



Fiscal Year 2024 Program Questionnaire  
Student Fees Advisory Committee

1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.

The main mission of the Spirit of Houston Bands, Cheer, Dance, and Mascots is to provide University of Houston students with the opportunity to participate in instrumental music ensembles and spirit groups that represent the university to the highest level possible. The University Band Department consists of the following ensembles: Spirit of Houston Cougar Marching Band and Twirlers, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band, and Cougar Brass Athletic Bands. The spirit squad portion of the band department includes the University of Houston Cheerleaders, Cougar Dolls Dance Team, and Mascot team.

The Spirit of Houston Cougar Marching Band and Spirit Groups are the ultimate example of students from varied backgrounds and majors coming together to perform, learn, and grow as students while representing the University of Houston. All aspects of the Spirit of Houston and University Bands Department include non-majors. Over two-thirds of the Spirit of Houston are not music majors (this includes the marching band), and these students represent on average over 50 different majors from across campus. The work that these students do as members of the Spirit of Houston and University Bands creates a long-term sense of pride and commitment to the University of Houston that is among the highest of any group on campus.

The visibility of and demand for the Spirit of Houston continues to grow every year. We continue to provide financial assistance to all students (marching band and spirit groups) as they perform and represent the university. In addition, we work to increase financial support to help fund student travel, instrument purchases and repair, music arrangements, marching drill design, uniforms and uniform maintenance, recordings (studio and live recordings), cheer and dance accessories, cheer and dance choreography, mascot equipment, mascot costume accessories, summer recruitment and training programs, and other program-related expenses. In this year's request, we will be seeking two one-time allotments. For the first one-time request, we are seeking funding for Spirit of Houston and University Bands travel to continue our increased presence at athletic events and appearances around the state and country. The one-time request in addition to our continued base budget will help the Spirit of Houston and University Bands maintain levels of success and growth that have been established in recent years for our organization. For the second one-time request, we will be requesting funding to support the purchases of a large order of instruments for the marching band. This instrument purchase would solidify the quality of instruments used by every student in the marching band, replacing the final instruments still being used that are all in the 15-20 years old age range.

2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, advisor, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students

### **University of Houston Band Department**

David Bertman,  
*Director of Bands*

Cameron Kubos,  
*Director of Athletic Bands  
and Spirit Groups*

Dana Pradervand,  
*Associate Director of Bands,  
Division Head- Winds and Brass*

Unfilled Position  
*DBA*

Sean Phelan,  
*Asst. Director of Athletic Bands*

Cory Meals,  
*Instrumental Music Education*

Khristal Harbert,  
*Head Coach, Spirit Groups*

Mark Martin,  
*Graduate Teaching Assistant*

Tatian Kane,  
*Coach, Cougar Dolls*

Jordan Simmons,  
*Graduate Teaching Assistant*

Matt Samuels,  
*Coach, Cheerleaders*

Tenile Brown,  
*Coach, Cheerleaders*

Megan Brown,  
*Coach, Mascots*

3. List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2021-2022 school year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.

DSAES Plan: ([http://www.uh.edu/dsaes/about/strategic\\_plan.html](http://www.uh.edu/dsaes/about/strategic_plan.html))

UH Goals: (<http://www.uh.edu/about/mission>)

