



Budget Request Form FY2019

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: Multicultural Services

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Cultural Explorations

SAFAB Use Only	
YES	NO

General Description:

Cultural Explorations are student experiences, where applied, student-centered exploration align with culture and scholarship. The purpose of the program is to purposefully engage students in experiences and focused reflection to increase knowledge, develop skills, explore values, and develop students' perspectives and capacities to contribute to the Texas A&M University campus community and beyond. Cultural Explorations trips average 40 students per trip and has developed intentional partnerships with faculty for delivery of the experiences. Cultural Explorations are day trips that allow students to experience cultures in unique and engaging settings, to facilitate a learning experience that is educational, impactful, and transformational.

The department sponsored five Cultural Explorations, with a total of 177 student participants. Two of the trips were strengthened by faculty partnerships with the Departments of History and Psychology. These collaborations enriched the depth of the experience by connecting cultural experiences in the community to the scholarship of our academic partners. This allows for our students to take the knowledge they are learning in the classroom and apply it in the world at large.

Request Type: Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested UAF Other

General Questions:

How does this address an important need and positively impact students?

The Cultural Explorations program promotes a positive and supportive climate by providing an environment that fully recognizes, values, and integrates diversity in the pursuit of learning. The program will demonstrate respect for individual differences, affirm and encourage pride in a variety of social identities, explore and educate about individual differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment, and targets various historically marginalized or underrepresented racial, ethnic and cultural identity groups. After actively participating in a Cultural Exploration, students will be able to:

1. Recognize and identify the characteristics, values, customs and beliefs of various cultures and communities.
2. Demonstrate personal knowledge of diverse groups.

What department/Division Strategic Plan item does this support?

What is the impact if not funded?

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 is essential.

This request aligns with several university, division of student affairs, and department initiatives:

- a. Texas A&M’s Vision 2020
 - i. Imperative 3: Enhance the Undergraduate Experience through the university’s distinctive approach to student leadership development to offer high-impact educational experiences that are recognized nationally for their ability to produce successful graduates prepared to think critically, communicate effectively and engage responsibly as citizens in a diverse global environment.
 - 3.1 Precept: Provide students a purposeful, challenging and meaningful undergraduate experience in a research university by building on the distinctiveness and character of Texas A&M’s commitment to educating the whole student
 - a. Precept: Build on the strengths of the Aggie Spirit by integrating and practicing the Aggie core values throughout the campus culture
 - 3.3 Precept: Enhance Student Leadership Development Opportunities
 - ii. Imperative 6: Diversify and Globalize the Texas A&M Community as the university must accelerate its efforts to attract, nurture and sustain a more racially, ethnically, socially, culturally and geographically diverse faculty, staff and student body.
 - 6.1 Precept: Lead in Diversity
 - 6.2 Precept: Help All Students Achieve Global Appreciation and Have a Global Experience
 - b. Texas A&M’s Core Value of RESPECT - we are the Aggies, the Aggies are we
 - c. Texas A&M’s Diversity Plan goals of greater inclusion and academic excellence by positively impacting the university’s campus *Climate*.
 - i. Psychological climate - perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes about diversity
 - ii. Behavioral climate - how different groups interact on campus
 - d. President Young’s Strategic Imperatives *Transformational Learning* and *Discovery & Innovation*: Students become better leaders as they create their own understanding of the world – based on real data and facts – and organize that understanding in ways that allow them to effectively work with and connect with others, as well as address real problems in the spaces where they work and live.
2. Division of Student Affairs Level
 - a. Goal #1: Enrich the learning experience of students by cultivating an environment of intellectual curiosity
 - i. *Objective 1.a. Increase the number of opportunities for students to engage in High Impact Learning Experiences in the Division*

- ii. *Objective 1.b. Enhance partnerships with faculty and other stakeholders to promote integrative learning*
- b. Goal #2: Contribute to student success, including retention/persistence, and timely graduation
 - i. *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*
- c. 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.b. Expand opportunities for students and staff to reflect on personal and multiple perspectives regarding difference, diversity, and inclusion.*

3. Department Level

- a. Strategic goal #3: Increase diversity education opportunities for students, student organizations and the campus at large. In addition to student workshops, peer-to-peer education, and cultural competence modules, the department seeks to engage all campus constituents for a greater impact on the Texas A&M campus community.

Without increased funding, the department will not be able to deliver experiential off-campus co-curricular experiences at minimal expense. Lose academic collaborators who partner for experiential learning to support their courses. We could meet expense obligations to ensure continuation of this program, however without an increase the department would suffer reductions to other highly valued programs and services.

Please provide any data, evidence, input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.

The majority of this initiative's expenses are being funded by one-time funds. Specifically the one-time funding made the program financially sustainable, allowed for an increase in the number of trips offered, therefore expanding our reach to more students across campus. The number of requests to attend a Cultural Exploration increased by at least 5% each trip. Students were turned away from attending for each of the trips due to limited space. The department reallocated funding from a previous initiative to help meet the budget projection, however given the growth of and interest in the program, the need still exceeds the department's available funding. Dependence on the current partial allocation and one-time funding would not be good business practice.

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

The following has been done to address the need:

- Reallocation of programming funds
- One-time funding requests (ACE Funding, AFS Funding)
- Partnerships with faculty for specific trips (researching long-term partnership with specific courses who could implement a trip fee to supplement funding)

Generally, what assessment tools will you use to evaluate this program/service?

The evaluation structure for Cultural Explorations will continue. Currently evaluations of each trip were overwhelmingly positive. Qualtrics was used to collect the following feedback:

STUDENT | AFFAIRS | FEE | ADVISORY | BOARD

- 95% of students that participated asserted that their understanding of history and cultures in Texas were enhanced by the trips.
- 92% of students that participated said they would like to attend another Cultural Explorations trip in the future. Please see some of the student feedback on the trips below.
- Student voices include:
 - *“This trip taught me to explore, to venture, to worry less and to experience more. It taught me to tie the lessons I’d learned in my previous classes to the real world, and it allowed me to see first-hand what culture looks like.” – Student Attendee (Dallas Art Museum Trip)*
 - *“The overall best thing about attending this event was seeing the connectedness of an entire community that is often forgot about in modern day America... Minority communities all seem to share incredible bonds that come from living through tremendous hardships and these connections inspire me to better understand my history and the history of others.” – Student (Pow Wow Trip)*
 - *“This experience opened my eyes to the beauty of the Asian culture that I always knew existed but never got to truly experience or appreciate. I am overwhelmingly grateful for this opportunity and greatly looking forward to future Cultural Explorations.” –Student Attendee (Asian Festival)*

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

The department has completed one-time funding requests. Faculty have also been sought for partnership with specific courses. Reserve funding has been identified as a potential resource for continued one-time funding, however as an annual expense, with campus-wide involvement and consistent and increasing student interest, it should be part of the department’s annual allocation. The department is also currently researching long-term partnership opportunities with specific courses that could implement a trip fee to supplement funding.

Funding Description:

	Dollar Amount
Total Estimated Cost	\$20,000.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i>	<i>\$10,000.00</i>
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$10,000.00

SAFAB Comments/Notes: