

Center for Student Media

Supporting & Empowering Student-Driven Expression,
Publishing, & Broadcasting



Program Questionnaire
FY 27

STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)
FY2027 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions below. The totality of your responses should give the members of the Committee a comprehensive understanding of the role and function of your unit(s).

Questionnaire completed by:

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- 1. Please provide in brief terms: your unit's mission, goals that support your mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of student benefits.**

Center for Student Media (CSM)

Mission:

The Center for Student Media (CSM) is grounded in professional ethics and best practices, supporting and empowering student-driven expression, publishing, and broadcasting. CSM is a cutting-edge, multi-platform laboratory that prepares students for real-world media practice and leadership.

Vision:

The Center for Student Media aspires to be a cutting-edge multi-platform laboratory that prepares collaborative, innovative, and creative students for real-world leadership.

Through professional advising, hands-on training, and revenue-generating activities, CSM provides students the tools and opportunities to develop their voices, refine their skills, and contribute meaningfully to campus life and the broader media landscape.

Goals Supporting the Mission:

To fulfill its mission, CSM advances the following strategic goals:

- 1. Expand Experiential Learning Opportunities:**
 CSM offers students practical experience across journalism, broadcasting, marketing, and leadership. Through participation in CoogTV, Coog Radio, *The Cougar*, and Media Services, students build transferable skills in content creation, reporting, production management, advertising, and digital strategy.
- 2. Support Student-Run Media Platforms and Publications:**
 CSM provides advising, operational infrastructure, and assessment frameworks to sustain and strengthen *The Cougar* newspaper, CoogTV, Coog Radio, and university publications such as *Transitions Magazine* for new students and *The Houstonian* for graduating seniors. These outlets are essential for storytelling, information sharing, and campus engagement.
- 3. Foster Academic and Industry Partnerships:**
 Collaborations with the Valenti School of Communication and MediaMate, a national college media firm, expand student access to internships, marketing and advertising training, and professional development programs. These partnerships bridge classroom learning with applied practice, giving students real-world experience in a supportive environment.

4. **Create Innovative Media Initiatives:**

CSM is developing a student-run TV production highlighting UH student-athletes' personal stories beyond their athletic achievements, slated for launch in Spring 2026. This project exemplifies how CSM continually evolves to give students new creative and leadership opportunities while elevating campus narratives.

5. **Strengthen Media Services and Student Employment:**

CSM manages campus advertising sales, publication distribution, and media service logistics to support its growing operations, creating additional work-study and graduate assistantship positions. Students play a direct role in the media's business and operational functions, learning professional skills that align with career paths in communications, business, and marketing.

Justification of Student Fee Allocation:

Student fee funding is essential for sustaining the advising, operational infrastructure, and developmental programming that underpin CSM's mission. While the center generates advertising revenue to offset costs, student fees ensure the stability and accessibility of media experiences for a diverse student body.

Through this funding, CSM provides students with:

- Hands-on, career-building experiences in media production, journalism, broadcasting, marketing, and leadership.
- Paid positions and graduate assistantships that support financial wellness and deepen engagement with campus operations.
- High-impact learning environments that integrate academic theory with professional media practice.
- Platforms to amplify student voices, foster civic engagement, and build community through shared storytelling and creative expression.

