



**Metropolitan Volunteer Program
Fiscal Year 2022**

**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:

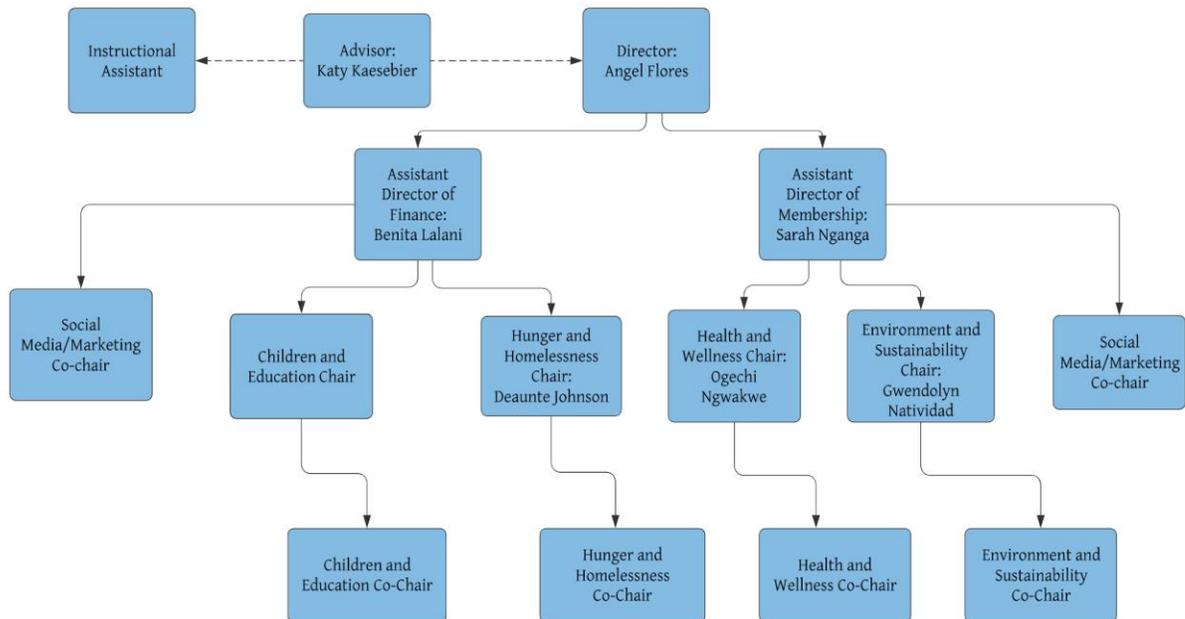
The Metropolitan Volunteer Program (MVP) accomplishes our mission by providing the diverse student body of the University of Houston with unique service and awareness opportunities that fall under the following social issue areas: Children & Education, Environment & Sustainability, Health & Wellness, 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 made up of four committees, each led by a Chair and focused on one of the specific service areas mentioned above. Through the work of the committees, our volunteers are able to connect with these 4 different social issues and others, enabling them to engage with the issues that matter most to them. With the Chair's passion and expertise in the service area, meaningful and intentional dialogues are created through our service events. 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 wide range of partnerships for specific service areas that we can connect them to. MVP continues to hold service as a core value of the organization and we aim to ensure that students have access to opportunities that 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 scheduled a total of 112 volunteer events, with some being cancelled due to weather and COVID-19 bringing the total of events that were actually executed to 86 during the 2019-2020 school year. Of these events 86% were 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 (6) - There is one co-chair per committee and two social media/marketing co-chairs. These students are responsible for assisting in the coordination of volunteer events, leading service events and reflections, assisting with tracking service hours for MVP events, and miscellaneous tasks that support the success of MVP.

3. List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2019-2020 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 to contribute to students becoming engaged citizens.

- **Action Step 1:** Improve communication with volunteers through the newsletter, and Get Involved.

Status: Accomplished

During the 2019-2020 school year, MVP revamped the newsletter and Get Involved pages to increase interaction and improve communication with members. Survey results show that 75% of students heard about the Metropolitan Volunteer Program through newsletters and 12.5% from on campus marketing. This is an increase of 35% and 7.9% respectively from previous years showing the effectiveness of newsletters as a form of communication with volunteers.

