



**Metropolitan Volunteer Program
Fiscal Year 2021**

**Student Fees Advisory Committee
Program Questionnaire**

1. *Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.*

Mission:

The mission of the University of Houston Metropolitan Volunteer Program is to create and provide service opportunities for students by collaborating with campus and community partners. Through this, we aim to develop responsible citizens with a lifelong commitment to service while creating sustainable change in our campus and community.

Accomplishing Our Mission:

The Metropolitan Volunteer Program (MVP) accomplishes our mission by providing the diverse student population of the University of Houston with unique service and awareness opportunities within the following social issue areas: Children & Education, Environment & Sustainability, Health & Wellness, and Hunger & Homelessness. A more specific description of each of the committees can be found under the current structure in section 2 of this report.

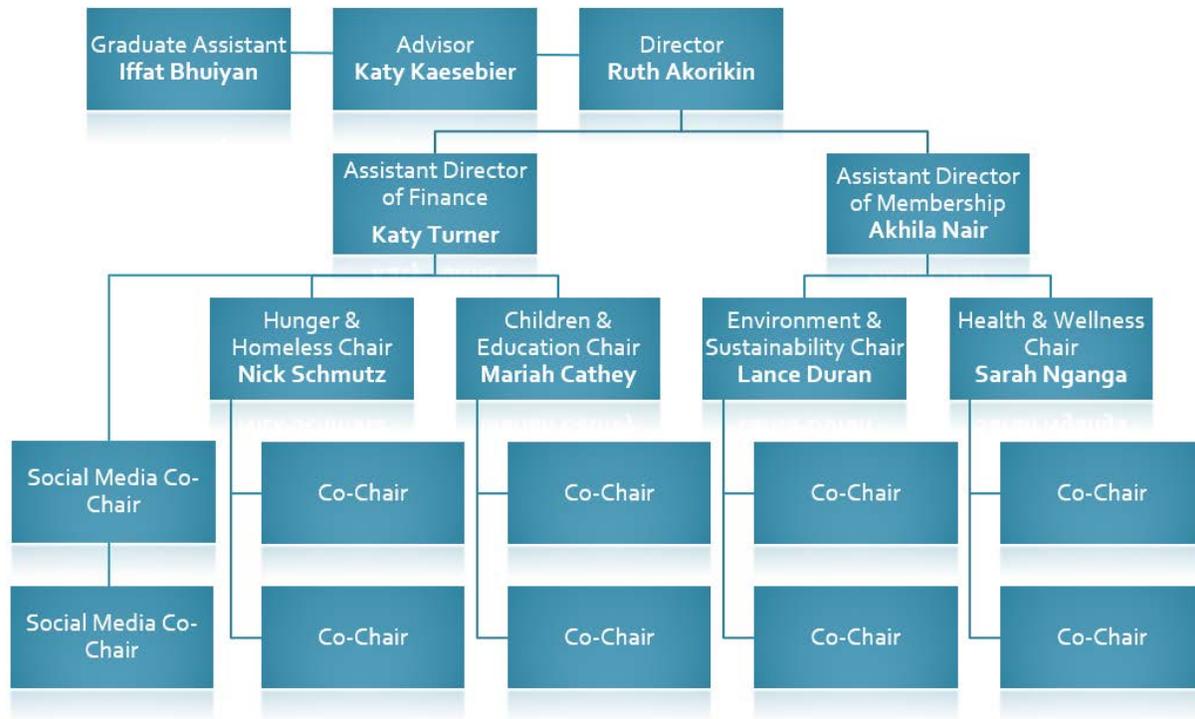
MVP is composed of four committees, each led by a Chair and focused on one specific service area. Through the work of the committees, our volunteers are able to connect with a variety of different social issues, enabling them to engage with the issues that matter most to them. Due to the Chairs interest and expertise in the service area, more meaningful and intentional dialogues are created. For example, if a student is studying education we can directly connect them with tutoring or other education related opportunities. Similarly, when groups request our assistance for volunteer/service events, we have a wider range of partnerships for specific service areas. MVP continues to hold service as a core value and we aim to ensure that students have access to make a tangible and sustainable impact within the UH campus and local communities.

Justification:

The Metropolitan Volunteer Program offers a large variety of service opportunities to UH students, faculty, and staff to participate in both the fall and spring semesters. MVP hosted a total of 94 volunteer events and 3 awareness events during the 2018-2019 school year, with almost all of these events in collaboration with campus and community partners.

