



Budget Request Form FY2018

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: Offices of the Dean of Student Life

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Increase to Student Media Funding

| SAFAB Use Only | |
|----------------|----|
| YES | NO |
| | |

General Description:

In 1980, The Battalion asked to have its student service fees reduced from \$70,000 to \$32,000 (from about \$2.00/student to \$1.00/student. In FY98 Student Media’s fee allocation was increased to \$42,000 then in FY99 the allocation was reduced by ½ to \$21,000 per year. From FY03-FY17 the allocation has been \$22,000. Since then, Student Media has operated The Battalion and the Aggieland Yearbook with revenue generated from advertising sales and book sales with the addition of the \$22,000 student fee allocation. Over the last five years, advertising sales have declined across the print industry. Student media outlets around the nation have dealt with the same downturn as the professional print industry. As Texas A&M’s student population has grown the price per student in student fee allocation for your student media has declined to \$0.38/per student. For the past five years Student Media has worked to identify ways to cut costs, increase revenue and maintain services at the current allocation. At this point, the staff and students are unable to continue providing the same service and student experience at this funding level. In the questions that follow you will see reduction to the number of days the paper is printed and offered to students, as well as, number of full-time employees supporting students within the Student Media unit.

Request Type: Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested UAF Other

General Questions:

How does this address an important need and positively impact students?

Student Media employs between 50-70 students each semester with The Battalion, 15-20 for the Aggieland Yearbook and another 10-15 for advertising sales, circulation and front-office help. In total, those students earn approximately \$120,000 each school year. Students who work in Student Media come various academic programs, including journalism, Ag Comm, marketing, English, engineering and math just to name a few. These students develop many skills, including writing, editing, photography, graphic layout and, most importantly, real-life leadership skills that translate to earning their first jobs after graduation.

What department/Division Strategic Plan item does this support?

What is the impact if not funded?

Much of the work done in Student Media connects with Student Affairs' Division Goal 1, enriching the learning experience of students by cultivating an environment of intellectual curiosity. As noted above, we attract students from a wide range of academic departments. However, writing skills, critical-thinking skills and leadership are identified as undergraduate learning outcomes for all Texas A&M students. Those skills are honed in Student Media through daily peer review, professional input from former students working in the field and journalists who come to Texas A&M to provide seminars and training sessions to our students.

If this request is not funded, we lose the opportunity to provide this training ground for current and future students. Additionally, we may have to continue to reduce the number of days the newspaper is printed and the amount of money earned by students in student media. Bigger than that, Student Media covers Texas A&M events and stories in a way that no other media outlet can and does currently. The Battalion and its website, thebatt.com, provide a daily utility for every student, faculty and staff member. The Aggieland Yearbook provides the historical snapshot of every year on campus. With continuing declining advertising revenues, it's imperative that we seek additional funding sources to sustain these valuable services for students and opportunities for student learning.

Please provide any data, evidence, input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.

In FY07, sales and services for Student Media was \$1,455,696, much of this was advertising revenue in The Battalion. Since this peak in 2007, revenue has steadily declined as outlined in the data below.

- FY08: \$1,399,368
- FY09: \$1,123,044
- FY10: \$1,124,834
- FY11: \$928,005
- FY12: \$990,441
- FY13: \$809,098
- FY14: \$494,030
- FY15: \$384,493
- FY16: \$368,446

This is consistent with trends across the country as advertisers have found more efficient ways of reaching their target audiences through social media outlets and other means.

What actions have you implemented internally to address the identified need?

In the past five years, the full-time staff in Student Media has been reduced from six to two, including two that were trimmed in the past two fiscal years. Beginning in Fall of 2016, The Battalion reduced its printing schedule from Monday-Friday to Monday-Thursday, saving approximately \$26,000 in printing and student employee pay. In the past two summers, The Battalion has trimmed its summer printing schedule to approximately 15-16 editions each summer. The printing is tied to New Student Conferences so that advertising and content can be tailored to new students and their parents.

New revenue streams added in the past fiscal year include selling advertising in the Aggieland Yearbook for the first time in decades and new newsstands for The Battalion with advertising which will arrive on campus in Fall 2016. Those two items alone will add \$21,000 per year to Student Media over the next five years.

Generally, what assessment tools will you use to evaluate this program/service?

We've always received positive feedback from students about their improved writing, editing, publishing and leadership skills in our exit interview surveys. This past year, we began tracking the persistence, graduation rate and grade-point averages of our students. Those who assess The Battalion and the Aggieland Yearbook at national contests routinely rate both publications among the best in the nation, if not the best. Below is benchmarking data regarding our revenue and additional financial support.

| State of Texas Peers | <u>Enrollment</u> | <u>Student Media Professional Staff Positions (FTE)</u> | <u>Student Media Org/Platforms</u> | <u>Total Funding from the Institution</u> | <u>Total generated Income (projected)</u> | <u>Newspaper Frequency</u> | <u>Print Circulation</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|--|---|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| University of Houston | 42,000 | 5 | Newspaper Radio TV Magazine | \$414,088 | \$320,000 | weekly | 10,000 |
| Texas A&M University | 58,809 | 2 | Newspaper Yearbook | \$22,000 | \$368,446 | 4x/wk | 10,000 |
| Texas Tech University | 33,111 | 6 | Newspaper Yearbook Magazine | \$431,900 | \$300,000 | 4x/wk | 6,000 |
| University of Texas - Austin | 51,313 | 13.5 | Radio TV Humor Publication Yearbook Newspaper | \$500,000 | \$1,000,000 | 5x/wk | 12,000 |
| University of Texas - Arlington | 46,000 | 6 | Newspaper Telephone Directory Apartment Guide | \$590,000 | \$300,000 | weekly | 12,000 |
| University of Texas - Dallas | 23,100 | 3 | Newspaper Magazine Online- Radio/TV | \$310,000 | \$70,000 | bi-weekly | 4,500 |
| University of North Texas | 37,000 | 2 | Newspaper | \$172,000 | \$145,000 | weekly | 8,000 |
| National Peer Institutions | | | | | | | |
| Georgia State University | 33,000 > 50,000 | 5 | Newspaper TV Radio Literary Journal Undergrad Literary Journal Online website app | \$368,820 | \$38,000 | weekly | 5,000 |
| Temple University | 26,068 | 1 | Newspaper Yearbook Radio | \$240,000 | \$100,000 | weekly | 5,000 |
| Big 12 | | | | | | | |
| University of Oklahoma | 30,786 | unknown | Newspaper Yearbook Special Publications | \$435,000 | \$593,000 | 4x/wk | 8,000 |

How have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered?

Please explain.

As already mentioned above, new revenue streams added in the past fiscal year include selling advertising in the Aggieland Yearbook for the first time in decades and new newsstands for The Battalion with advertising which will arrive on campus in Fall 2016. Those two items alone will add \$21,000 per year to Student Media over the next five years.

In FY16, Student Media held Aggieland Yearbook sales days for the first time, one during Parents' Weekend in the MSC and also during the May graduations at The Association of Former Students. We are in talks with AFS to make purchasing the Aggieland part of joining the Association upon graduation.

Funding Description:

| | | | Dollar Amount |
|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Total Estimated Cost | | | \$28,000.00 |
| Current funding \$22,000, seeking \$28,000 additional | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i> | | | |
| TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED | | | \$28,000.00 |

SAFAB Comments/Notes: