

= University of Houston =

The University of Houston ( UH ) is a state research university and the flagship institution of the University of Houston System . Founded in 1927 , UH is the third @-@ largest university in Texas with nearly 43 @,@ 000 students . Its campus spans 667 acres in southeast Houston , and was known as University of Houston ? University Park from 1983 to 1991 . The Carnegie Foundation classifies UH as a comprehensive doctoral degree @-@ granting institution with very high research activity . The U.S. News & World Report ranks the university No. 187 in its National University Rankings , and No. 105 among top public universities . UH is one of four public universities in Texas with a Phi Beta Kappa chapter .

The university offers more than 280 degree programs through its 12 academic colleges on campus ? including programs leading to professional degrees in law , optometry , and pharmacy . The institution conducts nearly \$ 130 million annually in research , and operates more than 40 research centers and institutes on campus . Interdisciplinary research includes superconductivity , space commercialization and exploration , biomedical sciences and engineering , energy and natural resources , and artificial intelligence . Awarding more than 9 @,@ 000 degrees annually , UH 's alumni base exceeds 260 @,@ 000 . The economic impact of the university contributes over \$ 3 billion annually to the Texas economy , while generating about 24 @,@ 000 jobs .

The University of Houston hosts a variety of theatrical performances , concerts , lectures , and events . It has more than 400 student organizations and 17 intercollegiate sports teams . Annual UH events and traditions include The Cat 's Back , Homecoming , and Frontier Fiesta . The university 's varsity athletic teams , known as the Houston Cougars , are members of the American Athletic Conference and compete in the NCAA Division I in all sports . The football team regularly makes bowl game appearances , and the men 's basketball team has made 19 appearances in the NCAA Division I Tournament ? including five Final Four appearances . The men 's golf team has won 16 national championships ? the second @-@ most of any NCAA golf program .

= = History = =

= = = Founding = = =

The University of Houston began as Houston Junior College ( HJC ) . On March 7 , 1927 , trustees of the Houston Independent School District ( HISD ) Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution that authorized the founding and operating of a junior college . The junior college was operated and administered by HISD .

Originally HJC was located in San Jacinto High School and offered only night courses . Its first session began March 7 , 1927 , with an enrollment of 232 students and 12 faculty . This session was primarily held to educate the future teachers of the junior college , freshmen were not permitted to enroll . A more accurate date for the official opening of HJC is September 19 , 1927 , when enrollment was opened to all persons having completed the necessary educational requirements . The first president of HJC was Edison Ellsworth Oberholtzer , who was the dominant force in establishing the junior college .

= = = University beginnings = = =

The junior college became eligible to become a university in October 1933 when Governor of Texas , Miriam A. Ferguson , signed House Bill 194 into law . On April 30 , 1934 , HISD 's Board of Education adopted a resolution to make the school a four @-@ year institution , and Houston Junior College changed its name to the University of Houston .

UH 's first session as a four @-@ year institution began June 4 , 1934 , at San Jacinto High School with an enrollment of 682 . In 1934 , the first campus of the University of Houston was established at the Second Baptist Church at Milam and McGowen . The next fall , the campus was moved to the

South Main Baptist Church on Main Street ? between Richmond Avenue and Eagle Street ? where it stayed for the next five years . In May 1935 , the institution as a university held its first commencement at Miller Outdoor Theatre .

In 1936 , heirs of philanthropists J. J. Settegast and Ben Taub donated 110 acres ( 0 @. @ 45 km2 ) to the university for use as a permanent location . At this time , there was no road that led to the land tract , but in 1937 , the city added Saint Bernard Street , which was later renamed to Cullen Boulevard . It would become a major thoroughfare of the campus . As a project of the National Youth Administration , workers were paid fifty cents an hour to clear the land . In 1938 , Hugh Roy Cullen donated \$ 335 @, @ 000 ( equivalent to \$ 5 @, @ 631 @, @ 643 @. @ 03 in 2015 ) for the first building to be built at the location . The Roy Gustav Cullen Memorial Building was dedicated on June 4 , 1939 , and classes began the next day . The first full semester of classes began officially on Wednesday , September 20 , 1939 .

