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Student Services Program Review

Program Name: **Veterans Services**

Program Contact: **Villareal, Henry**

Academic Year: **2013-2014**

Status: **Submitted**

1. 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 Program Planning](#) as appropriate.

1. Description

Veterans Services at College of San Mateo envelops a variety of services that are designed to support current and former military personnel. Primary services include certification of eligible students for GI Bill benefits, referrals to departments on campus such as financial aid, counseling, Learning Center, 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)

Of significant distinction is the establishment of the Veteran Resource and Opportunity Center (VROC) which recently celebrated its two-year anniversary. The VROC opened in spring 2012 and has become the gathering place for CSM's veteran students. The Center provides for a comfortable environment that promotes a sense of camaraderie amongst the veterans. Essentially, the VROC is a "safe zone." In addition, it is a place where veterans can relax, watch television, and study. Further, the VROC has expanded its services to include financial aid advising, academic and personal counseling, and career planning. The VROC is evolving into a one-stop service center. (Institutional priorities 1 & 3)

2. Summary of Student and Program Data

A. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Reflect on recent SLO assessment results for courses and degrees and certificates offered by the program.

SLO: 85% of GI Benefit eligible veterans will complete and submit the FAFSA.

Though not reaching the pre-established percentage, 112 or 66% of veterans applied for financial aid by completing the FAFSA.

SLO: 90% of GI Bill eligible veterans will apply for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver (BOGFW).

Interestingly, only 32 or 19% of veterans received a BOGFW.

Assessment

Despite increased efforts to encourage veterans to learn about and apply for financial aid, only 112 out of 169 veterans did so. Increased efforts included having a Financial Aid Office representative present at the VROC once per week as well as having the VROC coordinator encouraging the students to apply.

Of the 112 veterans who submitted the FAFSA, 58 or 34 % of all veterans receiving GI Bill benefits were awarded federal financial aid. 57 or 34% of veterans did not apply for financial aid.

With only part-time, temporary personnel which includes an hourly temp for 20 hours per week and several work study students it is a challenge to fully implement a plan that will ensure all veteran students are aware of the availability of financial aid and even more difficult to ensure they apply.

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 generally open Monday thru Thursday from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm and 7:30 am to 12 noon on Fridays. Hours of service may vary given the limited staffing that is comprised of an hourly temp and work study students.

It is recognized that the VROC is readily used by veteran students. However, the SARS TRAK computer was inoperable for several weeks and current SARS Tracking does not seem to be correctly capturing student visits. Assistance from ITS will be sought to assess this issue. However, to provide some evidence of how the VROC is being utilized, data from last year's Program Review is included below.

Veteran's Center Visitations

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.

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 from the Peninsula Veteran Center 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.

Student Satisfaction Survey Results highlight that veteran students utilizing the VROC are generally very satisfied. A selected group of responses from the survey are included below.

VROC Satisfaction Survey 2013-14

Satisfied with Staff Assistance

95% Strongly Agree; 5% Agree

Satisfied with Staff Knowledge

90% Strongly Agree; 10% Agree

Satisfied with Financial Aid Assistance

85% Strongly Agree; 7% agree; 7% disagree

Staff Assistance Overall

95% Strongly Agree; 5% Agree

Satisfied with VROC Hours of Operation

87% Strongly Agree; 10% Agree; 3% Disagree

I know where to find information about benefits or about school

83% Strongly Agree; 5% Agree; 7% Disagree; 5% Strongly Disagree

Overall Satisfaction with VROC Services

98% Strongly Agree; 2% Agree

In what ways has the VROC helped you personally?

"Gives me a place where I can talk to people with similar experience."

"It's nice to have people on campus who can navigate the VA bullshit."

"I am truly grateful to the staff in all areas for assisting vets as a whole."

"Helped me get my Pell Grant, and get my VA benefits."

"Education benefits. Computers and fax."

"Being around other vets is very beneficial to me. Helps with my PTSD."

Comments

"Awesome place to study."

"Helped me to know what benefits are and how to get help."

"Extend the Center hours."

