

**FY 2018-19**

**HESSR Funding Proposal**

<b>Unit Name:</b>	<b>MIDDLE EASTERN STUDENT CENTER</b>
<b>Contact Name:</b>	<b>TINA AOUN</b>
<b>Phone Extension:</b>	<b>951-827-7233</b>
<b>Email Address:</b>	<b>tina.aoun@ucr.edu</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>May 2018</b>

## A. DEPARTMENT NARRATIVE “PROGRAM PLAN”

### 1. Mission Statement:

<p>Student diversity at the University of California, Riverside is a hallmark of this institutions excellence and success. The Middle Eastern student community will continue to grow and weave into the fabric that shapes the UCR experience. The MESC will play an increasingly important role in providing an avenue for Middle Eastern students to access and participate in campus life and activities. We wish to create opportunities that raise the community’s awareness of Middle Eastern culture and history.</p>	
---	--

### 2. Program Description: a. *Please list each of your programs and/or your major activities/services for your department and give detailed information that describes your department.*

#### **Overview / Major Activates**

The Middle Eastern Student Center is in its fifth year as a Student Affairs department and has already made significant strides in supporting Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim students at UCR. A Director, a limited SLDS II and a small group of student employees who work alongside passionate and dedicated volunteers currently staff MESC.

With an ever-growing constituency, now, it is more crucial than ever before, that we support our students during this difficult time where bias and discrimination and hate incidents are targeting the Middle Eastern and Muslim populations at UCR, as do discriminatory federal policies regarding immigration. Rampant hate speech and anti-Muslim, anti-Middle Eastern rhetoric is at an all time high in the media. Incidents of terror, both locally and abroad, do two things to the MESC community: increase fear, paranoia, and anxiety of hate crimes and incidents while on campus as MESC students can easily be targets of ‘revengeful attacks’, and evoke sadness, stress, and depression in worries that their families back home may or may not have survived attacks throughout the Middle East.

To make ME students feel more at home at UCR, we have created institutional changes and support programs and services for all students, including: Empowered Arab Sisterhood, The Markaz Living Learning Community, Leadership Summits, Conference Travel, Individual & Org support, free programs, trainings, talking circles, and more.

MESC Programs and Services:

Middle Eastern Student Assembly

Registered campus clubs and organizations as well as individuals with interests or ties to the region are invited to join the Middle Eastern Student Assembly (MESA). This coalition of students serves as the governing board for events and programs sponsored by the

## Middle Eastern Student Center.

Selected programs serve a broad range of students and events are selected by overall consensus from the board. Everyone is welcome to join these meetings and propose ideas for collaborations with MESC. The MESA board has done an excellent job of inviting a delegate from each of the 23 MESC affiliated student organizations to attend weekly meetings and address issues regarding campus climate and policy. Together, they work toward enriching UCR's campus community and turning MESC students into leaders in higher education.

### Student Panel Series

With an increased climate across the country and world of an anti-Middle Eastern, anti-Arab, anti-Muslim, and mistakenly anti-Sikh sentiment, MESC has launched "True Life" – a quarterly series of student panel discussions that is designed to showcase a diverse panel of students from various backgrounds to combat discrimination and dispel stereotypes.

### MESC Film and Speaker Series

Quarterly campus wide programs that include any of the following: film screenings, speakers or performances that focus on the complexities of identity within the Middle Eastern community. Featured guest speakers will include performers, the director or subject of the film, or a speaker's panel who can host a discussion afterwards.

### Educational Workshops

Educational Workshops and trainings are aimed at educating the UCR and MESC community about the varying historical, cultural, political, and religious dynamics that shape the Middle East. The Middle Eastern Student Center will accomplish this goal by providing the UCR community a wide variety of events which include but are not exclusive to; research forums, literary readings, historical displays, and cultural celebrations. By providing a wide range of educational programs, the MESC will raise awareness about the community while simultaneously offering the campus a new understanding of the cultural richness that exists within the Middle East.

With a growing number of MESC constituents, it has also been displayed that MESC students need more education regarding wellness, mental health, and sex education. Educational workshops have also been modified to include these student requests.

### Club Organization Support & Leadership Training

The goal of the MESC is to create an environment that fosters the growth and development of upcoming leaders through workshops and training sessions. These sessions will provide the tools necessary for open-minded discussion and healthy dialogue. Leadership qualities are instilled through bridging cultural ties, establishing common ground, problem solving skills, community involvement, and research.

