Al-Madinah Cultural Center

1/24/2014

Student Services Fee Request for the 2014 - 2015 Academic Year

236 Coffman Union 300 Washington Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Address

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Phone Fax Email

“We acknowledge that the Fee Committee does not award actual dollars, but rather a penny fee that earns dollars based upon student enrollment levels. Any differences between anticipated and actual income resulting from changes in enrollment are the responsibility of the student organization, not of the Fee Committee.”

Adnan Khan
Preparer’s Name

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Co-Preparer’s Name

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Is your organization an IRS 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit? Yes ________ No ___ X ___

If yes, please provide proof of your organization’s 501(c)(3) status.

Funds are being requested for (check all that apply):


Project / Program Support: X Technical Assistance: Other (List):

Budget

- SSF Dollar Amount Requested $ 78,400
- Total Annual Organization Budget $ 92,350
- Total Program Budget (apart from General Operating) $ 84,050
Section 1: Narrative

Please use the following guidelines to provide a description of your organization:

- Brief summary of organization history, including date of establishment

This nation has seen many influxes of immigrants throughout its rich history. A group of these immigrants were Muslims from various regional and ethnic backgrounds. From Europe to South East Asia and from Africa to the Middle East, many Muslims now call America their home. These Muslims, regardless of race, ethnicity, and language, share a unique cultural bond by their religious beliefs—a culture that is most diverse in this country. They find themselves with common bonds under the long established traditions of equality and brotherhood/sisterhood.

Muslims have been students and scholars at the University of Minnesota for over a century; however, for many of these years their presence was little known or felt. After a number of years the Muslims on campus began to congregate and discover their ties with other Muslims. The need for a gathering place where Muslims could strengthen these ties as well as discover their cultural roots was imperative. Muslim students, an ever increasing number on campus, began getting recognized, yet they were still misunderstood by the majority of non-Muslims due to various acts of misrepresentation, misinterpretation, and prejudices.

The University community therefore was in need of a center and an organization that would enhance the understanding of the rich Islamic traditions and culture. In recognition of this void, the Al-Madinah Cultural Center was established in June of 1999, not only to provide a gathering place for Muslims but also to contribute to the goals of higher education and cultural experiences by University students and faculty. Soon after Al-Madinah was founded, Coffman Memorial Union was shut down for renovation. Even without a room in Coffman Union, Al-Madinah still worked to use all possible means to fulfill its mission of enhancing diversity and understanding on the University campus. The reopening of Coffman Memorial Union in January of 2003 finally provided Al-Madinah with the base it needed, and has since established itself as a primary and respected resource for Islam and Islamic culture both at the University and within the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul community.
Organization mission / vision statements, inclusive of organizational goals

Al-Madinah “will help educate the University of Minnesota community by creating a better understanding and appreciation for the diverse cultures and traditions of Islam and Muslims through educational, social, and community activities.”

Al-Madinah’s vision is two-fold: seeking to serve both the Muslim minority on campus as well as the campus community at large. Al-Madinah aims to increase awareness of campus diversity and to enhance the University experience through educational, social, and communal programming inclusively aimed at Muslims and non-Muslims. Al-Madinah is an outcome-oriented organization. The outcomes, listed in our mission, are the basis of the organization of events and initiatives.

Al-Madinah’s goals include: 1) retention and recruitment of new members to be involved in educational workshops and study circles; 2) expanding active participants among members and nonmembers; 3) working to establish accessible online as well as print materials that support Al-Madinah’s mission; 4) assisting and developing Al-Madinah’s affiliate organizations; 5) increasing the visibility of Al-Madinah on and off campus; 6) continuing to develop relationships with organizations that share similar missions.

