



CENTER FOR STUDENT MEDIA

Student Fees Advisory Committee (SFAC)
Program Questionnaire for FY 2014-2015



- 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.**

In a short time, the Center for Student Media (CSM) has made strides to put the unit and its student organizations in a position to support and empower student-driven expression, publishing and broadcasting. With its scheduled move to the UC North and moving forward, the CSM intends to make leaps to become a cutting-edge multi-platform laboratory that prepares collaborative, innovative and creative students for real-world leadership.

Several recommendations of the Student Media Task Force have been implemented ahead of schedule. An advisory committee was formed and is providing support during the transition. The Daily Cougar and Coog Radio have undergone extensive online upgrades. A special task group of the Student Media Advisory Committee has evaluated the various financial challenges facing print media and has prepared plans to adapt the student newspaper program at UH to a more digitally focused mission with a less frequent print publication. The CSM has also taken a proactive role in developing Coog Radio and Student Video Network by working with student leaders to think about their organizations (and their budgets) differently.

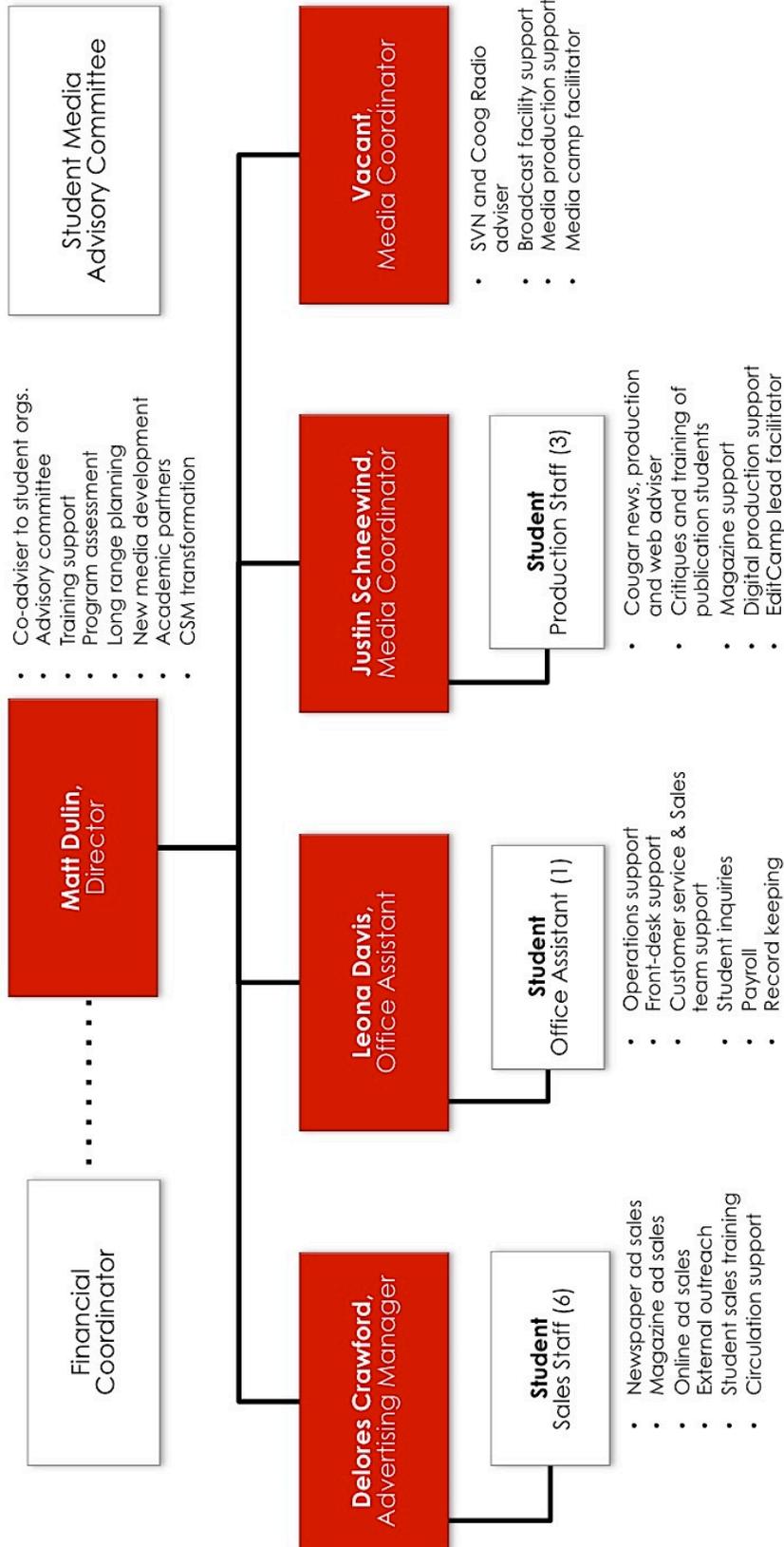
The center accomplishes its mission by providing professional media training, creating opportunities for students to learn about and create media, and by generating revenues to support these efforts. In 2012-13, the center expanded its EditCamp training program and received higher satisfaction ratings from participants this year. An assessment of writing quality showed that students struggle to master journalistic skills, prompting the center to maintain a focus on weekly training and providing daily feedback. In advertising, guest speakers and coaching sessions have helped student ad reps stay abreast of the most effective strategies in making cold calls and proposals.