Leadership training is also catered to the professional development of MESC constituents. To better prepare students for life after graduation, MESC's leadership training entails resources that will allow students to confidently interview with future employees and graduate schools, submit impeccable resumes and cover letters to employers, and network with professionals in their field of choice to improve their chances of success and collaboration.

#### Individual Student Support, Advising and Referral

Individual student support and advising are valuable to the work of the center. Each student will have the opportunity to access campus resources and receive referrals to appropriate departments. Students that identify within the Middle Eastern community may encounter negativity and discrimination even within a diverse student body. In the event of such incidents our staff is well qualified to provide appropriate referrals to respective departments and campus resources.

#### Event Coordination and Collaborations

Clubs and organizations or individual students involved with the MESC will have the opportunity to receive assistance with event coordination and program planning. The MESC can assist with events by collaborating with multiple departments and maximizing the use of UCR campus resources.

#### Cultural Events and Celebrations

Cultural events, celebrations and social gatherings that support community building are essential to the work of the MESC. A strong campus community requires that individuals interact with each other and honor their heritage, customs, and historical achievements.

#### Professional, Academic, and Leadership Development

Through funds allocated for conference travel, students and staff are able to attend national and regional conferences that provides them with information they would not have access to at UCR or in the classroom.

### Programs/Services

#### 1. Program/Service: Middle Eastern Student Assembly (Leadership & Org Support)

Registered campus clubs and organizations as well as individuals with interests or ties to the region are invited to join the Middle Eastern Student Collaborative. This coalition of students serves as the governing board for events and programs sponsored by the Middle Eastern Student Center, and also act as the liaison between administration and ME students on campus. Selected programs serve a broad range of students and events are selected by overall consensus from the board. Everyone is welcome to join these meetings and propose ideas for collaborations with MESC.

2.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: Women’s Circle Circle (Educational, Cultural, Wellness)</u></b>  The weekly Women’s Circles meets to discuss topics that include: mental health, stress, relationships with parents and peers, career goals, religion, and culture. All discussions are moderated by a student and staff.</p>
3.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: MESC Staff Training (Leadership, PMP)</u></b>  The MESC Staff training is a day-long training facilitated by MESC Director to train the staff in best practices, resources, and protocol before they serve and support MESC constituents and the campus community.</p>
4.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: MESC Orientation (Leadership, PMP)</u></b>  The MESC Orientation Week was intended to educate returning and new students to all of the resources, programs and services the MESC has to offer, both to students and student organizations. Students were informed of ways to engage with ASUCR, MESA, and the Empowered Arab Sisterhood.</p>
5.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: MESC Student Staff &amp; Volunteer Training (Leadership)</u></b>  All MESC student staff are required to attend MESC’s fall training to learn MESC protocol, guidelines, responsibilities, and the history of MESC and the existing Costo Hall departments. This time is also used for team building and best practices for collaborating with students, staff, and faculty.</p>
6.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: MESC Fall Mixer (Cultural, Celebration, Student Org)</u></b>  To kickstart each year, we bring together various student organizations to celebrate the beginning of the year, network with one another, and build community. This is also a wonderful time for first year students and transfer students to discover MESC and build new relationship with their peers, while signing up to take part in any of our 15 ME student organizations.</p>
7.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: Calligraphy with M.E (Educational, Wellness Collaborative)</u></b>  The purpose of this event was to give students a place to destress before midterms week and be introduced to a new skill/hobby in calligraphy while teaching them the Arabic alphabet and the history of calligraphy in the Middle East. In collaboration with The Well</p>
8.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: MESC and Rest (Wellness, Collaborative)</u></b>  The purpose of this event was to give students a place to destress before midterms week through, games, food, conversation and a massage. This was a Costo Hall collaborative.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: True Life Panels (Educational, Cultural, Student Panel)</u></b>  The True Life <b>quarterly</b> series aims to educate our campus community about the multiculturalism and diversity of MESC constituents. Panels of 5 to 7 students are asked questions regarding specific topics, and then engage in a Q&amp;A with the audience. For more complex topics, a professional speaker or UCR faculty member is invited to give a brief lecture regarding the topic at hand. True Life panels have thus far covered topics including: Middle Eastern Minority, Middle Eastern and Queer, and more.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Program/Service: MESCafe (Educational, Cultural)</u></b>  MESCafe is a <b>weekly</b> coffee social, which offers students a unique opportunity to have an open dialogue about current affairs and news in the Middle East. There currently is not a space or program that allows for students to discuss how the events in the Middle East have hindered their daily lives. MESCafe educates our campus about what's</p>

