

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

Alcohol and drug abuse on college campuses is widely recognized, with many initiatives created to target these abuse problems. Relatively few programs or services address college students in recovery; those who have made a commitment to a sober lifestyle, but who will continually face the risk of relapse in their recovery. College life, without any extra challenges, is difficult enough. For students in recovery, the difficulty is multiplied.

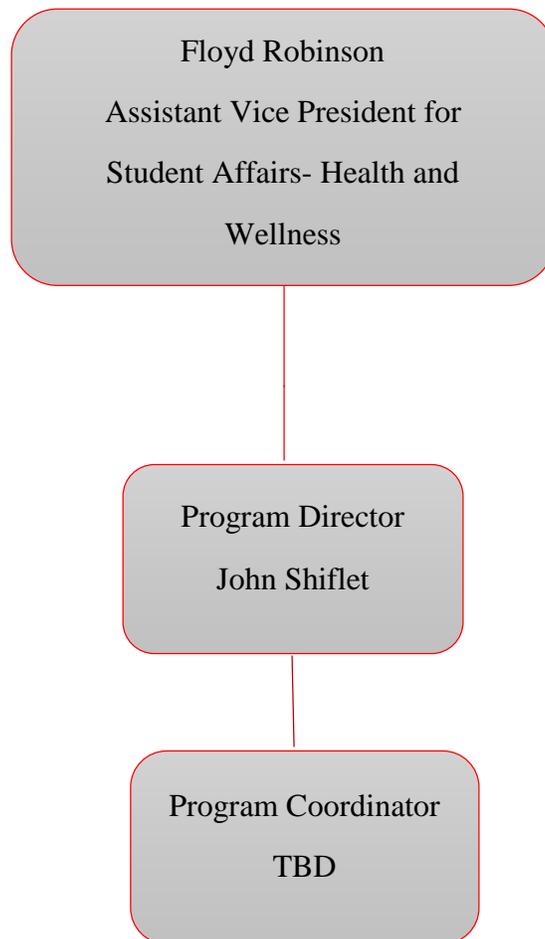
SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, defines recovery as a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. SAMHSA has identified four major dimensions that support a life in recovery. Health focuses on abstaining from substances and making healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being. Home refers to having a safe and sober place to live. Purpose encompasses participation in meaningful daily activities. Community incorporates relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love and hope. Cougars in Recovery, (CIR) exemplifies SAMHSA's definition through their mission 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. This mission is accomplished through five core components including providing a safe sober environment, accountability, recovery support, Celebration of Recovery, and community service opportunities.

CIR staff currently consists of a paid program director and a volunteer program coordinator. According to the Association of Recovery in Higher Education, the national association for collegiate recovery communities, best practices state that the staff to student ratio within a community should be 1:25. CIR closed FY15 serving 32 students and began FY16 serving 50 students. This exponential growth is expected to continue as additional students learn that recovery support is available on campus. CIR respectfully asks the Student Fees Advisory Committee to consider a one-time new request for FY16 to fund a program coordinator's salary as well as base salaries for both the director and coordinator positions for FY17.

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

COUGARS IN RECOVERY

Organizational Chart



Below are the 2014-2015 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 action steps taken to achieve each initiative are included followed by a summary of initiative accomplishments.

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: (1b) Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

Establish support and advocacy based programs and services for commuter, transfer, adult, non-traditional and graduate students.

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:

-Hosted Celebration of Recovery, a weekly all recovery meeting open to the Houston community, celebrating sobriety milestones along with a speaker sharing his/her experience, strength and hope.

-Established Cougars in the Community in fall, 2014, a registered student organization focused on service and education. This organization offered sober tailgating at all 2014 home football games.

-Implemented an outdoor adventure component in spring, 2015. This included training on the rock wall in the recreation center followed by a weekend trip to Enchanted Rock State Park for camping and rock climbing.

-Began collaborating with the Sober Recreation Committee in spring, 2015. This organization provides fun activities for the recovering community in the Greater Houston area. CIR members created a softball team and participate in monthly tournaments.

Initiative Accomplishments:

Celebration of Recovery is now chaired by CIR members. Students are responsible for inviting speakers, posting meetings on social media, setting up the room, and leading the meeting each week.