In a year after opening the new campus , the university had about 2 @, @ 500 students . As World War II approached , enrollment decreased due to the draft and enlistments . The university proposed to be in a new , highly unusual training activity of the United States Navy , and was one of six institutions selected to give the Primary School in the Electronics Training Program . By the fall of 1943 , there were only about 1 @, @ 100 regular students at UH ; thus , the 300 or so servicemen contributed in sustaining the faculty and facilities of the Engineering College . This training at UH continued until March 1945 , with a total of 4 @, @ 178 students .

On March 12 , 1945 , Senate Bill 207 was signed into law , removing the control of the University of Houston from HISD and placing it into the hands of a board of regents . In 1945 , the university ? which had grown too large and complex for the Houston school board to administer ? became a private university .

In March 1947 , the regents authorized creation of a law school at the university . In 1949 , the M.D. Anderson Foundation made a \$ 1 @. @ 5 million gift to UH for the construction of a dedicated library building on the campus . By 1950 , the educational plant at UH consisted of 12 permanent buildings . Enrollment was more than 14 @, @ 000 with a full @- @ time faculty of more than 300 . KUHF , the university radio station , signed on in November . By 1951 , UH was the second @- @ largest university in the State of Texas and was the fastest growing university in the United States and is now looking to be recognized as a Historically Black College and University ( HBCU ) with having a full yard restored on campus in Spring 2016 .

= = = State university = = =

In 1953 , the university established KUHT ? the first educational television station in the nation ? after the four @- @ year @- @ long Federal Communications Commission 's television licensing freeze ended . During this period , however , the university as a private institution was facing financial troubles . Tuition failed to cover rising costs , and in turn , tuition increases caused a drop in enrollment .

After a lengthy battle between supporters of the University of Houston , led by school president A.D. Bruce , and forces from state universities geared to block the change , Senate Bill 2 was passed on May 23 , 1961 , enabling the university to enter the state system in 1963 .

As the University of Houston celebrated its 50th anniversary , the Texas Legislature formally established the University of Houston System in 1977 . Philip G. Hoffman resigned from his position as president of UH and became the first chancellor of the University of Houston System . The University of Houston became the oldest and largest member institution in the UH System with nearly 30 @, @ 000 students .

On April 26 , 1983 , the university appended its official name to University of Houston ? University Park ; however , the name was changed back to University of Houston on August 26 , 1991 . This name change was an effort by the UH System to give its flagship institution a distinctive name that would eliminate confusion with the University of Houston ? Downtown ( UHD ) , which is a separate and distinct degree @- @ granting institution that is not part of the University of Houston .

## == Restructuring and growth ==

In 1997, the administrations of the UH System and the University of Houston were combined under a single chief executive officer, with the dual title of Chancellor of the UH System and President of the University of Houston. Arthur K. Smith became the first person to have held the combined position. As of 1997, the University of Houston System Administration has been located on campus in the Ezekiel W. Cullen Building.

On October 15, 2007, Renu Khator was selected for the position of UH System chancellor and UH president. On November 5, 2007, Khator was confirmed as the third person to hold the dual title of UH System chancellor and UH president concurrently, and took office in January 2008.

In January 2011, the University of Houston was classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as a research university with very high research activity.

## == Campuses ==

### == University of Houston Main Campus ==

The campus of the University of Houston is located in southeast Houston, with an official address of 4800 Calhoun Road. It was known as University of Houston ? University Park from 1983 to 1991. The campus spans 667 @-@ acre ( 2 @.@ 70 km<sup>2</sup> ) and is roughly bisected by Cullen Boulevard ? a thoroughfare that has become synonymous with the university.

The university campus includes numerous green spaces, fountains, and sculptures, including a work by famed sculptor Jim Sanborn. Renowned architects César Pelli and Philip Johnson have designed buildings on the UH campus. Recent campus beautification projects have garnered awards from the Keep Houston Beautiful group for improvements made to the Cullen Boulevard corridor.