<p>happening in the Middle East, while allowing for students to have an emotional outlet in a safe space.</p>
<p>11. <u>Program/Service: <b>Cook with ME! (Health and Wellness, Educational, Cultural)</b></u>        In collaboration with The Well and R’Pantry, MESC brings a Registered Dietician <b>quarterly</b> to share the nutritious value of the Mediterranean diet, and does a food demonstration to encourage students and community members to incorporate the Mediterranean diet into their busy lifestyles. This food demonstration and lecture aims to teach students and staff how to stay healthy while on a tight budget and schedule.</p>
<p>12. <u>Program/Service: <b>Stomp Out Stigma (Health and Wellness, Cultural, Collaborative)</b></u>        Discussion with The Well to bring mental health awareness to the forefront, paired with a t-shirt making activity to connect culture, education, and stress relief.</p>
<p>13. <u>Program/Service: <b>“Yalla Vote!” National Voter Registration Day (Leadership, Educational)</b></u>        In partnership with the Arab American Institute in Washington D.C, MESC hosted an in house voter registration and information booth for National Voter Registration Day.</p>
<p>14. <u>Program/Service: <b>Grad Success Coffee Social (Cultural, Collaborative)</b></u>        MESC presents to graduate students of UCR every quarter to connect with the graduate student community, respond to their needs, link them with appropriate resources, students, and faculty for research, and invite them to our programs.</p>
<p>15. <u>Program/Service): <b>AfghaniSTEM (Outreach, Collaborative)</b></u>        Introduced a group of local refugee K-12 students to a college campus and teach them about major and career options in the sciences. This was also an opportunity to introduce their parents to how the university system functions and the resources available to them and their students. Collaborative effort with Empowered Arab Sisterhood, CNAS Ambassadors, RPantry, RGarden and Glocally Connected.</p>
<p>16. <u>Program/Service: <b>Afh-where-istan (Educational)</b></u>        This educational lecture was intended to discuss Afghanistan history in a way through the lens on an Afghan, historian, and UCI PhD Candidate Ali Olomi. This is a topic that is not taught in the classroom and since the war in Afghanistan, students have little resources to access true history.</p>
<p>17. <u>Program/Service: Lecture: <b>What Caused and Fueled the Arab Spring? (Educational)</b></u>        PhD candidate and UCR Alum Arman Azedi presents on and discusses the causes of the beginning of the Arab Spring, and the outcomes and results of one of the biggest political events of the 21st century, a topic that is not always offered in UCR’s curriculum.</p>
<p>18. <u>Program/Service: <b>MESC Success   Preparation Week (Leadership, Educational)</b></u>        MESC hosts a week of graduation preparation readiness which will be in collaboration with MESC alumni and the Career Center. Workshops include resume writing, cover letter, mock interviews, professionalism, and a graduate student panel.</p>
<p>19. <u>Program/Service: <b>Afghan Awareness Week (Cultural, Educational)</b></u>        Afghan Awareness Week celebrated the culture of Afghanistan while showcasing Afghan non-profits, the Afghan Student Association, and celebrating and empowering local Afghan refugees.</p>