The center has formed academic partnerships to enhance its advertising programs and its approach to marketing. This year, two advertising classes are developing strategies that could help the center communicate an all-in-one brand to outside businesses. Meanwhile, a partnership with a School of Communication media sales class is slated to activate in Fall 2014 to create a pipeline to support the CSM advertising team.

Student Service Fee funding contributes directly to the CSM's ability to provide an unparalleled student experience and a portfolio of valuable community services that inform, guide and engage students, faculty and staff. The funding provided by SFAC allows the center to direct proper attention to education as well as invest toward revenue-generating activities.

While the CSM is poised to grow, declines in newspaper advertising revenue and readership as a universal trend pose a significant challenge. A once solid base of revenues, national advertising fell by 66% in FY 13, contributing to an overall print revenue decline of \$85,500. Fortunately, with additional revenues from online advertising and new projects, as well as continued cost-cutting, the deficit in FY 13 was kept to \$54,000. Fortunately, fiscal management over the last two years has resulted in fund reserves that can be used to balance the budget while new strategies are implemented. The CSM looks forward to continued SFAC support of the unit, its student organizations and their collective efforts to serve the UH community.

2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, advisor, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.



3. List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2012-2013 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.

- A. Increase off-campus revenue from local businesses. Growth in online readership and new specialty editions such as Overtime, the football section, will be leveraged to find and keep new advertisers.

Partially achieved: Overtime and special sections: Revenue generated from Overtime increased 78% to \$9,712.12. Total revenue produced by special editions (Career Guide, Grad Guide, etc.) increased 24% in FY13 to \$12,341.58. Advertising placed online almost doubled in FY 13, reaching \$22,217.23. Unfortunately, overall local print display revenues fell by 7%.

- B. Investigate new printing options to look for cost savings, including adjusting the printing schedule and printing vendor arrangements.

Achieved: Size reduction cost savings: In FY 12, printing and delivery costs for The Daily Cougar totaled \$118,352.78. In FY 13, printing and delivery costs were cut 8% to \$108,672.54, despite adding full color to every page of every edition and increasing the number of delivery locations. This was achieved through a redesign of our print format to cut 2 inches from the vertical length of the paper. Moving forward, Daily Cougar printing costs are addressed in that organization's budget; however the CSM is responsible for monitoring print distribution.

- C. Review print circulation and identify where new stands should be deployed and where existing stands may need to be relocated to maximize print readership.

Ongoing: Circulation reports are received weekly and the department meets with the circulation team once per semester to review rack placements, status of racks and other needs. The distribution plan expanded from 75 to 82 news racks in FY 13 and provides newspapers to almost every campus building, including the Energy Research Park. The department is now reviewing the status of our racks to determine replacement and repair needs. An interactive Google map has been added to The Daily Cougar website showing the location of all of our racks to allow at-a-glance review of our circulation points.

- D. Emphasize editorial quality through regular, consistent training, review and feedback.

Achieved: The Center for Student Media has taken a proactive, structured approach to providing training, advice and feedback to The Daily Cougar. In 2012-13, the following programs were conducted to emphasize editorial feedback and growth.

- EditCamp, a four-day seminar focused on editorial leadership and media management
- Monthly editorial board workshops focused on topics related to newspaper management
- Friday workshops on writing, editing and photography
- A writing quality assessment to determine areas of need and improvement
- Creation of a training/on-boarding checklist for all new Daily Cougar editorial staff
- Daily written critiques by the production assistant
- Individual meetings between production assistant and editors

- E. Transition the Student Publications Committee (SPC) to the Student Media Advisory Committee (SMAC).

