



Fiscal Year 2025 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, and we continually strive to find new ways to expand our outreach. We work to provide financial assistance to 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 one (1) one-time allotment. For the 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 and Spirit Groups maintain levels of success and growth that were achieved prior to the pandemic and grow in new ways moving forward.

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*

Karina Duran
DBA

Sean Phelan,
Asst. Director of Athletic Bands

Cory Meals,
Instrumental Music Education

Khristal Harbert,
Head Coach, Spirit Groups

Emmanuel Acevedo,
Graduate Teaching Assistant

Tatiana Kane,
Coach, Cougar Dolls

Austin Brake,
Graduate Teaching Assistant

Tennille Williams,
Coach, Cheerleaders

Mark Martin,
Graduate Teaching Assistant

Megan Brown,
Coach, Mascots

Jordan Simmons,
Graduate Teaching Assistant

3. If your unit falls under the Division of Student Affairs, list your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2022 – 2023 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs (DSA) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they can relate (links below). If your unit does not fall under the division of student affairs, explain, in detail, the strategic plan your unit operated under. Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/ action step changes 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.

DSA: uh.edu/dsa/about/strategic-planning/2019-2023/

UH Goals: 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. All groups leadership teams completed training with Ron Morrison of Peer Based Student Leadership (PBSL) and continue to work with this program throughout the year.
- 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 year 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) have also increased the ways that we can unify the different areas within our programs.
- 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.

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 and the University of North Texas Green Brigade. This year we continued this work by partnering with the Rice University MOB to perform at halftime commemorating the 20th Anniversary of September 11, 2001.
 - 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 at the 2021 Final Four in Indianapolis, Indiana. This year, the band has performed at football games at Rice University, Texas Tech University, marching band exhibition performances at the Bands of America Katy Regional, and will perform at Baylor University as well as the Alamodome in San Antonio for both the Bands of America Super Regional Contest and the UIL 3A State Marching Contest. The Cougar Brass and Spirit groups will perform at Toyota Center as the Men's Basketball team takes on Texas A&M University, and the cheer team will travel to Daytona Florida for the NCA Cheer National Championships for the second year in a row.
4. Please list your 2024-2025 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and if operating under the DSA, cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Values and University of Houston Strategies Goals to which they relate. If your unit does not operate under the DSA, reference the strategic plan your unit operates under. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprograms. 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.
- i. Articulate how KPIs are tracked and how/when your unit utilizes them to measure progress towards your goals. Are there any deficiencies in your ability to measure your KPIs? If so, explain why.
 - ii. Identify the milestones laid out on the path to achieving the long-term goals you have laid out. How do these milestones contribute to your unit's ability to hold itself accountable to the long-term goals?
 - iii. In your response, identify who (besides the department director) is responsible for each milestone in the plan and for measuring each KPI you have identified.

I. 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.
- 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 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 which 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 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.
- Partnerships with Post-Secondary Institutions- The Spirit of Houston Marching Band and Spirit Groups want to continue building our relationships within post-secondary institutions particularly within the Big 12 Athletic Conference and other area institutions..
- Regional and National Involvement- The Spirit of Houston will continue to build upon

opportunities afforded to our groups this year to create new experiences to expand the reach of the University of Houston. This includes both director and student involvement in performance and learning experiences regionally and nationally.

II. Milestones

- Enrollment-

The Spirit of Houston aims to maintain a consistent size in all groups (280 band, 40 cheer, 20 Dance, 5 Mascots). We are in the 3rd year of average size within this area and we are working towards 5 years of steady and controlled size. The initiatives outlined above are intended to assist in both recruitment and retention which will be measured through the five year milestone based on size. Changes both larger or smaller in group enrollment would provide information regarding the success of initiatives.

- Performance-

The Spirit of Houston will maintain and grow performance opportunities at a regional and national level over a five year period. This is measured through the number of performances within certain areas: on-campus traditional activities (football/basketball/traditional student events), traditional community (parades, festivals, etc), non-traditional community performances (Greater Houston Area), regional performances (areas within the state such as San Antonio, Dallas, Austin), and national traditional and non-traditional performances. These performances are tracked yearly and measured both in number of performances, expected outreach of performance (in-person and digital), and any financial or operational incentive attached to these performances. The expectation is that this is monitored alongside the five-year enrollment watch and evaluated in a similar manner alongside the initiatives outlined above.

III. Responsibility

All staff within the Spirit of Houston and University of Houston Bands are responsible for helping craft the above initiatives as well as monitor all aspects. This includes record keeping, tracking student enrollment, and any other information used to gauge success or identify needed changes.

5. 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 exists, 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 this data. If your unit holds events, please provide revenue sources breakdown of each revenue stream including but not limited to the number of:
 - i. Tickets sold/number of attendees recorded
 - ii. Merchandise
 - ii. Concessions sold/distributed
 - iii. Revenue generated from these sales

We are currently in the process of identifying new ways to track the above-mentioned aspects of our program. In regards to the program itself, we have accurate data being built regarding our student and staff retention and numbers. We track this information from year to year and have built a solid base of information in this regard going back to the 2018/2019 school year.

We are trying to identify new ways to accurately gauge the outreach of our performances

on a yearly. This includes accurate information in regard to athletic events (televised and in-person viewership), performances outside of the athletic community (exhibitions, national competitions, etc), as well as social media involvement and outreach for all Spirit of Houston and University of Houston Band platforms.

We are admittedly building our ways to track these areas and look forward to developing our methods and sharing more information in future presentations.