- **Action Step 2:** Enhance reflection to provide the volunteers with more insight into the impact they are making in their community.

Status: Accomplished

At the end of each service event, MVP implemented reflection facilitation from site leads in which the event was discussed in a group setting as the event came to a close. Through this, site leads gained a thorough understanding of what members experienced and learned during the event, and responded to any issues that arose. Reflections after each event also allowed for discussion to gain insight into the impact the students had on the community. Furthermore, after the event (within 24 hours) a survey was sent to see how members felt about the impact that was made and what could be done to improve member experience at future events.

- **Action Step 3:** Encourage volunteers to take surveys after each event so we can continually identify areas of improvement.

Status: Accomplished

MVP sent surveys at the end of every event to gauge the student experience with various nonprofit organizations hosting our volunteer groups. Questions asked included satisfaction with the event, how the organization ran the event, and how likely students are to volunteer again. Through the responses we received, MVP was able to improve certain aspects on how we coordinate our events. For example, based on student feedback of challenges finding the group, we started to include photos of the site lead within confirmation emails so they knew exactly who they were looking for when meeting the group.

University of Houston Goal: Student Success

DSAES Strategic Initiative SS1: Engage all students to intentionally develop leadership qualities, critical thinking and communication skills, diversity competencies, and personal growth.

DSAES Strategic Initiative P3: Create opportunities for our students by developing initiatives that support our neighboring communities.

Strategic Initiative #2: Increase attendance for all events in order to increase our impact on the community.

- **Action Step 1:** Develop new marketing techniques, such as a unique marketing layout for each theme week and Service Nights.

Status: Accomplished

MVP prioritized developing a new approach to marketing for our theme weeks and service nights. While we used to list specific events on the marketing, we got the feedback from students that the marketing often looked overwhelming or “busy” so students would simply not read it. We adjusted to focus the marketing on the overall social issue of the week, and directed students to our social media and website to get information about the specific events. This allowed our marketing to have a consistent visual throughout the week which stood out to students and helped us to engage them.

- **Action Step 2:** Collaborate consistently with RSOs for our monthly Service Nights and annual events to introduce them to MVP.

Status: Accomplished

During the 2019-2020 school year, MVP collaborated with 36 RSOs, which was 21 more than in previous years, through a multitude of events. Some of these events included collaborating with RSOs during different MVP weeks such as the Health and Wellness week, and more. MVP also increased consistent collaboration with University sponsored organizations, continuing partnerships with Frontier Fiesta and CCA. Furthermore, connecting with the Center of Diversity and Inclusion, MVP was able to provide training to the MVP board about inclusive volunteer experiences.

- **Action Step 3:** Be more transparent about our structure of the organization and that we have a large variety of volunteering opportunities.

Status: Accomplished

During the 2019-2020 school year, we provided students, through various platforms, with information on how MVP operates and the various volunteer opportunities. Examples can be found in the way we used our newsletter and social media to highlight our board members and their responsibilities within their roles. We also worked with our board to communicate the different types of opportunities available with participants at their events, instead of just focusing on their own specific service area and committee. Finally, we revamped our website to easily provide students with a simple way to identify what volunteer events were coming up and how they can participate.

*University of Houston Goal: Student Success
DSAES Strategic Initiative SS1: Engage all students to intentionally develop leadership qualities,*

critical thinking and communication skills, diversity competencies, and personal growth. DSAES Strategic Initiative R1: Evaluate resources to identify opportunities for efficiency, improvement, and transformation.

3. Enhance the membership experience.

- **Action Step 1:** *Restructure General Meetings to provide opportunities for members to become more involved in our organization.*

Status: Accomplished

During MVP informational meetings, we added an FAQ section, which helped to share information with students about how to officially join the organization, how we verify service hours, the various committees, etc. We also added a game component which allowed students to win limited edition promotional items and become excited about volunteering with MVP. Through this new and improved format, MVP was able to gain more volunteers as well as give members more opportunities to be involved at a deeper level.