The University of Houston ( UH ) is the flagship institution of the University of Houston System ( UHS ). It is a multi @-@ campus university with a branch campus located in Sugar Land. The University of Houston ? Clear Lake ( UHCL ), the University of Houston ? Downtown ( UHD ), and the University of Houston ? Victoria ( UHV ) are separate universities; they are not branch campuses of UH.

## == Campus layout ==

The University of Houston 's campus framework has identified the following five core areas and districts : inner campus, the Arts District, the Professional District, the Wheeler District, and the Stadium District. In addition, the campus contains several outlying areas not identified among the four districts.

The inner campus contains the academic core of the university and consists of the M.D. Anderson Library, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics including the Physics Department, the College of Technology, and the Honors College. The interior of the campus has the original buildings : the Roy G. Cullen Building, the Old Science Building, and the Ezekiel W. Cullen Building. Academic and research facilities include the Cullen Performance Hall, the Science and Engineering Research and Classroom Complex, and Texas Center for Superconductivity, and various other science and liberal arts buildings. This area of campus features the reflecting pool at Cullen Family Plaza, the Lynn Eusan Park, and various plazas and green spaces.

The Arts District is located in the northern part of campus and is home to the university 's School of Art, the Moores School of Music, the School of Theatre and Dance, the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture, and the Valenti School of Communication. The district also has the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Performing Arts which houses the Lyndall Finley Wortham Theatre, the main stage of the School of Theatre and Dance, and Moores Opera Center. Other facilities include the

Dudley Recital Hall and the Organ Recital Hall in the Fine Arts Building , the Quintero Lab Theatre in the School of Theatre and Dance , and the Moores Opera House and Choral Recital Hall in the Moores School of Music Building .

The Professional District is located northeast and east of the university campus . The district has facilities of the University of Houston Law Center , the Cullen College of Engineering , and the C.T. Bauer College of Business . This area of campus is home to Calhoun Lofts , which is an upper @-@ level and graduate housing facility . The East Parking Garage is located on the east end of the district . Adjacent to the district is the University Center ( UC ) , the larger of two student unions on campus .

The Wheeler District is located in the southern portion of the campus , along Wheeler Avenue and east of Cullen Boulevard . This area has undergraduate dormitories , the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management , and the College of Optometry . Dormitory facilities include the twin 18 @-@ story Moody Towers , Cougar Village , and the Quadrangle which has the following five separate halls : Oberholtzer , Bates , Taub , Settegast , and Law . Adjacent to the Moody Towers and Lynn Eusan Park is the Hilton University of Houston Hotel .

= = = Facilities = = =

The university 's Energy Research Park is a research park specializing in energy research , consisting of 74 acres and 19 acres of undeveloped land . Much of the physical property was originally developed in 1953 by the oilfield services company Schlumberger as its global headquarters . It was acquired by the university in 2009 .

The University of Houston Libraries is the library system of the university . It consists of the M.D. Anderson Library and three branch libraries : the Music Library , the Weston A. Pettey Optometry Library , and the William R. Jenkins Architecture and Art Library . In addition to the libraries administered by the UH Libraries , the university also has the O 'Quinn Law Library and the Conrad N. Hilton Library .

The campus has the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Performing Arts , which houses the Lyndall Finley Wortham Theatre and Moores Opera Center . The Cullen Performance Hall is a 1 @, @ 544 seat proscenium theater which offers a variety of events sponsored by departments and organizations at the university in addition to contemporary music concerts , opera , modern dance , and theatrical performances put on by groups in and outside the Houston area . The Blaffer Gallery exhibits the works of both visiting artists and those of students in the university 's School of Art .

The 264 @, @ 000 ft <sup>2</sup> ( 25 @, @ 000 m <sup>2</sup> ) Campus Recreation and Wellness Center , which is home to the nation 's largest collegiate natatorium , was recognized by the National Intramural @-@ Sports Association as an outstanding facility upon its completion in 2004 .

