

THE SIGNAL BEATS

A beat is an assigned area or office that The Signal staff members check on a weekly basis. Beat reports are a good source of information for upcoming events and future story ideas. By assigning each staff member a different beat, the editors are able to maintain open communication with the university at large.

Reporters for community newspapers are often assigned a beat to allow newspapers to keep track of what's happening within a city. Similarly, the UHCL campus represents our community.

For example:

The UHCL Police Department is representative of a city's police department beat.

The UHCL Health Center is representative of a city's hospital beat.

The UHCL Student Life Office is representative of a city's Chamber of Commerce.

The four schools of HSH, SOE, SCE and SOB represent a city's school district.

The Student Government Association is representative of a city council.

UHCL BEATS:

President's Office

Alumni Relations & Development

Provost's Office

UHCL Schools: Human Science & Humanities; Education; Science & Computer Engineering; Business
Student Services

Dean of Students/Student Assistance Center

Student Life Office

Cultural Arts

Student Organizations

Student Leadership

International Initiatives

Intercultural and International Student Services

Health and Disability

Career and Counseling Center

Financial Aid

Enrollment Services

Distance Ed

Library and Learning Resources

University Computing and Telecommunications

University Forest Apartments

Police Department

EDITORS' BEAT:

Student Government Association

(Attend weekly SGA meetings, Tuesdays, 11:30 – 12:30., Rm. B2511)

HOW TO COVER A BEAT

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

During the first week you should introduce yourself in person to all contacts and make friends with the secretary(s)/assistant(s). Ask your contact how he or she would like to follow up on a weekly basis. Some will want to arrange face-to-face meetings; some will want you to call them; some will prefer to work via e-mails. Let it be their decisions.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH YOUR BEAT

Familiarize yourself with what your beat does. In addition to contacting your beat, keep an eye on the bulletin boards and Web sites for any information concerning your beat.

SUBMIT A BEAT REPORT EVERY WEEK – DUE MONDAY’S BY NOON

Submit a beat report – even if your source says there is nothing happening – and turn it in every Monday. If there is nothing to report – report that. The important thing is that you check in with your beat and keep tabs on what is happening within that office each week. Email your beat reports to: washington@uhcl.edu

THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO A BEAT REPORT

Your weekly beat report consists of two parts. Part one involves checking in with your beat and reporting that information back to the newspaper office. Part two involves coming up with an original story idea.

Part 1 – Beat Coverage

Provide the name of your beat and the person you contacted. Provide details of any ongoing/upcoming events your beat contact might like to see covered in the school paper.

Part 2 – Original Story Idea

Original story ideas are separate from, and do not pertain to, your beat. Every staff member of The Signal is responsible for the contents of the paper. Articles/news coverage is only as good as the ideas you generate and submit. Every staff member must submit one original story idea each week along with his/her beat report. Note that you are not limited to one, however. Try to think of good story ideas for news, feature, entertainment, commentary, etc. Be sure to provide specific dates and contact information.

Sample Beat Report

Reporter's Name: Jane Doe

Date: Monday, August 31

Assigned Beat: Office of Student Life

Contact Person for Beat: David Rachita, director of student life

BEAT COVERAGE

The annual Chili Cookoff is scheduled for next month. Traditionally, this is a pretty big event for the university. Different student organizations and UHCL offices compete for prizes in "best chili," "best booth decorations," and other categories. There are games and entertainment. The people to contact to learn more are David Rachita and Andrew Reitberger.

ORIGINAL STORY IDEA

#1) As this is an election year, we should definitely do a story on the different candidates and their stances on various issues - - try to promote voting interest. As we are a student newspaper, we should make a special effort to look for the candidates' stances on education and college funding/tuition - - as well as other issues that affect students. We can pull up information on the candidates' Web sites (as well as other reputable Web sites). We can call the candidates (or an office spokesperson) for interviews. There's also the League of Women's voters and other non-partisan organizations.

#2) The Gulf Coast Film Festival will be hosting its annual festival in a few weeks (provide a specific date). The festival features work from student filmmakers. Additionally, there will be a celebrity guest, a social mixer, and an awards banquet. Hal Wixon, the festival's director, will let us interview him, arrange for us to interview the celebrity guest and allow us to attend the festival for free. Contact information:
www.gulfcoastfilmfest.com