



The **Cougar**

**Student Fees Advisory Committee
One-Time Requests**

The Cougar

Opening Statement – Students are widely moving to consume news content digitally, and the website and email edition are critical to The Cougar growing as a brand. As a print weekly, digital daily publication, increasing on-campus visibility, student outreach and audience engagement is also more crucial than ever. The following funding requests, listed in priority order, serve as a way to help The Cougar become a more visible and continue to adapt to growing and changing audiences on campus:

1. FY 19 One-Time — \$4,055 for Web Editor position
2. FY 18 One-Time — \$2,703 for Features Editor position
3. FY 19 One-Time — \$4,055 for Features Editor position
4. FY 18 One-Time — \$ 11,488.64 for photography equipment
5. FY 19 One-Time — \$ 6,536.25 for conference travel
6. FY 19 One-Time — \$ 1,207.50 for sports travel

With these initiatives, increased visibility to the student body will further secure The Cougar as a brand around the UH campus and improve the quality of that brand. The success of The Cougar is centered on producing and gathering content, correctly reporting it, and the Web Editor position allows for more student interactivity with digital content, pushing The Cougar further into the campus spotlight, which is essential in increasing print and especially web readers.

Meanwhile, the Features Editor position will allow for strengthened news coverage across The Cougar's platforms. By allowing the News Editor to shift his or her focus to only web stories, The Cougar expects to increase the News section's daily coverage by at least 20 percent.

FY 2019 One-Time Request No. 1 – Web Editor

The Cougar is requesting another year of one-time funding for the crucial Web Editor position. Since adding this position to the Editorial Board, social media followership and engagement have increased. Close in line with industry standards, the Web Editor makes roughly 110-120 posts on The Cougar’s Facebook alone each week. Statistics are similar for Twitter. They also track our web analytics, make an email edition for every weekday, and give feedback to editors about what stories our readers like to read.

And this isn’t just for The Cougar. The Web Editor assists other members of the staff with planning, posting and monitoring social media for Cooglif and The Cougar Sports, which is co-run by The Cougar’s sports staff. Another term for this role at news organizations is “audience engagement.” There is truly no other editor at The Cougar who interacts so closely with our readers. It is an invaluable position.

Hired for a 12-month period, The Cougar’s Web Editor curates The Cougar’s social media posts, fostering a dialogue within the UH student body and increasing community involvement throughout the University.

The job demands of The Cougar’s web editor meet those of an editorial board member, as they are responsible for updating and moderating debate at all hours of the day and on all days of the week, as well as posting stories to The Cougar’s website. They also drive the initiative for email subscriptions at Student Media Wednesday and other community events.

Stipend (12 mos. X \$318.75)	—	\$ 3,825.00
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)	—	\$ 230.00
Subtotal	—	\$ 4,055.00

Web Editor: The Web Editor works directly with all other members of the Editorial Board to plan and create an engaging web and social media presence. As a leader at the newspaper, the Web Editor assists the Editor in Chief, Managing Editor and Creative Director in editorial and management decisions. On a daily basis, the Web Editor posts on The Cougar’s several social media accounts and creates the morning email edition. If the Editor in Chief and Managing Editor are unavailable, the Web Editor serves as an emergency closing editor. This editor:

- Attends thrice-weekly content meetings.
- Manages The Cougar’s social media platforms and website and serves as the official spokesperson for the paper.
- Works as closing editor in case of emergency.
- Serves on the Editorial Board and assists with staff editorials.
- Works with photo editors and Creative Director to develop visually interesting stories on the web and social media applications.
- Monitors and responds to the needs of The Cougar’s audience, 24/7.
- Optimizes each story for top performance on search engines, the No. 1 way our readers find The Cougar
- Develops and assigns quick-turnaround stories to section editors for web publication based on observed social media trends and online news
- Creates weekly reports detailing The Cougar’s performance on social media platforms and page views.
- Schedules social media broadcasts such as Meet the Staff or ticket giveaways.
- Makes himself or herself available for meetings with members of the UH community.

FY 2018 One-Time Request No. 2 – Features Editor

As The Cougar continues to maintain excellence in its award-winning weekly print edition, the demands of the News Editor are stretched thin. Between managing dozens of staff writers, coordinating complex features stories and juggling timely online-only stories, our quality on both sides of production — print and online — does not reach our fullest potential.

The Features Editor would act as a remedy to that issue. By acting as a second News Editor, the Features editor would plan, curate, assign and edit The Cougar’s news features, and take full responsibility for the News section in print each week. In addition, they would do the same for a handful of high-quality online features throughout the week.

Shifting the responsibility of long-term features away from the News Editor would transform their role into a Campus & City Editor focused solely on daily online coverage. Under this system, the Campus & City Editor would retain both of our Assistant News Editors, forming a team equipped to write with short-turnaround times. This would result in more and better coverage of campus events, UH administration meetings and daily developments, without sacrificing the great storytelling of features.

The Campus & City Editor would also be able to realize a long-standing goal of The Cougar: covering the city of Houston. Without the addition of this position, we do not have the resources to plan and edit that coverage of Houston transportation, energy, business and City Hall news. In 2016, 78 percent of UH students lived in Harris or an adjacent county. The Cougar hopes to cover news that matters to UH students, and that means we need to start reporting beyond campus.

This request would cover January – August 2018.

