

Cougars in Recovery, the Collegiate Recovery Program at the University of Houston

As the fourth largest city in America, Houston has the population, the need and the resources to create the number one collegiate recovery program in the nation. This high impact program will save the lives of Texans and college students across the nation. Implementation of this program will gain the University of Houston local and national recognition.

The mission of Cougars in Recovery (CIR) is to provide students in recovery from addiction a safe, sober environment that assists and supports them as they pursue their academic and professional goals; walk the path of recovery; and participate in the diverse social opportunities available on campus. Application of this mission is witnessed daily as students take advantage of opportunities such as sober housing, lounge space that is available round the clock, multiple twelve step meetings, healthy social interactions and service opportunities.

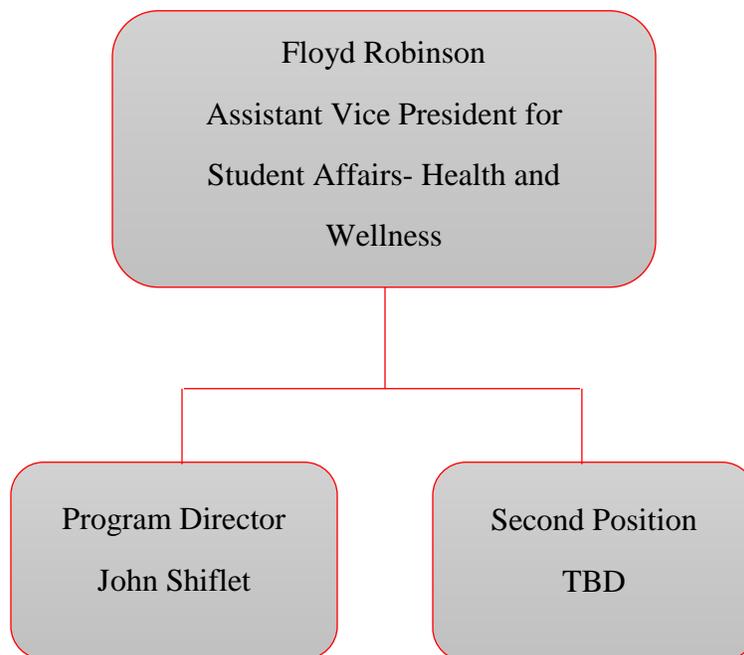
College campuses are toxic environments for students in recovery. Current CIR members have expressed the positivity of program participation stating, “Before I sobered up, I can remember walking around campus and feeling like a ghost. My college experience was virtually nonexistent. After treatment and my year-long residence in sober living, Cougars in Recovery filled the void of accountability and sense of community that sober living had previously provided.”-LH, UH Senior. “Joining CIR was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Before joining I felt a fear about being on campus. I was afraid to eat lunch in the common areas or even explore the buildings on campus. I had no idea what the University had to offer me as a student. Now, I feel as if I have a purpose and a reason to be here. As a result, my grades have improved, and I actually enjoy coming to campus. I look forward to being a part of our group's growth and helping new students on their journey through academia and recovery. - LW, UH Junior.

CIR currently serves twenty-one students with one paid staff member and one volunteer. With open annual enrollment, the program expects to welcome thirty to forty members this year. Strategic initiatives and projected budgets have been developed which include plans for expansion as the need arises. CIR is proud to complete the continuum of care offered to young people in recovery in Houston and strives to create a sustainable program.

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

COUGARS IN RECOVERY

Organizational Chart



Below are the 2013-2014 strategic initiatives for Cougars in Recovery (CIR), followed by the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) strategic initiatives and the University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. The actions steps taken to achieve each initiative are included followed by a summary of program successes to date.

1. Create and develop a program of attraction that will ensure the success of students in recovery at the University of Houston.

Related DSAES Initiative:

Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

Related University of Houston Strategic Goal: Student Success:

UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

- Host Celebration of Recovery, a weekly all recovery meeting open to the Houston Recovery Community honoring individuals with continuous periods of sobriety along with a speaker sharing his/her experience, strength and hope with others.
- Build a sense of community through shared experiences including regularly organized fun, sober social activities.
- Sponsor sober tailgating before all Cougar home football games to engage students in safe sober school spirit activities.
- Modify the program as needed to meet the needs of incoming students by increasing the number and variety of support meetings offered each week.

CIR Initiative Accomplishments:

CIR has grown exponentially since opening its doors to ten students in the fall of 2013. The community began the 2014-2015 academic year with an enrollment of twenty-one students. Celebration of Recovery, a primary component of the program, was introduced in August, 2014, replacing the speaker meeting that was offered in the inaugural year. This is an all recovery meeting supporting individuals in recovery from any addiction and celebrating milestones of recovery on a weekly basis. The meeting is open to the University of Houston student body and the Houston community at large. Weekly attendance averages twenty-five to thirty people in recovery; approximately eight CIR members and twenty to twenty-five members of the Houston community.