### *Spirit of Houston and University Bands Strategic Initiatives and Action Steps*

#### **Student Success**

- Focus on Leadership- All areas within the Spirit of Houston have grown and strengthened the involvement and training of student leadership within their specific branches. The focus has been on strengthening student involvement and ownership of the program, while working to develop their communication skills and personal leadership skills in a way that will impact their future education and careers. All aspects of our program have moved to a focus on student driven experiences, including increased use of student leaders working with and teaching alongside faculty and staff. This has been a reoccurring goal for the groups within the Spirit of Houston, and we continue our mission to grow this area. We have seen tremendous success in the development of our groups based on the elevation of student leadership, and we plan to continue this moving forward. New steps have included extended leadership training for all groups, including a full-day workshop with legendary Texas Band Directors Ron Morrison and Joni Perez as part of the "Peer Based Student Leadership" program, book and literature study groups within the spirit teams, and leadership training at both the NCA Cheer Camp and Pro-Action Dance Camps.
- Focus on the student as a whole- The Spirit of Houston and University Bands Department has focused an increased amount of rehearsal time on monitoring the well-being of all students. Within all areas, including cheer, dance, and mascots, there has been a focus to help students understand all things offered to them on campus including physical and mental health resources. There has also been internal staff training and discussions to monitor and care for the general well-being of all students separate from their individual duties within the band or spirit areas. Our focus continues to grow in its desire to strengthen our individual groups (band, cheer, dance, and mascots) by strengthening our students away from those specific performance-based groups.
- Focus on diverse experiences within our students and their community- The Spirit of Houston has continued to expand our focus on expanding the educational and social experiences for all students. The student members of the organization are a diverse group that are representative of our university and city. By elevating student leaders, as well as the leadership skills and responsibilities of all students, we are working to expand their world views while in the organization in a way that is representative of their experiences outside of our department. All of our students should leave the organization with a better understanding of social, cultural, and racial groups that were not their own at the end of their time in our organization. In addition, we want to foster a better understanding and commitment the local communities surrounding the University of Houston. Our organization will continue to develop this through the empowerment of our own students as they shape the path forward of our groups, growth in the diversity of repertoire and skills taught to all groups, and involvement from other musicians, artists, and educators from our community to bring a wealth of experience to our students. As we move forward and find ways to increase the support that we can provide students (i.e., instruments for all members), we can also offer this experience to more members of the local community that may have concerns about being able to participate. We want to remove all barriers that could keep a deserving student from participating in one of our groups during their time at the University of Houston, and in doing so we strengthen the diversity of our areas.
- UH Connection- The Spirit of Houston has continued and will continue to identify and create connections between all members and the University of Houston. Through the strengthening of performance aspects within all programs, we have strived to create a direct sense of pride within the students regarding what they do in our areas to represent the university. Each area within the group has also implemented new and different ways of connecting with alumni of the program to help our students understand their connections within the history of the university and to see how they can affect that for future students.

## **Division Cohesion**

- **Strengthen Staff Connections-** The Spirit of Houston has worked throughout the past two years and continues to work towards strengthening staff connections within the staff and through their involvement with students. We have implanted new roles and responsibilities within our own staff so that all students view each staff member as a part of their process (i.e. band students have interactions with the spirit coaches and vice versa) as well as giving each staff member a greater sense of responsibility and belonging within the program. The development of newer positions (Spirit Coordinator and Assistant Director of Athletic Bands) has also increased the ways that we can unify the different areas within our programs. The elevation of Khristal Harbert to spirit coordinator and the increased work to strengthen the individual roles of the Spirit Team coaches has greatly improved the student experience in those groups as well as the cohesion within those staff members.
- **Collaborative Divisional Processes-** The Spirit of Houston and University Bands have continued to strengthen connections to other areas within our departments. This has included strengthening connections with athletics staff particularly in regard to our spirit programs and working more directly with multiple areas within the School of Music. Examples of this include increased collaboration between our student leaders and social media students with the Athletics Department and the College of the Arts, increased interaction between the band area students at all levels and the Music Education faculty, and increased use of non-band department faculty and staff in design processes and development for the marching band and all spirit groups.

## **Resources**

- **Evaluate Resources-** Through empowered relationships within areas on campus, the Spirit of Houston has found ways to make our day to day operations and planning more efficient. The most obvious example of this is our strengthened relationship with athletics that has resulted in help with travel planning resources and uniform/accessory ordering. This has transformed our ability to outfit the Spirit of Houston throughout the year as well as our approach to travel planning.
- **Organization of resources-** Through work with the Moores School of Music and College of the Arts, our staff has taken a greater control over our resources and their monitoring. By consolidating these responsibilities under the Assistant Director of Athletic Bands, we have gained a better understanding of our inventory and resources, particularly in regard to musical instruments. Through this, we hope to be able to provide more and better resources for our students while also developing the most cost and energy efficient options for our department and staff. In the second year of having this position, we have continued to refine the work and leadership that can be developed in the position currently held by Sean Phelan.

