FY 2020-21

HESSR Funding Proposal

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A. DEPARTMENT NARRATIVE "PROGRAM PLAN"

1. **Mission Statement:**

Working Mission: The Middle Eastern Student Center provides education, retention services, and advocacy for Middle Eastern students and the wider campus community at UC Riverside.

2. **Program Description: a.** *Please list each of your programs and/or your major activities/services for your department and give detailed information that describes your department.*

Overview / Major Activities

The Middle Eastern Student Center is in its seventh year as a Student Affairs department and has already made significant strides in supporting Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim students at UCR. A Director, a SLDS II and a small group of student employees who work alongside passionate and dedicated volunteers currently staff MESC.

With an ever-growing constituency, now, it is more crucial than ever before, that we support our students during this difficult time where bias and discrimination and hate incidents are targeting the Middle Eastern and Muslim populations at UCR, as do discriminatory federal policies regarding immigration. Rampant hate speech and anti-Muslim, anti-Middle Eastern rhetoric has become a regular occurrence in the media. Incidents of violence, that get local and international attention, do two things to the MESC community: increase fear, paranoia, and anxiety of hate crimes and incidents while on campus as MESC students can easily be targets of 'revengeful attacks', and evoke sadness, stress, and depression in worries that their families back home may or may not have survived attacks throughout the Middle East.

To make ME students feel more at home at UCR, we have created institutional changes and support programs and services for all students, including: Empowered Arab Sisterhood, The Markaz Living Learning Community, Leadership Summits, Conference Travel, Individual & Organizational support, free programs, trainings, talking circles, and more.

Programs/Services

1. **<u>Educational Programming</u>**
   Lectures and guest speakers around topics of history, current affairs, etc. that are relevant and timely to the Middle Eastern/North African community.

2. **<u>Cultural Programming</u>**
   Workshops and programs to explore and engage in different aspects of Middle East/North African culture. Examples include Embroidery, kite-making, and calligraphy workshops.

3. **<u>Civic Engagement Programming</u>**
   Workshops and programs around voter engagement, political topics/issues, and Census outreach.

4. **<u>Recognition & Celebration</u>**
   Events to recognize and celebrate the achievements of students within the MESC community and its supporters. Examples include the annual MESC Gala, Graduation recognition, Student org awards, and annual yearbook.

5. **<u>Social & Community Building</u>**
   Events to help foster relationships and build community for new students (first-year, transfer, graduate, and international students). These allow students to find community outside of class and living areas.

6. **<u>Health & Wellness</u>**
   Workshops, events, services that promote healthy living, lifestyles. Examples include finals destressors and yoga/mindfulness workshops

7. **<u>Academic Success</u>**
   Workshops, events, programs that support academic success. Examples include study skills presentations, virtual study groups, and informal tutoring.

8. **Initiating Meaningful Partnerships & Community Transformation (IMPACT) Internship Program**
   Paid internships with local/national organizations focused on issues of social justice. Coordinated in collaboration with the Office of Student Life.

9. **Middle Eastern Student Assembly (Leadership & Org Support)**
   Registered campus clubs and organizations as well as individuals with interests or ties to the region are invited to join the Middle Eastern Student Assembly. This coalition of students serves as an advisory board for events and programs sponsored by the Middle Eastern Student Center, and also act as the liaison between administration and ME students on campus.

10. **Conference Travel & Support**
    Supporting students to attend nationwide conferences that connect student leaders and organizations throughout the nation. Examples include Lebanese Collegiate Network & the Afghan-American Conference.

11. Student Group Campus-Wide Events Co-Programming: Advising, logistical support and funding for student-initiated campus-wide events. Examples include Coming Together for Lebanon, MSA Islamophobia Awareness Week
12. Technology Services Printing and computer services within the office space for use by students.
13. Common Ground Collective A joint effort with African Student Programs, Asian Pacific Student Programs, Chicano Student Programs, Foster Youth Program, LGBT Resource Center, Middle Eastern Student Center, Native American Student Programs, Undocumented Student Programs, and the Women's Resource Center. Staff work with students to facilitate the Building our Common Ground activity during Highlander Orientation; plan and facilitate the Common Ground Retreat with 50 UCR students; and continue campus-wide educational programs throughout the year, including Unity Hours in Winter Quarter.
14. Staff/Faculty Engagement Working to build relationships, networking opportunities and retention of faculty and staff who identify as MENA.
15. Advocacy Serve as a liaison between university and MENA student population. Examples include coordinating a conversation between university counsel and students on rights of free speech on campus, working alongside Dining Services to ensure Ramadan services for observing students, and to

3. **Strategic Vision: Discuss your short-term (2020-21) plans and major program goals that will use HESSR funds:**

> MESC would like to make more institutional and policy changes that benefit students, staff and faculty. Educational policy development and campus climate assessment will be two major driving forces this year along with faculty outreach and increasing civic engagement.
>
> 1. Develop a more expansive programming model that will have key focus areas and more opportunities for engagement
> 2. Offset budget constraints from permanent funding cuts due to COVID
> 3. Piloting the IMPACT Internship alongside other offices to increase civic engagement and opportunities for professional/community development
> 4. Build a more formal assessment process and consulting that bring in outside researchers
> 5. Develop alumni, staff/faculty networks