2. *Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in*

the same position (e.g. counselor, advisor, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.



Executive:

Director- Sets the direction and vision for the organization. Oversees MVP events and organizational processes, as well as maintains relations with various on-campus departments and committees. Responsible for planning, marketing, and implementing signature events such as Rock the Campus, Rock the Block, and Service Nights.

Assistant Director of Finance- Oversees the financial aspects of MVP including budgets, purchases, promotional items, and membership items. This Assistant Director provides support for the Children & Education Committee and the Health & Wellness Committee. Responsible for opening/marketing events such as Weeks of Welcome events and any other collaborative events where MVP can be promoted.

Assistant Director of Membership- Oversees the membership development for MVP including tracking service hours, event sign in sheets, reservations, and assists the Director in board development. This Assistant Director provides support for the Environment & Sustainability Committee and the Hunger & Homelessness Committee. Responsible for the biannual Volunteer Fairs, a Membership Social each semester, and the end of the year banquet.

Chairs:

Each committee chair is responsible for developing partnerships within their respective social issues, event planning, marketing, and coordinating awareness and educational events such as workshops, guest speakers, or documentaries.

Children & Education Chair- This chair is responsible for providing volunteer opportunities and coordinating awareness events focused on children and education. These include service projects with community partners such as Generation One, Houston Public Library, and Children's Festivals.

Environment & Sustainability Chair- This chair is responsible for providing volunteer opportunities and coordinating awareness events focused on the environment and sustainability. These include service projects with community partners such as UH Community Garden, Centennial Gardens, and Hermann Park.

Health & Wellness Chair- This chair is responsible for providing volunteer opportunities and coordinating awareness events focused on health and wellness. These include service projects with community partners such as Harris Health, Ronald McDonald, and awareness walks.

Hunger & Homelessness Chair- This chair is responsible for providing volunteer opportunities and coordinating awareness events focused on hunger and homelessness. These include service projects with community partners such as The Beacon, Houston Food Bank, and Kid's Meals.

Co-Chairs:

Co-Chairs (10) - There are two co-chairs per committee and two social media co-chairs. These students are responsible for assisting in the coordination of volunteer events, leading service events and reflections, assisting with tracking service hours, and other miscellaneous tasks that support the success of MVP.

3. List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2018-2019 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.

DSAES Plan: (http://www.uh.edu/dsaes/about/strategic_plan.html)

UH Goals: (<http://www.uh.edu/about/mission/>)

Strategic Initiative #1: Increase Volunteer Retention

- **Action Step 1:** Revamp membership surveys to identify reasons for non-returning volunteers.

Status: Accomplished

During 2018-19, we updated our membership survey in an attempt to identify reasons volunteers did not return. Based on the results of the survey, 59.3% of respondents said that they were extremely likely to volunteer with MVP again. We were able to identify that some of the reasons that students stated they were not planning to volunteer with us again was due to the fact that they were graduating seniors or were too busy with class and work schedules.

- **Action Step 2:** Increase event visibility through stronger and more consistent marketing techniques.

Status: Accomplished

Through all of our social media platforms, our team has focused on intentional images and descriptions to promote the work we do in the community. We have also increased marketing for specific events, such as creating targeted marketing for Service Nights and general meetings. Lastly, we have reviewed how theme weeks are promoted and increased visibility on social media outlets to reach more students. These efforts produced a higher number of one time volunteers and increased our returning volunteers.

- **Action Step 3:** Establish an incentive system to encourage volunteers to stay engaged with MVP and volunteer more than one time per year.

Status: Ongoing

MVP hosts an end of the year banquet that recognizes individuals who are nominated by their committee for awards, shows appreciation to all of our volunteers, and introduces the incoming board. Students who complete six hours of service or more with MVP are eligible for a membership T-shirt and are invited to the end of the year banquet. In addition to this, MVP encourages students to log their hours on Get Involved to be eligible for the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. We have seen a growth of people logging their hours in Get Involved and a higher attendance at the end of the year banquet.

- **Action Step 4:** Enhance reflections to provide a more meaningful and educational experience for volunteers.

Status: Accomplished

MVP connected with our Center for Diversity and Inclusion liaison to provide training to the MVP board on how reflection and inclusion can improve the MVP volunteering experience. Throughout the year MVP board members brainstormed and implemented ideas on how to facilitate engaging reflections for volunteers.

