

The Cougar

Opening Statement — Students and other media consumers are turning more toward digital methods of news consumption every day, making The Cougar’s website and email edition critical. As part of the newspaper’s mission to provide a platform for student voices, visibility of our content on social media and our ability to engage with students through these mediums they use daily is necessary to ensure our coverage accurately reflects and serves the student body and UH community at large. The following funding requests, listed in priority order, serve as a way to help The Cougar in its approach to become a digital first newsroom, where our content reaches readers where they’re already obtaining news — online and via social media:

1. FY 20 One-Time — \$4,055 for Features Editor position
2. FY 19 One-Time — \$6,536.25 for conference travel
3. FY 20 One-Time — \$6,536.25 for conference travel

With these initiatives, an increased digital presence with the student body will help The Cougar ensure its readers are being accurately informed and reflected in daily web and weekly print coverage. 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 to increasing readers.

Meanwhile, the Features Editor position will continue to broaden coverage within The Cougar’s news section, as it will allow the dedicated Campus Editor to focus on daily web coverage of the University and news that impacts our community. The Cougar expects the continuation of the Features Editor position to increase the quality and quantity of news coverage available through the newspaper’s website and social media around the clock, in addition to ensuring each print issue contains at least one full-length feature on a topic of interest to the student body.

FY 2020 One-Time Request No. 1 — Features Editor

As The Cougar continues to maintain excellence in its award winning weekly print edition, nominated as recently as 2017-2018, the demands of the News Editor are stretched thin. Between managing dozens of staff writers, coordinating complex feature 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.

The addition of the Features Editor to our staff has allowed for our News Editor to shift to the role of a Campus & City Editor focused solely on daily online coverage. Under this system, the Campus Editor and team of news assistants are better able to produce short-turnaround stories in time to inform on-campus conversations. The continued joint effort of the Features and Campus editor will result in better timely coverage of relevant daily news without compromising the effort and quality directed toward our weekly print edition.

The Campus & City Editor would also be able to realize a long-standing goal of The Cougar: covering the city of Houston. Without the continuance 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.

Stipend (12 mos. X \$318.75)	—	\$ 3,825.25
<u>UH Administrative Charge (6.0%)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>\$ 230.00</u>
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:

- Meets with the Campus Editor at least twice a week
- Attends twice 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 hold 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. 2 — Conference Travel

Twice per year, the Associated Collegiate Press hosts a conference for all member organizations. The conference comprises lectures, workshops and seminars by media professionals and other top collegiate media organizations. This conference's fall counterpart awards the Pacemaker Award, the highest honor in collegiate journalism, for which The Cougar is a finalist for its print coverage spanning the 2017-2018 term.

This spring, the conference will be held in New York City 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.

The skills and critiques The Cougar received from attending the 2017 fall conference in Dallas were invaluable to the newspaper's development.

This will better the quality of content The Cougar published 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. The Cougar expects to take skills learned from all workshop opportunities and apply them toward efforts to receive its first ever Pacemaker for online coverage.

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

FY 2020 One-Time Request No. 3 — Conference Travel

Twice per year, the Associated Collegiate Press hosts a conference for all member organizations. The conference comprises lectures, workshops and seminars by media professionals and other top collegiate media organizations. This fall conference awards the Pacemaker Award, the highest honor in collegiate journalism, for which The Cougar is a finalist for its print coverage spanning the 2017-2018 term.

In Fall 2020, the conference will be held in Washington, D.C., 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.

The skills and critiques The Cougar received from attending the 2017 fall conference in Dallas were invaluable to the newspaper's development. These skills, ranging from design and layout, to headline writing for the social media age to investigative and long-form reporting led The Cougar to be named a finalist for the Pacemaker Award, which will be given to a select number of collegiate papers in October 2018.

Future attendance of this conference will better the quality of content The Cougar published 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. The Cougar expects to take skills learned from all workshop opportunities and apply them toward efforts to receive its first ever Pacemaker for online coverage.

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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