<p>20. <b><u>Program/Service: Islam Awareness Week (Educational, Collaborative)</u></b>          In collaboration with the Muslim Student Association, MESC sponsored Hijab Day/Modesty Challenge, where 120 non-Muslim student, staff and faculty members tried on the hijab for a day and then came together for an educational panel to share their experiences and what they learned from the challenge.</p>
<p>21. <b><u>Program/Service: Finals Week Stress Relief (Wellness, Collaborative)</u></b>          In collaboration with the UCR Library, MESC gave out goody bags to students while studying for finals to increase visibility of MESC, support student food security initiatives and help students destress.</p>
<p>22. <b><u>Program/Service: Hivemind: Arabic Calligraphy (Cultural, Educational, Collaborative)</u></b>          In collaboration with the UCR Library and the Muslim Student Association, we partnered to transcribe Arabic historical texts and hosted a lecture with Dr. Imad Bayoun regarding Arabic calligraphy and the origins of the leaves. Students will be cited in the publishing of the transcriptions.</p>
<p>23. <b><u>Program/Service: The Importance of Easter (Educational, Collaborative)</u></b>          In collaboration with the Coptic Club, MESC presented an evening of food and education with Father Lazarus regarding the importance of Easter to Coptic Christians, while highlighting the existence and practices of MENA Christians.</p>
<p>24. <b><u>Program/Service: MENASA Focus Group (Cultural, Educational, Research)</u></b>          In collaboration with at USF graduate student, MESC hosted a focus group discussion to learn about campus climate at UCR and understand better the services that students need during this particular national climate with heightened Islamophobia and Anti-Arab racism.</p>
<p>25. <b><u>Program/Service: Leadership Retreat (Leadership, Educational)</u></b>          Utilizing UCR's Lakehouse, the annual Leadership Retreat invites MESC student leaders to a weekend of leadership and identity development with UCR alumni and MESC staff</p>
<p>26. <b><u>Program/Service: Middle Eastern Week (Cultural, Educational)</u></b>          A week of programming to raise awareness about historical and contemporary issues in the Middle East. Also the stories and voices of students at UCR will be highlighted throughout student panels, educational programs, and photo projects.</p>
<p>27. <b><u>Program/Service: MESC Gala (Cultural, Celebration)</u></b>          A full year of programming deserves a celebration, awards and recognition for all the students, staff, and faculty that were involved in our events throughout the year. A special honor is given to graduating seniors who showed exceptional leadership in their service to MESC and the UCR community.</p>
<p>28. <b><u>Program/Service: Nowruz, Eid Celebration, Coptic Christmas Celebration (Cultural Events and Celebration)</u></b>          The holidays above are celebrated with the UCR community. Two of the three holidays land on the first week of Fall and Winter quarter, which is challenging for students. To give students the feel of "home," MESC sponsors celebrations to unite the communities to celebrate each other's holidays and religions. Keynote speakers and UCR faculty are also invited as keynote speakers to the Nowruz Celebration.</p>

<p>29. <b><u>Program/Service: Lebanese Collegiate Network Convention [Club/Org Support &amp; Leadership Training]</u></b></p> <p>The Lebanese Social Club at UCR took an active role in organizing and planning the ever professional and academic convention sponsored by the Lebanese Collegiate Network. MESC proudly helps support LSC and MESA’s travel to the annual conference so that they can represent UCR’s and the role that MESC and the university plays in their success as an organization. There, student leaders connect and network with organizations across the country and learn essential leadership tools through a plethora of lectures, workshops, and more.</p>
<p>30. <b><u>Program/Service: Afghan American Conference [Club/Org Support &amp; Leadership Training]</u></b></p> <p>The Afghan Student Association at UCR took an active role in organizing and planning the first ever Afghan American Conference at UC Berkeley. MESC proudly helps support ASA’s travel to the conference so that they can represent UCR’s ASA and the role that MESC and the university plays in their success as an organization.</p>
<p>31. <b><u>Program/Service: Heart to Heart: Demystifying Sexual Health and Relationships (Educational, Wellness, Collaborative)</u></b></p> <p>In collaboration with CARE, MESA Women’s Circle and the HEART foundation, students were taught about healthy relationships through a cultural lens and best practice for supporting themselves and their peers in maintaining healthy relationships and knowing their campus and off campus resources.</p>
<p>32. <b><u>Program/Service: Self Care Fair &amp; Art with Impact [Health and Wellness, Cultural]</u></b></p> <p>Along with The Well and various campus departments, we engaged in a self care fair and art with impact movie screening to remind students to practice self care and also get students more comfortable with discussing mental health.</p>

**3. Strategic Vision: Discuss your short-term (2016-2017) plans and major program goals that will use HESSR funds:**

<p>The Middle Eastern Student Center hopes to unite the community and facilitate coalition building amongst student clubs and organizations with ties to the Middle East and its neighbors. Informed by the Middle Eastern Student Assembly, we hope to create an environment of acceptance and inclusion for all these populations. The MESC hopes to raise awareness of the multiculturalism within the Middle East with respect to its cultures, languages, traditions, and religious practices. Films, educational workshops, professional development opportunities for staff, and speakers that can highlight the connection and uniqueness of this community will be hosted by MESC.</p> <p>MESC would like to make more institutional and policy changes that benefit students, staff and faculty. Educational policy development and campus climate assessment will be two major driving forces this year.</p>
---



MESC has accomplished a great amount of short term goals in the past five years. Our upcoming short term goals including the following:

1. Create UC wide network of MENA students to sit on UCOP informal task force
2. Develop relationship between MESA and new campus administration: VCSA and AVC/DOS

Develop solid training and mentorship with the new Markaz, LLC

**4. Challenges: Identify obstacles that need to be overcome and/or need to be met.**

The main challenges of MESC include:

