



# The **Cougar**

PRINT WEEKLY. DIGITAL DAILY



FY 2015 & FY 2016

# New Funding Requests

Distribution ■ Marketing ■ Community Manager

**Opening Statement** – As identified by last year’s The Daily Cougar Business Model Task Force, marketing and outreach are critical challenges for the newspaper. With the transformation of The Cougar into a print weekly, digital daily publication, a strategic goal is increasing on-campus visibility, student outreach and audience engagement. The following funding requests, listed in priority order, serve as an integrated package to help The Cougar adapt to the new media landscape over the next two years:

1. Weekly Distribution and Street Team
  - a. BA FY 16: \$19,402.00
2. Marketing and Readership Expenses
  - a. FY 15 OT: \$2,939.90
  - b. FY 16 BA: \$3,180.00
3. Proposed Stipend Student Leader Position (Community manager)
  - a. OT FY 15: \$1,351.50
  - b. BA FY 16: \$4,054.50

Through all three of these initiatives, The Cougar will increase its on-campus visibility and foster community engagement throughout the UH student body. The Cougar’s current Editorial positions are centered around the producing and gathering content, maintaining a staff, managing a daily digital workflow and creating a weekly print product. With all of these demands, board members are often unable to dedicate time to outreach initiatives and community involvement.

These initiatives would ensure that The Cougar could maintain as much visibility as possible on-campus, which is essential to increase print and web readership. By fostering community engagement through The Cougar, the UH student body will have an overall greater sense of community, UH pride and a direct connection with their news source and platform for community dialogue.

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**FY2016 Base Augmentation Request #1**  
**Weekly Distribution and Street Team**

With the help of the Student Fees Advisory Committee in FY 14 and FY 15, The Cougar has been able to kick-start an aggressive hand-to-hand distribution program. Early results from this ongoing initiative are positive. In Spring 2014, a team of eight students distributed 400 papers each Wednesday and Thursday, which was effectively 10% of the print run. In the Fall 2014 program, more than 40 students applied to join the team. Currently, 20 students are on the active roster and distribute up to 4,000 papers each week. This far exceeds the initial estimate of distributing 2,000 papers each week, and based on this success, The Cougar wants to shift more of its distribution through this program.

The added advantages of a Street Team are becoming clear: the team can act as a student media promotional force, a community liaison (several street team members report they have received story suggestions or have been asked about how to join the newspaper staff) and a constant reminder that this campus has a vibrant student newspaper.

In FY 15, SFAC agreed to fund the weekly delivery of newspapers to its network of campus newsstands. The Cougar worked through the Center for Student Media to establish a strategic partnership with the UH

Printing & Postal department to take on weekly delivery and rack maintenance. Working with the Postal team, the CSM now has a consistent, accountable delivery method with accurate reporting on pickup. It also now has the most up-to-date rack inventory, with a growing list of desired rack locations as well as a growing list of obsolete racks that need to be removed. As newspaper stands are currently responsible for distributing 60-70% of the press run, the Cougar needs ongoing services to ensure timely delivery and ongoing maintenance of racks. \*See Appendix A: Delivery Services Quote for additional documentation of costs.

**Cost breakdown - FY 16 Base Augmentation**

Delivery and rack maintenance program*	-	\$13,510.00
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)	-	\$ 810.60
Subtotal		-\$14,320.60
Street team program		
(\$20 per shift x 8 shifts x 30 weeks)	-	\$4,800.00
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)	-	\$ 288.00
Subtotal	-	\$5,088.00
Total distribution package	-	\$19,408.60

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**FY 15 One-Time and FY2016 Base Augmentation Request #2  
Readership & Marketing Increase**

The Cougar’s marketing initiatives are crucial, as increasing readership throughout campus ties directly with the potential for The Cougar to generate its own revenue. The need for marketing collateral serves two purposes - first, it creates awareness among readers, and second, it can create awareness among advertisers. The second is a critical addition to our marketing strategy - making The Cougar a more recognized name among the Houston business community. For these reasons, The Cougar is asking for a one-time increase in marketing expenses and moving forward, The Cougar is asking for its base funding to include this critical piece of our long-term growth.