6. If your unit concluded FY2023 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity in excess of \$5,000, please describe the conditions which cause the addition and provide a line-item identification of the budgetary sources(s) of the addition (I.e., lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).

Not applicable.

7. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2025 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 5.0% in your total FY2025 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

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.

In the previous year, we were notified of a 5% cut to our upcoming base budget. We are understanding of these needs within our greater community and will work to make this happen.

In addition, we have been asked to cover additional travel funds for post-season travel (football bowl games and conference basketball tournaments) by the athletic department which have typically been covered in their entirety in the past. While this is still being looked at on our end, we have been asked to provide 25% of each trip, when in the past bowl games and the Men's and Women's Tournaments were covered through the Athletic Department. This is a major expense particularly with the basketball tournaments now occurring in Kansas City as opposed to Fort Worth and the bowl possibilities being varied.

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.

8. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last year (FY2024) 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.

There are no major changes to report besides the budget cuts outlined above within our program.

9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made 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.
 - i. If applicable, what can be done to increase donations, sponsorship sales, and other revenue streams? Please answer each separately.

Within our area, there are limited resources on the grants/academic funding side for performing ensembles particularly those connected to athletic departments (either directly or through the lens of where the groups perform most often). We do work to grow a donor base and have been discussions to help fund several areas, including scholarship endowments and instrument funding endowments. These are in the early steps and we hope to be able to report on the creation of these funding pools in the future.

10. Does your unit generate revenue? (Please do not address donations in this question) If your unit does not generate revenue, respond “not applicable. If so:
 - i. Provide your unit’s P&L statement for the current fiscal year and trailing five-years showing all revenue streams for your unit.
 - ii. Provide line-item data for each revenue stream.
 - iii. For each revenue stream, provide an explanation of the nature of the revenue and briefly articulate the successes and failures for each line item.

Not applicable.

11. Does your unit raises money from donors and sponsors? If your unit does not receive donations or sponsorships, respond “not applicable.” If so:
 - i. Identify key staff members responsible for development and seeking sponsorships.
 - ii. Provide financials for the current fiscal year, as well as the trailing five fiscal years including:
 1. An analysis of your development activities. Include a breakdown of the nominal quantity of donors donating \$20m+, \$10m+, \$5m+ \$1m+, \$500k+, \$100k+, \$50k+, \$25k+, \$10k+, \$5k+, \$1k+, \$100+. Provide this both in terms of lifetime contributions and annual contributions.
 2. An analysis of your sponsorship activities. Include a breakdown of total sponsorship dollars and identify your top twenty-five (25) sponsorship deals.
 - iii. If applicable, provide a breakdown of each capital project or capital campaign in your unit. Explain how each capital project or campaign aligns with the goals and milestones laid out in your departments strategic plan.

Our unit works to raise funds as discuss above but we do not receive major funding from donors or sponsors in a consistent manner. On the budget spreadsheet, you will see the amount of \$170,000 in the donations column but this is based on the funding code of that money. This money is the Cullen Endowment and is the budget the band area receives directly from the University of Houston. This amount has not changed since 2000, when the band and Spirit Programs totaled roughly 150 students total.

12. 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 of Houston Bands are a unique group on-campus both in their purpose, outreach, and ability to serve a wide range of students. The amount of students as well as their diversity of background and majors is the most important aspect of our program and why we believe our units occupy a special place in the fabric of our campus.

13. What percentage of department M&O is allocated to marketing?
- i. Please detail your comprehensive marketing strategy towards the student body including metrics used to measure the effectiveness of the marketing strategy.
 - ii. How much revenue is allocated towards the marketing strategy?

Marketing is handled within the overall College of the Arts which we do have access to. They work with us and provide support, but is not directly a part of our area or budget.

14. If any of your funding from the student service fee goes to your general operating fund, please detail where any student service fees you received went and what they were spent on as well as future intentions if granted. Otherwise please respond “not applicable”.

Our funds for student fees primarily go toward travel for all groups, operational expenses for all areas including equipment/game and performance day support, and staff support. This is the primary purpose of all of our funding, and this has been a consistent use of the money in recent years. We intend for those purposes to continue.

15. How does your unit contribute to campus culture and improve the student experience? How is the effectiveness of these contributions measured by your unit if at all? What else can your unit do going forward to continue to improve your contribution to the student experience?
- i. Does your unit contribute to turning students into coogs for life?

It is our belief that the Spirit of Houston is an integral part of the campus and student experience. This is two fold: our groups are both a part of the experience for the spirit and performances they provide on-campus for students as well as a unique experience for the over 350 students in the group every year. While performance based groups can sometimes be hard to measure in metrics (although we will continue to try and find new ways to show this), we do believe the presence of these groups at football games, basketball games, volleyball games, and on-campus experiences is appreciated and valued by the campus. We work to make those performances engaging and reflective of our campus and will continue to strive for that in our future.

Our program makes Coogs for Life both in the commitment of our students after they graduate and for the recruiting support that we provide. We are constantly working with the Spirit of Houston Alumni Association to involve students after they graduate and this is usually not difficult after spending their college years in our groups. These students return to campus on a regular basis and we are working to track this data moving forward.

In addition, our exhibition performances, community performances, and national competitions serve as visible recruiting tools for the university. For example, we will perform at the Bands of America San Antonio Super Regional, the Bands of America Katy Regional,

and the UIL 3A State Marching Contest this year. In total we will be seen by over 100 high school bands from Texas and the Southwest at these contests. While many of these students will be Coogs for Life as members of the Spirit of Houston many of them will come to this university and not be in our program- and we are fine with that! We want to recruit for every major, every department, every part of this campus and add to the future legacy of our alumni.