

## Student Media

### SFAC BUDGET REQUEST QUESTIONNAIRE – Budget Cycle FY26

1. **Provide a summary of your unit’s mission/purpose, how you accomplish your unit’s mission or purpose, and a justification of your unit’s student fee allocation in terms of the benefit to students.**

The mission of the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) Student Media is to amplify student-driven expression, innovative storytelling, and impactful journalism. We strive to inform, educate, and engage the UHCL campus and surrounding communities through journalistic best practices. UHCL Student Media serves as a professional learning environment where students can gain valuable skills and experiences across various media channels.

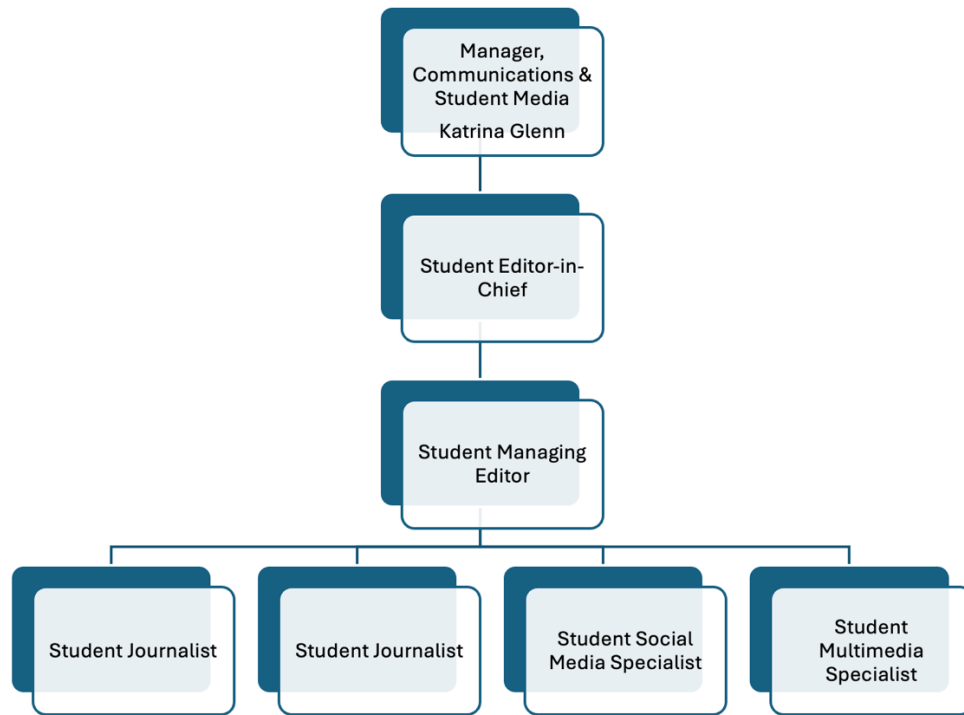
Student Media accomplishes our mission through professional and hands-on training, such as:

1. **Content Creation:** Produce real-time, factual, and expressive content through articles, podcasts, videos, photos and social media.
2. **Journalism Reporting:** Writing that highlights campus, community and national events with accuracy and relevant information.
3. **Workshops and Training:** Offer training sessions and workshops on media ethics, writing, editing, multimedia production and social media marketing to enhance student skills.
4. **Community Engagement:** Engage with the UHCL campus and surrounding community to broaden the informational reach and create collaborative projects.
5. **Digital Presence:** Maintain a strong online presence through social media and a website to reach a broader audience.
6. **Professional Experience:** Provide a comprehensive space for students of all majors to build professional communication skills.
7. **Preservance:** Keep a comprehensive archive of published work for historical reference and student expression at UHCL.

Student Media uses its funding to retain accessibility to professional development and creative expression for our students. The allocation of fees supports the four key benefits of:

1. **Empowerment and Freedom of Expression:** Student Media amplify student voices and creative expression through the First Amendment
2. **Professional Development:** The investment in Student Media, gives additional access to hands-on experience for their future careers. This practical experience allows our students to be competitive in a global job market.
3. **Civic Engagement:** Our coverage of campus and community engages students in being informed while promoting a campus-wide culture of awareness.
4. **Enhance Campus Culture:** Student Media contributes to a robust campus atmosphere by highlighting achievements, events and important conversations.

2. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Include all professional and student staff positions (with names), as well as vacancies. Make sure it is easily identifiable between professional and student staff on the chart.



#### Professional Staff

- Katrina Glenn, Manager, Communications & Student Media

#### Contractor Staff (The Signal)

- Student Editor-in-Chief
- Student Managing Editor
- Journalist, Student Reporter
- Student Social Media Specialist
- Student Multimedia Specialist

3. Present your Budget Worksheet. You are required to show and outline ALL funding sources (i.e. student fees, central funding, grants, gifts, outside sales revenue, auxiliary income, etc.). Use this area to define each funding source, its intended purpose, and how you are utilizing said funds.

See Attachment

Student Media receives funding through several sources to support student development offered through the department in line with our mission. This includes funding from Student Service Fees (Designated and One-Time requests) funds.

**Designated Funds:**

- \$116,276: Employee salaries, Reporters, Specialists, and Editors.
- \$14,128: Student Media office operations. This allocation allows us to efficiently operate the office through the purchase of computers, printers, office supplies, etc.
- \$8,000: Travel for Staff and Students to attend professional development conferences and award competitions.