The LeRoy and Lucile Melcher Center for Public Broadcasting houses the studios and offices of KUHT Houston PBS , the nation 's first public television station ; KUHF ( 88 @. @ 7 FM ) , Houston 's NPR station ; the Center for Public Policy Polling ; and television studio labs .

The 200 @, @ 000 sq ft ( 19 @, @ 000 m<sup>2</sup> ) Science and Engineering Research and Classroom Complex ( SERCC ) was designed by architect César Pelli . It houses facilities for many interdisciplinary research programs at UH , including bionanotechnology .

The university has an on @-@ campus Hilton hotel that is part of the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management . This hotel was established with a donation by the founder of Hilton Hotels , Conrad N. Hilton , and is staffed by students in the College of Hotel and Restaurant Management .

= = = Transportation = = =

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County ( METRO ) operates public transportation services , including buses and the METRORail tram service , which serve the university . METRORail Purple Line stations serving the university include :

Elgin / Third Ward

Robertson Stadium / UH / TSU  
UH South / University Oaks

== Sugar Land Campus ==

The University of Houston Sugar Land ( UHSL ) is a branch campus of the University of Houston located in Sugar Land , Texas . The campus was founded in 1995 as a higher education " teaching center " of the University of Houston System . It was originally named the " Fort Bend Institute " and later the " University of Houston System at Fort Bend " prior to its name as the " University of Houston System at Sugar Land " . In 2002 , the campus was moved to its current 250 @-@ acre area on University Boulevard at U.S. Highway 59 with the opening of the Albert and Mamie George Building . On April 23 , 2009 , a \$ 37 million USD facility was opened on the campus dubbed " Brazos Hall " housing the Sugar Land campus of Wharton County Junior College . Originally approved in May 2006 , the Fort Bend County Libraries system opened their University Branch at the UHSL campus on November 10 , 2011 . The library serves as a joint @-@ use facility between both the public and university students . On November 16 , 2011 , the University of Houston System announced that the University of Houston as an institution would replace the university system as the administrative entity for the teaching center , effectively making it a branch campus of the university . With this action , the campus was renamed the " University of Houston Sugar Land " as of January 2012 .

== Institutional structure ==

The University of Houston ( UH ) is one of four separate and distinct institutions in the University of Houston System , and was known as University of Houston ? University Park from 1983 to 1991 . The University of Houston ( UH ) is the flagship institution of the University of Houston System ( UHS ) . It is a multi @-@ campus university with a branch campus located in Sugar Land . The University of Houston ? Clear Lake ( UHCL ) , the University of Houston ? Downtown ( UHD ) , and the University of Houston ? Victoria ( UHV ) are stand @-@ alone universities ; they are not branch campuses of UH .

The organization and control of the University of Houston is vested in the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System . The Board has all the rights , powers , and duties that it has with respect to the organization and control of other institutions in the System ; however , UH is maintained as a separate and distinct institution .

== Administration ==

The president is the chief executive officer ( CEO ) of the University of Houston , and serves concurrently as chancellor of the University of Houston System . The chancellor is the CEO of the UH System , and the position is appointed by its board of regents .

The administrations of the University of Houston and the UH System are located on the university campus in the Ezekiel W. Cullen Building . The Chancellor / President resides in the Wortham House , provided by the Board of Regents of the University of Houston System as part of the chancellor / president 's employment contract .

== Academics ==

The mission of the University of Houston is to " discover and disseminate knowledge through the education of a diverse population of traditional and nontraditional students , and through research , artistic and scholarly endeavors , as it becomes the nation 's premier public university in an urban setting . "

The university offers 282 degree programs : 111 bachelors ; 121 masters ; 47 research doctorates ; and three professional doctorate degrees in law , optometry , and pharmacy . Awarding more than 9

@, @ 000 degrees annually , UH 's alumni base exceeds 260 @, @ 000 and is the largest in the Houston area .

The University of Houston 's faculty includes three @-@ time Pulitzer Prize winner Edward Albee , National Medal of Science recipient Paul Chu from the Physics Department , and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jody Williams .

