



Budget Request Form FY2019

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 for \$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 and then in FY99, the allocation was reduced by ½ to \$21,000 per year. From FY03-FY18 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 six 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 \$0.33/per student. For the past six 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 65-100 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 earned approximately \$100,000 in FY17 and as much as \$120,000 in previous years. For FY18, Student Media stopped payment for content produced for The Battalion in an effort to cut costs. Student wages will be reduced to ~\$50,000 this year as editors will still be paid and some writers will continue to be paid to provide content for the Aggieland and the new magazine product, Maroon Life. Students who work in Student Media

come from all sorts of academic programs, including Journalism, Agricultural Communications & Journalism, 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.

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 is imperative that we seek additional funding sources to sustain these valuable services for students and opportunities for student learning.

If this request is not funded, we lose an important contribution to the provision of this journalism and leadership training ground for current and future students. Additionally, we may contribute to the continuing trend of having to reduce the number of days the newspaper is printed and the amount of money earned by students in Student Media.

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
- FY17: \$375,066

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?

From FY16 to FY17, Student Media cut its expenses by 16 percent, trimming \$102,000 in expenditures. In the past six years, the full-time staff in Student Media has been reduced from six to two. Beginning in Fall of 2016, The Battalion reduced its printing schedule from five days a week to four, Monday-Thursday, saving approximately \$26,000 in printing and student employee pay. Beginning in Fall of 2017, The Battalion reduced its printing schedule again to three days a week, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, and in total circulation from 10,000 copies to 6,200 copies in hopes of saving at least another \$35,000. In the summers of 2015-16, The Battalion trimmed its summer printing schedule to approximately 15-16 editions each summer. In the summer of 2017, The Battalion dropped its print schedule to once a month.

The biggest reason for printing once a month in the summer was the creation of the Maroon Life magazine. The first issue, 15,000 copies of the New Student's Guide to Aggieland, was distributed to students and families coming for New Student Conferences all summer long. The magazine netted a profit of \$16,000 and the second, 5,000 copies of the Fall Sports Preview, netted another \$11,000. Maroon Life has at least three more editions planned for this school year.

New revenue streams added in FY16 included selling advertising in the Aggieland Yearbook for the first time in decades and new newsstands for The Battalion with advertising which arrived on campus in Fall 2016. Those two items alone will add at least \$21,000 per year to Student Media over the next five years. Advertising in the Aggieland rose from \$7,600 in FY16 to \$10,000 in FY17.

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. Results from the exit interview surveys as well as tracking data are still being processed.

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.

Recent awards for The Battalion

2014-15: Runner-up for best four-year daily newspaper in the nation by the College Media Association

2015-16: Pinnacle Award as best four-year daily newspaper in the nation by the College Media Association

2015-16: Runner-up best sports section in the nation by the College Media Association

2016: Apple Award as best four-year daily newspaper in the nation by the College Media Association

2016: Best four-year daily newspaper in the state by the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA)

2016: Winner of the Betty Gage Holland Award for excellence in college journalism (first-time to win this national honor)

2016: Editor of the year for all Texas student publications, Sam King, by TIPA

2016: Reporter of the year for all Texas student publications, Chevall Pryce, by TIPA

2016: In individual competition, Battalion staffers won 15 first-place state honors and 42 overall by TIPA

2016-17: Finalist for best sports section in the nation by the College Media Association

2016-17: With several categories still unknown, Battalion staffers are finalist for four individual national awards from CMA and ACP.

Recent awards for the Aggieland

2013-15: Finalist for the Associated Collegiate Press' national Pacemaker Award

2014: Best yearbook in the state by the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association

2016: Best yearbook in the state by the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association

2016: In individual competition, Aggieland staffers won 9 first-place state honors and 25 overall by TIPA

2016-17: With several categories still unknown, Aggieland staffers are finalist for two individual national awards from CMA and ACP.

Student Media recently benchmarked our revenue and additional financial support with several other universities. Below are the results of that study. Texas A&M has the highest enrollment of students yet ranks the lowest for institutional provided funding.

<u>State of Texas Peers</u>	<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	66,425	2	Newspaper Yearbook Magazine	\$22,000	\$375,066	3x/wk	6,200
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
<u>National Peer Institutions</u>							
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

University of Oklahoma	30,786	unknown	Newspaper Yearbook Special Publications	\$435,000	\$593,000	2x/wk	8,000
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How have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered?

Please explain.

New revenue streams added in the past two fiscal years include creation of the Maroon Life magazine, selling advertising in the Aggieland Yearbook for the first time in decades and new newsstands for The Battalion with advertising. Those three items alone have the potential to add at least \$75,000 per year to Student Media over the next five years, with a low estimate of \$50,000 of that coming from Maroon Life advertising profit.

At the start of FY17, The Battalion entered into a content creation agreement with Snapchat. That will yield a revenue stream from advertising sold on the Discover Stories, but we don't yet know how much that will be because the program is less than a month old.

We are also looking at utilizing the website, thebatt.com, to build more revenue opportunities, including sharing space on the site for a nationally syndicated writing service. Again, that's something in the preliminary stages, but that would yield another \$10,000 a year.

Funding Description:

	Dollar Amount
Total Estimated Cost	\$25,000.00
Current funding \$22,000, seeking \$25,000 additional	
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i>	
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$25,000.00

SAFAB Comments/Notes: