Student Affairs Fee Advisory Board

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Funding Request Form FY2023

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department:
Multicultural Services

Program, Service or Operation Requested:
Professional/Full Time Employee (FTE) position - Student Development Specialist II

General Description:
This request is for a full time employee positions to support the Multicultural Services new organizational structure and office space expansion through position responsibilities with foci on Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American academic, professional and personal development student initiatives.

Request Type:

☒ Full   ☐ Increase   ☐ One-Time   ☐ Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested:

☒ UAF   ☐ Other

General Questions

How does this address an important need and/or positively impact students?
This request addresses the department's need to add professional staff to support the department in meeting student needs as 1) the student population remains one of the largest in the country, 2) addressing disparities continue to be a campus focus, 3) student persistence and education needs continue to be critical to student learning, 4) campus approaches the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) qualifying status, 5) African American student enrollment continues to decline or remain stagnant, and 6) national climate continues to impact students' campus experiences.

The department has been charged with supporting the Texas A&M University's mission, strategic, diversity, and quality enhancement plans, and initiatives designed to fulfill the university's commitment to an inclusive, equitable and diverse environment. The Student Success Initiative established for first-time in college freshmen outlines retention and graduation goals for all students. Addressing the initiative involves issues of campus climate and belonging. Specifically, student perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about difference, interactions between students, and how much of a sense of belonging a student feels have been proven to have a direct correlation to retention and persistence to graduation.

The department has also been included in Texas A&M's new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of strategies to eliminate disparities in retention and graduation rates across ethnic,

family income, first-generation and gender categories. Two strategies to accomplish the university's plan delineate the department's physical space renovation and expansion which will allow expanded focus on racial and ethnic identity learning communities and organizations.

Given the department's charge, there is a need for additional staffing to assist the university in decreasing disparities in first-year retention, four-year graduation and six-year graduation rates across racial, ethnic, family income, first-generation and gender as outlined in the goals of the Student Success Initiative and purpose of the new QEP.

Further the department was granted short-term funding from the Office of the Provost for a student success focused position hired April 2020. This funding is scheduled to end in FY23. Not only is there a need for additional staffing to 1) assist the university in decreasing disparities in first-year retention, four-year graduation and six-year graduation rates across racial, ethnic, family income, first-generation and gender as outlined in the goals of the Student Success Initiative, 2) contribute to the QEP, and 3) meet student growth needs, but this funding will further the department's staffing plan and curtail any reduction of operations funding.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?
As the Texas A&M University Diversity Plan outlines, *"The Aggie family is diverse, therefore initiatives to intellectually explore individual differences in a safe, positive, welcoming, and nurturing space are essential."*   This request supports this plan, as well as the new Texas A&M Decade of Excellence - Strategic Plan 2020-2030 as it states *"We must tirelessly ensure that all undergraduate students can access the life-changing experience of a transformative education, both inside and outside the classroom, to close equity gaps and promote social mobility"*.

In addition to these university plans, this request supports the following Division of Student Affairs (DSA) goals.
- DSA Goal #2: Contribute to student success, including retention/persistence, and timely graduation
    - i. *Objective 2.a. Examine current programs, processes, and practices that promote student success*
    - ii. *Objective 2.b. Design programs and services that equip students with the skills and competencies desired by employers and ensure they are highly sought after for jobs and participation in significant areas upon graduation*

- DSA Goal #3: Create an inclusive environment that develops global citizens and leaders who productively engage in a wide spectrum of ideas, perspectives, and cultures.
    - i. *Objective 3.a. Enhance, create, and foster environments and communities in which students find places to belong*
    - ii. *Objective 3.b. Expand opportunities for students and staff to reflect on personal and multiple perspectives regarding difference, diversity, and inclusion.*

iii. *Objective 3.c. Create and enhance programs and services to reduce and effectively respond to bias related incidents.*
iv. *Objective 3.d. Create and enhance an on campus environment that promotes the freedom to inquire, to speak, to hear, and to examine all perspectives in the marketplace of ideas.*
v. *Objective 3.e. Foster positive leadership development experiences, grounded in emerging leadership and/or student development theories or models, which equip students with skills and competencies highly desired by employers.*

Further, this request supports the Department's charge through the following static goals:

- DMS Goal #1 - Make integrative learning and high impact practice seamless throughout all programs and services utilizing evidence-based decision making.