1. Staffing and support: As MESC continues to grow and serve a larger community, 1 FTE is simply not enough to make the desired institutional impacts, while supporting and developing a student community with many unique challenges, especially in today's political climate.
2. Space: We have already outgrown our space, and there is not sufficient space for meetings, a work station, etc.
3. Data collection and assessment: because the SWANA category is not on most applications and surveys, it is incredibly difficult to track staff, faculty, and students and cater to their needs and challenges

**5. Please provide information on any recent evaluations your unit may have had. What recommendations were made, and what actions were taken in response to the recommendations.**

Please see attached UCUES MENA/SWANA Campus Climate results for UCR students

**6. Additional information or clarification you would like to provide the committee on your department's program plan for using HESSR funds:**

N/A

**B. BUDGET QUESTIONS**

- 1. Describe any SSFAC budget requests below. Departments may not duplicate budget requests for SSAF and RSAC.**

N/A

- 2. How many FTE positions are currently open? Which if any of the positions are newly created? Why was there a need to hire additional staff? What expanded services are provided by the new hires?**

Our current temporary, limited SLDS II has helped developed the center and the community in the following ways:

- Further development of The Markaz
- First ever refugee and outreach programming
- Meaningful with Dining for more food options in residence halls and across campus

Creation of Ramadan food packages for students in housing who are fasting

- 3. Additional information or clarification you would like to provide the committee on your department's Budget plan:**

Budget proposal may change significantly, depending on any potential relocation

### C. Funding Proposal and Narrative

List below each use of funds you propose, following the guidelines put forth by the Referendum:

The Highlander Empowerment Student Services Referendum will allow the seven departments to better meet undergraduate students' needs by providing:

- Increased co-programming with student organizations and student-led initiatives, including funding and advising
- Staffing to assist students in finding support and resources
- Support for conference hosting and conference travel
- Support for Common Ground Collective projects & collaborative initiatives with the ASUCR Diversity Council
- Peer mentoring and peer education programs support
- More resources in each student program office and center, such as student computer support and educational materials
- Operational support for student services programs as described above, as the costs of campus services continue to increase

**1. Overview: Any Information you would like to provide the committee on this year's proposal.**

N/A
-----

Fund Amount	Short Description
\$37,000	<u>Cultural, Educational, Social, Collaborative Programs</u> Funds to collaborate with the Ethnic and Gender programs, as well as student organization, and academic programs will allow for MESC to develop leaders across campus, while further uniting and bridging the gap between students, staff, and faculty. Providing student organizations with programming support and funds is also critical in allow them to grow and foster relationships with MESC and the university.

\$3,000	<p><u>Gamechangers Program</u> To engage students with leadership skills that relate to institutional change and policy, Gamechangers will be a 5 part series offered winter and spring quarter.</p>
\$7,000	<p><u>Staff Professional Development</u> To support the professional development of our Director and future coordinator to network with student affairs professionals, while spreading the mission and work of MESC at nationwide and regional conferences.</p>
\$10,000	<p><u>Student Conference Travel</u> Harvard Arab Weekend, The Afghan-American Conference, and The Lebanese Collegiate Network Convention, and the Islamophobia Summit are just a few of the conventions that are students are interested in attending to represent UCR and MESC. There, they develop as leaders and also begin the important process of networking to guarantee their success after graduation</p>
\$2,000	<p><u>The Markaz</u> MESC would like to provide funding for the inaugural year of the Markaz special interest hall in Pentland Hills. Funds will support intentional programming, collaborations with dining, training and development, and community building across special interest communities.</p>
\$10,000	<p><u>Student Org Support</u> Student orgs will have the opportunity to apply for funding for collaborative programs and events that are related to the mission of MESC.</p>
\$11,000	<p><u>Office Supplies and Equipment</u> To continue to support our resources and functionality of the space with equipment that student groups will also be able to borrow. Additional laptops will also be ordered, and potentially a printer as well to support increase in staff.</p>
\$1,500	<p><u>RSAC Stipend</u> Funds will be requested to support student stipends for RSAC.</p>

\$6,000	<u>Marketing</u> MESC will be order gear and printing additional informational and education flyers to pass out to the campus community.
\$3,500	<u>Diversity Council Support</u> The center would like to assist Diversity Council members in getting to know each other and their mission via a Retreat for student members. We'd like to use RSAC funds for a DC Retreat in Summer or early Fall, in addition to the programming budget.
\$6,000	<u>Student Staff Salaries</u> In the case that SSFAC funds run out for student staff salaries, this cushion will allow our student staff to work through the summer.
\$3,000	<u>UCOP Assessment Fee</u> Mandatory fee paid to UCOP at varying rate