The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences has the Creative Writing Program , which was founded by alumnus Donald Barthelme and offers degrees in poetry , fiction , and non @-@ fiction .

The Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture is one of only 36 schools to have an accreditation from the National Architectural Accrediting Board .

The University of Houston 's academic colleges are as follows :

#### = = = Rankings = = =

The University of Houston was ranked the 31st top college in the United States by Payscale and CollegeNet 's Social Mobility Index college rankings . The U.S. News & World Report ranks the university No. 187 in its National University Rankings , and No. 105 among top public universities . The Princeton Review has listed UH as one of America 's best colleges . The institution ranks in the Top 50 American Research Universities , and is among the Top 300 in the global Academic Ranking of World Universities .

The University of Houston Law Center was ranked 58th among the nation 's " Best Law Schools " in U.S. News & World Report in 2012 . U.S. News & World Report ranked the C.T. Bauer College of Business as the top Undergraduate Business Program in Houston , third among public universities in the state of Texas , and 43rd in the nation among public universities . In 2002 , the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management ranked third in the nation in hospitality management by the Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education .

The Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship at the C.T. Bauer College of Business is the No. 1 ranked undergraduate program for Entrepreneurship in the nation . The program has been ranked by The Princeton Review and Entrepreneur magazine as No. 1 for 2008 , 2010 , and 2011 ; and No. 2 in 2007 and 2009 .

#### = = Research = =

The Carnegie Foundation classifies the University of Houston as a research university with very high research activity . The designation makes UH one of only seven public universities in Texas with that classification .

The university conducts nearly \$ 130 million annually in academic and scientific research , and operates more than 40 research centers and institutes on campus . Through these facilities , UH maintains partnerships with government , health care and private industry . Areas of interdisciplinary research include nanotechnology , superconductivity , space commercialization and exploration , biomedical sciences and engineering , energy and natural resources , and artificial intelligence .

Six interdisciplinary research clusters enable scholars to exchange ideas and explore research areas and to work with industry , other research organizations , and the community . University of Houston research clusters include : Arts and Human Enrichment , Bio @-@ Med Sciences and Engineering , Community Advancement and Education , Complex Systems / Space Exploration , Energy and Natural Resources , and Nano @-@ Materials .

#### = = Student life = =

The University of Houston is notable for its diverse student body , and U.S. News & World Report ranks UH as the second @-@ most ethnically diverse research university in the United States . With 42 @, @ 704 students in the fall 2015 semester , the university has significant numbers of Asian American and Hispanic students . Its international student population is primarily from Asia .

### == = Art , music and theatre = = =

Located in the Fine Arts Building , Blaffer Art Museum is a contemporary art museum dedicated to emerging , mid @-@ career , and underrepresented artists and bodies of work through exhibitions , publications , and public programs . Its educational programs include public lectures , artists ' talks , docent tours , audio guides , and youth programs such as Studio Saturday , Summer Arts , and the Young Artist Apprenticeship Program .

The Cullen Performance Hall is a 1 @,@ 544 seat proscenium theater located near Entrance 1 . The hall offers a variety of events sponsored by departments and organizations at the university in addition to contemporary music concerts , opera , modern dance , and theatrical performances put on by groups in and outside the Houston area .

The Rebecca and John J. Moores School of Music presents concerts in various campus venues : Dudley Recital Hall and the Organ Recital Hall in the Fine Arts Building , and in the Moores Opera House and Choral Recital Hall in the music building . Musical events range from opera to jazz with performers including students , faculty , and guest artists .

The School of Theatre and Dance offers a subscription series of five plays each year . Works by classical and modern dramatists , as well as new musical collaborators , are seen in full productions or " gypsy runthroughs . "

The School of Art exhibits young artists several times a year , including the Master of Fine Arts exhibition held traditionally near the end of the spring semester in the Blaffer Art Museum . The School of Art also hosts presentations by numerous visiting artists and art historians throughout the academic year .

