

STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW: SPRING 2013 SUBMISSION CYCLE

Program Name: Veterans Services
Program Contact: Durella Combs

Academic Year: 2012 - 2013
Program Review Submission Date: 3/18/2013

I. Description of Program

Provide a brief description of the program and how it supports the college's [College Mission and Diversity Statements](#), [Institutional Priorities, 2008-2013](#), [5 in 5 College Strategies, Spring 2011](#), and other [institutional planning documents](#) as appropriate.

Veterans Services at College of San Mateo has been developed to provide a comprehensive array of services to all veteran students, active duty personal, members of the reserves, including their dependents and family. Primary services include certification of eligible students for GI Bill benefits, referrals to departments on campus such as financial aid, academic counseling, DSPS, and Psychological Services. In addition, referrals are made to off campus community social services such as the Veteran's Hospital, social and mental health services agencies, and other veteran professional associations. (Institutional priority 3)

The most recent service offered under the Veterans Services umbrella is the Veteran Resource and Opportunity Center (VROC) which opened spring 2012. VROC is a place where veterans can come to relax, converse, and study in a place that they feel safe and comfortable among fellow vets. While the adjustment to stringent academia is a source of stress for all populations, veterans can be especially challenged in this adjustment. The transition from military personnel to student can be difficult especially for those leaving places of conflict under constant survival concerns. VROC provides a friendly inviting environment that supports the veteran academically while providing a central location for offering critical services and referrals to this vulnerable population. (Institutional priority 1)

II. Summary of Student and Program Data

A. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Summarize recent SLO assessments, identify trends, and discuss areas in need of improvement.

SLO: 85% of GI Benefit eligible students will apply for the BOG and file the FAFSA and the students will be monitored to determine actual compliance.

ASSESSMENT: A system to monitor The % of GI Benefit eligible students that have applied for the BOG and filed for the FAFSA is not yet in place; however VROC and the veteran support services in Admission and Records, Counseling, and Financial aid have shown an even and steady improvement in the efficiency in which services are delivered and success in the monitoring of services provided GI Benefit eligible students.

SLO: GI Benefit eligible students will keep a current SEP on file and student records will be monitored to ensure compliance.

ASSESSMENT: 100% of registered GI Benefit eligible students have a SEP on file and to ensure that it is up-to-date, student records are checked at the beginning of each month. Because the students benefits are tied to a current SEP, and because compliance is checked so frequently, Counseling has provided the student with a Veteran's Communication Form that can be used to by the student to communicate with the student's counselor if a minor modification in the students schedule has occurred, thus avoiding a wait that may jeopardize the students benefits.

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A system of tracking GI Benefit eligible students and the services that they receive should continue to be developed and expanded with the assistance of institutional research.

The general trend in serving this population is to tweak our rules of service where appropriate to mesh with the requirements already required of the Veteran student and to bring support services at VROC.

In this writers opinion based on experience and observation a service offered in VROC is more likely to be used than one offered elsewhere on campus, and once a connection with a service provider is made the more likely a student will reach out to that contact outside of VROC.

B. Student Support Indicators

1. Review student program usage and discuss any differences across demographic variables. Refer to SARS, Banner, [Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness \(PRIE\)](#) reports and other data sources as appropriate.

In the interest of serving as many as possible the center is open 7:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 7:30 am to 8:00 pm on Wednesday, and 7:30 am to 11:00 am on Fridays. Hours of service may change from semester to semester to accommodate demand.

Upon signing in to VROC using the TRAC system, students have several choices to describe their intended use of the center. Choices include computer use, meet with staff, study group, and relax. Once signed in students are not required to update their reasons for using the center. Most students will sign in under one service heading, but take advantage of several of the center's services during that same visit.

There have been 4750 visits to VROC since it opened February 2012; over 1,800 of those visits are recorded under relax. Although students are drawn to the center to relax the center also provides a forum to learn about and apply for benefits, plan schedules, share experiences about classes, programs, and professors. They rely on the center as their point of contact on campus, a place to help and be helped. In this writers opinion based on experience and observation a service offered in VROC is more likely to be used than one offered elsewhere on campus, and once a connection with a service provider is made, the more likely a student will reach out to that contact outside of VROC.

College personnel representing Financial Aid and Academic Counseling spend 4 hours a week in VROC providing direct services to the students. A Veteran Affairs Representative visits the center regularly to provide advice and counseling concerning veteran's benefits. The personnel providing services both inside and outside of VROC are trained and aware of policies and regulations that govern GI Benefit eligibility. In addition to the support VROC receives from Financial Aid and Academic Counseling inside VROC, two Veteran Certifying Staff from A&R certify and perform monthly checks to student records for current SEPs in addition to their other duties, outside the center;

VROC is staffed with both veteran and non-veteran student workers, two of whom are employed in, and paid by, V.A. work-study program. All staff is equipped to help advise and refer students in school programs and procedures, as well as V.A. benefit information. Since fall 2012 a Faculty

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Coordinator has been assigned to the center full-time to help manage VROC and assist in certifying veterans for educational benefits.