Achieved: Originally set for FY 14, this goal was fast-tracked to begin supporting all organizations as soon as possible. In April, the SPC approved a new set of bylaws and operating procedures to create the SMAC. This committee now features voting representation from each student media organization, the student body and professional media. Ex-officio members include the CSM staff, a Faculty Senate representative, a Staff Council representative and a representative of the School of Communication, our biggest academic partner. It is responsible for monitoring progress of all CSM units and organizations and for selecting the top leaders of each media organization.

- F. Supervise the development of a new website for Coog Radio.

Achieved: In August, the Coog Radio website relaunched under the guidance of the CSM. Using the same technology that powers The Daily Cougar website, CoogRadio.com is now a student-run website that offers a new outlet to the organization and an opportunity for more student learning. The CSM will determine the feasibility of running ads and collecting revenue from the site in FY 15.

- G. Supervise the development of a new Daily Cougar website and email edition.

Achieved: The CSM production team supported a redesign of The Daily Cougar website to respond to viewership trends showing that more readers are accessing it with a mobile device. In addition, the CSM reformatted the email edition of the Cougar to make it more visually appealing and to highlight each day's top stories more prominently.

- H. Send a UH representative to the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association Conference to determine potential value to students and establish ties with fellow university student media.

Achieved: Production assistant Justin Scheewind attended the Fort Worth conference and found that it would be a valuable event to be able to send Daily Cougar students in future years. Sessions provided advanced training on several aspects of the media — photography, videography, design, writing, investigative reporting and digital publication strategies. The University of Houston attendance was publicly noted and appreciated by the TIPA executive director. UH will continue to participate in the TIPA awards program, and when possible, send students for additional educational experiences.

- I. Achieve national and state recognition by submitting work to college media association competition.

Achieved: The College Newspaper Business and Advertising Managers group, a national association, recognized the department's professional staff – Delores Crawford, Matt Dulin and Justin Schneewind for work contributed to:

- Second Place, Best Rate Card/Media Kit Design
- Third Place, Best Multimedia Ad Campaign
- Third Place, Best Display Ad Design

State and national groups also recognized the following student work:

Columbia Scholastic Press Association: Gold Circle, Advertising Layout (newspaper)

- First Place, Farah Hasnie

Texas Intercollegiate Press Association: Yearbook Division I (Houstonian)

- First place, Cover Design: Jorge Robles
- First place, Photo Story: Staff

- Second place, Sports Feature Photo: Brianna Leigh Morrison
- Third place, Sports Copy: Joshua Siegel
- Third place, Feature Photo: Johnny Pena
- Third place, Academics Story Package: Houstonian staff
- Honorable mention, Opening Package: Houstonian staff
- Honorable mention, Overall Excellence: Houstonian staff

Texas Intercollegiate Press Association: General Magazine (Transitions)

- Third place, Cover Design: Andres Garcia
- Honorable mention: News Feature Story: Lauren Nicole Mathis
- Honorable mention, Overall Design: Transitions staff

4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/ or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

Student Media Awareness and Usage: In Fall 2012, as part of the Student Media Task Force recommendation, the department distributed an email survey to capture awareness of student media on campus. The major highlights are below. The margin of error is 5.65%.

Question	Daily Cougar print	Daily Cougar online	Coog Radio	Student Video Network
Which of the following are you aware of?	84.97%	38.52%	36.89%	18.85%
How often do you use the following? - Never	23.28%	37.41%	76.92%	65.85%

	Yes	No
I am aware that I do not have to be a Communications major to be involved in these student media organizations.	59.35%	40.65%
I am aware that Coog Radio is a student-run organization and is separate from KUHF, which is a University-owned station.	52.85%	47.15%
If it were available, I would download and use a student media app with student news, radio and video on a smartphone/tablet.	70.15%	29.85%

	Online	Mobile device	Social media	TV	Print	Radio
What are your preferred media?	78.46%	59.38%	48.62%	48.00%	34.46%	29.54%

Leadership of Daily Cougar student leaders: Over the course of the year, the advising team for The Daily Cougar – the director and production assistant – performed an assessment of the student leaders to determine what areas of development were needed and what was creating obstacles for student success. As a common baseline, all of the editors demonstrated an ability to set goals, determine the necessary steps and prerequisites, and create a plan of action for their area. The job of being an editor challenged them to balance their work and plan ahead, to communicate and establish a team-friendly environment. This assessment was used to inform the advisers of what steps should be taken to train and guide the students to be successful. Because every leader had varying degrees of strength in different areas, the student leaders of The Daily Cougar are now asked to meet individually with their adviser to get focused feedback and guidance on handling their specific challenges. In addition, advisers have recommended changes to internal workflows and job assignments.