Participation in Cougars in the Community allows CIR members to engage in organized volunteer opportunities in a recovery friendly environment. Students have the opportunity to

serve in leadership positions gaining experience with decision making, fundraising and budget issues, time and stress management, meeting management and conflict mediation.

An outdoor adventure component was added to the programming in spring, 2015. Benefits of outdoor learning opportunities include enhancing personal and social development, improving problem solving skills, developing leadership qualities, enhancing teamwork and overcoming adversity. The goal is to implement a different activity each semester to meet the interests and skill levels of all students over time.

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

Related DSAES Initiative: (2b) Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience.

Execute an effective operating plan of existing fiscal, human, technological and facility resources in support of student success.

Related 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:

- Partnered with the Dean of Students' office to offer CIR members priority registration beginning summer, 2015.
- Collaborated with Dean of Students' office to support UH students who receive drug and alcohol related violations on campus.
- Collaborated with CAPS, SHRL and Undergraduate Academic Affairs to ensure the success of all UH students who struggle with substance abuse issues.
- Offered support to students with eating disorders beginning in fall, 2014.
- Held first annual Senior Recognition Breakfast in fall, 2014 to acknowledge CIR's first graduates.
- Expanded collegiate recovery support to full UH system by including students at UH-D in the program.
- Increased the number of weekly twelve-step meetings offered from two to eight.
- Supported UH Athletics as they establish proactive measures to hold student athletes accountable and provide education on addiction and recovery.
- Participated in conversations with UH Veterans' Services to determine how members of the armed forces with substance abuse and/or addiction issues can best be served.

-Collaborated with the Center for Students with Disabilities to assist students who qualify for educational modifications.

-Worked with the Center for Student Involvement through the student organization, Cougars in the Community.

-Worked with the Office of Undergraduate Affairs to assist students in resolving issues related to their academics.

Initiative Accomplishments:

Priority registration was offered to CIR members beginning with the summer, 2015 semester. This privilege allows students to register for and take classes together with built-in accountability regarding class attendance, completing homework and studying for tests.

In an attempt to better support all students in recovery, CIR staff attended the annual Houston Eating Disorder Specialists conference with a student. At the conference, staff met another UH student struggling with an eating disorder. Conversations about holding a weekly eating disorder meeting were held.

The first Annual Senior Recognition Breakfast was held in December, 2014. This event highlighted CIR's first two graduates. One student graduated magna cum laude with five months of sobriety, the other graduated with just under two years sober. CIR celebrated two additional graduates in May, 2015, one was a United States veteran who completed his course work at UH allowing him to graduate from an out-of-state school that does not offer recovery support. Two former students are currently enrolled in graduate school, one at UH; one student plans to begin graduate school at UH in fall, 2016; and the fourth graduate is currently working as a teacher.

UH Athletics reached out to CIR staff inviting them to assist in the restructuring of the Athletic Department's substance abuse policy. A curriculum was developed to educate student athletes on various substances and how they affect the brain, the body and athletic performance. The curriculum will be implemented with all student athletes in FY16.

CIR has served two United States veterans to date as members of the collegiate recovery community. Staff is holding discussions with Veterans' Services to determine how best to support UH student veterans who struggle with substance abuse issues.

Many individuals who suffer from addiction have co-occurring conditions making them eligible for educational modifications. CIR maintains a close relationship and open communication with the Center for Students with Disabilities to ensure that eligible members receive the assistance necessary to ensure their academic success.

Periodically, a student who struggles with addiction must be referred to a higher level of care. When this need arises, it is usually urgent. CIR has relationships with staff in the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and can immediately refer students in need to the proper individual for expedited assistance.

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

Related DSAES Initiative: (3c) Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

Explore and enhance multicultural-based collaborative programs with departments outside of the Division and in partnership with agencies in our surrounding environments.

Related 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:

- Adopted a family through Houston Children's Charity for Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Participated in feeding the homeless at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church's Way Station.
- Volunteered at the Houston Food Bank.
- Chaired the weekly Celebration of Recovery meeting.
- Participated in tabling events on campus.
- Participated in fundraising activities.