4. **Challenges: Identify obstacles that need to be overcome and/or need to be met.**

The main challenges of MESC include:
1. Budget cuts due to COVID 19
2. Working and engaging students within a remote environment
3. Adjustments to timeline of physical location move
4. Data collection and assessment: because the MENA category is not on most applications and surveys, it is incredibly difficult to track staff, faculty, and students and cater to their needs and challenges

5. **Please provide information on any recent evaluations your unit may have had. What recommendations were made, and what actions were taken in response to the recommendations.**

Formal departmental evaluations did not occur in this past year, however UCUES data was provided to give a better sense of the campus climate of our students. Respondents were less likely to feel respected based on race/ethnicity, political beliefs, and immigration background. This year's programming and services are meant to address these needs and ensure that students feel more welcome on campus.

6. Additional information or clarification you would like to provide the committee on your department's program plan for using HESSR funds:

N/A

B. BUDGET QUESTIONS

1. **Describe any <u>SSFAC</u> budget requests below. Departments may not duplicate budget requests for SSAF and RSAC.**

   N/A

2. **How many FTE positions are currently open? Which if any of the positions are newly created? Why was there a need to hire additional staff? What expanded services are provided by the new hires?**

   Most recently, a new Director was hired in 2020. This position allows for more accountability, supervision, and direction for the center in the near and long term.

3. **Additional information or clarification you would like to provide the committee on your department's Budget plan:**

   Budget proposal may change due to COVID-19 restrictions reducing the costs associated with programming. Budget cuts may also occur and HESSR funds may be needed to offset these costs.

C. Funding Proposal and Narrative

List below each use of funds you propose, following the guidelines put forth by the Referendum:

The Highlander Empowerment Student Services Referendum will allow the seven departments to better meet undergraduate students' needs by providing:

- Increased co-programming with student organizations and student-led initiatives, including funding and advising
- Staffing to assist students in finding support and resources
- Support for conference hosting and conference travel
- Support for Common Ground Collective projects & collaborative initiatives with the ASUCR Diversity Council
- Peer mentoring and peer education programs support
- More resources in each student program office and center, such as student computer support and educational materials
- Operational support for student services programs as described above, as the costs of campus services continue to increase
- Support for educational programming that students are unable to get in the standard academic curriculum

1. **Overview: Any Information you would like to provide the committee on this year's proposal.**

   We will also be using $20,000 from the 2018-19 Budget as carry forward money to put towards the costs of outfitting our new space with lounge and office furniture.

Fund Amount	Short Description
$21,400	Student Staff Salaries & Benefits 7 student staff working 5-10 hours per week. This number is subject to increase in case of permanent funds that may be cut.

$18,000	**IMPACT Internship Program** 3 students to participate in piloting the IMPACT (Initiating Meaningful Partnerships & Community Transformation) Program will be paid internships sponsored by the MESC for students to work at local/national community organizations or non-profits.
$12000	**Spring Programming** Programs, events, workshops during the spring quarter which also includes graduation, student recognition, and annual Gala.
$10,000	**Winter Programming** Programs, events, workshops during the Winter quarter. Expenses include speaker fees, incentives, and other costs.
$10,000	**Fall Programming** Programs, events, workshops during the Fall quarter. Expenses include speaker fees, incentives, and other costs.
$4,000	**Supplies and Expenses** To continue to support our resources and functionality of the virtual workspace with equipment, subscriptions and services to increase functionality. Examples include slack, google drive, cloud storage, and other tools for programming and coordination.
$3,000	**Onboarding Fees** 7 staff, 3 IMPACT Interns
$3,000	**Student Conference Attendance** Harvard Arab Weekend, The Afghan-American Conference, and The Lebanese Collegiate Network Convention, and the Islamophobia Summit are just a few of the conferences that our students are interested in attending to represent UCR and MESC. There, they develop as leaders and also begin the important process of networking to guarantee their success after graduation. Some of these conferences will be virtual and we intend to support them and help offset costs.

$3,000	**Development & Assessment** Recruit an outside consultant or researcher to provide support in short term projects around MESC assessment and development.
$3,000	**Marketing** Purchasing MESC branded items along with other marketing materials needed from programming and services.
$3,000	**Student Org Support** Student orgs will have the opportunity to apply for funding for collaborative programs and events that are related to the mission of MESC.
$2,500	**VCSA Assessment Fee** A required fee assessed based on 2.3% of HESSR income from the previous fiscal year.
$2,100	**RSAC Stipend** Funds will be requested to support student stipends for RSAC. funds to pay the RSAC representative $500 per quarter for their service. This includes $500 for the RSAC 2019-20 Student Rep extending their term into Summer 2020 due to the delay in the budget proposal process caused by COVID -19.
$2,000	**The Markaz** Intentional programming, collaborations with dining, training and development, and community building across special interest communities.
$2,000	**Staff Training** Guest speakers, assessment tools, welcome packages and other needs to support staff training.

$500	**Diversity Council Support** The center would like to assist Diversity Council members in getting to know each other and their mission via a Retreat for student members. We'd like to use RSAC funds for a DC Retreat in Summer or early Fall, in addition to the programming budget.
$500	**RSAC Support** Food, P&R, and other expenses related to work of RSAC.