## **Partnerships**

- **Campus Partners-** The Spirit of Houston and University Bands have continued to work towards strengthening our relationships on campus through continued involvement in events through the Homecoming Board, Campus Government Relations, Athletics, and more.
- **Neighboring Communities-** The Spirit of Houston has continued to focus on expanding our footprint in local communities. This includes performances and school programs involving all areas including band, cheer, dance, and mascots, throughout the year including during the summer. This will be a major focus moving into the upcoming school year, including planned partnerships with groups including the Houston Independent School District.
- **Partnerships with Post-Secondary Institutions-** The Spirit of Houston Marching Band and Spirit Groups have built relationships with other university groups that have not previously existed. In previous years we have collaborated with marching bands in the area, including the Texas Southern University Ocean of Soul, the University of North Texas Green Brigade, and the Rice MOB. In addition we have continued to work with outside groups including Drum Corps International and Bands of America/Music For All to continue to offer new experiences for our students.
- **Regional and National Involvement-** The Spirit of Houston and University Bands have worked to involve ourselves in projects over the past year and the upcoming year that have raised the profile of our group and in turn the university. In recent years, the group has been seen at multiple performances around the city, state, and country, including on CBS Sunday Morning. We have

continued our presence at sporting events and university functions, including travel to support the Men’s Basketball Team throughout the 2022 March Madness Tournament. This year, the band and spirit teams have performed at the UH football games in San Antonio, Lubbock, and Memphis, and will also travel to Dallas and Greenville, North Carolina. The band and dance team have performed for 8,000 high school students and parents at the Bands of America Katy Regional and will also perform for more students at the Gulf Coast Marching Contest in Friendswood, TX on October 22.

4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

In recent years, the Spirit of Houston and University Bands has continued to see significant growth as an organization. In the 2018-2019 school year, the University Bands staff in particular experienced significant turnover and experiences organizational problems that resulted in an almost entirely new staff. Throughout the school year, this was stabilized resulting in a foundationally solid staff for the current year and past year that has helped retain and grow all areas of the organization. The organization will continue to grow and reflect the amazing support we receive from both the University of Houston and the Student Fees Advisory Committee. The current staff has implemented programs and monitoring within our area to track all students within the program, retention, and recruiting possibilities. As the University of Houston continues to grow, so must the organization that serves as a face for the institution.

The numbers below reflect the current sizes for all groups. The numbers below are a reflection of both the growth of all areas, and also show the size that we have frozen the groups at as a whole to properly fund each individual student including scholarship, equipment, performance gear, food, and travel.

Throughout the fall, the obvious face of the Spirit of Houston and University Bands Department is the Spirit of Houston Cougar Marching Band and Spirit Groups. Through these organizations we are serving not only the students within each group, but the audiences that view them at every performance. These performances, whether they be football games, parades, school outreach programs, or any other number of experiences, always serve the University of Houston as publicity, recruiting, branding, and general awareness of the state of the university as a whole. In addition, this year students will give up a portion of their holiday to represent the the university at the City of Houston Thanksgiving Day Parade.

These events do not stop in the fall and continue into the spring as we continue participating in spring sports as well as events such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Parade, Frontier Fiesta, numerous walks and fun runs, and more. These events continue to include the Cougar Marching Band and Spirit Groups and also involve the Cougar Brass Pep Bands.

The concert ensembles in the Band Department continue to perform multiple times every semester. These concerts reach a different audience than sporting events and bring a new group of faces to campus.

