**Metropolitan Volunteer Program
Fiscal Year 2024**

**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, flexibly scheduled and accessible 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.
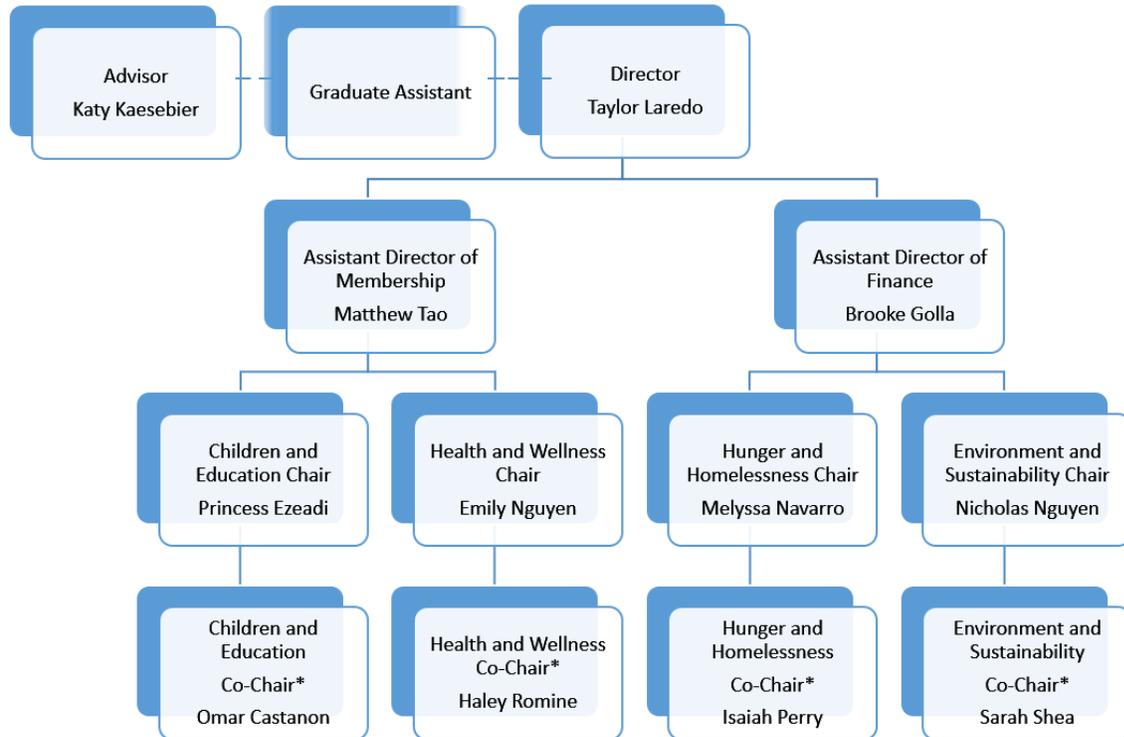
MVP is made up of four committees, each led by a Chair and focused on one of the specific service areas mentioned above. Through the work of the committees, our volunteers are able to connect with these 4 different social issues and others, enabling them to engage with the issues that matter most to 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 community.

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 87 volunteer events during the 2021-2022 school year, a significant increase due to easing of COVID-19 restrictions and its effect on our community partners to provide in-person volunteering. Of these events, 81.58% were hosted 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.*

*(Asterisk indicates a 5 hour a week unpaid, volunteer position)

Advisor Katy Kaesebier	Graduate Assistant	Director Taylor Laredo

Assistant Director of Membership — Matthew Tao

- Children and Education Chair — Princess Ezeadi
  - Children and Education Co-Chair* — Omar Castanon
- Health and Wellness Chair — Emily Nguyen
  - Health and Wellness Co-Chair* — Haley Romine