Describe your organization’s relationship with organizations of like mission

Al-Madinah prides itself on its general body members as well as its affiliated organizations. Some of these organizations include the Muslim Students Association, Malaysian Students Association (PERSISMA), Pakistani Students Association, Somali Student Association, Persian Student Organization of Minnesota, Saudi Student House, Omani Student Union, United Arab Emirates Student Association, Bharat, Indian Student Association, Sudanese Student Union, Health Occupations Students of America, Students for Justice in Palestine, Silk Road, and the Muslim Future Physician Association. Al-Madinah has coordinated with these groups in a variety of events, as well as conducted meetings to strengthen relationships among these various student organizations. This has resulted in a dynamic set of relationships that has allowed the respective organizations’ reach to broaden and to positively affect more students’ experience on campus. Additionally, Al-Madinah actively works with the various cultural centers in Coffman Union, including: La Raza Student Cultural Center, Asian-American Student Union, American Indian Student Cultural Center, Disabled Student Cultural Center, the Black Student Union, and Minnesota International Students Association. Recently our organization has developed ties with the Greek Community, including the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, Pi Sigma Beta Fraternity, Sigma Lambda Beta Multicultural Fraternity.
In response to an ever-increasing demand for event co-sponsorship by affiliates, a Partnership System has been written. Following ratification by Al-Madinah’s general body this month, Registered Student Organizations will be given the opportunity to apply for Partnership. Partner Status will give student organizations priority for co-sponsorships, facility usage, and our advertising power among other benefits. The ultimate goal for this system is to strengthen and cement ties between Al-Madinah and the University’s student groups, helping us execute our mission on a larger scale and providing a more influential resource for students at the University.

- Illustrate the need for your organization within the university community, inclusive of how your organization meets this need

The University of Minnesota’s commitment to enhancing and promoting diversity on campus has made possible the various student organizations on campus through University affiliated centers and departments. The University of Minnesota houses renowned departments in Women’s Studies, Latin American studies, GLBT studies, African and African-American studies, Asian studies, and Jewish studies, just to name a few. Islam and Muslims have lacked this presence on campus, and misconceptions are still prevalent. In these times more than ever, the need for a center and organization to dispel rumors and myths about a faith so terribly misrepresented and misused is vital.

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase in the number of international students at the University, many of whom are Muslim and come from Islamic backgrounds. Al-Madinah provides these students with the resources necessary for an exceptional college experience consistent with Islamic principles. For instance, the past decade was marked by an influx of Somali students at the University. Many of these students are first generation and come from families who fled their war torn country; they continue to be labeled as foreign or as “other.” Al-Madinah works to bridge this gap and facilitate the transition of like communities to the campus community, creating mutually beneficial relationships. Al-Madinah also serves as a center for knowledge and discussion regarding many topics, particularly with those related to Islam. The availability for discourse among groups traditionally not equipped to discuss controversial issues has broadened students’ college experience and has enhanced their learning experiences.
Detail the student benefit derived from your organization, whether or not students utilize services.

All University members including students and faculty may benefit from the services provided by Al-Madinah whether or not they know of the organization or have been to the center. Al-Madinah’s education and outreach programs increase the diversity, tolerance, and understanding on campus, hence bringing greater unity among the vast campus community. Annual events like Fast-a-Thon, 2008’s Tony Diggs Program of the Year, and Islam Awareness Week, as well as the various lectures and events sponsored by Al-Madinah, benefit a great deal of students on campus. Very importantly, Al-Madinah has shown commitment and continues to respect the value of Student Service Fees and resisted the trend of giving stipends to its officers as many other student organizations do.

Therefore, Al-Madinah’s officers do not gain any monetary benefit from the Student Services Fees. Members of our organization noticed a trend in other student organizations of similar size this past year concerning stipends: we believe that many reduced or removed their stipends due to our example of motivated officers who work purely to further the mission of our organization. We’re proud of our legacy, whether or not it was intentional by those groups. Additionally, all students, Muslim or non-Muslim, that are a part of AMCC’s general body can get involved in one of the many events facilitated by the Al-Madinah Cultural Center.

For years before Al-Madinah was founded, Muslim students would resort to finding quiet places to pray and this became a stressful burden on many Muslims on campus. Al-Madinah has provided students the facility to quickly and comfortably pray between classes or gather with fellow students. It is also a place to get to know Muslim students. We frequently have visitors from religious groups or classes requesting information or simply looking for a chat, and therefore Al-Madinah acts as a place for dialogue and community building. A similar benefit also extends to International Students who often spend time in Al-Madinah to learn to speak English more fluently through conversing.