Daily Cougar writing quality: While a relatively small sampling of articles — 24 out of approximately 1,800 items published from August-April, and only six writers out of an estimated 60 active contributors to the newspaper — this assessment revealed overall weaknesses that are typical of student-produced journalism. Over the course of the year, the six writers showed improvement in areas such as using more sources, using more creativity and clarity, and including necessary information.

Newspaper pickup rates: The CSM is responsible for ensuring campuswide distribution of The Daily Cougar as part of the printing/delivery contract. Delivery is included in The Daily Cougar’s printing

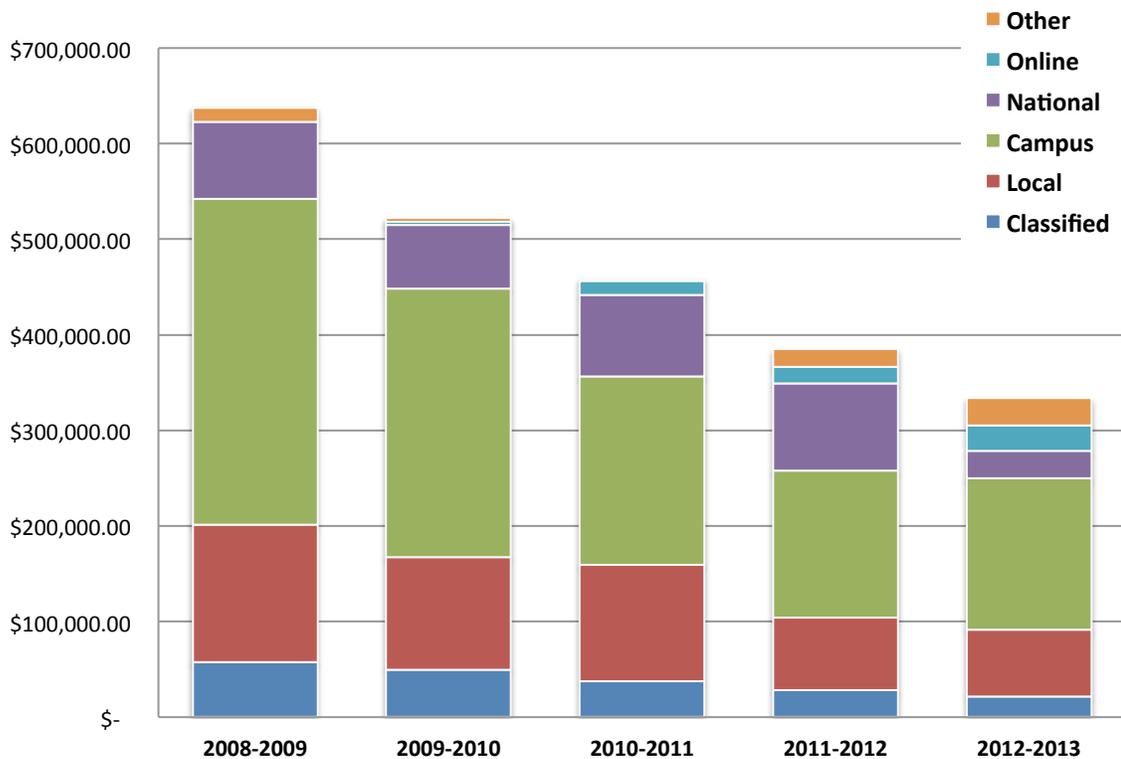
budget and accounts for about 20% of the total service charge. As part of the delivery, the department receives regular reports of how many copies are left in the racks. This chart shows a selected week in Spring 2013. The pickup rates fluctuate between 80% and 90% on most days, with Thursdays tending to be picked up slightly more often. While general pickup is stable compared to last year, surveys are more effective at telling us how students behave overall.

Edition	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Overall
Spring 2013 (March 18-21)	90%	88%	90%	91%	89.75%

More readership data is available in the Daily Cougar Business Model Task Force report, which will be submitted with The Daily Cougar’s SFAC request documents.

Revenue: The CSM tracks every dollar of generated revenue based upon the source: local, campus, national, classified and online. These charts look at our aggregate FY 13 performance by merging all revenues from Daily Cougar, Transitions, Houstonian and any other CSM project. In FY 13, the sales team continued to increase our online revenues and slightly increased campus-based revenue overall. Also note the significant drop in national advertising.

Total 5-year generated revenue by type



5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2014) 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. In addition, if your unit concluded FY2013 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity, please describe the conditions which caused the addition.