**Spring 2015 Marketing:**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Purpose</i>		<i>Price</i>
250 Shirts	Spring Cat’s Back, Ad Giveaways	-	\$1275.00
250 Tote bags	Spring Cat’s Back, Ad Giveaways	-	\$350.00
30 Posters (18x36)	Readership promotion	-	\$600.00
2,000 Reporter cards	For sources & promo tables	-	\$100.00
20 A-Frame Posters	SGA debate promotion	-	\$400.00
UH Admin Charge (6.0%)		-	\$163.50
			<b>Subtotal Spring: \$2,888.50</b>

**Summer/Back to School 2015 Marketing:**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Purpose</i>		<i>Price</i>
500 T-shirts	Cougar Carnival, Move-In, Weeks of Welcome	-	\$2,880.75
15 Polo Shirts	Cougar Editorial Board	-	\$500.00
300 Water Bottles	Cougar Carnival, Move-In, Weeks of Welcome	-	\$390.00
1,000 4x6 cards	Cougar Carnival, Move-In, Weeks of Welcome	-	\$100.00
500 Stickers	Cougar Carnival, Move-In, Weeks of Welcome	-	\$290.00

300 Buttons	Cougar Carnival, Move-In, Weeks of Welcome	-	\$150.00
UH Admin Charge (6.0%)		-	\$240.65
			<b>Subtotal Back to School: \$4,251.40</b>

**Total annual marketing plan cost:** \$7,439.90  
**Total covered by Cougar revenue (projected):** \$4,500.00  
**Remainder requested as new OT and BA funding:** \$2,939.90

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**FY 2015 One-Time and FY2016 Base Augmentation Request #3  
Community Manager (Stipend Student Leader)**

The purpose of The Cougar’s community manager is to promote the organization around campus in ways that the Cougar’s editorial board cannot, due to the demanding nature of the positions. Hired for a 12-month period, The Cougar’s community manager would curate The Cougar’s social media posts, fostering a dialogue within the UH student body and increasing community involvement throughout the University. He would also be in charge of managing The Cougar’s presence at organization fairs and student events. In a sense, the position is a combination of a social media manager and a marketing manager.

A social media manager has become a fixture in newsroom across the county -- both professionally and at the university level. Media Bistro, a media industry trends website, calls the social media manager a “must-have position for (a news organization),” emphasizing that a newspaper’s “Facebook page and Twitter page are all public-facing, and they deal directly with (its) readers on a daily basis.” With The Cougar having some of the most prolific social media accounts of fee-funded organizations, managing this channel has become a full-time job. Student newspapers across the nation have implemented this position:

Institution	Organization name	Position name	Pay rate/ hours per week	Publication schedule	Social media traffic (likes and followers)
University of Houston	The Cougar	Community manager	\$318/month 12 hours/week	Weekly print, daily web	Facebook: 3,727 Twitter: 7,154
University of Cincinnati	The News Record	-Social media manager -Marketing manager	\$8.50/hr \$8.50/hr 20 hours	3-weekly print, daily web	Facebook: 2,113 Twitter: 3,358
University of Texas	The Daily Texan	Social media manager		Daily print, daily web	Facebook: 8,777 Twitter: 34.1K
University of Oklahoma	OU Daily	Social media manager	\$150/week 20 hours	Daily print, daily web	Facebook: 2,692 Twitter: 10.5K
UT- Arlington	The Shorthorn	-Social media manager -Two marketing reps, one marketing manager	-Social media manager: \$25/day 20 hours -Marketing reps: \$8/hr 15-18 hours	Weekly print, daily print	Facebook: 5,414 Twitter: 4,356

The job demands of The Cougar's community manager would meet those of an editorial board member, as the community manager would be responsible for updating and moderating debate at all hours of the day and on all days of the week, as well as managing The Cougar's marketing efforts. See Appendix B: Job Description, Qualifications, Organization Chart for more details about the position.