A snapshot picture is provided below for the Spirit of Houston Cougar Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Winds, Symphonic Band, University Band, Cougar Brass, Cougar Dolls, Cheerleaders, and Mascots for 2022-2023:

Spirit of Houston Cougar Marching Band	250
Cougar Brass Pep Band	150
Wind Ensemble	65
Symphonic Winds	65
Symphonic Band	65
Concert Band	75
Cougar Dolls	25
Cheerleaders	30
Mascots	5
Total	710

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2023) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.

Throughout the past years, the University Bands Department was able to stabilize after multiple staff changes. The Director of Bands (David Bertman) and Director of Athletic Bands (Cameron Kubos) have continued along with the addition of Associate Director of Bands Dana Pradervand in 2019. Rhonda Pitts was hired to serve as the Program Coordinator for the Spirit of Houston and University Bands Department, but her position was lost in the summer of 2020 without being replaced. In the spring of 2022, Mr. Sean Phelan was hired to replace Brandon Meeks in the role of Assistant Director of Athletic Bands. Spirit Coordinator Khristal Harbert has continued, and the spirit staff now includes Tatiana Kane (assistant coach-dance), Matt Samuels (assistant coach- cheer), Tenile Brown (assistant coach- cheer), and Megan Brown (assistant coach- Mascot).

6. If your unit concluded FY2022 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity in excess of \$5,000, please describe the conditions which caused the addition and provide a line item identification of the budgetary source(s) of the addition (i.e. lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).

NA

7. Please list your 2023-2024 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Values and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.

### **Student Success**

- Focus on Leadership- All areas within the Spirit of Houston plan to expand leadership opportunities and programs within our group. This includes diversifying the types of positions available and using the student's expertise, interests, and major areas to strengthen our organization. This includes expanded roles for students within teaching/coaching all groups in controlled environments, positions involving media/social media/design, and use of students to guide and tutor others in academic areas to support all students that need help in their degree areas.
- Diversification of Experiences- The University Bands Department has created a focus on expanding the musical repertoire of all ensembles including the concert bands, marching band, and pep groups. Our students come from backgrounds that include classically focused school band programs, jazz and popular music focused school programs, HBCU style band programs, mariachi school programs, and more. Instead of strictly focusing on one area or the other, the bands have chosen to program, teach, and perform music that reaches out to students from all of these areas as they inhabit our program, while also teaching students from different backgrounds about these areas.
- Focus on the student as a whole- The Spirit of Houston and University Bands Department wants to continue expanding our focus on student well-being. The organization plans to expand trainings and information sessions, particularly in our initial Spirit Week for all groups, covering areas including personal physical and mental health, awareness of areas such as assault and hazing and reporting procedures/help offered through campus, and all the programs the campus has to protect and support students.
- UH Connection- The Spirit of Houston has continued and will continue to identify and create connections between all members and the University of Houston. Through the strengthening of performance aspects within all programs, we have strived to create a direct sense of pride within the students regarding what they do in our areas to represent the university. Each area within the group has also implemented new and different ways of connecting with alumni of the program to help our students understand their connections within the history of the university and to see how they can affect that for future students.

## Division Cohesion

- Strengthen Staff Connections- The Spirit of Houston plans to continue to refine staff roles and increase staff communication and support. As our staff continues to function in a more productive and effective manner, the better product we are able to offer to the students within our program.
- Collaborative Divisional Processes- The Spirit of Houston and University Bands have continued to strengthen connections to other areas within our departments. Throughout the upcoming year, goals for the organization involve creating more unique performance situations going across multiple groups (both within our spirit groups/athletic bands and our concert ensembles) as well as involving more academic faculty from the School of Music (other areas such as Jazz, Choir, Music Education) in concerts and learning cycles within the band program.