An additional benefit derived from our organization is the use of the center on the second floor, where a portion of the University’s budget goes to renovate and maintain an extraordinarily welcoming space. Historically, our average space usage exceeded similar student groups on the second floor since its opening in 2003, and that convinced the 2012-2013 Coffman Second Floor Advisory Committee to allocate an even larger space to Al-Madinah following the summer 2013 renovations. Our center is also the most accessible center on the second floor, open longer than every other center. As demonstrated, the services provided by Al-Madinah to the greater campus community are vast.
Moreover, Al-Madinah is committed to providing resources for students’ academic success. Events such as “Study Days” during the week of finals provide a quiet space for students to come and study. Programs such as the Leadership Development workshops and the Freshman Mentoring Program put strong emphasis on academic success. Through these programs, grades are put first and extra-curricular involvement is encouraged to supplement academic success, as extensive research has shown.

- Describe student involvement within your organization

Student involvement within Al-Madinah varies and depends on one’s level of interest. Members can be general body members by attending General Body Meetings, actively coming to the center, receiving weekly emails, etc. Students can also increase their involvement within the organization by many activities including but not limited to volunteering at events, offering insight to the board through office hours, serving on specific event committees, or serving as interns for a semester. Lastly, students can be nominated and elected to serve as board members, or be assigned to an appointed board position. Al-Madinah’s members are among the most diverse, spanning a great deal of expertise and academic disciplines. Undergraduates make up majority of the general body, but numerous Master’s and Doctorate students either serve on committees or have previously served on the AMCC board.
Section 2: Organizational Chart

- Provide a block diagram that supplements the narrative section and details more clearly the structure of the student group. The organizational chart should provide a clear picture of the reporting structure, student involvement and programmatic areas.

Section 3: Performance Report

- Use quantitative measures to indicate the degree of use and participation of services and programs within the student group. Figures should be used to demonstrate the impact the student group has on campus life and the collegiate experience. Consider the following details:
  - Participation/attendance figures
  - Survey results
  - Number of students served

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islam Awareness Week <em>Includes lecture, discussion dialogue, and workshops to educate the public of Islam and to eradicate misconceptions revolving it.</em></td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>4000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Cost 1</td>
<td>Cost 2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Fast-A-Thon&lt;br&gt;A program that encourages people who normally wouldn’t fast to fast and arranges for sponsorships to fund pledges for philanthropy.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>450</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Eid-Rageous&lt;br&gt;Celebration of the Muslim holiday Eid Al-Adha.</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>700</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Graduation Ceremony&lt;br&gt;Event to end the year, bidding farewell to graduating seniors and recognizing their achievements.</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Critical Thinking Discussions&lt;br&gt;Discussions serve to enhance the public's professionalism, activism, and community.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sisters’ Socials&lt;br&gt;A talent show displaying unique performances of females from various cultural groups on campus.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>450</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Freshmen Mentoring Program&lt;br&gt;Providing a program to get freshmen involved with upperclassmen to get advice and help that makes the student successful and achieve academic excellence.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I-Cultures Festival&lt;br&gt;An evening of cultural performances from all over the Arab and Muslim world each taking an entertaining approach to present the cultures and traditions of Islam and Muslims.</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>800</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Welcome Week Event&lt;br&gt;An event to get students informed about the many different student groups located on the second floor of Coffman Memorial Union.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Annual Welcome Back &amp; End of Year Picnic/Barbeques&lt;br&gt;One gathering at the beginning of the year for the executive board to interact with the general body and one last get-together for students before finals start and the school year comes to an end.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Meet with your Congressman&lt;br&gt;An annual event with provides students an opportunity to meet and discuss current issues with a local congressman.</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Educational Lectures and Workshops&lt;br&gt;Providing a means for students to discuss relevant issues in a safe and respectful environment.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Event Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Cost 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Monthly Volunteering</td>
<td>A monthly initiative to volunteer at a non-profit organization in the area with the goal of community involvement and bonding.</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Annual Ski Trip</td>
<td>Going to Afton Alps to have fun and bring the community closer together, as well as provide an incentive for students to volunteer and engage in their local communities.</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Welcome Back Open Houses</td>
<td>Welcomes new and current students back at the beginning of semesters with informal breakfasts or lunches.</td>
<td>800</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Brothers’ Bashes</td>
<td>Evening of activities to strengthen the community and increase involvement.</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Sports Tournaments</td>
<td>Soccer tournaments, one per semester.</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Culture Shows</td>
<td>Showcasing cultural student organizations in AMCC’s room. Also serves as a general body-meeting forum.</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Leadership Building Series</td>
<td>Develops leadership skills for underclassmen at the University of Minnesota.</td>
<td>400</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>International Bazaar</td>
<td>A showcase of many cultures in an open house style with a plethora of activities for students to engage in and international food to sample.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>College Day</td>
<td>Provides upperclassmen in high schools in Minneapolis an opportunity to view college life and encourages them to consider post-secondary education at a diverse, academically successful, and engaging University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Study Days</td>
<td>Providing a quiet space on campus with plenty of seating, tables, and electric accessibilities to study for finals.</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Breakfasts</td>
<td>Held twice a semester as a checkpoint for students, provides a safe and welcoming space for students to socialize and relax.</td>
<td>400</td>
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</table>
Section 4: Reserve Accounts