"It gives us vets a sense of belonging as we don't connect with 19 year old civilians."

"Love this Center."

"Thankful for the veterans' resources. Thank you."

2. Discuss any differences in student program usage across modes of service delivery.

Veteran students utilize the VROC for a variety of purposes. Prior SARS data highlight that the majority of veterans come to the center primarily to relax. However, a good number of students also utilize the various services that are provided including meeting with the Financial Aid representative, schedule appointments to meet with the counselor, and on a more limited basis meet with the psychological services counselor. In addition, SARS Trak data does capture additional purposes of visiting the VROC and include to use computers; meet with staff; to meet with study group; and to meet with a VA representative.

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.

Overall, the VROC is most efficient given that there are presently no full-time, permanent staff. Rather the center is staffed by one hourly temp and several work study students. In addition, a financial aid staff member and counselor spend about 4 hours per week at the Center. While this minimal staffing is efficient albeit frugal, the needs of CSM's veteran students are generally being met. The shortfall is the lack of a permanent, full-time staff member who can be retained and provide some consistency in terms of service and attention to the veteran students' needs. During the two years the Center has been operating, it has yet to be staffed with a full-time staff member. At one point, there was a faculty member assigned to the Center four days per week but again not full-time nor a permanent position. Thus, yes, the program is efficient but only because of dedicated part-time, hourly and student staff.

The VROC as a facility is relatively well-suited in providing appropriate resources to veteran students. There are computers four desk top computers available, two laptops, a printer, fax and copy machine. In addition, comfortable furniture and a television contribute to a multi-purpose facility that can be used for relaxing, studying, and meeting with staff.

3. 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.

It is expected that the number of veterans enrolling at CSM may increase due to the pending troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. As well, the robust VA monthly housing allowance, one of the highest in the nation, is a lucrative draw to CSM. A very difference factor that can impact the VROC and the college is the potential mental and physical challenges that some veteran students may bring with them. PTSD and other war inflicted wounds may cause unexpected disruptions at the VROC and as well possibly in the classroom. The college needs to be prepared to contend with these types of issues. CSM should continue to provide workshops and other trainings for faculty and staff so that there is some preparation for contending with these issues.

4. Planning

A. Results of Program Plans and Actions

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

Goal: Celebrate the Two-year Anniversary of the VROC

Outcome: Accomplished. A celebration of the two-year existence of the Center was held on February 20.

Goal: Monitor the Effectiveness of the VROC

Outcome: A Satisfaction Survey was administered during the Fall 2013 semester. Feedback is generally very positive.

Goal: Maintain Federal and VA Work Study Support for Veteran Student Employees

Outcome: Six of the eight student employees are on Federal or VA Work Study. Seven of the student employees are veterans.

Goal: Maintain existing financial aid and counselor support.

Outcome: The VROC continues to have regular financial aid and counseling staff presence. Approximately four hours per week are dedicated to financial aid and counseling staffing.

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 Program Planning](#) as appropriate. Address trends in the SLO assessment results and student program usage and data noted in Section 2.

[Note: Specific plans to be implemented in the *next year* should be entered in Section 4C.]

The vision for the VROC is to not only sustain existing services but to expand upon it provides to veteran students.

1. First and foremost is to secure a full-time Program Services Coordinator. The two-year old center has yet to have a permanent staff member assigned to operate and manage the Center. There is the need to develop staffing consistency so that veteran students know that they are not only welcomed but will have someone who will dig in roots and provide them needed guidance and direction. The Center cannot continue to operate with only an hourly temp and student workers. It is imperative that a permanent, full-time staff person be hired. Institutional Priority 3.

2. Maintain workshops and other types of institutional training that educates the college's faculty and staff to veteran students issues and needs. It is important that the college continue to sustain the programming and events that have been supported by the CSM Cares Mental Health Grant. By being aware and cognizant of this student population's needs, the college's faculty and staff can contribute to their academic success. Institutional Priority 1.