Assistant Director of Finance — Brooke Golla

- Hunger and Homelessness Chair — Melyssa Navarro
  - Hunger and Homelessness Co-Chair* — Isaiah Perry
- Environment and Sustainability Chair — Nicholas Nguyen
  - Environment and Sustainability Co-Chair* — Sarah Shea

3. *List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2021-2022 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.*

> *DSA Plan: (https://uh.edu/dsa/about/strategic-planning/2019-2023/)*
> *UH Goals: (http://www.uh.edu/about/mission/)*

1. *Improve the Metropolitan Volunteer Program's communication to stakeholders.*

> a. *Action Step 1: Evaluate Website content and usage to ensure effectiveness for members.*

Status: Accomplished

MVP implemented several design updates to the website, specifically the live events calendar at the bottom of our homepage. This allows students to see the four upcoming events and sign up instantly, alleviating the struggle of finding the volunteer calendar on a different window. We also added updated answers to the frequently asked questions page to ensure that volunteers have easy access to common questions about joining MVP.

> b. *Action Step 2: Improve the way we use our newsletter to communicate with the UH community.*

Status: Accomplished

MVP has redesigned the format of our newsletter, and content to make it more engaging with students. We added board introductions, community partner spotlights and a "Most Valuable Volunteer" spotlight to engage with our volunteers. During the Weeks of Welcome, we also highlighted volunteering opportunities on campus that volunteers could sign up for independent of MVP sponsored opportunities. We are continuously seeking to innovate the newsletter and we have solicited feedback for improvement from our volunteers in a survey on how to improve the newsletter.

> c. *Action Step 3: Create a newsletter specifically for our community partners to create a more transparent communication*

Status: Changed

MVP has sent out a survey to our community partners about how we can improve our communication with them. Internally, we decided to make more efforts to include our community partners on our existing newsletter to keep them in the loop, and start a community partner spotlight where we showcase community partners in our newsletter.

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.

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

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

> *2. Increase Volunteer Retention*
>
> > 1. *Action Step 1: Create more social event opportunities to encourage a stronger sense of community within MVP.*

Status: Accomplished

MVP implemented icebreakers at our events with chairs this past year to facilitate more social connections and volunteer interactions. We also launched our pilot signature event Be the MVP where we promoted volunteer community building by having tables for eating, and a DJ for music where volunteers could socialize while completing their service projects. MVP also opened up our office in FY23 for Impact Hours every week, where students can come in, complete a service project and interact with each other and the board.

> > 2. *Action Step 2: Revamp post-event survey to determine any challenges in our process and finding solutions to them.*

Status: Accomplished

MVP implemented a new post-event feedback survey that was sent following every chair's events to all volunteers. We decided to seek more open ended feedback from volunteers rather than simple "yes" or "no" questions. We found in this process there were ways we could make our events more welcoming to first time volunteers, and ways that we can improve our communication. In responding to this, we encouraged site leads to engage more with volunteers socially while working, and to change our email system with fewer emails that demand responses from volunteers in altered language.

3. *Action Step 3: Diversify volunteering events to meet the needs of students and the Houston community.*

Status: Accomplished

This year MVP has added to our roster of community partners. The Exec team has actively challenged board members to seek out new community partners, especially community partners in the Third Ward through guided research. The board has been making active attempts to research and engage with new community partners, and this has been aided by the creation of a Community Partner Bank, where we have compiled every community partner MVP has worked with in the past five years. Each committee has also added at least one new community partner in the past year, the Hunger and Homelessness Committee added SEARCH and the Santa Maria Hostel, the Children and Education Committee added Bayou City Blessings in a Backpack, the Environment and Sustainability Committee added Jansen CDC, and the Health and Wellness Committee added Nexus Children's Hospital and ViaColori. MVP also piloted on campus volunteering events in response to COVID protocols limiting off campus volunteer capacity, which allowed students to complete service projects on campus rather than having to travel.

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.