**Cost breakdown - FY 15 One-Time**

Stipend (May, June, July, August x \$318.75) -	\$1275.00
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%) -	\$ 76.50
Total FY 15 One-Time Request -	\$1351.50

**Cost breakdown - FY 16 Base Augmentation**

Stipend (12 mos. x \$318.75) -	\$3825.00
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%) -	\$ 229.50
Total FY 16 Base Augmentation Request -	\$4054.50

**Summary**

If these requests are approved, The Cougar would be in a stronger position to positively impact campus life and foster a dialogue within the UH community. The Cougar is committed to positively impacting UH and its students, and is committed to doing so by creating a product that encourages students to take an active role in caring about and improving the University.

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Thank you for your consideration.

## **Appendix A: Delivery Services**

See following page.



## Printing and Postal Services

To: Matt Dulin, Director  
Center for Student Media

From: Sally J. Rowland-Ketley, Director

Subject: Delivery Proposal for Student Newspaper FY16

Date: October 13, 2014

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This proposal is in response to your email of October 12, 2014. The information listed below will include the cost of the service and the scope of these services. The services are quoted for Fiscal Year 2016.

### **Proposed Cost Paper Delivery & Poster Distribution**

- 90 racks @ \$2.50 per rack = \$225 per week @ 34 weeks = \$7,650
- 50 racks @ \$2.50 per rack = \$125 per week @ 34 weeks = \$4,250
- CV1 & CV2 flat rate for mail boxes 1<sup>st</sup> week of school = \$250
- UHSL & UHNW via UPS \$10 per box. \$40 per week @ 34 weeks = \$1360
- **GRAND TOTAL for ALL SERVICES = \$13,510**

### **Scope of Services and Conditions**

- One day a week delivery to established newspaper racks. Wednesday is the proposed day.
- Approximately 85-100 racks. The racks are in various buildings on the Houston campus.
- The rack listing and number of papers deposited to each rack will be provided by Center for Student Media.
- Approximately 10,000 papers will be printed each week and delivered to the UH Postal Services dock area by 6:00 a.m.
- Papers will be bound in stacks of 25 by the printer.
- Delivery of the papers to the racks on campus will be completed within a 3-hour window. Projected timeframe would be 7 am to 10:00 am with a targeted deadline by 9:00 am if possible.
- A return report will be provided monthly. The return papers will be recycled.
- The delivery to selected staff\faculty with names on the newspapers via interoffice mail can be discussed at a later date.

## Appendix B: Community Manager

**Job description:** The community manager’s main responsibility is to promote The Cougar’s editorial content and brand on the organization’s social media accounts, as well as through marketing, student outreach initiatives and through actively participating in on-campus organization activities. The community manager’s direct supervisor is the managing editor, followed by the editor in chief. The community manager:

- Attends daily content meetings.
- Manage and curate The Cougar’s social media accounts, actively engaging with students, alumni, local businesses and any member of The Cougar’s readership
- Work with the activities coordinator in implementing new marketing, advertising and outreach initiatives, including participating in the Street Team and Overtime distribution team
  - Maintain a marketing calendar of events for The Cougar’s board members to attend, including resource fairs and tabling at campus events
- Ensure that all board members, including assistant editors are actively sharing The Cougar’s content via their personal social media accounts, managing the accounts on Hootsuite
- Moderate the website for comments that may be offensive in language or content. The community manager is to immediately notify the editor in chief should a comment(s) be considered for removal and is not permitted to remove comments without his or her permission.
- Develop a strategic social media plan to increase engagement with UH students, faculty, and alumni
- Conduct a monthly live-chat via The Cougar’s social media account, featuring a prominent member of the UH student body, staff, faculty or alumni base
- During the first year of the position, the Community Manager will be responsible for increasing The Cougar’s email subscription list by 100%, each social media account’s reach by 50% and online referrals through social media.
- Generate seven story ideas per week from social media trends and conversations (city and university subreddit, Twitter hashtags, Facebook shares, etc.) for submission to the editor in chief to distribute among the staff

### **Organization chart**

Proposed position marked in blue.