DSAES Student Success 1: Engage all students to intentionally develop leadership qualities, critical thinking and communication skills, diversity competencies, and personal growth.

University of Houston Goal: Student Success: UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

Strategic Initiative #2: Increase Attendance at Meetings and Events

- **Action Step 1:** Develop stronger marketing techniques such as consistent social media posts, and ensuring marketing for events is posted around campus well in advance of events.

Status: Accomplished

We included a call to action component with all of our physical marketing. To ensure students have the most accurate information our marketing is updated weekly through emails about upcoming events. To engage the residential community, our board performed presentations on upcoming events throughout the year.

- **Action Step 2:** Increase accountability for volunteers through email communication during event sign-ups.

Status: Accomplished

Three emails are sent prior to a volunteering event which provides students with deadlines and event information. After each event we send a follow up email (no-show or thank you for attending) to make sure communication is clear for volunteers. This has increased communication and accountability among volunteers and board members.

- **Action Step 3:** Include more interactive components in meetings and workshops. This could include giveaways, on-site service projects, or open discussions.

Status: Partially Accomplished

During our informational meetings, we have a FAQ section that engages the students on how to join, how we verify hours, committees, etc. For students that give the correct answer, they have the opportunity to win limited edition promotional items.

DSAES Student Success 1: Engage all students to intentionally develop leadership qualities, critical thinking and communication skills, diversity competencies, and personal growth.

University of Houston Goal: Student Success: UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

Strategic Initiative #3: Enhance MVP's Brand Recognition on Campus

- **Action Step 1:** Identify and connect with Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) that have specialized missions that align with the four social issue focus areas for MVP.

Status: Accomplished

Our executive team attended semester RSO general meetings to connect with other RSO officers and ensure that they were aware of volunteer opportunities. We added an RSO spotlight to our weekly newsletters in order to highlight our partners and the success of the organizations.

- **Action Step 2:** Capture the volunteer experience to share the impact of MVP through innovative use of social media.

Status: Accomplished

We trained our social media co-chairs to capture more impactful event photos for marketing purposes. These photos were used through social media, in print marketing, and in the weekly newsletter.

- **Action Step 3:** Develop an infographic to highlight the benefits of volunteering and service, specifically highlighting the impact on the community.

Status: Accomplished

Our marketing committee created a general infographic that gives students a basic overview of our organization, highlights the impact of MVP during 2018-2019, and information on how they can get involved. This infographic is currently in production and will be distributed throughout campus spaces.

DSAES Student Success 1: Engage all students to intentionally develop leadership qualities, critical thinking and communication skills, diversity competencies, and personal growth.

DSAES Partnerships 1: Educate and empower campus partners to be our advocates.

University of Houston Goal: Student Success: UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

4. *Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons and/or unique students served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data. If available, please provide program benchmarking data from comparable institutions.*

Attendance:

MVP's primary method of evaluating the success of our organization is by tracking attendance at general meetings, service events, workshops, awareness events, and other MVP events. Students must register for events in advance via the website, and then sign in or swipe in to the event under the supervision of an officer. After every event, MVP records the information in a database that tracks the number of volunteers, individual service hours logged with MVP, annual number of service hours, and a monthly/yearly participation count. Get Involved is another tool we use to track all of our attendance.

Our tracking for events in 2018-2019 indicated that our 2,856 volunteers gave over 4,678.5 hours volunteering through our events. We found that a number of individuals have volunteered with MVP up to 8 times. Our tracking also shows our most popular events include our signature Rock the Campus with 338 volunteers and Service Nights with a combined 662 volunteers.

This year, to refocus on our mission, we provided more service opportunities than awareness events. We found that the service events have a higher attendance and are often as informative, if not more, than an awareness event or workshop. Participating in a volunteer event gives the students the opportunity to connect directly with the community and see the positive impact of their service. During the four theme weeks, we continue to offer awareness events and workshops to support the education process for our volunteers.