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

3. Evaluate training of Metropolitan Volunteer Board to improve leadership development within their positions

1. *Action Step 1: Create more efficient and effective training resources for board members.*

Status: Accomplished

This year the MVP Board prioritized organizing training materials and creating new training materials that are simple and effective, and centralized in one folder in our Google Drive. The MVP exec team focused on making training documents that break down processes like creating events in GetInvolved, event planning processes and contacting community partners in easily digestible small steps. We even created documents that

explained day to day office procedures like clocking in, and logging service hours, and how to join GetInvolved. These documents include step by step guides, powerpoints and video training, and helped ease the transition of our new board members.

2. *Action Step 2: Encourage research within and across committees to become well versed on the social issues impacting the Houston community.*

Status:Accomplished

This year at MVP, the Exec Board encouraged chairs to research the community partners they worked with before planning an event with them. Chairs were guided to write event briefs, where they would discuss the mission of their community partner and the social issues the organization works within. These event briefs would be discussed with volunteers in a pre-and-post event reflection. Furthermore, at Service Nights, chairs presented a brief informational speech to attendees about the nature of the service project. Also, several committees collaborated on events, such as the Health and Wellness and Hunger and Homelessness joint mask-making event promoted two social causes simultaneously- as they promoted COVID-19 health precautions and encouraged volunteers to make two masks- one to keep, and one to donate to SEARCH for people experiencing homelessness.

3. *Action Step 3: Incorporating professional development opportunities into board meeting structure.*

Status: Accomplished

This past year MVP incorporated several professional development opportunities into our board meetings. We had a representative come from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, where we did a group Diversity assessment and learned more about how we can be an inclusive organization. The MVP Exec board also facilitated activities within board meetings that promoted professional development among board members that we were able to use to further progress towards UH Scarlet Seals of Excellence.

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.

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

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 into 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, the 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 2021-2022 indicated that our 1,910 volunteers gave over 1300 hours volunteering through our events. We found that a high number of individuals have volunteered with MVP multiple times indicating that our retention is high. Our tracking showed our most popular events were Be the MVP, with 241 attendees and Volunteer Fair with 151 attendees. We were enthusiastically able to return to hosting many of our signature events in person including Volunteer Fair, Adopt-a-Beach and we debuted a new signature event: Be the MVP. Even as UH moved toward hosting more in-person events with safety precautions in place, many of our community partners were unable to host volunteer groups, or had size restrictions on groups of volunteers, limiting our ability to take volunteers into the community. Our MVP Board adapted and responded by piloting new monthly on-campus volunteering opportunities such as preparing items for donation for Meals on Wheels, DREAM Academy, and SEARCH, which had successful attendance that matched our signature Service Nights, and were attractive to returning volunteers.