Stipend (12 mos. X \$318.75)	—	\$ 2,550.00
<u>UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>\$ 153.00</u>
Subtotal	—	\$ 2,703.00

Features Editor: The Features Editor’s main responsibility is to work with the Campus Editor to coordinate in-depth news features for print and online publication. The Features Editor would work with reporters in all beats to facilitate and edit anything from evergreen human interest features to long-form investigative stories. Any topic covered in the news section would be fair game for an assignment from the Features Editor. This editor:

- Meets with the Campus Editor at least twice a week.
- Attends thrice-weekly content meetings.
- Assigns, facilitates and edits the entire News print section each week.
- Assigns, facilitates and edits a minimum of four online features each week.
- Maintains constant communication with the UH Office of External Communications, the Student Government Association, Residence Halls Association, Faculty Senate and Staff Council to ensure coverage of key campus constituencies.
- Ensures every story has a compelling visual element.
- Works with Campus Editor to holds regular meetings with writing staff in an individual or group setting.
- Uploads all features and corresponding images to WordPress for publication online.
- Designs the layout for every page in the news printed section, including article, image and ad placement.
- Serves on the Editorial Board and assists with staff editorials.
- Makes himself or herself available for meetings with members of the UH community.

FY 2019 One-Time Request No. 3 – Features Editor

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Stipend (12 mos. X \$318.75)	—	\$ 3,825.00
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)	—	\$ 230.00
Subtotal	—	\$ 4,055.00

Features Editor: The Features Editor’s main responsibility is to work with the Campus Editor to coordinate in-depth news features for print and online publication. The Features Editor would work with reporters in all beats to facilitate and edit anything from evergreen human interest features to long-form investigative stories. Any topic covered in the news section would be fair game for an assignment from the Features Editor. This editor:

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- Works with Campus Editor to holds regular meetings with writing staff in an individual or group setting.
- Uploads all features and corresponding images to WordPress for publication online.
- Designs the layout for every page in the news printed section, including article, image and ad placement.
- Serves on the Editorial Board and assists with staff editorials.
- Makes himself or herself available for meetings with members of the UH community.

FY 2018 One-Time Request No. 4 – Camera Equipment

Each day, student photographers at The Cougar rely on in-house equipment to capture engaging and informative photos that supplement our print and online content. To better our visual storytelling and simulate a more professional work environment for photographers, The Cougar would like to increase the gear available to the photo desk.

The Canon EF 300 mm f/2.8 telephoto lens is the industry standard for sports photography. As the Cougar does not currently have a lens with comparable zoom capability, the addition of this piece of equipment to the photo desk would increase the ease and quality of The Cougar's sports coverage.

The Canon EF 300 mm f/4 telephoto lens would provide equal zoom capability, but the smaller aperture range would limit this lens' usefulness under extreme light conditions, such as during late-night football games and indoor events.

Full-frame cameras are the industry standard for all professional photography, and provide visually superior photos to lower grade DSLRs. They offer higher resolution and more advanced features as compared to cheaper, cropped frame cameras. The Canon EOS 5D Mark IV offers a full-frame sensor, a 10 megapixel increase from The Cougar's current DSLR and a superior autofocus system, allowing for reliably clear sports photos.

To make better use of equipment, The Cougar would like purchase accessories geared toward safety and general use. The Cougar would like to add an electric flash, necessary for quality indoor photos, a combined pack of SD cards and an SD card reader necessary for capturing and transferring photos, a protective memory card case to ensure their longevity, a camera strap and a camera bag.

Canon EF 300 mm f/2.8 lens	—	\$ 6,099.00
Canon EF 300 mm f/4 lens	—	\$ 1,349.00
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV	—	\$ 3,299.00
External Flash	—	\$ 35.99
10 SD Cards and Accessories	—	\$ 86.59
Rapid Fire Camera Strap	—	\$ 21.99
DSLR Camera Backpack	—	\$ 49.99
UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)	—	\$ 547.08
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Subtotal	—	\$ 11,488.64

FY 2019 One-Time Request No. 5 – Conference Travel

Each year, the Associated Collegiate Press hosts a conference for all member organizations. The conference awards the Pacemaker Award and recognizes the finalists, and student media professionals hold lectures, workshops, and seminars in hundreds of skills relating to media on college campuses.

Next year, the conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, and The Cougar would like to send five editors to learn from others in the field to better connect with the campus and improve skills both technical and conceptual.

This will better the quality of content The Cougar publishes and will generate new ideas for interacting with the community by allowing student leaders to learn from other universities and benchmark their success in comparison with other student media models.

Travel	—	\$ 2,500.00
Lodging	—	\$ 2,200.00
Food	—	\$ 1,000.00
Registration	—	\$ 525.00
<u>UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)</u>	—	<u>\$ 311.25</u>
Subtotal	—	\$ 6,536.25

FY 2019 One-Time Request No. 6 – Sports Travel

UH football's annual bowl games are highly anticipated events for the UH community, and they look to The Cougar for comprehensive coverage of those games. Only by sending a sports writer and photographer can The Cougar ensure an adequate quality of coverage.

When the Cougars are invited to a bowl game within driving distance, The Cougar is typically reserved 2 seats on the student fan bus and some accommodations in the destination city, allowing us to easily travel to and cover the game. But when UH advanced to the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl in 2015, funding for one editor and one photographer to travel to Atlanta came down to alumni donations.

In 2016, when the Cougars were invited to the Las Vegas Bowl, a student fan bus was not provided, and The Cougar otherwise lacked the funds to send anyone to the game.

In order to ensure future coverage of these events which our readers expect us to cover, The Cougar is requesting \$1,200 to help cover the travel and lodging costs of its editors. If the football team does not advance to a bowl game in 2019, The Cougar would use the funds to send editors to championship games for spring sports such as baseball, basketball and track & field. In the event that none of these sports advances to a championship, The Cougar would return the funds to the SFAC pool.

Travel	—	\$ 600.00
Lodging	—	\$ 300.00
Food	—	\$ 250.00
<u>UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)</u>	—	<u>\$ 57.50</u>
Subtotal	—	\$ 1,207.50