CIR offers a lounge with comfortable amenities including leather couches, a flat screen television, a game system, a ping pong table, and a refrigerator. This space offers students a safe, nurturing, and fun environment where they can socialize with others in recovery; feeling welcomed, supported and encouraged to continue their academic and recovery processes.

CIR encourages its students to participate in safe sober social activities. One example is the sober tailgate experience that is offered before each home football game. This activity includes food that has been donated by a local restaurant and tailgate games such as Frisbee and ladder golf. This activity is open to CIR members, students at the University of Houston, and community members who are seeking a life of sobriety. On average, about thirty percent of CIR members attend each tailgate along with approximately ten clients from various adolescent treatment centers in Houston. Following each tailgate, CIR students and staff attend the football games as a community to ensure accountability and support for one another in an environment where alcohol is prevalent.

CIR strives to consistently meet the needs of its members. To this end, meetings are modified and added to appropriately support students in recovery. The Celebration of Recovery meeting was implemented because it acknowledges people in recovery from all addictions, not just alcohol. Previously, a speaker meeting was offered with a primary focus of supporting individuals with addictions to alcohol. Since implementing the all recovery support meeting, attendance has doubled. CIR has incorporated seven new meetings in its second year including a daily noon twelve step meeting, a Narcotics Anonymous meeting and a second check-in meeting.

These options allow students to participate in the program at a level that meets their individual recovery needs.

2. Expand components of the program to meet the needs of the recovery community on campus and in the city of Houston.

DSAES Strategic Initiative:

Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Community Advancement

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

-Build students' leadership and social skills and educate the community on addiction and recovery through the development of a student organization called Cougars in the Community.

-Foster strong relationships with campus and community leaders to strengthen the support received by students. Among others, these groups will include the Dean of Students Office; Student Housing and Residential Life; Counseling and Psychological Services, (C.A.P.S.); the Student Health Center; University Career Services; Campus Recreation; UH Wellness; Admissions; Learning Support Services; the UH Substance Abuse Committee; the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Marketing and Communications Committee; and the CIR Advisory Committee.

CIR Initiative Accomplishments:

CIR student leaders have formed a student organization called Cougars in the Community (CITC); a registered organization, meeting all requirements established by the Center for Student Involvement. CITC is an organization of students in recovery partnering with the whole student body to enrich the community through service and education. The organization currently has four officers and ten voting members who meet regularly to discuss their plans for taking on

community service projects and educating the UH and Houston communities on the addiction recovery process.

CIR works closely with multiple departments at the university. Program staff meets regularly with directors of various departments to ensure awareness of CIR's presence on campus. C.A.P.S. refers struggling students to CIR as needed. These students utilize services from both organizations simultaneously to ensure student success during times of need. Through collaborations with the Dean of Students office, a conduct policy is being developed for students involved in drug or alcohol related violations on campus. This policy will require the student to schedule an appointment with the director of CIR to learn more about services offered to students struggling with substance abuse or dependence. When finalized, this policy will be printed in the code of conduct and the housing agreement. A partnership with the Center for Students with Disabilities offers support to individuals who struggle with substance abuse/dependence disorder and a co-occurring diagnosis such as anxiety or depression. The Advisory Committee is comprised of Houston recovery professionals and meets quarterly to discuss CIR accomplishments and upcoming events.

3. Engage students in meaningful service work through collaborations with community partners to develop students' self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence.

DSAES Strategic Initiative:

Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

University of Houston Strategic Goals: Community Advancement

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

CIR Initiative Action Step:

-Engage students in weekly service opportunities by working with organizations such as the Houston Food Bank, Ecclesia Church, Simple Feast, Hermann Park Lunch, Harmony House Barbecue, Mercy Street Mission, Mercy Street Mobile, The Beacon and The Art Project to offer assistance to those in need in the Houston community.

CIR Initiative Accomplishments:

Service projects for CITC include adopting a family at Thanksgiving and Christmas through a partnership with Houston Children's Charity. A full holiday meal will be provided for Thanksgiving and gifts will be purchased for children in the family for Christmas. Other service opportunities include volunteering monthly at the Houston Food Bank. Additional service projects are being explored and will be implemented as the organization develops.

