



# THE DAILY COUGAR. FY15 SFAC One-Time Requests

- Photo equipment
- Distribution and delivery



## The Daily Cougar FY2015 One-Time Request

### Photography equipment

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With the transformation of The Daily Cougar into a new print format and increased digital presence, the need for sharp, powerful visuals is more important than ever before.

The Daily Cougar currently has only one camera available for use to meet the demands of a daily news organization. Every week, dozens of photo assignments are placed with the photo editor, but a number of these aren't assigned because there aren't enough resources. When events can't be covered, it impacts readership and the ability to produce a high-quality publication.

The photo staff could be increased if more equipment were available for checkout. As it is, the Cougar relies too heavily students who have already made the investment in photo equipment. Moreover, it cannot train new students in advanced techniques without proper equipment to train on.

#### Itemized equipment

Canon t4i body x 2 .....	\$1,200.00
External flash +softbox .....	\$399.00
35mm lens (indoor coverage).....	\$300.00
28-135mm lens (general) .....	\$300.00
EF 70-200mm (sports) .....	\$1,349.00
Lens adapter .....	\$480.00
Camera body sleeves.....	\$100.00
Batteries (2).....	\$50.00
Storage case + bag.....	\$300.00
32gb SD cards (3).....	\$75.00
Subtotal .....	\$4553.00
Admin charge (6%).....	\$273.18
<b>Total equipment request.....</b>	<b>\$4,826.18</b>

## The Daily Cougar FY2015 One-Time Request

### **Daily Cougar transformation: delivery and distribution**

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At the recommendation of the Student Media Task Force, in the summer of 2013, a special task force was formed by the Director of the Center for Student Media to examine the past, current and projected financial challenges facing print newspaper advertising, the shift toward digital among news media, and the educational demands of the media work force.

By involving discussions among staff, students, and media professionals, in addition to surveys of readership and research into new models emerging at other universities, the task force concluded that The Daily Cougar should take bigger steps to innovate. The task force acknowledged some basic facts about the news media environment both nationally and on the college level:

1. Daily print readership is declining to a point of disappearing completely. Newsprint revenue is rapidly declining.
2. Mobile and digital news consumption is rising rapidly. Mobile and digital advertising (and subscription fees) are growing.
3. News media employers are looking for graduates with digital skill sets in addition to print.

To adapt to these factors, the task force recommended that The Daily Cougar adopt a more robust digital strategy, drop to one print edition per week that showcases more and better content with more depth, and innovate its distribution and promotion strategies to increase overall awareness of the publication. These strategies are more developed in the Daily Cougar Business Model Task Force report, which shall be submitted to SFAC under separate cover.

Specifically, this one-time request is being sought to fund the print distribution aspect of this transformation.

#### **Print delivery and distribution**

Cutting from four days per week of publication to one day per week will result in a cost savings in distribution, however, due to reduced revenue overall to date, the Cougar is requesting funding for delivery and distribution through student fees as a kind of “subscription” charge. In addition, by publishing weekly, the Cougar can be distributed more widely to the near-campus area (such as along the new Metro rail line) or to satellite campuses – Northwest and Sugar Land – thus increasing exposure to the newspaper to more readers (and potential advertisers). Therefore we project an increase from 82 current newsstands to 100 total.

In addition, the Cougar is seeking to establish a dedicated distribution team that can actively hand out newspapers to students during peak midday hours. In trial runs, this has been a successful strategy to get newspapers in students’ hands, since many walk by the newsracks without grabbing a copy. A sustained hand-to-hand effort will reduce newsprint waste by recirculating the newspaper among the community.

**Cost breakdown**

Weekly distribution to racks, projected = \$13,500

Hand-to-hand distribution program, projected = \$4,800

Admin charge = \$1098

**Total request = \$19,398.**

This one-time request comes out to about 5 cents per copy, assuming 35 regular issues and 10,000 copies per issue, or \$2 per student per year.

**Outcomes**

This request is intended to help The Daily Cougar make these recommended changes and implement a strong, successful program that achieves these outcomes:

1. The Daily Cougar will see an increase in print and online readership overall, which would be reflected in a decrease of the number of students who indicate they “never” read the Cougar in the annual readership survey.
2. The Daily Cougar will see stabilizing or increasing print revenues and rapidly increasing digital revenues, while reducing print-based costs.