- **Action Step 2:** *Getting to know volunteers through increased social opportunities with the MVP Board.*

Status: Accomplished

During the spring semester, we hosted a bowling social on campus, where students were able to come out and get to know board members, while also enjoying some ice cream and bowling. We had an attendance of 21 individuals and it was a great way for people to have fun and get more connected with others who are also involved with MVP. Due to COVID, we were unable to have our end of year banquet and another scheduled social event. We plan on continuing to have more social events in the future as we believe these events build community and connection to the organization.

- **Action Step 3:** *Provide more background information about the community partners and enhance the social issue education process.*

Status: Accomplished

In advertising for volunteering events, MVP made it a priority to provide more information about the event and volunteer organization on the MVP website. Through this methodology, students were able to better understand and comprehend the impact they are making with that organization and in the community. In order to enhance the education on a particular social issue, we made sure that our leaders were better educated about the organization with which they were volunteering. Through an introductory email to students who were volunteering, they received information about the organization and the social issue, beginning the social issue education process before they even arrived.

University of Houston Goal: Student Success

DSAES Strategic Initiative SS1: Engage all students to intentionally develop leadership qualities, critical thinking and communication skills, diversity competencies, and personal growth.

DSAES Strategic Initiative R1: Evaluate resources to identify opportunities for efficiency, improvement, and transformation.

DSAES Strategic Initiative P3: Create opportunities for our students by developing initiatives that support our neighboring communities.

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. Attendance is also recorded in Get Involved for each of our events.

Our tracking for events in 2019-2020 indicated that our 1,778 volunteers gave over 2,749 hours volunteering through our events. We found that a number of individuals have volunteered with MVP multiple times indicating that our retention is high. Our tracking also shows our most popular events include our signature Rock the Campus with 216 volunteers and Service Nights with 215 volunteers. Due to inclement weather and the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to host some of our largest and most popular events, including Adopt a Beach and Rock the Block which typically have a combined minimum attendance of 285.

Benchmarking:

Texas A&M University

- AggieServe!
 - 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

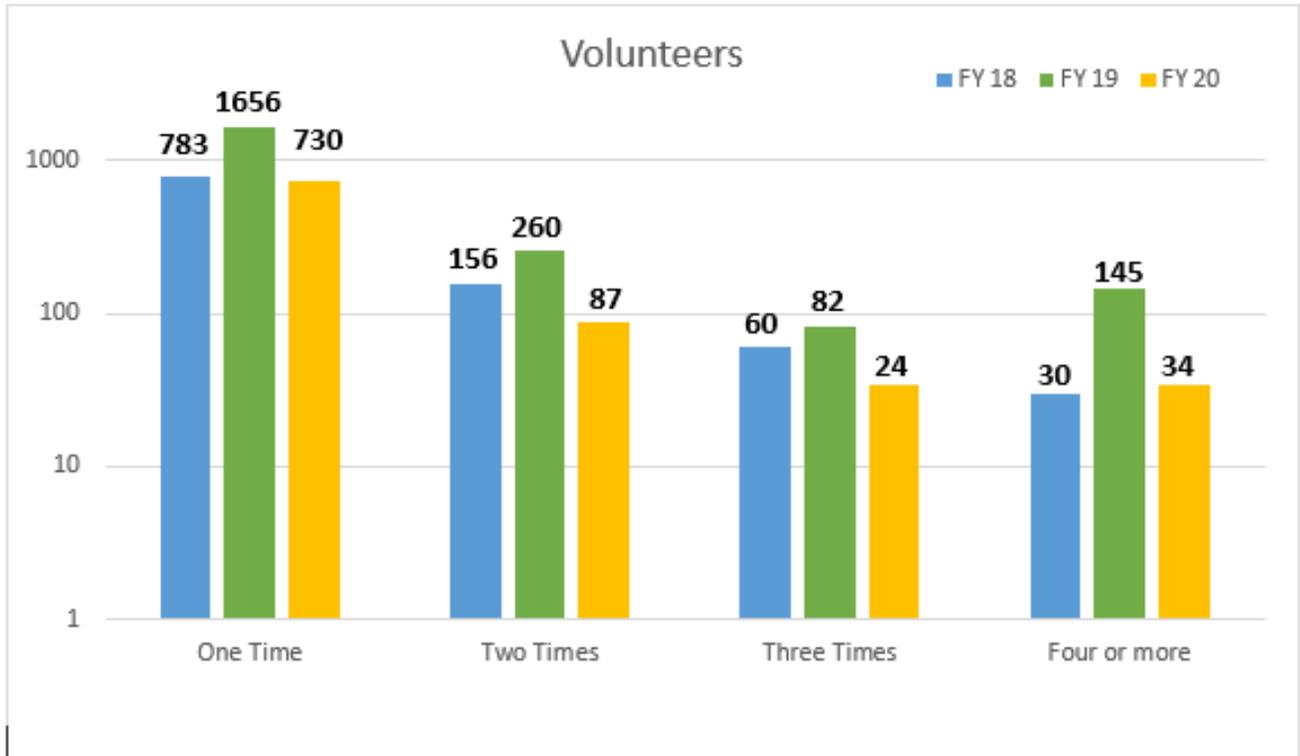
Sam Houston State University

- Justserve.org
 - Links to community organizations

Number of Returning Volunteers:

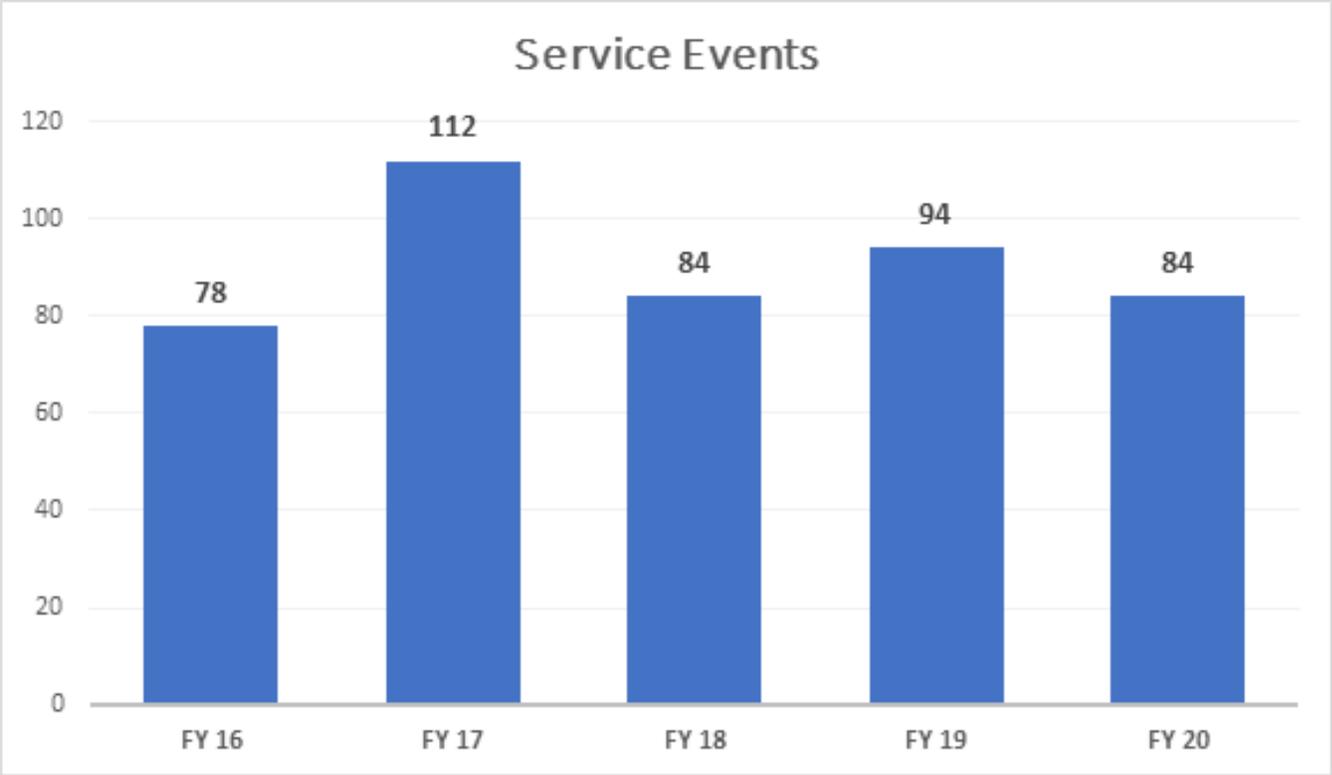
Another method that MVP utilizes to evaluate the success of volunteering events is by analyzing data about the number of returning volunteers. During FY20, we saw 730 one-time volunteers, 87 two-time volunteers, 24 three-time volunteers, and 34 four-time volunteers. These numbers reflect the unique students who participated in our events. One of the major ways we were able to focus on our retention this year was through better communication through our website and social media about 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. Despite our best efforts, we did see a decrease in our overall attendance and number of returning volunteers within each category. COVID-19 cancellations and inclement weather were the primary factors

