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Student Affairs Fee  
Advisory Board  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**Funding Request Form FY2026**

*Department should complete one form for each individual request*

**Department:**  
MSC Programs

**Program, Service or Operation Requested:**  
MSC Programs’ Engagement Initiative Enhancements

**General Description:**

MSC Programs engages students in purposefully designed campus programs and service opportunities that prepare them to be global leaders. As a programming entity, our department embraces its role in helping to create the #1 student experience, we want to address ways in which we can “improve opportunities and remove the barriers that will allow each student, when they leave Texas A&M, to look back fondly on their time on campus.” By offering enhanced engagement initiatives, we hope to improve students’ opportunities for connectivity and access, particularly related to our Howdy Week event and MSC Open House.

**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?***

MSC Aggie Cinema and MSC Programs were honored to host the first two featured Howdy Week events this semester, both on Thursday, August. 15. As the first official fall events for our incoming students, we want to ensure we are meeting their needs and offering experiences that support their campus transition. Likewise, MSC Open House is one of the first and one of the largest events on campus each fall (and spring), with over 20K students regularly attending. However, with feedback coming out of the Student Experience Survey, we know that adjustments to these programs will need to be made in order to increase engagement at our first events during Howdy Week, while also decreasing barriers to engagement that overwhelming events like MSC Open House can create.

***What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?***

Department: Program with Excellence – Programming with excellence includes supporting and producing purposefully designed, high impact-high visibility events and activities that are mission-driven and mission-aligned.

Embrace Innovation – Embracing innovation includes our ability to identify and utilize new methods to fulfill our mission, adopting a “cutting edge” approach to new technologies, and seeking innovation in program content and program delivery.

DSA: Inclusive and Caring Communities - Provide relevant opportunities for students to engage with staff, faculty, and each other that promotes a sense of belonging. Ensure DSA programs, services, and facilities are welcoming and accessible for all.

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

As highlighted in the Batt, one out-of-state student used the MSC Programs’ Howdy Week event (Game Night) to get to know a few people before her roommates moved in, and another student described MSC Open House as “the best introduction to A&M life.” But, as highlighted in the Student Experience Survey, “students shared perspectives ranging from feeling that they had to be ‘invited to participate’ in both campus traditions and campus activities...and that ‘to feel welcome on campus it is super important to find your group.’” Additionally, students spoke to the difficulty of finding a group the first semester (and in some cases the first year) based on the size of the incoming class, the size of classes they took their first semester (citing 300+ person classes as impractical to making friends), and navigating events like MSC Open House where 20,000+ students in a small space make quality interactions and connections impractical.” Finally, it has been recommended that we work to “reimagine” these first-year experiences to better capture engagement in the first year, but in order to do that, additional funding will be needed. Depending on the enhancements adopted for each of these programs, it is expected that cost will increase significantly, especially with regard to the MSC Open House program due to increased logistics and staffing (UCEN, EMS, etc.) to support the event, advertising and promotions for the event, and the rising costs of venue rentals.

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

This year, MSC Programs moved our Howdy Week event from Aggie Park (due to temperatures, event time, and costs) to inside the MSC where we transformed the facility into an epic “game night” featuring arcade games, oversized lawn games, karaoke, board games, a bingo hall, free food, face painting, live music, and more. We estimate that approximately 1300 students attended, recognizing that freshmen moving in on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday were not on campus at the time of our event. Additionally, we made adjustments to MSC Open House this fall – opening Rudder Exhibit Hall an hour early to accommodate the high demand of the Freshman Leadership Organization tables, designating organizations as “freshmen friendly” for those that accepted freshmen members, and increasing our table capacity inside the MSC due to high temperatures for outside tabling.

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

We will continue to assess our programs to determine whether improvements are moving the needle forward with regard to engagement, connection, and a sense of belonging.

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

Revenue from the fall and spring MSC Open Houses cover the operating costs of each of these programs, in addition to the marketing budget for MSC Programs, and miscellaneous department operating expenses. The Howdy Week program is currently covered out of our departmental reserve account.

**Total Estimated Cost**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
MSC Open Houses (fall + spring)	\$30,000
MSC Howdy Week event	\$25,000
Additional funding for Engagement Initiative Enhancements	\$25,000
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	<i>(\$55,000)</i>
<b>TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>