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Student Affairs Fee  
Advisory Board  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

**Funding Request Form FY2023**

**Department:**

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs – Marketing & Communications

**Program, Service or Operation Requested:**

Recurring funds for a Communications Specialist I

**General Description:**

Recurring funds for an entry-level staff member to assist our growing team with public and media relations, development marketing, and a variety of OVPSA and DSA marketing and communications initiatives and projects to benefit both students and staff.

**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?***

The central marketing and communications team for the Division of Student Affairs manages front-line messaging to Texas A&M students on events, activities, and issues. We work closely with our DSA partner departments on almost all initiatives to tell the stories of the division, including those of our students as they relate to the division. Just a few examples are suicide awareness and prevention, all Texas A&M traditions such as Midnight Yell Practice and Silver Taps, student engagement events such as MSC Open House or Howdy Week, and engaging student profiles. They address the need for students to be informed on how to get involved, where to find assistance, or how to build leadership skills. The work this new employee will do will speak directly to students in many ways using social media, web communications, and email, among others.

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

Goal No. 5 of our strategic plan calls for strategically leveraging resources and developing new strategies to ensure our future effectiveness and sustainability. Under our existing funding model and project demand, the ability to meet the marketing and

communication needs of our 17 departments and student organizations at a high level of quality, professionalism, and timeliness, is a great challenge and sometimes out of reach. Funding this position for the Division of Student Affairs within its central marketing office would give the entire division, including key student organizations, access to additional resources and skills. The central marketing office in the Division of Student Affairs handles a variety of marketing and communications projects for the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and many of our 17 departments. These projects include everything from printed brochures to websites, to social media campaigns, printed and digital signs, press releases and other narratives, videos, photos, and presentations to name a few. A number of our peer institution's student affairs offices employ student teams to accomplish marketing goals. During the past two years, we have logged more than 300 individual project requests, and we have received project requests and assistance from many student organizations. Building a full-time team with additional capacity for the long term could help us to serve student groups in the future.

This item would also support Strategic Goals 1, 2, and 3 of our strategic plan. This communications specialist would: 1) help us enrich the learning experience of students. 2) Contribute to their success by enhancing the messaging they receive on key programs, services, and student organizations. 3) Help to create an inclusive environment that develops global citizens and leaders who productively engage in a wide spectrum of ideas, perspectives, and cultures. We would continue to contribute to this goal through an intentional process of content solicitation that targets a wide range of students, and we would disseminate our campaigns as widely as possible using various Texas A&M media channels.

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

The central marketing office in the Division of Student Affairs handles a variety of marketing and communications projects for the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and many of our 17 departments. These projects include everything from printed brochures to websites, to social media campaigns, printed and digital signs, press releases and other narratives, videos, photos, and presentations to name a few. The number of project requests have increased despite the pandemic, especially in the area of public relations and development marketing. During the past year, we have started an electronic newsletter for donors and prospects, and have multiple new projects associated with development marketing. We've also taken on many new marketing and public relations projects involving high-level student groups and activities, such as the Yell Leaders, Student Government Association, Class Councils, the Diversity Commission, and others. I want to ensure that we can address all requests to our group while maintaining focus on strategy, long-term planning, proper assessment, and growth to meet the needs of our students.

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

We were able to identify temporary funds to hire two additional student employees this summer, but neither have the skills needed to achieve the goals for this full-time position. While we have discontinued some projects, the number of requests continue to increase. Unless a new operating model is discussed, discontinuing parts of our duties is neither realistic or advisable.

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

Digital marketing campaigns

- social media analytics (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Google analytics (website)
- engagement (comments, feedback, reach, page and post views, shares, downloads, time spent on a video, and conversions).

With assistance from Student Life Studies:

- internal customer satisfaction survey
- student workers / student interns
- job satisfaction survey
- pre- and post-reflection questions

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

The marketing and communications group in our division does not have access to additional funds for the expansion of our staff at this time. We have been advised that the addition of a Marketing Communications Specialist I through private fundraising or sponsorship is unlikely.

**Total Estimated Cost**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Recurring funds for a full-time Marketing Communications Specialist I</b>	
Base Salary	33,362
Benefits Cost (30% of salary)	10,008
6-Month Salary Adjustment (10%)	3,362
Benefits for Salary Adjustment (30%)	1,000
Computer Hardware and Software	800
Professional Development Cost	1,000
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
<b>TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$49,532</b>