A survey administered spring 2013 provides an assessment of the student satisfaction of the services offered in VROC. 40 surveys were collected.

SERVICES OFFERED:

Help with VA benefits:

78% were very satisfied, 13% were somewhat satisfied, and 8% had no opinion

Academic counseling

65% were very satisfied, 15% were somewhat satisfied, 5% were unsatisfied, and 15% had no opinion

Financial aid services

63% were very satisfied, 28% were somewhat satisfied, and 10% had no opinion

Psychological services

33% were very satisfied, 15% were somewhat satisfied, 10 % were unsatisfied, and 43% had no opinion

Access to computers

88% were very satisfied, and 10% were unsatisfied

Printing services

90% were very satisfied, 8% somewhat satisfied and 3% had no opinion

Lounging/TV area

98% were very satisfied, and 3% were somewhat satisfied

Visiting/study area

90% were very satisfied, 10% were somewhat satisfied

Food/drink area

88% were very satisfied, 5% were somewhat satisfied, and 5% had no opinion

Zen room

50% were very satisfied, 10 % were somewhat satisfied, 15% were unsatisfied, and 15% had no opinion

Over-all cleanliness

100% were very satisfied

Staff assistance

90% were very satisfied, 5% were somewhat satisfied

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Comments:

What do you like best about VROC?

“very welcoming environment, supportive & helpful people; has everything you would need.”

“nice place to relax and do homework”

“quiet early morning hours”

“great place to study and be with people who understand me”

What do you like least about VROC?

“more room for quiet study sometimes there is not enough room”

“it is small I wish it were bigger”

“sometimes it gets loud and it is difficult to study”

“I don’t see anything wrong with VROC”

What additional services would you like to see offered?

“tutoring”

“4 year transfer help”

“more of the same, service hours are not conducive to my schedule”

“more counseling hours”

C. Program Efficiency Indicators. Do we deliver programs efficiently given our resources?

Summarize trends in program efficiency. Discuss no-shows, group vs. individual delivery, etc.

approximately:

300 veterans attend CSM (some veterans do not identify themselves as such)

170 veterans (or dependents) collect GI Benefits.

4750 visits to VROC have been recorded since it opened Feb. 2012

213 individuals have visited VROC

68% of the visitors collect GI Benefits

20% of visitors are female

17% visitors overall have single digit visits (from 1 to 9 visits)

69% of the female visitors have single digit visits

89% of the veterans not collecting benefits have single digit visits

VROC has one common area with 4 adjacent rooms; two are study rooms, each equipped with 2 computers loaded with the software and support necessary for college study. All computers are Skype capable thus allowing veterans the ability to converse with friends and colleagues still serving in the military. The last room serves as an office for the Faculty Coordinator and doubles as a private meeting

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area for the counseling of students. Within the common area there are two separate living areas set up with couches and chairs for group gatherings. One living area supports conversation and group study, the other is set up with a TV and gaming capabilities, for relaxing and socializing. The center also has a quiet room for individual relaxation and mediation, and a refrigerator and microwave provide additional creature comforts. A counter area provides seating for individual study and eating, and a lap-top computer is available for in house use when needed.

Occasionally demands for computer use exceeds the 5 available computers and individual use has to be limited to a half hour.

B. Course Outline Updates(if applicable) NOT APPLICABLE

C. Website Review

Review the program's website(s) annually and update as needed.

Program contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Durella Combs	Fall 2013
	Tab to add rows

III. Student Learning Outcomes Scheduling and Alignment

A. Course SLO Assessment (if applicable) NOT APPLICABLE

B. Program SLO Assessment

A system of tracking GI Benefit eligible students and the services that they receive should continue to be developed and expanded; the assistance of institutional research will be sought out.

C. SLO Alignment (if applicable) NOT APPLICABLE

IV. Additional Factors

Discuss additional factors that impact the program, including, as applicable, changes in student populations, state-wide initiatives, transfer requirements, advisory committee recommendations, legal mandates, workforce development and employment opportunities, community needs. See [Institutional Research](#) as needed.

As the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down the number of veterans leaving the military will increase. An estimation of 68,000 vets will be returning from the mid-east by December 2014, up to

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20% are coming to CA (David Joseph, Veterans Summit II, Redwood City 2012). According to vba.va.gov/reports, 25% of veterans go to school within the first year, and more than ½ of all CA veterans receiving GI Benefits attend Community College (Fast Facts CC League of CA).