### == = Housing = = =

Fifteen percent of UH students live on campus . UH has several on campus dormitories : Moody Towers , The Quadrangle , Cougar Village I & II , Cougar Place , Calhoun Lofts , Bayou Oaks , Cullen Oaks , and Cambridge Oaks .

Moody Towers , frequently just called " The Towers , " is one of the tallest complexes on campus and the largest area of residence halls . Each of the two towers consists of eighteen stories and together house 1 @,@ 100 students . The Towers feature a newly renovated dining hall . The rooms in The Towers are scheduled to be renovated during the summer of 2011 .

The Quadrangle , also known as " The Quad , " is the oldest housing area on campus and consists of several coed dorm halls : Bates , Law , Oberholtzer , Settegast , and Taub . Oberholtzer Hall features a smaller , albeit cozy dining hall . The Quadrangle houses 800 students . The rooms in The Quads are scheduled to be renovated during the summer of 2011 .

In August 2009 , Calhoun Lofts ? a new university @-@ owned and operated residential facility aimed at graduate and professional students ? opened and includes retail stores , lecture halls , and recreation facilities .

Cougar Village I & II are new freshman / Honors College dorm which opened in August 2010 and August 2013 , respectively . The dormitory features themed floors with kitchens and lounges , a tutoring center , computer labs , multi @-@ purpose rooms , study areas , a convenience store , a laundry facility , and a fitness center . Cougar Village I & II are exclusive only to freshman and Honor College students .

In addition to traditional dormitories , Cougar Place was an apartment @-@ style housing complex consisting of 400 units . Cougar Place has since been demolished as of 2013 and has been replaced with a new on @-@ campus housing complex for sophomores .

The university has privately owned apartment complexes on campus : Cullen Oaks , Bayou Oaks , and Cambridge Oaks .

### == = Media = = =

The official student newspaper is The Daily Cougar , and has been published since 1927 . Students

also produce the official University of Houston yearbook , The Houstonian .

The UH Student Video Network , a student @-@ run network , appears on the University of Houston cable network and is one of the few fee @-@ funded student organizations on campus .

COOG Radio , the University of Houston 's student @-@ run college radio station , made its debut on August 29 , 2011 .

= = Traditions = =

The seal of the University of Houston , officially adopted in 1938 , is a stylized version of the coat @-@ of @-@ arms of General Sam Houston . The first official version was placed on the floor of the Roy Gustav Cullen Building .

The official colors of the University of Houston are scarlet red and albino white . These were the colors of Sam Houston 's ancestor , Sir Hugh , and were adopted by UH at the same time as the official seal . Scarlet red symbolizes courage or inner strength to face the unknown , and white symbolizes the goodness and purity of spirit embodied in helping one 's fellow man .

Cougar Red Friday is part of the ongoing Keep Houston Red initiative at the University of Houston . Students and staff are encouraged to wear red shirts on Friday to show pride and passion for the University .

The school 's official mascot is a cougar , which was adopted in 1947 and later named Shasta . The university owned a series of female cougars , but this tradition ceased in 1989 , upon the death of Shasta V. When a cougar cub was orphaned in Washington State and moved to the Houston Zoo in 2011 , the university adopted it as its first live male cougar mascot .

The Frontiersmen - initially exclusive to members of the Sigma Chi Fraternity , but later opened membership to the entire student body - is a group of students who participate in university events to drive school spirit . At football games , the Frontiersmen ? donning cowboy hats , Wrangler Jeans , and dusters for attire ? run across the field with the university 's flag and the Flag of Texas after each score .

Frontier Fiesta ? a re @-@ creation of a 19th @-@ century Western town , with music , food and historical exhibits ? is a major event on campus each spring semester . The student @-@ led festival is a part of a long @-@ standing tradition dating back to the 1940s established by Gan Bey which later became the Sigma Chi Fraternity 's Epsilon Xi chapter at UH . Frontier Fiesta attained widespread notoriety when the Sigma Chi variety show performance known as " Bella Union " garnered national attention on the cover of Life ( magazine ) as " The Greatest College Show on Earth " and soon @-@ after drew crowds numbered in the tens of thousands from all across the country to participate in the festivities . As Frontier Fiesta grew it eventually evolved into what we know today as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo . Although , there is still an annual " Frontier Fiesta " held on UH 's campus - the Houston Rodeo is today 's closest resemblance to the original Frontier Fiesta .