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 FY22, we saw 873 one-time volunteers, 62 two-time volunteers, 33 three-time volunteers, and 9 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 providing weekly recurring events like Cougar Cupboard volunteering, and opportunities for social interaction before and after the event with volunteers. One challenge in getting returning volunteers was the volunteer limits that were put in place due to COVID-19, forcing us to close sign ups early, and with fewer volunteers than we could usually take. However, our numbers seem to be rebounding to previous years following the alleviation of COVID-19 protocols.
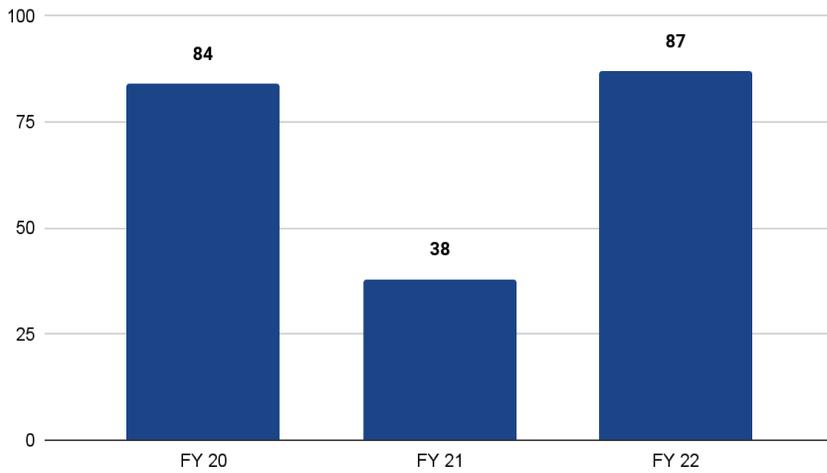
Volunteers
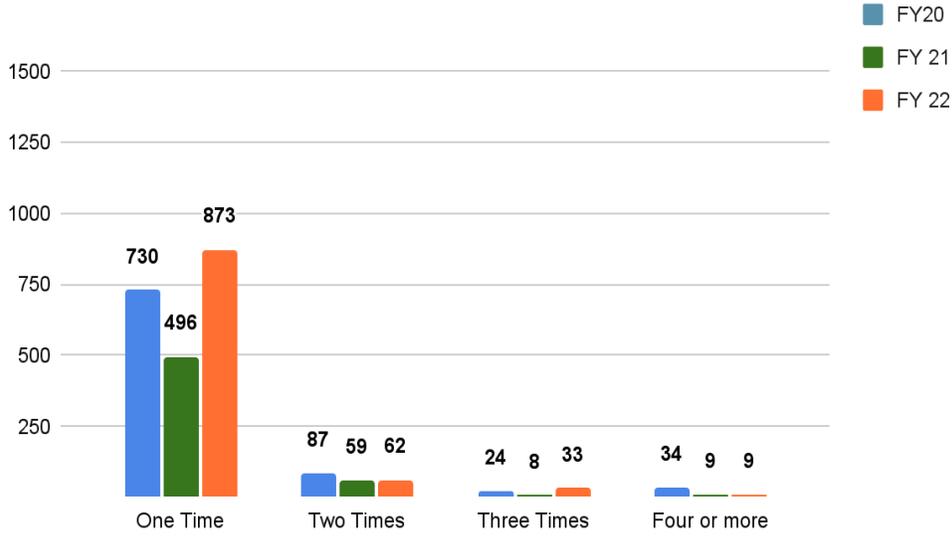
Number and Variety of Volunteer/Service Events Provided:

During FY22, MVP hosted 87 service events. We were ecstatic to return to pre-Pandemic numbers of events due to easing of COVID-19 restrictions and implementation of on-campus service opportunities with new community partners.
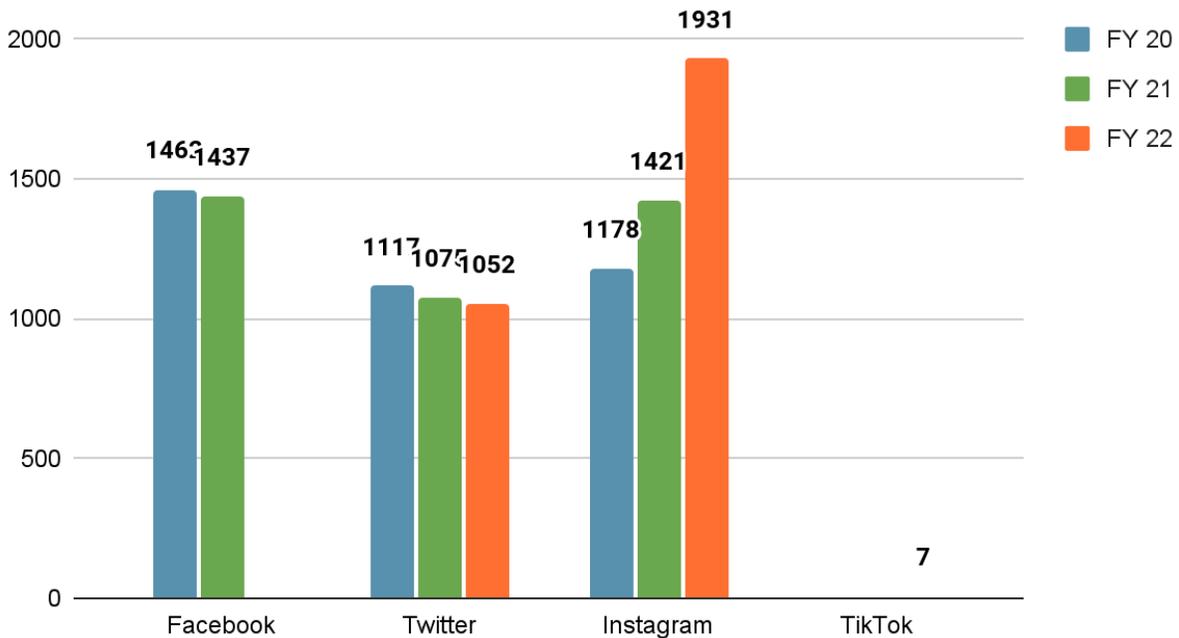
Service Events