The 5 most prevalent degrees pursued by veterans are criminal justice, nursing, business administration, political science, and management (vba.va.gov/reports). This is important to CSM because of our strong programs of study in these areas and the fact that GI benefit receiving students at CSM receive the highest housing allowance from the V.A., making CSM an attractive choice of schools. Some additional relevant facts from CC League of CA are that 80% of firefighters, law enforcement officers and EMT are credentialed at Community Colleges and 70% of nurses in CA are educated at Community Colleges.

California is one of 5 states with the highest population of veterans. The National Center for Veteran Analysis and Statistics states that \$15,301,000.00 was spent on education benefits in San Mateo Co. in 2011.

Not only veterans are eligible for VA education benefits; active service members and the children and spouses of veterans and active service members can also be eligible to receive benefits. Eligibility for education benefits don't expire till 15 years from the last day of active service and even if expired there are programs for the unemployed veteran between ages 35 and 60, that offer benefits up to \$17,600.00 to be used for obtaining AA/AS Degrees and Certificates.

Besides money given for fees and tuition there are allowances for housing, books and materials, and tutoring services. The State and the County benefit from the stability and money brought to the community by veteran students and their families.

V. Institutional Planning

A. Results of Plans and Actions

Describe results, including measurable outcomes, from plans and actions in recent program reviews

GOAL: Establish a Veteran Resource Center
OUTCOME: VROC opened February 2012.

GOAL: Monitor the effectiveness of VROC
OUTCOME: A survey administered spring 2013 and detailed under provides an assessment of the student satisfaction of the services offered in VROC

GOAL: Secure VA or CSM Work study Funds to support VROC
OUTCOME: Two veteran students have been hired under the VA Work Study Program; fall 12 two students were hired under CSM Work Study and in spring 13 one student of those hired remains under CSM Work Study.

GOAL: Secure a Program Services Coordinator veterans Services staff position
OUTCOME: Since fall 2012 a Faculty Coordinator has been assigned to the center full-time to help manage VROC and assist in certifying veterans for educational benefits. The person serving in this capacity is on loan; this position is not permanent. A Faculty Coordinator or Program Service Coordinator is necessary for smooth operation of VROC and a position needs to be secured to ensure

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VROC is sustainable and maintains the quality of service and attention it needs to properly serve CSM veteran students, a position will be requested.

GOAL: Ensure that counselors are trained and aware of policies and regulations that govern GI Benefit eligibility.

OUTCOME: At least one counselor is aware of the intricacies involved in ensuring that veteran students are properly informed and registered for courses that fulfill the student's educational goals.

GOAL: Ensure veteran students are aware of and apply for the BOG and FAFSA

RESULT: A Financial Liaison is available 2 hours per week in VROC. Students are made aware of the importance of filing for these opportunities in counseling orientation and by the VROC staff.

GOAL: Operation Homecoming, a Learning Community for Veterans, consisting of an English 838 class in conjunction with a Career 122 class was developed and offered fall 12

RESULT: The classes filled but only a handful of veterans were registered. This is an excellent illustration of the difficulties of gathering a certain population of students together within today's commuter student body.

GOAL: Continue to bring awareness of veteran's issues as they relate to transiting from active military duty to student life.

RESULT: Training for staff and faculty is ongoing. The grant funded CSM CARES program has developed, offered, and will continue to offer workshops for faculty and staff that in part deal with the difficulties veterans face as they relate to transiting into student life. A workshop, Welcome Home Veterans on Campus, consisting of a panel of CSM veteran students will be offered late spring 13 to help staff and faculty who attend develop a better understanding of the veteran student.

B. Program Vision

What is the program's vision for sustaining and improving student learning and success during the *next six years*? Make connections to the [College Mission and Diversity Statements](#), [Institutional Priorities, 2008-2013](#), and other [institutional planning documents](#) as appropriate. Address trends in the SLO assessment results and student program usage and data noted in Section II. Summary of Student and Program Data.

[Note: Specific plans to be implemented in the *next year* should be entered in Section V.C.]

Click here to enter program vision narrative

1. To guide future faculty and staff development initiatives, describe the professional enrichment activities that would be most effective in carrying out the program's vision to improve student success.

Faculty and staff continue to attend campus based and outside institutional training sessions and workshops centering on student veterans needs

Continue to address and expand the student services necessary to support the academic and professional success of veterans students specifically filling an immediate need for basic skills academic support. 40% of the student veterans who stopped attending CSM between fall 13 and spring 13 left CSM under a dark cloud of dismissal or probation 16 % of returning student veterans are still under this cloud.

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2. To guide future collaboration across student services, learning support centers, and instructional programs, describe the interactions that would help the program to improve student success.