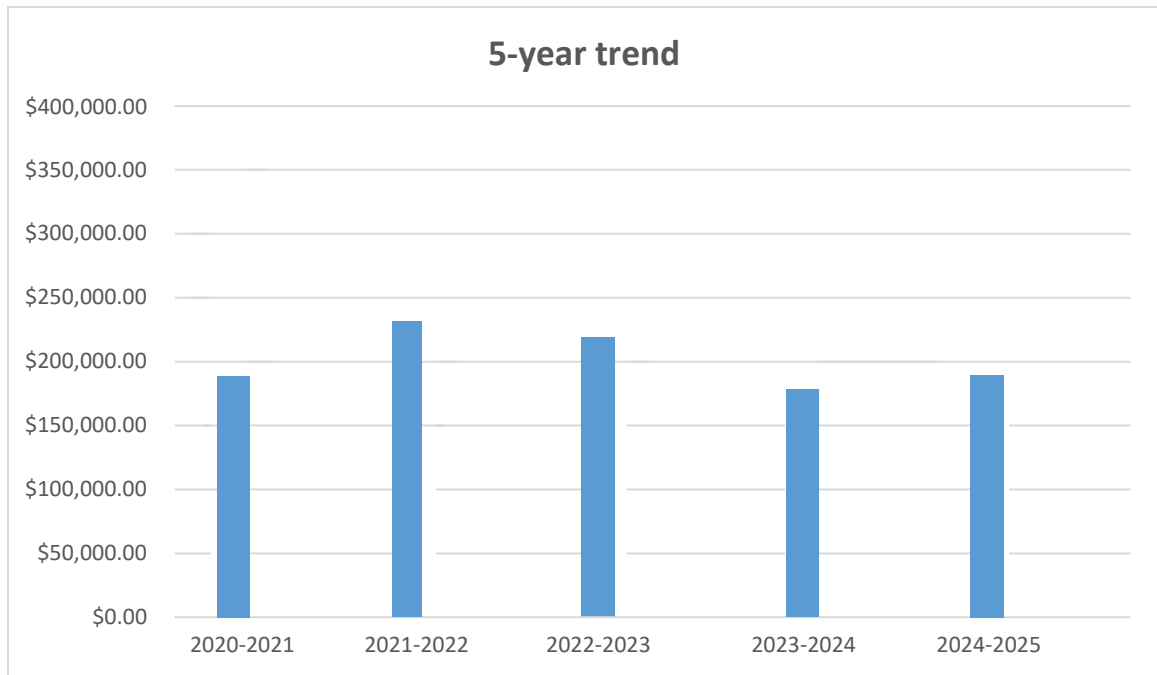
The benefits of this investment are far-reaching. Students who participate in CSM programs develop competitive skills, build robust portfolios, and often transition into careers at major media outlets, Fortune 500 companies, and professional sports organizations. Moreover, their work enhances the vibrancy, connectedness, and reputation of the University of Houston, supporting institutional goals related to student success, engagement, and public impact.

2. Please discuss the means you are utilizing to evaluate your success in achieving the DSA strategic initiatives and action steps in contributing to the retention of students. Where data exists, discuss any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting this data.

Utilization Reports:

- Total income for sales revenue **\$165,828.32** for FY25 (September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025).
- Total income for Media Services was **\$6,785.00** for FY25 (September 1, 2024- August 31, 2025).

Revenue Breakdown by year:



	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Local	\$11,957.25	\$13,957.25	10,490.00	\$7,363.27	\$11,057.25
Campus	\$50,690.59	\$69,314.42	\$79,303.43	\$44,690.30	\$36,619.58
National	\$99,877.89	\$155,361.76	\$120,927.76	\$105,489.47	\$116,889.47
Classified	\$1,861.19	\$885.57	\$2765.03	\$2,252.02	\$1,262.02
Total	\$164,386.92	\$239,518.75	\$213,486.22	\$159,795.06	\$165,828.32

Assessment Plan and Outcomes

The Center for Student Media (CSM) evaluates its success in achieving Division of Student Affairs (DSA) strategic initiatives and contributing to student retention through academic performance metrics, student learning assessments, industry feedback, and career placement tracking. These assessment activities measure how effectively CSM advances student engagement, career readiness, and academic success through co-curricular media experiences.

Alignment with DSA Strategic Initiatives

CSM's assessment strategy aligns directly with DSA priorities to enhance student engagement, integrate co-curricular and academic experiences, and support student success and retention.

Specifically, the center focuses on:

- Expanding student engagement through collaborations with the Valenti School of Communication to create co-curricular opportunities for students interested in journalism and multimedia.
- Developing a media career readiness track, introducing structured training, mentorship, and experiential opportunities that prepare students for professional roles in media and communications.
- Monitoring academic performance and retention indicators among First Time in College (FTIC) student leaders participating in CSM to assess how involvement affects credit hour completion and GPA.

Assessment Measures and Methods

1. Academic Performance (Retention Indicators)

CSM collects PeopleSoft data for all student leaders involved in its programs to track GPA and credit hours. Using these records, the academic performance of CSM FTIC student leaders are compared with the broader FTIC population to identify differences in engagement and retention outcomes.

- Average Credit Hours: CSM FTIC student leaders maintained an average of 14.8 credit hours per semester, compared to 14.2 among all FTIC students.
- Cumulative GPA: CSM student leaders reported an average GPA of 3.32, exceeding the UH overall FTIC GPA.

These metrics indicate that students engaged in CSM programs perform at or above university averages, suggesting that co-curricular involvement supports academic persistence and success.

2. Student Learning and Engagement Outcomes

To measure the impact of new co-curricular opportunities and the media career readiness track, CSM conducts pre- and post-participation surveys. These surveys assess changes in student interest in media careers, engagement levels, and perceived skill development.

- **Interest in Media Careers:** Interest increased by 25%, with more students indicating plans to pursue internships or jobs in media-related fields.
- **Perceived Program Value:** Students reported significant gains in their confidence using professional tools, collaborating on teams, and managing deadlines.
- **Engagement:** Students expressed higher satisfaction with opportunities to connect with peers and industry professionals than pre-survey baselines.