- Any student group reserve accounts must be listed and described. Include the following:
  - Name of the account(s)
  - Current amount in the account(s)
  - Purpose of the account(s)
  - Additional information the committee may find helpful

AMCC does not have a reserve account. It was closed in June of 2012 after the executive board saw no need for the account. At the end of the term, the current board will leave a small amount for the new board to help them carry out events and summer plans before receiving their SSF check in October.

Section 5: Fees Request

- State the total amount of your Student Services Fees request. Indicate whether this amount is a decrease from last year, an increase from last year, or if this is a first-time request. The Fees Committee will be particularly interested in the reasoning behind a fee increase.
- Please provide additional detail if you are requesting one-time, special or a significant funding increase as part of your SSF request. Include plausible/realistic plans, evidence that the applicant has thought through the facility, security, permitting and/or other requirements for putting on significant events, and demonstrate an understanding of the true full cost of the events or other applicant requests (where one-time, special or significant funding increases are included in the SSF application). The SSF Advisor is available to consult with applicants who wish to request one-time, special or significant funding increases.

We are requesting $78,400.00 from Student Services Fees for the term of 2014-2015. This is a significant increase from the amount received last year. We requested $66,550.00 last year and received $64,550. The award by last year’s SSF Committee signified that our budgeting was accurate, and so we decided to budget using the same methods as last year.

Our goal this year has been to streamline all events to the highest quality while maintaining maximum efficiency. Now that we’ve achieved a higher quality of our programming to provide unmatched levels of cultural education, our next goal is to increase the magnitude and quantity of the most successful events. For example, last year we budgeted for 4 Culture Shows, but we’ve increased that number for next year to 6 Shows. This is due to overwhelmingly positive feedback by the general body in terms of
engagement and education as well as the increasing demand by partner organizations for co-sponsorship of these Culture Shows. This increase of two shows results in an increase in our budget of $2000. This is to be spent mostly on entertainment and food. Room rental is not an issue because we host these shows in our existing facilities on the second floor of Coffman Memorial Union. Also, advertising costs are greatly decreased because co-sponsorship results in two organizations advertising to their memberships rather than just one. Furthermore, an increase of $3500 has been added to a combination of several events to further increase the magnitude and educational character of these events. This is most clearly seen in the budgeting of the I-Cultures Festival where an additional $2000 was added to provide more diverse and educational entertainment. Additionally, two of our most successful events, Eid-rageous and Fast-a-Thon, share a combined increase of $1500 in entertainment.

In addition, after our careful calculations, we found the opportunity to introduce new events. The first reason our fees request has significantly increased is due to the introduction of the International Bazaar, budgeted at $4050. This event will provide an ultimate showcase to many of the colorful cultures we represent through our mission and goals and ultimately make it very easy for students to be engaged in various activities and types of entertainment from around the world. For our second new event, we surveyed groups similar to our size and mission in universities across the country. We found that many of them created programming to not only engage more of their general bodies as leaders but also to bring a diversity of students to their universities. The most significant increase in our request was for a program called College Day, budgeted to be $4,500. We expect this event to engage 30 general body members as small group leaders and increase their achievements in terms of Student Development Outcomes. Additionally, we expect the event to highlight for the 400 attendees the benefits of not only pursuing post-secondary education, but also attending a University that offers diversity, community involvement, and academic success. Exact details of budget breakdown can be found in the budget sheet submitted with this document but the reasoning for each is as follows. Both events were planned with the intent of reserving Coffman’s Great Hall, as well as calculations of food necessities from other events of similar size. Since the International Bazaar requires lighter foods like finger food, cost per person is lower than College Day for which we intend a buffet style meal. Entertainment for both events would be in the form of local talent, as well as services provided by professionals like henna artists.