The BLAZE is an oil field warning siren that was chosen to represent the university 's ties to the petroleum industry . The purchase of the siren was completed in 1991 . The Sigma Chi Fraternity has been in charge of the siren and gave it the name " The BLAZE " in honor of its fallen brother , David Blazek .

Cougar First Impressions ? a program headed by the UH Staff Council ? takes place every year on the first two days of classes , when faculty and staff turn out to welcome new and returning students .

= = The Cougar Paw = =

The Cougar Paw is a popular hand sign used by University of Houston students , faculty , alumni , and athletics fans to represent camaraderie and support . The Cougar Paw tradition was adopted through several athletics events between the University of Houston and the University of Texas .

The University of Houston and the University of Texas played their first football game against one another in 1953 . Since this was their first meeting , members of Alpha Phi Omega ? the service



fraternity in charge of taking care of Shasta I , the university 's mascot ? brought her to the game . During the trip , Shasta 's front paw was caught in the cage door and one toe was cut off . At the game , several Longhorn players saw what had happened and began taunting UH players by holding up their hands with the ring finger bent , suggesting the Cougars were invalids . Texas went on to win this game 28 ? 7 . UH students had been using the victory sign as a hand signal up to that time , but began using the bent @-@ finger sign as a reminder that they would remember the taunts .

The Cougars didn 't play the Longhorns again until 1968 . With UH fans holding up the new sign of Cougar pride , UH played UT to a 20 ? 20 tie . They didn 't meet again until 1976 , the first year UH was a member of the Southwest Conference . In front of a record crowd at Texas ' Memorial Stadium , UH defeated UT 30 ? 0 , a rout that signaled the beginning of the end for legendary Texas coach Darrell Royal . This solidified the use of the Cougar Paw as a tradition .

= = Athletics = =

UH 's 17 @-@ sport intercollegiate program is a member of the American Athletic Conference . Houston was previously a member of Conference USA , of which it was a member since the conference was formed in 1995 to 2013 . During that timespan , the Cougars won 33 C @-@ USA titles . Prior to 1995 , Houston was a member of the Southwest Conference .

After 61 years of athletics at UH , other notable achievements include 16 national titles in men 's golf , five NCAA Men 's Basketball Final Four appearances , and two College World Series appearances .

More than 50 Olympic athletes have attended UH , bringing home 33 medals , including 19 gold . Former Olympian and UH alumnus Leroy Burrell returned as the men 's track and field head coach in 1998 . In April 2014 , Kelvin Sampson was named the eighth men 's basketball head coach . Ronald Hughey is the current women 's basketball coach . In December 2014 , Tom Herman was introduced as the head football coach .

In addition to varsity sports , the University of Houston offers a variety of intramural sports programs .

= = Varsity sports = =

The university has an intercollegiate sports program that competes in the National Collegiate Athletic Association ( NCAA ) . The NCAA 's Division I sports at the University of Houston include baseball , basketball , cross country , American football , golf , and track and field for men ; basketball , cross country , soccer , softball , swimming and diving , tennis , and track and field for women .

The Houston Cougars football team has made 24 post @-@ season bowl appearances and has to its credit several Southwest Conference championships and Cotton Bowl Classic appearances , as well as the 2006 Conference USA Championship and the 2015 American Athletic Conference championship . The 1989 Heisman Trophy winner , Andre Ware , was a Cougar .

The men 's basketball team has made 19 NCAA Tournament appearances , with five trips to the Final Four . See also Phi Slama Jama , the Cougars teams of the early 1980s that featured NBA legends Clyde Drexler and Hakeem Olajuwon .