Surveys were distributed to 42 student leaders, with 16 completing pre- and post-assessments (38% response rate). While the sample size is modest, the findings provide meaningful insight into program impact.

3. Industry Professional Feedback

Guest speakers, mentors, and workshop facilitators provide structured feedback on students' preparedness and professionalism.

- **Strengths:** Professionals consistently cited CSM students' creativity, adaptability, and enthusiasm. Many remarked that participants were "well-prepared for entry-level opportunities."
- **Areas for Growth:** Recommended areas included strategic communication, project management, and networking skills, which are now being integrated into future training plans.

4. Career Readiness and Post-Graduation Outcomes

CSM tracks internship and employment outcomes to assess the impact of its programs on career readiness.

- **Internships:** Nine students (21% of participants) secured media-related internships during the academic year.
- **Employment:** Four graduating seniors received job offers in journalism, digital media, or communications within three months of their CSM leadership experience.

These outcomes demonstrate that CSM's programs translate into tangible career opportunities and professional advancement for students.

Conclusions and Next Steps

CSM's assessment efforts show positive trends in academic performance, student engagement, and career readiness among its participants. CSM student leaders consistently perform at or above their peers academically, indicating that involvement in media organizations supports rather than detracts from retention and academic success. Survey results and industry feedback confirm that students are gaining meaningful skills and experiences that prepare them for professional roles.

Moving forward, CSM will expand its data collection to achieve higher participation rates in surveys and strengthen longitudinal tracking to assess multi-year impacts on retention, academic success, and career

outcomes. These efforts will ensure that CSM continues to make a measurable contribution to the DSA strategic initiatives and the University of Houston's student success mission.

3. **Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2026) 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.**

Budget and Organizational Changes (2024–2025)

Since the last SFAC request (FY2025), the Center for Student Media (CSM) has implemented a few organizational and programmatic changes to strengthen operational capacity, enhance student engagement, and address evolving programmatic needs. Despite budgetary constraints and shifting operational demands, these changes have positively affected student media programming, outreach, and support functions.

Personnel and Organizational Updates:

With SFAC one-time funding support, CSM expanded its team better to support student-led publications, events, and media services. Two new Instructional Assistants were hired to provide targeted support for *Cooglif*e Magazine, event planning, and Media Services operations.

This additional capacity has allowed the department to increase the frequency and quality of student programming, streamline publication workflows, and improve responsiveness to organizational needs.

Larsha Flowers joined CSM as the **Instructional Assistant for Student Publications and Operations**, focusing on operational support, student training, and logistical coordination. Her contributions have enhanced the efficiency of publication production cycles and strengthened student support structures. Her role involves being the Executive Editor of all CSM publications, which includes *Transitions* and *Houstonian* magazines. She also served in this same capacity for *Cooglif*e, the student-managed life and arts magazine of the Center for Student Media.

In September 2024, **Starns Leland** joined the team as the **Instructional Assistant for Media Services**. He coordinated and supported photography and videography requests from campus departments, student organizations, and media partners. Starns played a critical role in expanding CSM's capacity to deliver high-quality media services by managing these service requests and assisting with on-site production. His addition improved project turnaround times, supported revenue-generating media work, and provided students with additional opportunities for hands-on learning in production environments. However, due to an unsuccessful attempt to extend SFAC one-time funding for this IA position for FY26, Starns resigned in August 2025.

Programmatic Impacts and Budget Considerations:

Targeted marketing efforts for student media events led to measurable increases in both visibility and engagement. Across CoogTV, Coog Radio, and *The Cougar*, membership grew by 6%, and event attendance increased by 4%. These gains reflect the department's commitment to amplifying student voices and building a more vibrant media community on campus.

CSM also collaborated with the Center for Student Involvement (CSI), the Center for Student Advocacy (CSAC) & Community, and DSA IT Services to co-host Cougar Connection, which brought together nearly 300 students for an interactive, community-building experience. This partnership leveraged departmental resources efficiently while advancing shared student engagement goals across units.

Budgetary Adjustments and Rationale:

These organizational changes were implemented within existing budget parameters, requiring careful allocation of resources to support new personnel while maintaining core operations. While CSM did not receive additional base funding in FY2025, strategic use of FY2025 one-time funding and self-generated revenue has allowed the department to stabilize operations and scale engagement initiatives. The decision to invest in student staffing reflects a long-term strategy to strengthen CSM's capacity to support student-learning outcomes, improve program delivery, and sustain the growth of its media organizations.