3. Continue to monitor the academic progress of veteran students. While many of the students are succeeding, there are those who leave the college due to lack of academic progress. The college must expand its efforts to track and as appropriate incorporate intrusive

measures to support the academic success of these veteran students. Institutional Priority 1.

4. Establish Learning Communities for Veterans. Providing classroom experiences in which veterans comprise the majority of students in the class will allow them to develop a sense of camaraderie, allow them to form study groups, and also allow them to inform and educate their non-veteran classmates and teachers. Institutional Priority 1.

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.

See above Program Vision.

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:

Academic Counseling:

- Continue to train counselors in the particulars of helping the BI Benefit eligible students
- Offer veteran only orientation workshops that can help to form veteran learning partnerships or communities

Financial Aid

- Expand the hours of the Financial Aid representative at the VROC
- Sponsor financial aid workshops at the VROC

Learning Centers

- Provide tutoring services at the VROC

Community Service Organizations:

- Ensure the student veteran is getting all the opportunities and benefits due him/her
- Sustain the weekly visits by the VA representative to the VROC
- Continue to partner with the American Legion develop internships and other opportunities for student veterans
- Continue to publicly acknowledge publicly the financial support they provide to the VROC

3. To guide the **Institutional Planning Budget Committee** (IPBC) in long-range planning, identify any major changes in resource needs anticipated during the next three years. Examples: faculty retirements, equipment obsolescence, space allocation.

Faculty

Resource Needs

- Full-time Program Services Coordinator to manage and operate the VROC.
- 3-4 additional lap top computers
- Replacement of All-in-one Copy, printer, fax machine
- Expanded space to accommodate the projected increase in the number of war veterans enrolling at CSM

Equipment and Technology

1. Desk top computers- Existing computers should last for another 2-3 years but will eventually need to be replaced.
2. All-in-one copy, printer, fax machine will need to be replaced.
3. Three laptop computers to meet expanding need
4. Three desktop printers are needed to fulfill printing needs.

Instructional Materials

N/A

Classified Staff

Full-Time Program Services Coordinator

- Manage the Center
- Supervise student staff
- Manage the VROC budget
- Network with community service organizations
- Coordinate and promote awareness of veteran student needs
- Veteran Liaison to faculty and staff
- Coordinate workshops and other training for faculty and staff relating to veteran students' needs
- Identify and secure needed services for veteran students

Facilities

Consider expanding the VROC if indeed projected increase in veteran student enrollment becomes a reality.

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. (Plans may extend beyond a single year.)

- Tutoring in Algebra

-Provide small group study/tutoring sessions.

Measurable Outcome: Enhance success in algebra

Institutional Priority 1: Student Success

- Tutoring in other subject areas

-Identify subject areas that are most needed by veteran students

Measurable Outcome: Increased student success

Institutional Priority 1: Student Success

- Veteran Counseling Orientation

-Coordinate with Counseling to provide a weekly orientation targeted to veterans

Measurable Outcome: Camaraderie; veteran to veteran support

Institutional Priority 1: Student Success

5. Resource Requests

Itemized Resource Requests

List the resources needed for ongoing program operation.

Classified Staff

Description	Cost
Program Services Coordinator	80,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the Center • Supervise student staff • Manage the VROC budget • Network with community service organizations • Coordinate and promote awareness of veteran student needs on campus • Veteran Liaison to faculty and staff • Coordinate workshops and other training for faculty and staff relating to veteran students' needs • Identify and secure needed services for veteran students 	

Facilities

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

Description	Cost
N/A	

6. Program Maintenance

A. Course Outline Updates

Review the [course outline update record](#). List the courses that will be updated in the next academic year. For each course that will be updated, provide a faculty contact and the planned submission month. See the [Committee on Instruction website](#) for [course submission instructions](#). Contact your division's [COI representatives](#) if you have questions about submission deadlines.

Courses to be updated	Faculty contact	Submission month
N/A		

B. Website Review

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

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Jeremy Mileo, Chequita Williams, Henry Villareal	Periodically updated as needed.

C. SLO Assessment Contacts

Faculty contact(s)	Date of next review/update
Henry B. Villareal	March 2015