Growth of Social Media Pages:

MVP is currently active on Instagram, Twitter and TikTok. 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 and a significant increase in our Instagram users, and the start of our TikTok followers upon usage of the platform. During the 2021-2022 year, we put emphasis on our social media and our usage through ensuring we had timely posts about events, TikToks and Instagram reels that showed off the personality of the board, and implementation of a Linktree in our instagram bio with relevant links.This year we plan to improve by giving spotlights to our various community partners, a MVV (Most Valuable Volunteer) post monthly with an outstanding student volunteer, and our weekly recaps, which show our impact in real time.

Social Media

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, 100% of students responded that they had a "Good" or "Great" volunteering experience. Students also gave us feedback on which community partners they would like to see us work with in the future, and feedback on improving communication between site leaders and volunteers. This feedback helped guide us in event planning, and in how to improve the processes in how we communicate when organizing events.

5. *Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2022) 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.*

MVP did not have any budget or organizational changes during FY22

6. If your unit concluded FY22 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 FY22, MVP had a fund equity of $34,838. We were able to return to hosting many of our signature events in person such as our biannual Volunteer Fairs, Adopt a Beach, Rock the Campus and Be the MVP. Due to unforeseen circumstances, with our community partners we were unable to host Rock the Block- the only signature event to not return upon lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. This led to a slight fund equity, as outlined below. Throughout the year, we had various empty positions and multiple students volunteering for their role leading to a large fund equity in the salary/wage/fringe line.

- Salary/Wage/Fringe: $27.825
- Maintenance & Operation/Travel: $4,994
- Administrative Charge: $2,019

7. Please list your 2023-2024 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. Ensure the Metropolitan Volunteer Program fosters long-term change in the Houston Community and on UH Campus
    a. Action Step 1: Encourage research among board members to actively seek out new community partners and identify areas of long term change in the Houston area, specifically the Third Ward
    b. Action Step 2: Pilot new signature events, and programs that give back to the UH student body and the UH campus to promote sustainable change on campus
    c. Action Step 3: Hold forums, and gather feedback through surveys from students on what long term philanthropic projects they would like to see our program engage with on campus and in the community

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

DSA Student Success 3: Foster the holistic well-being of all students through coordinated, intentional services and processes.

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

2. Innovate the way we connect students with service opportunities
    a. Action Step 1: Refine our communication practices to make participation at events more accessible to first time volunteers and improve the flow of information about our organization to the entire student body
    b. Action Step 2: Explore different kinds of service opportunities, in new areas of need, geographical and social, and that are conducted in non-traditional manners and mediums
    c. Action Step 3: Actively listen to and collaborate with Registered Student Organizations to coordinate events centered around philanthropic issues that are of particular interest to those groups.