4. Educate the university and Houston communities on addiction and recovery.

DSAES Strategic Initiative:

Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Community Advancement

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

Resource Competitiveness:

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

-Bring awareness of recovery and its positive impact on individuals through participation in Generation Found; a documentary being created to emphasize the unique continuum of care offered to young people in recovery in Houston.

CIR Initiative Accomplishments:

Generation Found is a documentary being created to highlight the unique continuum of care available to young people and families who struggle with substance abuse/dependence in Houston. The film will tell the story of individuals who literally have a second chance at life because of the sustainable recovery available in our city. With the implementation of the Cougars in Recovery program, Houston is one of the only cities in the country offering a full continuum of care to its young people including residential treatment, alternative peer groups, recovery high schools and collegiate recovery support. The Cougars in Recovery program will be featured in this film shining a spotlight on Houston's first collegiate recovery program.

5. Spread awareness of available collegiate recovery support in Houston throughout the community, state and nation.

DSAES Initiative:

Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Resource Competitiveness

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

- Secure opportunities to share details of CIR to organizations in the community including behavioral health organizations, educational facilities, treatment centers, sober living facilities, and alternative peer groups.
- Maintain memberships with the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) and the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS) to collaborate with recovery high schools and collegiate recovery programs across the nation.
- Attend the National Collegiate Recovery Conference annually to learn what is being done on other campuses and share the successes of CIR.

CIR Initiative Accomplishments:

As awareness of the Cougars in Recovery program spreads, staff is frequently invited to share the mission and vision of the program throughout Houston. Presentations have been held at multiple treatment facilities, sober living communities, alternative peer groups, and both of Houston's recovery high schools. These presentations have led to inquiries about the program from incoming freshmen and transfer students who are seeking a university that offers recovery support. The collegiate recovery program is beginning to serve as a recruitment tool for the university.

Annual memberships are maintained with the Association of Recovery in Higher Education, (ARHE) and the Association of Recovery Schools, (ARS). Program staff attends conferences for both organizations annually to engage in dialog with leaders in the field and preview research findings on the outcomes of implementing collegiate recovery communities at universities across the country. The director and coordinator were invited to serve as presenters at the 2014 National Collegiate Recovery Conference hosted by the ARHE. Two CIR students attended this conference to interact with members of other collegiate recovery communities and learn how their schools support students in recovery.

As a department within the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services, Cougars in Recovery will be evaluated according to procedures established by the division's assessment and planning department including annual reporting, assessment planning, departmental progress cards and strategic plan mapping. Focus will be on identifying outcomes that can be used to improve the program to have a more significant impact on students. In the initial stages of developing an evaluation plan, learning outcomes and program objectives will include determining the success rate of students participating in the program; assessing the degree to which services offered meet the needs of the community; and evaluating the level of student engagement in meaningful service work. Data collection methods will include maintaining a record of the number of students served; the number of students who remain sober; the average GPA for the community each semester; the number of total people in attendance at meetings/events; the number of UH students in attendance at meetings/events; student classification; student age; student ethnicity; residential status; relapse rate; campus involvement; graduation rate; and level of employment.

Cougars in Recovery is applying for financial support from the Student Fees Advisory Committee for the first time. The approved division budget documentation is provided at the end of this report.

Below are the 2015-2016 strategic initiatives for Cougars in Recovery (CIR), followed by the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) strategic initiatives and the University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. The specific actions steps that are planned for implementation of these initiatives are provided in priority order.

1. Create and develop a program of attraction that will ensure the success of students in recovery at the University of Houston.

DSAES Initiative:

Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Student Success:

UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

-Alleviate the financial burden of college expenses for families by offering annual academic and housing scholarships to qualified students.

CIR Plan of Action:

A fundraising campaign will be launched to create scholarship funds for both academic and need-based housing scholarships. The campaign will incorporate reaching out to foundations supporting higher education, program development, scholarship funds, health and human services. Through a partnership with the DSAES director of advancement, donations from prominent individuals in the Houston recovery community, as well as those not in recovery personally, but negatively affected by the disease of addiction, will be sought. Once monies are secured, scholarship application procedures will be implemented.

2. Expand components of the program to meet the needs of the recovery community on campus and in the city of Houston.

DSAES Strategic Initiative:

Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Community Advancement

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

- Acknowledge the success of graduating students by implementing an annual fall senior recognition event.
- Offer recovery support to the full UH System, beginning with accepting and immersing students at UH-D fully into the program.
- Implement a weekly meeting that offers support to the loved ones of students in recovery.
- Support students attending community colleges who aspire to matriculate at the University of Houston, through a weekly check-in meeting designed to acclimate these students to the university environment while offering a smooth transition both socially and academically upon acceptance to UH.