Initiative Accomplishments:

In the world of recovery there is a saying, "You have to give it away to keep it". This refers to getting out of self and helping others. Participating in community service is a wonderful way for students in recovery to share compassion, empathy, and understanding for the needs of others. In addition to positively impacting each individual's recovery, student engagement has been positively linked to persistence. When students feel a part of; like they are making a difference, they are more likely to remain in school striving to reach their academic goals.

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

Related DSAES Initiative: (5c) Cultivate a collective identity that demonstrates a united vision.

Develop a comprehensive and integrated communications plan to increase awareness and understanding among the Division, the campus community

and the surrounding environments about who we are, what we do, and who we serve.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Local and National Recognition

UH will be known for its accomplishments locally and nationally.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

-Became an institutional member of both the Association of Recovery in Higher Education and the Association of Recovery Schools.

-Attended the National Collegiate Recovery Conference in spring, 2015 and the Association of Recovery Schools national conference in summer, 2015.

-Attended the Clinical Overview of the Recovery Experience Conference and its Advocacy Alliance Summit in summer, 2015.

-Created a brochure highlighting the CIR program and distributed it on campus and in the Houston community.

-Participating in Generation Found, a documentary focused on the continuum of care offered to young people in the city of Houston. The film is currently scheduled for distribution in 2016.

-Collaborating with other UH campuses to guide and assist them in supporting their students in recovery.

-Reaching out to other colleges and universities, sharing details of the program and offering guidance and assistance as needed.

-Spoke at public locations and events when invited.

Initiative Accomplishments:

Attendance at annual national conferences provides opportunities to share CIR's successes and learn from other professionals in the field of recovery.

Generation Found, a documentary highlighting the unique continuum of care offered to young people in Houston is currently in the editing phase. The film is scheduled for national distribution in 2016.

Although the collegiate recovery community on the main campus is available to all students in the University of Houston system, individual campuses have expressed an interest in offering support to their students in recovery. Conversations were held with UH-CL about starting a weekly twelve step meeting on their campus.

Ultimately, all students in recovery, no matter where they attend school, should feel supported and safe on their campuses. Conversations were held with representatives from Houston Baptist University, Sam Houston State University, and Prairie View A&M University to share the premise of CIR's program, discuss needs on their campuses, and offer guidance.

Staff had the opportunity to present the CIR program on campus at the SHRL Resident Advisor Diversity Conference, UH Faculty Senate, Dean of Student's Lunch and Learn, Dean of Students' Conduct Officer Training, Pharmacy School orientation, and Brown Bag Training on Transgender. Off campus presentations included Three Oaks Academy, Texas Association of Addiction Professionals Conference, Working Together Conference, UT Health School of Nursing, Family Recovery Expo and Symposium-Houston, and Memorial Hermann Prevention and Recovery Center.

5. Explore opportunities for sustainability and fiscal responsibility

Related DSAES Initiative: (2d) Actualize and leverage the fiscal, human, technological, and facility resources that enhance the student experience.

Create and implement a division-wide advancement and fundraising program in partnership with the Division of University Advancement.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Competitive Resources UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Initiative Action Steps:

- Submitted eight grant proposals totaling \$315,000 in collaboration with the Office of Foundation Relations.
- Held first Annual Senior Recognition Breakfast.
- Received in-kind donations of food and beverages in support of sober tailgating.
- Strategized with DSAES director of advancement on procuring donations from individuals.

Initiative Accomplishments:

CIR received three grant awards totaling \$85,000. Two additional grant proposals from FY15 are pending.

Food for sober tailgating at each fall, 2014 home football game was generously donated by a restaurant in Bellaire. These in-kind donations are valued at \$3,000.

Donations in the amount of \$3,200 were received at the Senior Recognition Breakfast.

Utilization and Evaluation of Cougars in Recovery Program

As evidenced in the chart below, the level of participation in the CIR community is growing at a steady pace. In fall, 2013 two weekly twelve-step meetings were offered, compared to eight weekly meetings in fall, 2014 and spring, 2015. Hope Dealers, Living the Dream and Sober Tailgating were added to the program in fall, 2014. Living the Dream meetings were not offered in spring, 2015 as no current students were involved in the NA program.