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.

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

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

3. Elevate the board responsibilities and alter the structure of the board to meet the diverse needs of the Houston community and a rapidly changing world
    a. Action Step 1: Evaluate the current structure of the board and determine how to alter responsibilities or roles to reflect the changing needs of the Houston community and the current social climate
    b. Action Step 2: Expand our online presence through more engaging and robust social media usage that focuses on interactive content and social advocacy
    c. Action Step 3: Facilitate educational and professional development opportunities for the board that emphasize their role as not only event coordinators, but advocates for their social causes

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.

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

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

*8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2024 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 **3.5, 5.0 or 7.5%** in your total FY2024 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made. A spreadsheet has been created to assist in this process. Please include a copy of the spreadsheet with your questionnaire submission.*

Based on the percent reductions outlined in the question, below is a breakdown of the amount for each percentage:

3.5%	$3,130
5.0%	$4,471
7.5%	$6706

Based on these potential reductions, MVP would be forced to make significant cuts to the Service Nights budget. Service Nights provide a monthly event allowing students to help create a variety of donations for the Houston Community. This is an important way MVP engages the UH student population and allows students the opportunity to remain active in the community while staying within UH campus as many students may have time restrictions or logistical barriers that prevent them from leaving campus for in-person volunteering. In the past, MVP has created DIY blankets to donate to community partners during colder months, created DIY dog toys for the BARC animal shelter, packed Hygiene Kits for Star of Hope, and made Warm Weather kits for people experiencing homelessness for SEARCH. Our MVP Board has also expanded the mission of Service Nights of providing reliable, on-campus volunteering opportunities into our IMPACT Hours, which are two hours a week that students may come into our office and complete a mini-service project for one of our community partners, such as Craft Bags for the Children's Hospital, and mugs to be donated to SEARCH and earn a service hour between their classes, or in their downtime. Depending on the amount of the reduction, we would also be forced to entirely eliminate our IMPACT Hours, which has seen great attendance as a weekly pilot event. Without these programs, our students would miss the opportunity to engage at a deeper, more meaningful level with one of our social issues and have an immediate, positive impact on the community.

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 widely accessible, flexible and regularly scheduled 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 outside of their work with MVP through signature events such as Volunteer Fair and the community partner spotlights on our social media and newsletter. Thus, we value both working with and giving back to the community outside of the events that MVP coordinates. MVP recognizes the outstanding work and commitment to service other student volunteering organizations do for the community, but also acknowledges that many of them only serve specific causes, are open to only specific groups or classifications of students, or have barriers to joining such as membership fees, or lengthy application processes. We do not have such gatekeeping measures in place that prevent certain students who may lack the time or connections from serving their community and getting involved on campus, as our events are frequent enough to fit students busy schedules, and open to all students at no cost. Through our commitment to 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.

STUDENT SERVICE FEE Questionnaire

Name of Unit: Metropolitan Volunteer Program
Dept#:

Funding Sources	FY 2024 Base Budget	FY 2024 Amount of 3.5% Reduction	FY 2024 Amount of 5.0% Reduction	FY 2024 Amount of 7.5% Reduction
Student Service Fees- Base Budget	89,415	3,130	4,471	6,706

Expenses		Amount of 3.5% Reduction	Amount of 5.0% Reduction	Amount of 7.5% Reduction
Salaries and Wages				
Full-time Employee Salaries				
Student Workers Wages				
Graduate (GA/IA) Students Wages				
Fringes		-	-	-
Salaries/Fringes Total		0	0	0
Other Expenses				
Service Nights		2,952	3,000	4,827
Impact Hours			1,218	1,500
Admin Charge Enter %	6%	177	253	380
Other Expenses Total		**3,129**	**4,471**	**6,707**
TOTAL EXPENSE		3,129	4,471	6,707
Amuount left to allocate		0	(0)	(0)