CIR Plan of Action:

The First Annual Senior Recognition Breakfast will take place at the culmination of the fall, 2014 semester honoring four students with anticipated graduation dates between December, 2014 and August, 2015. The event will spotlight the graduates who will share how they have been impacted by the Cougars in Recovery program. A short video depicting CIR will be viewed, and a prominent Houstonian in recovery will serve as the guest speaker, focusing on the positivity of living in long-term recovery. The guest list will include students, their family members and members of the Houston community with an interest in supporting recovery

programs. An opportunity for guests to financially support Cougars in Recovery will be available.

Working toward a goal of supporting students in recovery UH system-wide, CIR has accepted two students enrolled and taking courses at the University of Houston- Downtown. After classes, these students commute to the main campus to actively participate in the CIR program. Discussions are taking place between CIR staff and the leaders from the UH-Clear Lake Career and Counseling Center to begin the process of expanding recovery support to this second UH campus.

The disease of addiction is a family disease; the entire family is in recovery and requires continuous support to maintain an overall healthy environment. As the CIR population increases, the need to implement a family component will be monitored. Family members will be given the opportunity to come together and support one another as their loved ones navigate through college substance free

Students who graduate from recovery high schools often obtain the minimum high school diploma which requires participation at a community college before transferring to a four year university. CIR aims to provide these students with a weekly community check-in to facilitate a smooth transition to university life when ready to enter the UH system.

3. Engage students in meaningful service work through collaborations with community partners to develop students' self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence.

DSAES Strategic Initiative:

Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Community Advancement

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

Resource Competitiveness:

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

- Provide Clean Break service opportunities to students through collaborations with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Hand in Hand Ministries and the Hopeful Way Foundation.
- Incorporate an annual leadership trip to select students with an emphasis on team building and leadership development to create strong role models in our community who will support and assist new members through the transition to life at the university.

CIR Plan of Action:

Clean Break service opportunities will begin locally through involvement with an organization such as Habitat for Humanity. Long-term, the goal is to offer service opportunities that incorporate travel abroad with organizations such as Hand in Hand Ministries, building homes, schools and libraries for families in need around the world; and the Hopeful Way Foundation, supporting people in recovery in Ghana, Africa. These opportunities will allow students to remain dedicated to their service work; travel abroad with recovery support and accountability; and develop skills that will encourage marketability upon graduation including independence, an understanding of and the ability to communicate with people from other cultures, and real world experience.

Developing community leaders is a priority for CIR. An annual team building trip with a strong leadership component is in the planning stages. Community leaders offer support to newcomers and work to develop a strong program of attraction.

4. **Educate the university and Houston communities on addiction and recovery.**

DSAES Initiative:

Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Community Advancement

UH will commit to fulfilling regional and state workforce needs while becoming the primary engine of social, economic, and intellectual development.

Resource Competitiveness:

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Strategic Initiative Action Steps:

-Bring awareness of recovery and the positive impact it has on individuals through participation in Generation Found, a documentary being created to emphasize the unique continuum of care offered to young people in recovery in Houston.

-Educate the community on addiction and recovery by offering an annual Recovery Conference hosted by Cougars in the Community, a student organization focused on service, leadership and education.

CIR Plan of Action:

The impact of the Generation Found documentary on the Houston recovery community is expecting to be intense. As cities from across the nation learn about the continuum of care offered in Houston, a high volume of program inquiries and application submissions is expected by the CIR staff. Accommodations for handling the anticipated volume of applicants are being developed.

A recovery conference on the UH campus is being planned to educate the community on addiction and recovery. Members of the Cougars in the Community organization will offer this

conference under the guidance of student leaders from the Association of Students About Service. This organization is the service component for The Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery at Texas Tech University.

5. Spread awareness of available collegiate recovery support in Houston throughout the community, state and nation.

DSAES Initiative:

Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Resource Competitiveness

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Strategic Initiative Action Steps:

- Secure opportunities to share details of CIR to organizations in the community including behavioral health organizations, educational facilities, treatment centers, sober living facilities, and alternative peer groups.
- Maintain memberships with the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) and the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS) to collaborate with recovery high schools and collegiate recovery programs across the nation.
- Attend the National Collegiate Recovery Conference annually to learn what is being done on other campuses and share the successes of CIR.

CIR Plan of Action:

CIR staff will continue to share the mission and vision of the program with individuals in recovery to expand awareness of collegiate recovery support in Houston. They desire to offer hope to those who may believe that college is not a viable option to them because of their addiction.

Annual memberships with the Association of Recovery in Higher Education and the Association of Recovery Schools will be maintained as will annual attendance at conferences for both organizations.