**One-Time Funding:**

- **FY25**
  - Student Media (Total: \$15,000)
    - \$15,000: Update Student Media camera equipment
  - DSA Marketing & Communications: (Total: \$5,600)
    - \$3,600: Annual subscription for Grammarly (25 divisional seats)
    - \$2,000: Annual subscription for SocialPilot, a Social Media Scheduling Tool
- **FY26**
  - DSA Marketing & Communications: (Total: \$5,600)
    - \$3,600: Annual subscription for Grammarly (25 divisional seats)
    - \$2,000: Annual subscription for SocialPilot, a Social Media Scheduling Tool

**4. Did you receive any new funding for FY24? If so, please explain how it is being used. If you received any new one-time funding for FY25, please describe your plans to use those funds.**

Student Media did not receive any new funding for FY24.

**5. How does your unit support the mission of Student Affairs and contribute to the student experience on campus? Consider the utilization and impact of your unit's services.**

The Division of Student Affairs creates transformational experiences that strengthen the educational journey for UHCL students. Student Media aligns with DSA's mission by focusing on developing the students' professional skillsets and amplifying their voices. Students actively engage through the campus publication, The Signal. This student media outlet functions as an area where students build and practice the following skills:

- Writing
- Copyediting
- Photography
- Digital Design

- Business Management
- Marketing
- Video and audio production
- Journalism reporting
- Community building
- Leadership

**6. What did you learn in your annual assessment that is impacting your programs and services now?**

The assessment of Student Media could not be completed because the leadership position had been vacant for two years, and The Signal staff had been completely turned over.

Currently, we are in the process of creating a plan for 2024-2025 that will focus on the following:

1. **Content Creation:** Produce real-time, factual, and expressive content through articles, podcasts, videos, photos and social media.
2. **Journalism Reporting:** Writing that highlights campus, community and national events with accuracy and relevant information.
3. **Workshops and Training:** Offer training sessions and workshops on media ethics, writing, editing, multimedia production and social media marketing to enhance student skills.
4. **Community Engagement:** Engage with the UHCL campus and surrounding community to broaden the informational reach and create collaborative projects.
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**7. Describe any new programs and/or initiatives for the current year.**

New Initiatives for Student Media:

- Restructure of The Signal
- Expansion of communications focus areas (Video and Podcasting)
- The development of two new student contractor positions (Social Media Specialist & Multimedia Specialist)

**8. What challenges or opportunities do you foresee for the current year and next year?**

**Challenges:**

- **Staff/ Contractor Transition:** During FY25, Student Media will experience the year with one new professional staff member. This includes the transition of the Manager of

Communications and Student Media, who started in September 2024. In addition, Our Signal team currently encompasses two paid contractors, one of whom will graduate in December, leaving four vacant student contractor positions.

- **Offering only one communication area:** Our Student Media offers only a student newspaper, which lacks the diversity of communication outlets. Current students have shown interest in Podcasting and multimedia production.

### **Opportunities:**

- **Longevity Framework:** This year, the Manager of Communications & Student Media and the Editor-in-Chief are creating the framework for, The Signal. With staff transitions, many of the historical content and operation guidelines have been lost in the transfer. Re-establishing a solid framework will allow current and future students access to professional communication experience.
- **Expanding Student Media:** This year, the Manager of Communications & Student Media and the Editor-in-Chief are creating the opportunity to expand The Signal to include multimedia, social media, and podcasting experiences. Expanding the communication focus areas will allow students from all majors to engage in digital storytelling and broaden their technical skillset actively.
- **Workshops and Training:** To enhance student skills, offer training sessions and workshops on media ethics, writing, editing, multimedia production, and social media marketing. The workshops and training will be utilized through partnerships with UHCL Communications faculty.

**9. Did you have any Student Fee funds in excess of \$5,000.00 swept at the end of FY24? If so, describe how much and in which areas the funds came from.**

At the end of FY24, \$102,911 was swept. The funding came from the line items professional staff and student contractors.

**10. Are you requesting any new one-time funding? Present your budget request for next year with appropriate justification. \*Note that only one-time funding requests (no base requests) will be reviewed for FY26.**

Yes, for FY25 and FY26 Student Media has requested as outlined below.

1. Student Media is requesting FY25 \$15,000 to upgrade camera equipment by purchasing four to five camera kits (camera body and lenses). After accessing our current inventory, we found dated camera bodies and lenses that had trouble focusing and did not have video capabilities. Being able to capture high-quality visuals is essential for captivating readers and enhancing storytelling. Our current outdated equipment can hinder the ability to produce sharp, impactful images that reflect the dynamic nature of our campus and community. In addition, utilizing updated technology helps prepare student journalists for the professional world and empowers students to develop their skills in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

2. DSA Marketing & Communications is requesting FY25 and FY26 for \$11,200 (\$5,600 for each year) to implement two communication tools, Grammarly (\$3,600 - \$144 per seat annually) and SocialPilot (\$2,000 annually). These two tools will allow the Division of Student Affairs to produce high-quality written work, marketing collateral, and engaging content for our student population. More than 50% of Student Affairs offices or staff have purchased Grammarly on their own, which exceeds the overall budget for annual division subscriptions. In addition to Grammarly, SocialPilot will allow the portfolio of Student Affairs to schedule social media content strategically. The prescheduled content will assist the division in increasing student engagement, community outreach, and improving their college journey.

**11. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY2026 budget and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

A 5% (\$7,795.20) reduction in our base budget for FY26 would impact our ability to continue our mission of providing hands-on professional experience and protecting student voice; however, we would accommodate reductions in the following area of paid student contractors. By acquiring more contributors, college credit interns, and partnerships with Communications courses.