Partnerships:

with Academic Counseling:

- to continue to train counselors in the particulars of helping the BI Benefit eligible students
- run veteran only orientation workshop may help to form veteran learning partnerships or communities

with the VA:

- to insure the student veteran is getting all the opportunities and benefits due him/her

with the American Legion:

- continue to partner with the legion to develop internships and other opportunities for student veterans

3. To guide the [Institutional Planning Committee](#) (IPC) in long-range planning, discuss any major changes in resource needs anticipated in the *next six years*. Examples: faculty retirements, equipment obsolescence, space allocation. Leave sections blank if no major changes are anticipated. Specific resource requests for the next academic year should be itemized in Section VI.A below.

Faculty: At present a faculty coordinator position is needed to supervise and coordinate the running of VROC. The center cannot be left to be student run and the position calls for a nurturing role of an educator or faculty member. The VA representative, who visits all the local school run veteran centers states that CSM has one of the best veteran centers on the peninsula. Thus CSM VROC serves a model for bay area vet centers; several groups have been to visit VROC to gain insight and design ideas to help shape their school's veteran centers. We have a model center; our area offers the GI Benefit eligible veteran the highest basic housing allowance and our programs mesh with veteran's needs, in order to maintain our leadership we need to nurture a culture in VROC that only a full time faculty member can bring.

Equipment and Technology:

As VROC continues to grow more computers will be needed

Instructional Materials: Click here to enter long-range planning: [Instructional Materials narrative](#)

Classified Staff:

As the population of student veterans grow our already overburdened staff will need additional help

Facilities:

As the overseas conflicts end VROC will need more room to continue to offer services to a growing population

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C. Plans and Actions to Improve Student Success

Prioritize the plans to be carried out next year to sustain and improve student success. Briefly describe each plan and how it supports the [Institutional Priorities, 2008-2013](#). For each plan, list actions and measurable outcomes.

Plan 1

Title:
Algebra Skills (priorities 1, 2, 3)

Description
run an algebra study group lead by tutor inside VROC

Action(s)	Completion Date	Measurable Outcome(s)
find willing volunteer or the funds to hire a tutor to run an algebra study group	Fall 13	Click here to enter measurable outcome
find veterans wanting algebra tutoring and form study group	First week Fall 13	Click here to enter measurable outcome
Run algebra study group	Fall 13	student survey & grade improvement

Plan 2

Title: Veteran counseling orientation workshop (Priorities 1,2,3)

Description: coordinate with Counseling to run a veteran only orientation this will help veterans form bonds with other veterans during first semester of school and also offer opportunity for veteran to enroll in same sections of courses during the SEP planning portion of workshop and thus starting learning partnerships, if not communities, with VROC offering support and continuity in building these unions

Action: Coordinate with Counseling Summer 13 Fill veteran only workshops

Plan 3

Title:
VA psych services partnership (priorities 1,3)

Description

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form a partnership with VA to provide an visiting psychologist to VROC (priority 3)

Action(s)	Completion Date	Measurable Outcome(s)
form a partnership and schedule visiting hours	Spring 14	student use and survey
	Choose Year or Semester/Year	Click here to enter measurable outcome
	Choose Year or Semester/Year	Click here to enter measurable outcome

Plan 4

Visiting Therapy dog (priority1,3)

Have scheduled professional service therapy dog visits to VROC

Partnership formed awaiting dog to finish training Fall13 student use and survey

For additional plans, cut/paste from above and insert here. Or add an additional page. Number your additional plans accordingly.

[Note: Itemize in Section VI.A. Any additional resources required to implement plans.]

VI. Resource Requests

A. Itemized Resource Requests

List the resources needed for ongoing program operation and to implement the plans listed above.

Faculty

Full-time faculty requests (identify specialty if applicable)	Number of positions
Faculty Coordinator VROC	One

Complete [Full-Time Faculty Position Request Form](#) .

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Description of reassigned or hourly time for prioritized plans	Plan #(s)	Cost

Equipment and Technology

Description (for ongoing program operation)	Cost

Description (for prioritized plans)	Plan #(s)	Cost

Instructional Materials

Description (for ongoing program operation)	Cost

Description (for prioritized plans)	Plan #(s)	Cost

Classified Staff

Description (for ongoing program operation)	Cost

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Description (for prioritized plans)	Plan #(s)	Cost

Facilities

For immediate or routine facilities requests, submit a [CSM Facility Project Request Form](#).

Description (for prioritized plans)	Plan #(s)	Cost

B. Cost for Prioritized Plans

Use the resources costs from section VI.A. above to provide the total cost for each plan.

Plan #	Plan Title	Total Cost
1		
2		
	For additional plans, add rows and number accordingly.	