## Resources

- Evaluate Resources- In the process of obtaining new equipment and uniforms for all groups in the last year, we have been evaluating the ordering process, materials, and products that we use to support our Spirit Groups. Through the development of new relationships with UH Athletics, Varsity Cheer and Spirit, Fred J. Miller Uniforms, Selmer-Bach Music Instrument Corporation, and several independent vendors we have identified areas in which we can both be more cost efficient while providing a better experience for all members. As we continue to replenish and hopefully purchase new items, we are working to be as cost efficient as possible while elevating the look and function of the bands and spirit groups.

## Partnerships

- Campus Partners- The Spirit of Houston and University Bands have continued to work towards strengthening our relationships on campus through continued involvement in events through the Homecoming Board, Campus Government Relations, Athletics, and more. We are constantly striving to try and find new ways to provide more ensembles and performances to campus groups, including identifying new ways to split and offer our group to others.
- Neighboring Communities- The Spirit of Houston has continued to focus on expanding our footprint in local communities. This includes performances and school programs involving all areas including band, cheer, dance, and mascots, throughout the year including during the summer. We are continuing to try and work with programs in school districts such as Houston and Aldine ISD, as well as working towards new partnerships with groups such as the UIL Music Office for the State of Texas. While this year has halted some collaboration or moved it from being in-person, we have maintained all connections as possible and are already planning for opportunities in the spring and fall of 2022.
- Partnerships with Post-Secondary Institutions- The Spirit of Houston Marching Band and Spirit Groups have built relationships with other university groups that have not previously existed. In previous years we have collaborated with marching bands in the area, including the Texas Southern University Ocean of Soul, the University of North Texas Green Brigade, and the Rice MOB. In addition we have continued to work with outside groups including Drum Corps International and Bands of America/Music For All to continue to offer new experiences for our students.
- Regional and National Involvement- The Spirit of Houston and University Bands have worked to involve ourselves in projects over the past year and the upcoming year that have raised the profile of our group and in turn the university. In recent years, the group has been seen at multiple performances around the city, state, and country, including on CBS Sunday Morning. We have continued our presence at sporting events and university functions, including travel to support the Men's Basketball Team throughout the 2022 March Madness Tournament. This year, the band and spirit teams have performed at the UH football games in San Antonio, Lubbock, and Memphis, and will also travel to Dallas and Greenville, North Carolina. The band and dance team have performed for 8,000 high school students and parents at the Bands of America Katy Regional and will also perform for more students at the Gulf Coast Marching Contest in Friendswood, TX on October 22.

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2024 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. **Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 3.5, 5.0 or 7.5% in your total FY2024 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made. A spreadsheet has been created to assist in this process. Please include a copy of**

**the spreadsheet with your questionnaire submission.**

The operational budget of the Spirit of Houston and University Bands Department, which includes travel and staff salaries, depends heavily on the funding received from SFAC. If our base allocation were to be cut, our ability to meet the needs of our students and demand for our ensembles and groups would be greatly diminished. Our mission as a student organization for the University of Houston would be greatly affected as staff cuts would potentially be necessary (in addition to the position lost for this school year) in addition to a reduction of travel and appearances representing the university and athletics department.

At the same time, we are constantly working to tighten the demands on our budget and to find ways to stretch the money that we are graciously supported with. It is our duty to make sure that we do as much as we can with the funding received to support both our students and the University of Houston and we take that seriously at the highest level.

9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? **If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.**

Within our department, there is a strong desire and commitment to raising funds for our students. We work closely with the University of Houston Alumni Association as well as the Spirit of Houston Alumni Association to create new avenues for fundraising and support. Recently the main focus of these groups has been to help find ways to directly support students within our organization through student scholarships and assistance with meals during Spirit of Houston travel.

New avenues are always considered and brainstormed, and our band staff led by Director of Bands David Bertman is working strategically in this area.

10. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

The Spirit of Houston and University Bands is a unique area. First and foremost, the Spirit of Houston functions on two different levels: one as an extracurricular activity comprised of students for university and athletic needs; it is also a large ensemble provided for instruction to music majors within the ensemble. Both areas are of equal importance and offer things not generally found in other areas.