Houston competes with other notable sports teams , such as the baseball team , which has made 20 NCAA Tournament appearances with two trips to the College World Series ; the men 's golf team , which has won 16 NCAA National Championships ; the women 's soccer team , which was rated as the top first @-@ year women 's program in the country in 1998 ; the swimming and diving teams , which have spawned multiple Olympians and All @-@ Americans ; the track and field team , which perennially ranks in the top 10 as an NCAA team ; and the volleyball team , which had a streak of ten consecutive trips to the NCAA Tournament .

= = Notable people = =

Awarding more than 9 @, @ 000 degrees annually , UH 's alumni base exceeds 260 @, @ 000 . The University of Houston has seen many now notable persons pass through its halls .

Jack Valenti , long @-@ time president of the Motion Picture Association of America and creator of the MPAA film rating system , received his B.B.A. from UH and for decades was one of the most influential people in Hollywood . Acclaimed artist and filmmaker Julian Schnabel is also a University of Houston alum .

Tom Jarriel , longtime ABC News anchor , is an alumnus . He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1956 .

Alice Sebold , a noted novelist known for Lucky and The Lovely Bones , and Matt Mullenweg , creator of WordPress ( the most popular , open @-@ source blogging platform ) , also attended the university .

Notable athletes within the list include NFL players Wilson Whitley , Glenn Montgomery , Alfred Oglesby , Craig Veasey , Donnie Avery , David Klingler , Kevin Kolb , Billy Milner , Sebastian Vollmer , Case Keenum , and Heisman Trophy winner Andre Ware ; baseball stars Doug Drabek , Michael Bourn , and Brad Lincoln ; golfers Fred Couples , Billy Ray Brown , Steve Elkington , and Fuzzy Zoeller ; track and field legends Carl Lewis and Leroy Burrell ; NBA legends Hakeem " The Dream " Olajuwon , Clyde " The Glide " Drexler and " The Big E " Elvin Hayes as well as Bo Outlaw , Don Chaney , Michael Young , Damon Jones , Carl Herrera and Otis Birdsong ; and legendary Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry . The owner of the San Diego Padres and noted philanthropist John Moores holds both undergraduate and law degrees . The former Defensive Coordinator of the Houston Texans , Wade Phillips , is a UH alumnus , as well .

Elizabeth Warren , a U.S. Senator representing Massachusetts and formerly a Harvard Law School faculty member and chair of the Congressional Oversight Panel created to oversee the U.S. banking bailout during the 2008 ? 2009 financial crisis , received her B.S. from UH in 1970 . Tom DeLay , a former member and majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives , who represented Texas 's 22nd congressional district from 1984 until 2006 , also attended the University of Houston . Other politicians who attended UH include Gene Green , a Democratic politician and a U.S. congressman from the state of Texas representing that state 's 29th congressional district , which includes most of eastern Houston , along with large portions of Houston 's eastern suburbs ; and Ted Poe , a Republican politician currently representing Texas 's 2nd congressional district in the United States House of Representatives . Poe 's district includes most of northern Houston , as well as most of the Beaumont ? Port Arthur metropolitan area .

Other notable celebrity alumni include Jim Parsons , star of the television series The Big Bang Theory , Brent Spiner of Star Trek : The Next Generation , actors Robert Wuhl , Loretta Devine , Dennis Quaid , Randy Quaid , Brett Cullen , comedian Bill Hicks and former attorney and talk show host Star Jones , Project Runway contestants Chloe Dao and Laura Bennett , sportscasters Jim Nantz and Robert Flores , and country music star Larry Gatlin .

Crystle Stewart , Miss USA 2008 is a former student at the University , last attending in 2007 . Jason Alkire the artist and fashion designer is a graduate as well .

= = = Alumni Association = = =

The University of Houston Alumni Association is the official alumni association of the University of Houston . Formed in 1940 , it is a nonprofit organization with a Life Membership Program of over 5 @, @ 000 members . The alumni association is headquartered at the University of Houston 's on @-@ campus Athletics / Alumni Center . It can be found on the web at [www.houstonalumni.com](http://www.houstonalumni.com). It was previously known as the " Ex @-@ Students Association " and the " Houston Alumni Organization . "