Programming	Fall FY 14			Spring FY15		
	Total	Weekly Average	CIR Student Average	Total	Weekly Average	CIR Student Average
Community Check-in Attendance	270	15	15	286	18	18
Celebration of Recovery Attendance	429	24	8	290	18	15
Hope Dealers Daily AA Meeting	180	20	20	237	15	12
Living the Dream Weekly NA Meeting	39	3	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sober Tailgate	42	6	6	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sober Housing	3			0		
Total	963	52	35	813	51	45

Three assessment projects implemented in FY15 are described below.

- Build a sense of community through shared experiences, and ascertain which services offered are most impactful on CIR students by tracking attendance for the number of CIR members and Houston community members at weekly check-in and twelve step meetings; determining the average semester GPA of community members; determining the retention rate of community members in the collegiate recovery community and at the University of Houston; determining the average sobriety rate for community members. (See FY15 results below)

	Check-In	12 Step	Avg. GPA	Sobriety	Retention
Fall, 2014	270	648	3.216	78%	63%
Spring, 2015	286	527	3.144	81%	69%

Planned actions include determining a more accurate method for tracking attendance at meetings while maintaining confidentiality of attendees. Twelve-step meeting attendance dropped in spring, 2015. CIR is a program of attraction. Plans to increase attendance at twelve step meetings include incorporating a higher level of student involvement in meeting organization and implementation. Although the community average GPA is strong, the implementation of annual CIR scholarships may increase both student participation and academic focus.

- Enhance the collegiate experience for all students who have aspirations of attending college and obtaining a degree, allowing them to feel safe and comfortable in the process by developing a structured set of questions to be used when interviewing leaders from UH campuses system wide during the 2014-2015 academic year to determine what services, if any, are being offered; what services are needed; how many students on each campus receive counseling for substance abuse; how each campus currently supports students in recovery; how CIR can support other campuses in offering services to their students in recovery.

FY15 Results - The questionnaire has not yet been developed. Conversations were held with UH-CL about offering a weekly 12 step meeting on their campus. Although there is student interest, there has been no follow through to date.

Planned actions include creating a questionnaire using Baseline, if other campuses have access; sharing the questionnaire with Student Affairs, Health and Wellness, Counseling and the Dean of Students at UH-CL, UH-D, UH-SL and UH-V by end of fall, 2015.

- Identify components of service work that enhance recovery and impact student success in a positive manner by developing a structured survey for CIR community members to determine what service opportunities students participate in; what leadership opportunities they have taken advantage of; their semester GPA; how much time they spend doing volunteer activities; where they volunteer; how they feel these activities impact their recovery and enhance their success as students

FY15 Results - The survey is not yet ready for implementation. Surveys from other universities were analyzed. A draft of the survey was developed and shared with members of the assessment committee. Feedback was received.

Planned actions include determining the specific data required to evaluate level of engagement and how service work impacts recovery; using Baseline to create a student

survey; receiving feedback from the assessment committee; and emailing the survey to all CIR members in December, 2015 and May, 2016.

Below are the 2016-2017 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. Increase the number of students taking advantage of the residential component of the program by 20% through changing the sober housing location; allowing more students the opportunity to participate in the full collegiate experience.**

DSAES Strategic Initiative: (1e) Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

Develop learning communities intentionally connected to academic and student affairs programs to enhance success in support of the growing residential campus.

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:

-Meet with Student Housing and Residential Life to discuss options for changing the sober housing location. Possible locations include Cougar Place for sophomores and above, and Cougar Village 1 or 2 for freshmen.

-Initiate fundraising campaign to offer need based housing scholarships to students interested in living on campus.

CIR Plan of Action:

Students who choose to live on campus have an academic edge. They have closer proximity to classes and often take greater advantage of academic support services. Participating in residential life offers a supervised environment which is conducive to healthy personal and social development as students form their identities and experience a sense of community within their institution of higher education.