With respect to the magnitude of the task of distributing Student Services Fees, we request $78,400. We would like to continually strive to achieve our goals, and deduce that with our incredibly increased efficiency and new programming, we will be in a position to do so while we continue to refine finances that do not contribute to our goals.
For groups requesting more than $15,000 in annual SSF support, indicate if your organization will be either 0%, 50% or 100% operational in the summer of 2014.

- If your organization has an office, will it be open in the summer?
  
  Yes, AMCC has an office and it will be open, as all of the regular services are still provided.

- What programs and services will your student group offer in the summer?
  
  Our whole room will be open with which the prayer area, desktop computers, printing, and the library will continue to be available.

- How will students who pay the Student Services Fee in the summer benefit from your organization?
  
  They will benefit by being able to use the aforementioned services, as well as the room in general. All students are actively encouraged to utilize the space as a studying lounge at any point. Furthermore, bi-weekly activities will take place that all students are actively invited to partake in.

Section 6: External Funding

- Describe your organization’s efforts to secure funding in addition to Student Services Fee income.

  Al-Madinah values and respects the Student Services Fees that we receive, and rigorously self-evaluates all of our expenses to ensure that none of the Student Services Fees money we receive is wasted or improperly used. Feedback received annually from our Student Fees presentation is implemented the following year in our proposals to reflect this self-evaluation. With this being said, the Student Services Fees committee last year suggested that we try to secure funding from sources other than Student Services fees as Student Services Fees accounted for 98.4% of our total income. To reflect this, we have increased the amount of grants for which we have applied. This year we have made that effort to decrease our reliance on Student Services Fees, decreasing the percentage to 94.5% of the income with the help of grants. We propose in our budgeting for next year to further reduce that number to 90.3%, a total reduction of over eight percent in less than one year of budgeting.

  Al-Madinah further reduces its reliance on Student Services Fees by securing funds through sponsorships. Mentioned earlier was the event Fast-a-Thon. The basic premise for this event is that a specific dollar amount for every person who pledges to fast for a day is donated to a charity that works to eradicate hunger. We acknowledge that the Student Services Fee Income is not applicable to charity, and so we turn to the community. We ask
businesses around the Twin Cities to sponsor this event in exchange for using their services, often in the form of catering for events. For the 2012 Fast-a-thon, over $500 were sponsored by Jerusalem Market. The 2013 Fast-a-thon needed sponsorship by three businesses as we raised approximately $1000. We expect that number to increase for the 2014 Fast-a-thon this coming year, and we plan to return to these businesses for the sponsorships.

- Describe your organization’s financial need for Student Services Fee support that cannot be fulfilled with alternative sources of income.

Considering the size of Al-Madinah’s budget, the Student Services Fees Income is essential for operation. Fundraising from general body members, Twin Cities communities’ members, grants and local businesses would not provide an income that would allow Al-Madinah’s numerous high quality events to continue. Furthermore, the University places a great value of trust on undergraduate students when providing them with the budgets the SSF Committee sees fit that most middle-aged community members and business owners would be slow to support. We also would be forced to require entrance fees from general body members, a majority of whom are undergraduate students at the University. Asking them to pay that fee in addition to their tuition and SSFs would be incredibly undesirable.

Following this year of restructuring, we decided to request a larger budget because we have the necessary foundation for expansion. Our events require the budgets we request because they have been restructured to incredible efficiency. We would lose that efficiency should we be required to shift our energy to fundraising, and we would furthermore need to decrease the number of events we host. While Al-Madinah does care greatly about the quantity of its programs, the real emphasis has always been on their quality. We aim to provide a quality service or no service at all. To maintain such high standards, the organization will prioritize its proposed programs based on urgency and practicality and will opt to cancel programs with the least priority. In this process, some programs that are quite vital to the organization in particular and the University community in general, such as community involvement activities, and educational workshops may be affected. A reduction in the proposed amount would cause this organization to either contract or at the least continue to function at the same level; where the latter to us is another manifestation of the former.

Al-Madinah carefully crafts the combination of its social, educational, and community events such that they achieve its overarching goals throughout the year. Eliminating even one event is equivalent to removing a piece of a puzzle.
State the percentage of your budget that comes from Student Services Fee income and any other sources of revenue.

100%