groups are using the cards (13 by this stage last year);
- d) MVP, CEO, SPB, SGA, LSS, Homecoming, Frontier Fiesta, Campus Recreation, UH Wellness, the UC, CAPS, Career Services, Athletics and the Dean of Students Office have all used Trading Cards or will use cards this year;
- e) 27 students have already turned in 35+ cards (3 at this time last year);
- f) 114 students have already turned in 10+ cards (14 at this time last year).
- g) CAPS, Moores School of Music, and Athletics have already reported dramatic increases in attendance this year.

We would like to request continued SFAC funding to purchase the 2011-2012 cards. These will be designed and ordered in May 2011, once Faculty and Alumni Awards have been announced.

Although there may be more Faculty Awards this year, there is not a plan to increase the number of cards beyond 56. Thus, the funding request will be the same:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Purchase of 276,000 trading cards (55 x 5000 + 1000) | \$6,700 |
| Purchase of Card Posters (1000)                      | \$1,300 |
| Total  | \$8,000 |

Given that most SFAC-funded groups use the cards, it is more logical to direct the funding through the office of the Assistant Vice President for Student Development. Whether this funding is One-Time or Base Augmentation – it would be at the discretion of the committee.