Sober dorms provide a living space in which no alcohol or drugs are allowed. Students who are found with banned substances are asked to move to a different facility. Each CIR member signs a student agreement stating that he/she will hold others in the community accountable to their commitment to sobriety. This built-in accountability offers round the clock support to residents who may feel “triggered” to use substances. Residential students in recovery have greater access to all resources offered through the Cougars in Recovery program.

Sober housing is currently located in Law Hall. Although grateful for the space, it is believed that a larger number of students would take advantage of sober housing if its location was more aesthetically pleasing. Many CIR members have expressed their desire to have the full college experience. Participation in residential living would provide this opportunity.

The majority of CIR members work part-time to help pay for their education. Several students have expressed an interest in utilizing sober housing, but cannot afford to do so. The ability to offer need-based housing scholarships would provide the means for some students to take advantage of this important component of the program.

2. Bring awareness of recovery and its positive impact on individuals to the university and Houston communities through speaker events and conferences held on campus.

DSAES Strategic Initiative: (3b) Foster the creation of a global learning community that actualizes and embraces inclusion while preparing students to become active citizens.

Establish co-curricular, globally focused initiatives that provide students with opportunities for engagement on campus, in our surrounding environments and beyond.

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:

- Invite a nationally recognized person in recovery to share his/her experience, strength and hope. Invite members of the university and Houston communities to come and hear the positive message from someone living in long-term recovery.
- Participate in and possibly host the Clinical Overview of the Recovery Experience Advocacy Alliance Regional Mini Summit.

CIR Plan of Action:

There is a movement in the United States to shy away from discussing addiction, the problem and redirect our conversation to recovery, the solution. The stigma associated with addiction stems from the old-fashioned idea that addiction is a personal moral failure. This premise focuses on the fact that when we discuss addiction, we glamorize the negative behaviors that are exhibited by individuals who are suffering from an illness. We now know that addiction is a disease and that seeking treatment is not disgraceful. When people share their personal stories, they offer hope, to those struggling with addiction as well as their loved ones. They are living examples that treatment and recovery work and that addiction is not hopeless. Inviting prominent individuals to share their stories publicly will help to destigmatize the disease of addiction while educating our community on what it means to live in recovery.

The C.O.R.E. conference is a collaboration of individuals who are dedicated to promoting the design, provision and monitoring of outcomes-based addiction services and providing platforms to integrate varied academic disciplines and professional activities within the fields of addiction and behavioral health. At the annual national conference, plans were made to offer mini

Advocacy Alliance Summits regionally throughout the United States. CIR staff were invited to participate in the planning and implementation of a mini summit in Texas.

3. Increase sustainability by maintaining positive relationships with current donors while acquiring two additional foundation supporters, and building the base of individual donors.

DSAES Initiative: (6c) Create and engage in strategic partnerships.

Partner with the Division of University Advancement and the Alumni Association to nurture an alumni base to support the Division's initiatives.

University of Houston Strategic Goal: Competitive Resources UH will build a resource base that enables it to accomplish its mission and realize its vision.

CIR Strategic Initiative Action Steps:

- Foster strong relationships with current donors.
- Continue collaborating with Office of Foundation Relations on grant writing.
- Identify and seek funding from two new foundations.
- Bring awareness of the CIR program to the Alumni Association.
- Research additional fundraising opportunities.

CIR Plan of Action:

Communication with current donors will take place regularly to keep them apprised of CIR's successes and growth.

The potential for support from alumni in recovery is significant. CIR staff will reach out to the Alumni Association to ensure their awareness of the CIR program. They will also investigate the possibility of placing an article in the alumni newsletter summarizing the program and inviting alumni to attend the weekly Celebration of Recovery meeting. A request will also be made to place the CIR meeting schedule in the newsletter on a regular basis.

4. Modify programming to meet the needs of a growing population and ensure the success of students in recovery by obtaining feedback from students and implementing their ideas as appropriate.

DSAES Initiative: (1b) Create new opportunities for student success through learning, engagement and discovery.

Establish supportive and advocacy based programs and services for commuter, transfer, adult, non-traditional and graduate students.

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 Strategic Initiative Action Steps:

- Incorporate additional meetings as required to meet students' needs.
- Research plausibility of offering the weekly check-in meeting as a one credit, pass/fail class.
- Devise methods to ensure that each member of a rapidly growing community feels supported.

