



Funding Request Form FY2024

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department:

Student Affairs Planning, Assessment & Research

Program, Service or Operation Requested:

Student-Run Focus Groups

General Description:

This would be a new initiative for our department to solicit the student voice on a consistent, recurring basis covering a variety of topics. Each month we would have three focus groups on a determined topic. The topics would be open and helpful for more than one department. The results would be shared throughout the division. The focus would be on having a quick release – conduct the focus groups early in the month, theme the results, and have a report out by the end of the month.

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 new initiative will provide the student voice for numerous division departments on a wide range of topics. By conducting focus groups, we get away from surveys and survey fatigue of students. Additionally, focus groups provide a “story” behind the numbers and it is a way to provide a voice for those not in the majority. Division departments would be able to suggest broad topics that would be of interest to them.

Furthermore, this would provide hands on experience for a group of students to conduct the focus groups, theme the results, write reports, and share with the division. A team of students would be selected to run this process, with training, guidance, and oversight from staff in SAPAR that would allow them to take ownership and lead the process. Additionally, it allows students an opportunity to have their voice heard and provide input on numerous topics.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?

There are several (new) division priorities this initiative would support including:

--Student Learning and Development – the students who run the process will learn facilitation skills, data analysis, and written communication skills.

--Wellbeing/Sense of Belonging/Student Success – these would all be general topics that would be addressed in the monthly focus groups.

--Innovation – this is a new idea and one that is not common on a wide range of campuses.

--Inclusive and Caring Community – one of the best ways to ensure equity in assessment is by having the student voice involved in all aspects of an assessment project. This initiative would involve students in developing questions, gathering feedback, theming the results, and writing the report.

--Marketing/Communication/Outreach – this initiative will provide stories to complement the numbers gathered through traditional quantitative methods. It also may lead to content for division MarComm.

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

Equity-minded assessment is a relatively new concept; but there is evidence that the student voice of the under-represented students, in particular, is needed to provide a wide range of voices on different topics. Using a pool of students would allow for a committed and consistent voice from a variety of students. Qualitative research methods provide an opportunity to gather rich, descriptive information that surveys cannot do. Over the years, survey responses have continued to decrease, making it harder to draw generalizations. Focus groups do not usually support generalizations either, but they can provide deeper reflections on the student experience that tell a compelling story (that can also sometimes explain already collected quantitative results). Several other student affairs assessment offices across the country have had success doing this or are in the process of developing a similar initiative.

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

Department staff identified the need to include student voices throughout the assessment process, especially of those from under-represented groups, through attending training workshops and webinars for the last couple of years. We have tried to include students in the process of developing questions and theming the qualitative results; however, this is a time-consuming intentional process. Given our current workload, it is not feasible for us to do this to any large extent with the current staffing.

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

One aspect to determine success will be if we conduct three focus groups each month and produce one report each month. We want the data gathered to be useful for division departments; we would ask the Assessment Committee for feedback on the usefulness of this initiative and the data that is provided. Finally, we would measure student facilitators' learning through their involvement.

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

We do not have operating or reserve money for this initiative, and we do not have other funding sources.

Total Estimated Cost

Funding Description	Amount
Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching Coordinator	\$20,000
Student Facilitators (6 students at \$10 per hour for 10 hours per week for the year)	\$28,800
Students in Focus Groups (10 students at \$10 each for 3 focus groups each month)	\$3,600
Rev.com transcription services (\$100/focus group for 36 focus groups)	\$3,600
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	0
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$56,000