Benchmarking:

Texas A&M University

- Leadership Service Portal:
 - Where agencies, organizations, and university upload volunteer events as well as internships
 - Department under Department of Student Affairs (DSA)
 - Staff operated

University of Texas

- HornLink
 - Portal similar to GetInvolved
 - Unable to find a volunteer organization as large as MVP

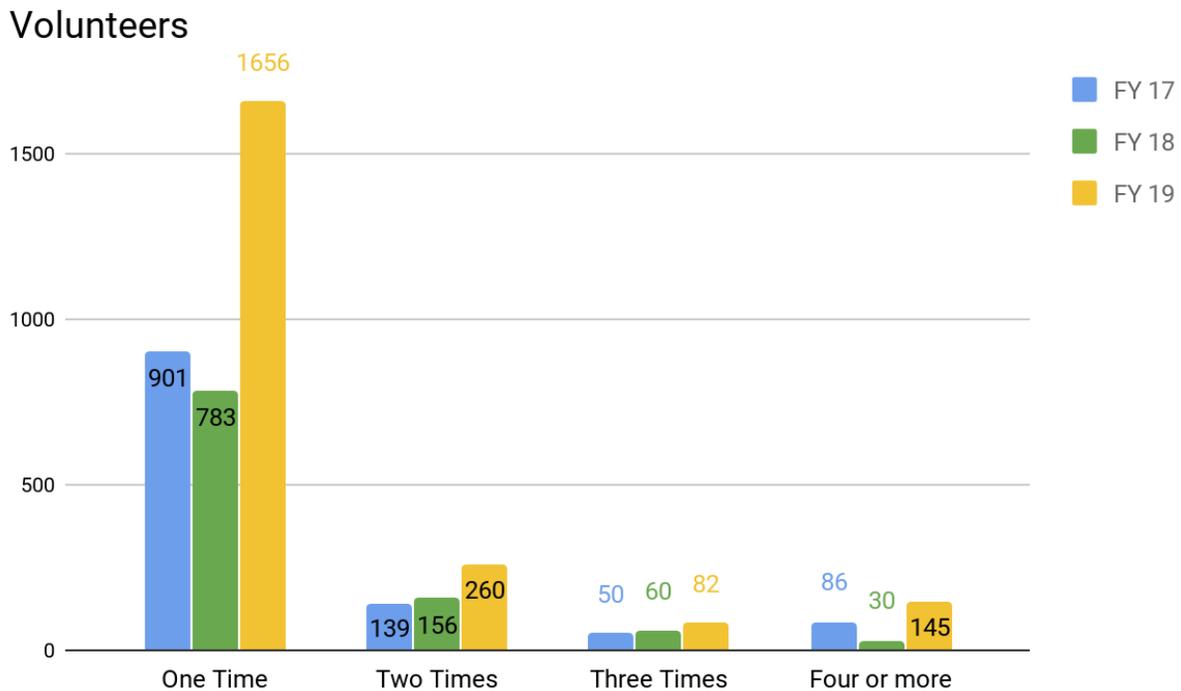
Sam Houston State University

- Justserve.org

- Links to organizations

Number of Returning Volunteers:

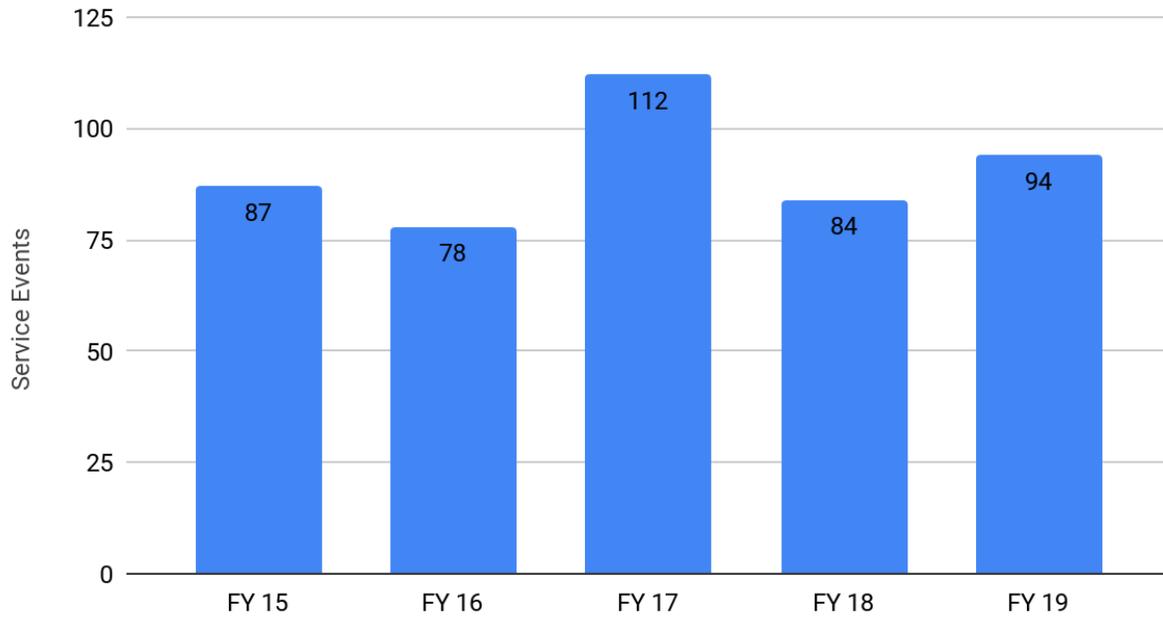
Another method that MVP utilizes to evaluate the success of volunteering events is by analyzing data about the number of returning volunteers. During FY19 we saw 1,656 one-time volunteers, 260 two-time volunteers, 82 three-time volunteers, and 145 four-time volunteers. These numbers reflect the unique students who participated in our events. Some of the ways we were able to accomplish this was through better communication through our website and social media on upcoming events. We uploaded events to our website at least two weeks prior to the date, and engaged our followers on social media by having monthly giveaways. The emphasis of creating a strong community feel for the organization, as well as facilitating a more in-depth reflection process after service events has contributed to our returning volunteer numbers increasing substantially from FY18. Our volunteers have increased in our category of four or more by 483%.



