

FY 2024-25

HESSR Funding Proposal

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A. DEPARTMENT NARRATIVE “PROGRAM PLAN”

1. Mission Statement:

Mission: The Middle Eastern Student Center works to educate, support, and build a community for the Southwest Asian North African (SWANA) and Muslim populations at UC Riverside.

Vision: A university community that empowers SWANA & Muslim students to excel academically, affirm their diverse identities, and graduate as justice-oriented leaders of the world.

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

Founded in 2013, the Middle Eastern Student Center is the first of its kind in the UC-system and in the nation. Our team includes a Director, a SLDS II, and a group of student employees who work alongside passionate and dedicated volunteers. As the first MESC, we often serve as a model and provide consultations to other colleges, universities, and programs interested in serving the Southwest Asian North African (SWANA), Middle Eastern North African (MENA), and Muslim communities.

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 SWANA and Muslim populations at UCR, as do discriminatory federal policies regarding immigration. Rampant hate speech and anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-SWANA 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 SWANA region.

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

Please see list below for program/service overview

Programs/Services

<p>1. <u>Educational Programming</u> Lectures and guest speakers around topics of history, current affairs, etc. that are relevant and timely to the Southwest Asian North African (SWANA) community.</p>
<p>2. <u>Cultural Programming</u> Workshops and programs to explore and engage in different aspects of Southwest Asian North African (SWANA) culture. Examples include Embroidery, kite-making, and calligraphy workshops.</p>
<p>3. <u>Civic Engagement Programming</u> Workshops and programs around voter engagement, political topics/issues, and Census outreach.</p>
<p>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, etc.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>6. <u>Health & Wellness</u> Workshops, events, services that promote healthy living, lifestyles. Examples include finals destressors and yoga/mindfulness workshops</p>
<p>7. <u>Academic Success</u> Workshops, events, programs that support academic success. Examples include study skills presentations, virtual study groups, and informal tutoring.</p>
<p>8. <u>Initiating Meaningful Partnerships & Community Transformation (IMPACT) Internship Program</u> Paid internships with local/national organizations focused on issues of social justice.</p>
<p>9. <u>Middle Eastern Student Assembly (Leadership & Org Support)</u> 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 SWANA students on campus.</p>
<p>10. <u>Conference Travel & Support</u></p>

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 Southwest Asian North African (SWANA) and/or Muslim.
15. Advocacy Serve as a liaison between university and SWANA 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, etc.

3. Strategic Vision: Discuss your short-term (2024-25) plans and major program goals that will use HESSR funds:

MESC has identified the following goals for the 2024-2025 year:

1. Hire and onboard a new Director
2. Strengthen relationships with student organizations
3. Solidify permanent funding sources for SWANA Con
4. Establish alumni network

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

The main challenges of MESC include:

1. Campus/global climate concerns given the increased violence in the SWANA region resulting in immense grief and mental health difficulties
2. 1 new professional staff currently and searching for 1 new staff member to begin summer 2024

3. Lacking direct federal and institutional access and data to students who identify as Southwest Asian North African
4. Funding for SWANA CON

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.

An internal review and SWOT analysis was conducted with the professional staff in 22-23. Some of the recommendations included:

- Establishing an alumni network and database
- Increasing community partnerships and external sources of funding
- Developing student scholarships

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 SSFAC budget requests below. Departments may not duplicate budget requests for SSAF and RSAC.**

Requests have been made, but we do not have any guaranteed budget from SSFAC
SWANA Conference: \$72,000
ME Week: \$28,000
MESC Gala: \$40,000
Graduate & alumni student assistant salary (570 hours for the year at \$20/hr) + benefits -
\$11,400 + \$205

- 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?**

1 director position open since November 2023.

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

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.

Fund Amount	Short Description
\$30,000	<u>Cultural and Educational Programming</u> Funds to support programs, events, workshops, related to building community and increasing education around the Middle Eastern communities. This amount was decreased because of the budget cuts that impacted student staff salaries.

\$40,320	<u>Student Staff Salaries</u> 7 Student staff interns working 10-12 hours per week during the academic year + additional hours over summer.
\$11,520	<u>IMPACT Internship Program</u> 2 students to participate in the IMPACT (Initiating Meaningful Partnerships & Community Transformation) Program will be paid internships sponsored by the MESC for students to partner with local and national non-profits
\$5,000	<u>Marketing</u> Purchasing MESC branded items along with other marketing materials needed from programming and services.
\$4,000	<u>VCSA Assessment Fee</u> A required fee assessed based on 3.75% of HESSR income from the previous fiscal year.
\$3,200	<u>Onboarding Fees</u> 7 staff, 2 IMPACT Interns (tentative based on VCSA ability to pay for this upcoming year)
\$1,960	<u>Student Organization Support</u> Student orgs will have the opportunity to apply for funding for collaborative programs and events that are related to the mission of MESC.
\$1,500	<u>RSAC Stipend</u> Funds will be requested to support student stipends for RSAC. funds to pay the RSAC representative \$500 per quarter for their service.
\$1,000	<u>Office Operations and Expenses</u> 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. Also includes office supplies.

\$500	<u>Diversity Council Support</u> 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.
\$800	<u>Markaz Living Learning Community</u> Intentional programming, collaborations with dining, training and development, and community building across special interest communities including Markaz Field Trip.
\$200	<u>RSAC Support</u> Food, P&R, and other expenses related to work of RSAC.

Total = \$100,000