resulting in the decrease. Without these cancellations, our data shows that we likely would have equaled, if not exceeded, our 2019 volunteer numbers.



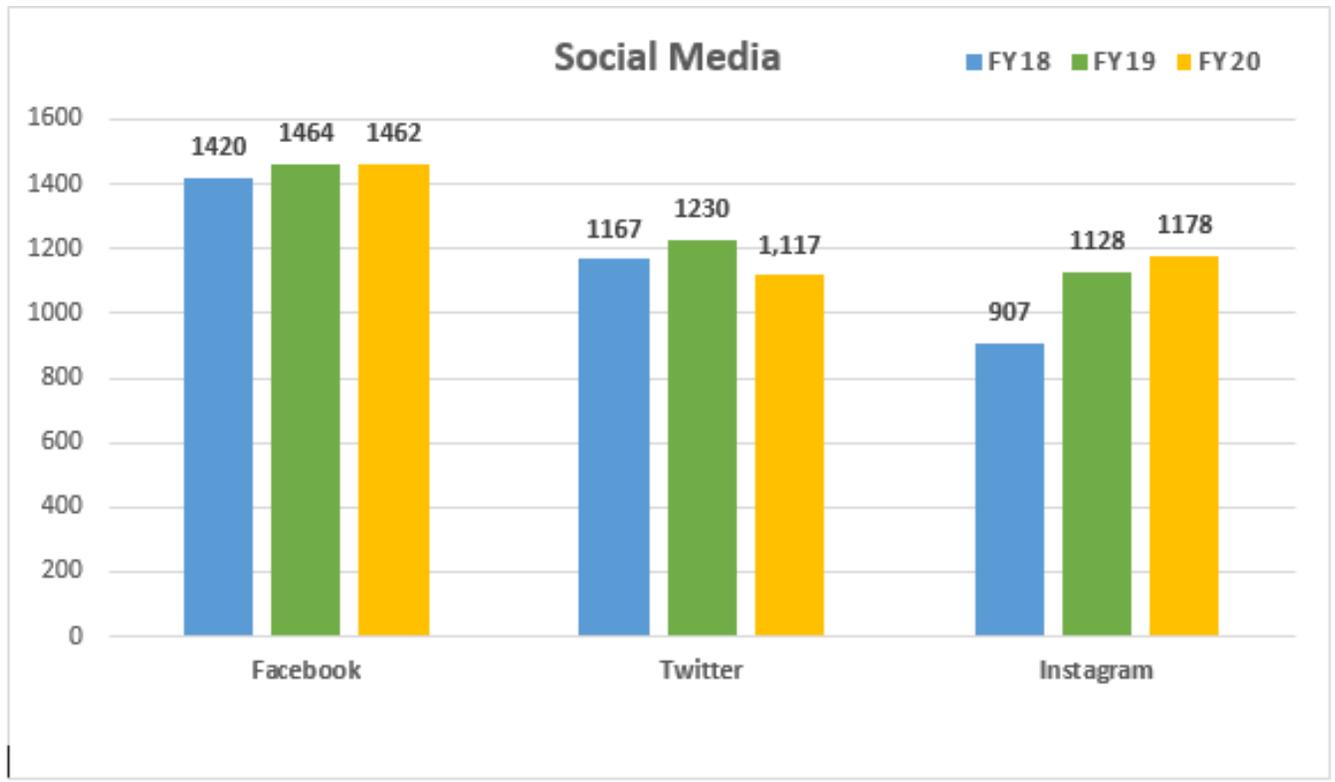
Number and Variety of Volunteer/Service Events Provided:

During FY20, MVP hosted 84 service events. While we were on track to exceed the FY19 number of 94 events significantly, due to weather conditions and COVID-19, a total of 28 events were cancelled.



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. As shown in the charts, we have had a stable amount of followers these past years. During the 2020-2021 year, we plan to put emphasis on our social media and our usage. Our plans include creating educational posts that provide awareness of the different social issues that impact the Houston community and giving spotlights to our various community partners.



Survey Assessments & Reflection:

Every service event hosted by MVP is followed by a site lead, who is an MVP board member that is responsible for organizing and managing volunteers during the event and facilitating a reflection. The post-event reflection consists of addressing the social issues that the event was focused on, challenging student perspectives, and asking students what they learned through their volunteer experience. Each board member is trained in the reflection process prior to leading events.

MVP sends each volunteer a thank you email and a link to a survey within 24 hours of each event, so we can measure their overall experience. The responses are evaluated by MVP and are discussed during our board meetings to help us continually improve the student experience. From our survey, 87.5% of students responded that they were likely or extremely likely to volunteer with MVP again.

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2021) 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.

With University budget cuts, MVP had a \$1,686 reduction for the FY21 One-Time funding for the Volunteer Fairs. As a result of the budget change, combined with current event policies regarding COVID-19, we are evaluating ways to adjust the structure of the Volunteer Fair for at least the fall semester, and potentially the spring semester. We want to ensure that our events are both cost-effective, and accessible to students who may be attending UH remotely.

6. *If your unit concluded FY2020 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.).*

At the end of FY2020, MVP had a fund equity of \$48,562. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to host events for over 2 months, including Rock the Block, two Service Nights, and our end of year banquet. We were also unable to purchase marketing and promotional items for summer and Weeks of Welcome events. Over the summer, we were unable to send new student leaders to the I-LEAD conference hosted annually by ACUI. Finally, we had multiple students volunteer in their role last year, resulting in returned funds in our salary line. We returned the following amounts, by funding line:

- Salary/Wage/Fringe: \$15,732
- Maintenance & Operation/Travel: \$32,831

7. Please list your 2021-2022 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. Improve the Metropolitan Volunteer Program's communication to stakeholders.
 - a. Action Step 1: Evaluate website content and usage to ensure effectiveness for members.
 - b. Action Step 2: Improve the way we use our newsletter to communicate with the UH community.
 - c. Action Step 3: Create a newsletter specifically for our community partners to create a more transparent communication

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 Resources 1: Evaluate resources to identify opportunities for efficiency, improvement, and transformation.

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

1. 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: Revamp post-event survey to determine any challenges in our process and finding solutions to them.
 - c. Action Step 3: Diversify volunteering events to meet the needs of students and the Houston community.

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 2: Expand diverse experiences on exploration and education while identifying and meeting the needs of our student population through supportive, inclusive environments.

2. Evaluate training of Metropolitan Volunteer Board to improve leadership development within their positions
 - a. Action Step 1: Create more efficient and effective training resources for board members.

- b. Action Step 2: Encourage research within and across committees to become well versed on the social issues impacting the Houston community.
- c. Action Step 3: Incorporate professional development opportunities into board meeting structure.

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

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2022 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 FY2022 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 (\$4470.75) in our total approved FY2022 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 \$870.75 from the 5% reduction would come out of our marketing and promotional items for signature events. This would limit MVP's reach, which would overall impact 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. As an organization, we also serve as an outlet for local nonprofits to connect with students with the hope of recruiting them to continuously volunteer. Thus, we value both working with and giving 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.