6. Explore opportunities for sustainability and fiscal responsibility.

DSAES Initiative:

Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

University of Houston Strategic Goal:

UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Strategic Initiative Action Steps:

- Implement an annual Spring Golf Tournament to raise money for academic and housing scholarships.
- Host an annual fall event to raise money for program development and celebrate the accomplishments of our students.
- Involve students in fundraising through the student organization. Proceeds will be used for events sponsored by Cougars in the Community.
- Establish relationships with potential donors including UH alumni and other prominent members of the Houston community.

CIR Plan of Action:

In the spring of 2015, CIR plans to host its first annual golf tournament. Money raised will be utilized to establish a scholarship fund for the program. Money raised from the annual senior recognition event in the fall will be designated for program development. Donations made to Cougars in the Community will be used for their community service projects.

The Houston community is known for the level of support it provides to individuals in recovery. A significant amount of funding for both the Texas Tech University and the University of Texas at Austin collegiate recovery programs came from the Houston community. During the development of the Cougars in Recovery program, the volunteer founder secured \$60,000 in grant donations. A one-time \$10,000 grant was received from the Stacie Mathewson Foundation; an organization supporting early-stage collegiate recovery efforts. A second gift of \$50,000 was received from the John P. McGovern Foundation; an organization supporting local health and educational causes. The McGovern Foundation gifted another \$50,000 to CIR for the program's second year. Additional gifts received include \$20,000 from the John M. O'Quinn Foundation, and \$10,000 from the Trull Foundation. Four grant requests totaling \$170,000 are pending. The founder/coordinator works closely with the UH office of foundation relations and the DSAES director of advancement to secure funding and create a sustainable program. Below is a summary of potential funding sources for the Cougars in Recovery program.

Possible Sources of Funding for Cougars in Recovery

<u>Funding Sources for Cougars in Recovery</u>	<u>2013-2014 Actual</u>	<u>2014-2015 Projected</u>	<u>2014-2015 Actual</u>	<u>2015-2016 Projected</u>
Foundations	\$90,000.00	\$170,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$165,000.00
Corporations	\$0.00	\$50,000.00		\$50,000.00
Individuals	\$7,250.00	\$10,000.00	\$500.00	\$10,000.00
In-Kind	\$1,330.00	\$2,100.00	\$1,500.00	\$3,500.00
Total	\$100,080.00	\$232,100.00	\$12,000.00	\$228,500.00

Houston has been referred to as the adolescent recovery capital of the nation due to the number of services it provides for adolescents in recovery including two sober high schools, four alternative peer groups, and multiple twelve step meetings geared toward young people. Houston also has an abundance of services for adults in recovery; however, a serious gap existed at the collegiate level where environmental pressures make college campuses high risk settings for students in recovery. Previously, Houston students wishing to participate in collegiate recovery in Texas had to attend Texas Tech University in Lubbock or the University of Texas at Austin. Many Houston students were choosing to attend community colleges to maintain involvement in their local recovery programs. The vision for Cougars in Recovery is to offer incoming students a smooth transition to the university, both socially and academically; to offer opportunities for positive social interactions; to set standards that hold recovering students accountable; and to provide support, guidance and opportunities to serve the community. CIR is the first collegiate recovery program in Houston, providing an opportunity for students to receive the full college experience which includes socializing and being part of a group on campus.

There is a collegiate recovery movement spreading across the United States. Many colleges and universities are in the process of establishing support for students in recovery on their campuses. The Board of Regents for the University of Texas took steps to expand collegiate recovery to all nine of their campuses over a three year period. A replication model created by Texas Tech University is being used across the country. Cougars in Recovery is setting the standard for collegiate recovery in Houston.

There are two recovery high schools in Houston: Archway Academy and Three Oaks Academy. These schools offer services similar to the CIR program, but at the high school level. There is an overlap between the two recovery high schools and the CIR program. These two schools are the primary CIR recruitment sites; many of their students have experienced recovery support at the high school level and wish to extend this support through their collegiate experience. Like Archway and Three Oaks Academies, Cougars in Recovery is an education-based program, providing support to students as they pursue their studies with the ultimate goal of graduation. As mentioned, Cougars in Recovery is the first collegiate recovery program in Houston. It is unique in comparison to other collegiate recovery programs. This is partly because of the uniqueness of Houston, which has more recovery support meetings available to young people than other cities. As a result, Cougars in Recovery is designed as a program of attraction;

a program that students choose to be part of because the meetings and activities offer a level of support that is not found at other meetings. Cougars in Recovery strives to supplement what is already available in Houston with recovery support that best meets the needs of college students at the University of Houston. Students have access to meetings, peer support and comradery right on campus.