- DMS Goal #3 - Support and challenge underrepresented minority students as they transition to campus and work through the impact of identity development.

The department has a short term plan to add professional, graduate and undergraduate student staff to support the department's space expansion that will allow further tailoring of well-researched and promising practices for student success, engagement, and education. These position would partially support the department's human resource needs.

Please provide data, evidence, and/or input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.
The department has identified human, financial, and physical space needs to address student growth and delivery of initiatives. In Fall 2009, when the current Multicultural Services space was reopened, 10,204 students identified as Asian, Black, or Hispanic (TAMU Enrollment Profile Fall 2009). In Fall 2019, this number had increased over 100% with 21,338 students identifying as Asian, Black, or Hispanic (TAMU Enrollment Profile Fall 2019). Students actively involved in department programs and services increased over 500% from 109 to 688 between the 2012 to 2019 academic years. Student organizations supported by the department increased from 10 to 55 during the same time period, an over 450% increase. Student organizations supported by the department increased from 10 to 55 during the same time period, an over 450% increase. Engagement tracking was interrupted due to COVID for the close of the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years, however current engagement is on track given early fall 2021 engagement has exceeded early fall 2019 numbers.

The physical space needs will be addressed within two years through a renovation and expansion of the current office space to serve this growing number of students and allow the department to strategically create a more robust and functional space to fulfill the department's mission. However, the physical space funding was not inclusive of staff, which yielded an inability to support the new organizational structure that would meet increasing student needs. The department maintained 12 full time staff across this campus growth period, and only recently (as of 9/21/20) increased to 13 full-time staff through funding identified internally.

What actions have you implemented or discontinued internally to address the identified need?

DMS acted to implement and discontinue in numerous ways to address and mitigate the demands caused by increased student growth and increased student engagement. DMS has:

- reviewed and restructured the organization of the department to provide specialized and targeted initiatives from staff with aligned expertise and experience

- developed practice of staff managing additional duties, considering temporary salary adjustments for staff assuming more than 100% effort, utilizing graduate assistants.

- expanded services and access to DMS space for students and student organizations with affiliation to DMS sponsored organizations.

- revamped and streamlined services, programming and presentation formats to allow delivery to larger audiences

- discontinued programs that were not meeting outcome/impact expectations

- reallocated funds based on discontinuation of programs and elimination/reclassification of positions

- utilized reserve balances and one-time funding opportunities to supplement operations funding gaps.

- developed a document incorporating multiple plans for expansion of the current office suite

If funding is granted, what metrics will you use to evaluate success of this program/service/operation?

Metrics to evaluate success will be related to evaluation of staff members' job responsibility performance. Performance evaluations are conducted annually and center specific behavioral competencies which are what as staff member does (applying your technical knowledge, skills, and ability) and how the staff member does it (the consistent behaviors you demonstrate and choose to use). Behavioral competencies incorporate an assessment of a staff member's service capacity, cooperation and collaboration, respect for treating people with dignity, civility, and fairness, level of resourcefulness, independent action, and professional judgement, and practice of taking ownership.

Metrics to evaluate success will also be implemented through processes to document students served, address disparities, and assist Texas A&M University in achieving the goals of the Student Success Initiative and purpose of the QEP.

Have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered? Please explain.

The department has refrained from instituting any practices that would cause full time employee salaries to be allocated from a one-time funding source.

Total Estimated Cost

Funding Description	Amount
Professional/Full Time Employee (FTE) position - Student Development Specialist II	60,000
Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)	
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	$60,000