Number and Variety of Volunteer/Service Events Provided:

During FY19, MVP hosted 94 service events. While we were on track to exceed the FY18 number of 84 events significantly, due to weather conditions and conflicting schedules with community partners, a total of 19 events were cancelled. In spite of the cancelled events, we still had roughly a 12% increase in the number of events and opportunities offered for UH students.

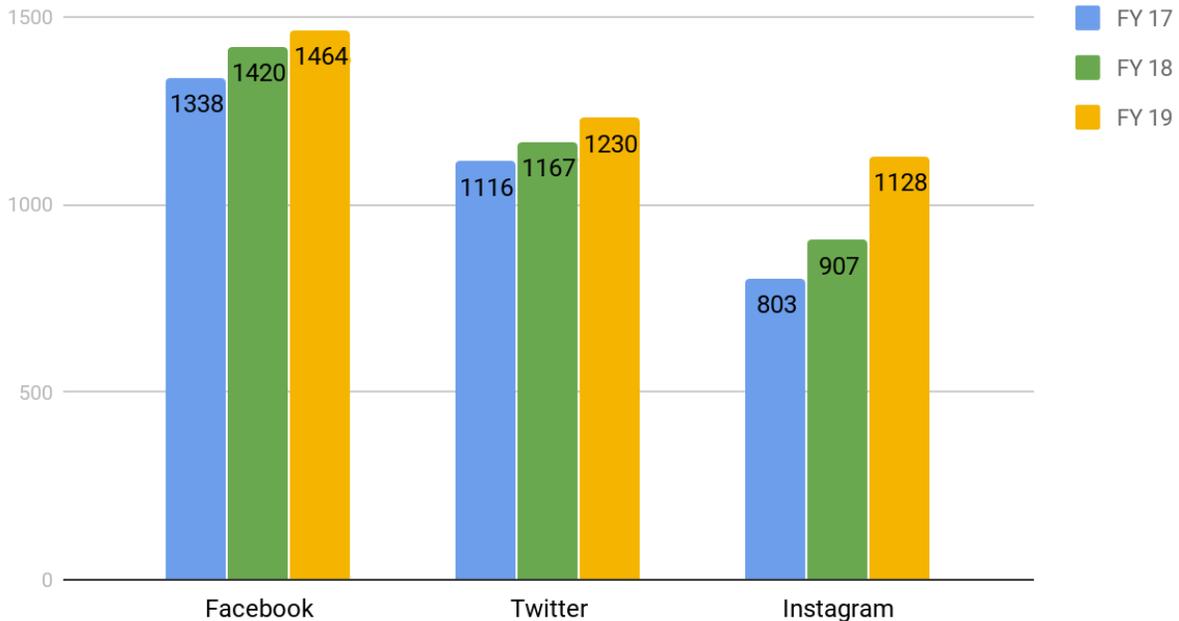
Service Events



Growth of Social Media Pages:

MVP is currently active on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. We monitor the growth of followers on these social media pages to gauge how effectively our organization is reaching new students and promoting our events. Due to an emphasis on increasing our social media presence and marketing tactics last year, we saw an increase in our followership across every social media platform.