Effective with the FY 2014 the Center for Student Media budget, costs associated with managing and publishing The Daily Cougar have been separated and established as a new budget under The Daily Cougar as a fee-funded student organization. This reorganization was the result of recommendations by the Student Media Task Force, which were approved by Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Dr. Richard Walker. As part of this budget arrangement, the CSM will share sales revenue generated through newspaper and online advertising with the student organization.

National advertising revenue reduction

The major budget change realized in FY 2013 and 14 was a drop in national advertising. These ads come to us based off of The Daily Cougar’s print circulation, enrollment and market position. This chart shows five years of national ad revenues. The decline is not limited to UH; most college newspapers have been hit with a reduction in national revenue.

FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014 Projected
\$80,553.79	\$66,315.93	\$85,686.73	\$91,256.71	\$27,977.18	\$12,000.00

SFAC Base adjustment

The amount of the FY 2014 projected and FY 2015 SSF base request has been increased by net amount of \$3,889.

Specifically, \$7,080 was added to cover mandated increase including merit, benefits and administrative charge. However, \$3,191 was deducted, which includes IT transfer plus administrative charge, as a result of the consolidation of the DSAES IT department.

251,233 – FY 2014 approved base
 + 7,080 – Merit
 \$258,313
 - 3,191 - IT
 \$255,122

6. Please list your 2014-2015 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.

1. Strategic Initiative 1: Adapt The Daily Cougar for a digital-first publishing strategy. Implement distribution and digital recommendations of the Daily Cougar Business Model Task Force.

Strategic plan link: Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience. Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

Action steps:

- a. Support The Daily Cougar's transition from a daily to a weekly print model while also maintaining daily digital production; develop training materials, documentation and hands-on assistance with new workflows, practices and procedures.
 - b. Leverage new distribution and readership to attract more revenues from campus and local accounts. Identify case studies to demonstrate the impact of advertising through print and online.
 - c. Work with The Daily Cougar to create new email editions, create new web content formats and provide additional training to editors in web production, social media and related skills.
 - d. Establish strategic partnerships to enable new delivery methods for the print edition, including new newsrack vendors, Student Housing and Residential Life, Postal Services, and student organizations.
 - e. Lead the design and launch of an app that includes content from all student media organizations, in addition to targeted advertising content and features designed to enhance student life while also increasing revenues for the center.
2. Strategic Initiative 2: Celebrate 80 years of publishing the Cougar and work with Advancement to attract donations for the student newspaper.

Strategic plan link: Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

Action steps:

- a. Collaborate with UH Advancement and alumni organization to host an alumni reception to kick-off a new alumni network dedicated to supporting The Daily Cougar.
 - b. Partner with UH Library to develop exhibit focused on 80 years of student journalism.
 - c. Working with the newspaper staff, produce a special edition of the Cougar to mark its birthday, Oct. 5. Seek out UH departments and programs to sponsor this publication to cover costs of production and associated promotion.
3. Strategic Initiative 3: Identify overlaps and areas for focused collaboration around promotion and marketing of Student Media to maximize use of marketing funds; work toward a common identity to represent Student Media and its components.

Strategic plan links: Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience. Cultivate a collective identity that demonstrates a united vision.

Action steps:

- a. Create a steering committee involving all three organizations and CSM staff to work to consolidate banquet budgets and establish a formal award program that uses professional guidelines and a panel of judges to review entries. Identify potential annual sponsors to offset the costs associated with the event.
 - b. Establish a CSM marketing committee composed of each organization's marketing team leaders, CSM advertising and production, to formulate cross-promotion strategies and facilitate resource sharing.
4. Strategic Initiative 4: Implement a Student Media Progress Card to track long-term metrics for Student Media's contributions to student success and efforts to achieve financial growth.

Strategic plan link: Develop a culture of innovation and accountability in the redesign of Division policies, processes and procedures.

Action steps:

- a. Establish a subcommittee of the SMAC to model a progress card that identifies measurable metrics in the following categories: Student Success/Learning, Local and National Recognition, and Competitive Resources.
- b. Collect first round of data to establish 2014-15 as the benchmark.

- 7. 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.**

In 2014-2015 the majority of revenue will continue to come from print and online advertising associated with publishing the newspaper and magazines.

A goal for FY 2014 is to perform market research in identifying the potential for media services such as event coverage, portrait photography and graphic design that can be offered to UH departments and local businesses that need creative services but not necessarily traditional advertising. If the research supports it, a business plan will be presented to SFAC next year.

- 8. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.**

No overlap exists.