CIR Plan of Action:

CIR staff will review all questionnaires completed by students at the end of the fall and spring semesters to determine what the students perceive as strengths and weaknesses of the program. Careful consideration will be given to student opinions and concerns as additional meetings and events are planned for each upcoming semester.

Staff will look into the possibility of offering the weekly check-in meeting as a one credit, pass/fail class. This would encourage all students to attend the check-in, allowing them to

give and receive feedback from their peers. It would also ensure that staff have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with all CIR members weekly.

Possible Sources of Funding for Cougars in Recovery

<u>Funding Sources for Cougars in Recovery</u>	<u>2014-2015 Actual</u>	<u>2015-2016 Projected</u>	<u>2015-2016 Actual To Date</u>	<u>2016-2017 Projected</u>
Foundations	\$85,000.00	\$110,000.00		\$125,000.00
Corporations	\$0.00	\$50,000.00		\$50,000.00
Individuals	\$4195.00	\$10,000.00		\$10,000.00
In-Kind	\$3,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$200.00	\$5,000.00
Total	\$92,195.00	\$175,000.00	\$200.00	\$190,000.00

In collaboration with the UH Office of Foundation Relations, eight grant proposals totaling \$315,000 were submitted on behalf of CIR in FY15. Three proposals totaling \$85,000 have been awarded. The John P. McGovern Foundation, an organization that contributes to local health charities, supported CIR with a gift of \$50,000 for the third consecutive year. The Trull Foundation, which strives to help those affected by substance abuse, gifted \$10,000 to CIR for the second consecutive year. The Hildebrand Foundation supports faith-based organizations serving the poor and needy in Houston. This generous organization gifted \$25,000 to CIR, a first-time gift to the University of Houston. Two grant proposals totaling \$75,000 are pending. The first annual Senior Recognition Breakfast held in December, 2014 raised \$3,200. Food and beverages for sober tailgating at all 2014 home football games were generously donated by Roadster Grill in Bellaire. This in-kind donation was valued at \$3,000.

The University of Houston recognizes the needs of students in recovery and has made a commitment through Cougars in Recovery to provide support and make a positive difference for this at-risk and previously underserved population.

CIR is the first and only collegiate recovery community in the Houston area; and as such, is setting the standard for collegiate recovery in Houston. CIR aspires to be the premier collegiate recovery community in the nation, establishing the University of Houston as the institution of choice for students seeking collegiate recovery support. CIR will gain national recognition as a program that draws students to the University of Houston to bridge the gap between their recovery and higher education. This program is open to all students in recovery from alcohol and other addictions who are enrolled throughout the University of Houston System.

The Cougars in Recovery program was created two years ago to address the needs of individuals with addictions seeking support to help them maintain their recovery while pursuing their UH degrees. In many cases, this program is providing an opportunity for individuals, who did not think a college education was possible for them before, to now work towards this dream.

The Cougars in Recovery program offers many resources and activities. Utilizing sober housing provides students with the opportunity to fully experience college life while living on campus in an environment where their peers have committed to live substance free. Students are offered eight opportunities to attend twelve-step meetings each week to maintain stability and accountability in recovery while participating in campus life as a full-time student. The CIR lounge is available to students 24 hours a day to study, watch TV, play games and socialize with others in recovery between classes and in the evenings. Accountability is achieved primarily through the weekly check-in meeting where students receive peer feedback after sharing their feelings, successes, struggles, recovery program status, gratitude and affirmations. Students learn skills for facing their struggles and receive referrals to helpful resources, with the reassurance that others are on this journey with them. Celebration of Recovery is an all recovery meeting that recognizes all twelve-step programs. Camaraderie and community service are integral components of the program.

With open enrollment, CIR has continued to grow at a rapid pace. FY15 began with twenty-one students; eight returning from the inaugural year, and closed with thirty-two members. The diversity of the group has increased with more variety evidenced in ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, classification and addiction. This increased diversity among the student population is adding to the cohesiveness of the program as students support one another, focusing on the similarities of their struggles rather than their differences.