Social Media



Survey Assessments & Reflection:

After every service event a site lead, who is an MVP board member that is responsible for organizing and managing volunteers during the event, facilitates a reflection. The reflection consists of addressing the social issues that the event was focused on, challenging student perspectives, and posing the question: “What can you do, from this point on, to positively impact this issue in your community?” Each board member is trained in the reflection process prior to leading events.

Within 24 hours of each event, MVP sends each volunteer a thank you email and a link to a survey about their overall experience. The responses are recorded and concerns are discussed during board meetings. From our survey, 92.6% students responded that were either extremely likely or very likely to volunteer with MVP again.

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2020) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections. SFAC Q, p.2.

MVP did not have any budget or organizational changes during FY19.

6. If your unit concluded FY2019 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity in excess of \$5,000, please describe the conditions which caused the addition and provide a line item identification of the budgetary source(s) of the addition (i.e. lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).

MVP had a fund equity of \$1,858.00.

7. Please list your 2020-2021 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.

1. Restructure the Metropolitan Volunteer Program's social media accounts to display specific impacts on the Houston community.
 - a. Action Step 1: Consistently make educational posts that display the impact made during our volunteer events.
 - b. Action Step 2: Post "spotlights" about our community partners, registered student organizations, and student volunteers.
 - c. Action Step 3: Engage MVP volunteers and partners on social media accounts through tagging volunteer partners, registered student organizations, and department social media accounts.

UH Goal: Student Success: UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

DSAES Partnerships 3: Create opportunities for our students by developing initiatives that support our neighboring communities.

2. Increase Volunteer Retention
 - a. Action Step 1: Create more social event opportunities to encourage a stronger sense of community within MVP.
 - b. Action Step 2: Train the MVP Board and site leaders to include an event improvement component at the end of each event.
 - c. Action Step 3: Diversify volunteering events and target specific registered student organizations on campus who focus on the social issue to encourage service with MVP.

UH Goal: Student Success: UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

DSAES Student Success 5: Enrich the sense of connection, belonging, and shared UH identity among all students.

3. Evaluate the current board structure to assess the overall effectiveness of each service committee.

- a. Action Step 1: Survey UH students to determine what they think the current needs are in the community, what type of events they would expect to see within the existing committees, and ways to improve volunteering events.
- b. Action Step 2: Re-evaluate the structure of theme weeks.

UH Goal: Student Success: UH will have a student profile consistent with a nationally competitive public research university by creating an environment in which student success can be ensured.

DSAES Student Success 4: Enhance assessment of student success by defining measures at the departmental and divisional level with focus on the impact of our programs and services.

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2021 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5% in your total FY2021 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

If MVP were to receive a 5% reduction (\$3,750.15) in our total approved FY2020 base Student Service Fee budget, we would be forced to cut theme weeks, which are dedicated weeks to focus on each of the four service areas MVP provides. Each theme week is budgeted for \$900, totaling \$3,600 for all four weeks. Theme weeks are an opportunity for the UH community to engage in workshops and volunteering events that highlight the social issues that directly impact the Houston community. Theme weeks allow us as an organization to focus solely on a specific social issue, and bring awareness about the impacts to campus. Without our theme weeks, our students would miss the opportunity to engage at a deeper, more meaningful level with one of our social issues.

The remaining \$150.15 from the 5% reduction would come out of our marketing for signature events. This would limit MVP's reach, which would overall lead to lower attendance at events.

9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.

MVP currently does not have any additional sources of funding available to the organization.

10. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

Various academic departments and organizations on campus include a volunteer component in their mission, but the Metropolitan Volunteer Program is the only student-led organization that provides service and volunteer opportunities to all students, regardless of major, classification, or involvement with a specific organization. We also serve as an outlet for local nonprofits to connect with students with the hope of recruiting them to continuously volunteer with them and give back to the community outside of the events that MVP coordinates. In its dedication and commitment to foster the spirit of service, volunteerism, and awareness, MVP is a vital resource for both the University and the city of Houston. We create a community for students to feel welcome in giving back to their community and making a visible, positive impact.