

2014-2015 Student Services Program Review

Program Name: **Veterans Services**

Program Contact: **Villareal, Henry**

Academic Year: **2014-2015**

Status: **Submitted for review**

Updated on: **03/30/2015 04:03 PM**

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, 2013/14-2015/16, 5 in 5 College Strategies, Spring 2011**, and other **Institutional Program Planning** as appropriate.

1. Description

Veterans Services at College of San Mateo provides a variety of support services targeting current and former military personnel. Primary services include certification of veteran students and their families 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 three-year anniversary. The VROC opened in spring 2012 and has become the gathering place for CSM's veteran students. The Center encapsulates a comfortable and relaxing environment that allows for a sense of camaraderie amongst the veterans. Essentially, the VROC serves as a "safe zone" for this specific student population. In addition, it is a place where veterans can receive tutoring, participate in study groups, use computers (lap and desk top computers are available), take time for personal reflection in the Zen Room, watch television, and enjoy coffee and other beverages as well as snacks that have been donated. Further, the VROC has expanded its services to include financial aid advising, academic and personal counseling, writing a resume, 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

1. Reflect on recent SLO assessment results for the department/unit. Identify trends and discuss areas in need of improvement.

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

Though not reaching the pre-established percentage, 84 or 53.8 percent of veterans applied for financial aid by completing the FAFSA. This was a significant decrease from the previous year when 112 or 66% of GI Bill eligible veteran students applied for financial aid.

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

Interestingly, only 33 or 21.4 percent of GI Bill eligible veterans applied for the BOGFW. This figure is similar to last year's data in which 32 or 19% of veterans received a BOGFW.

Assessment

Despite sustained efforts to encourage veterans to learn about and apply for financial aid, only 84 out of 156 veterans did so. This is in comparison to last year's number of 112 out of 169. It is difficult to fully ascertain why there was a significant decrease in this year's financial aid applicants, however, one probable reason is the lack of full-time staff who can periodically monitor who has and has not applied. It can

be also noted that even though a financial aid representative is available at the Center a few hours a week, this is not sufficient to fully promote the availability and benefits of applying for financial aid.

Of the 84 GI Bill benefit eligible veterans who received federal and state aid, 51 or 60.7 percent submitted the FAFSA and received a combination of aid including a Pell Grant and the BOGFW. 72 or 46 percent of veterans did not apply for financial aid.

With only a part-time, temporary staff member working 18 hours per week for most of the 2014-15 academic year and several work study students who often worked unsupervised, it has been 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. Thus, even now that the VROC has a permanent .48% OAI at 18 hours per week (as of February 2015), it is critical that the current part-time support be replaced with a full-time Program Services Coordinator who can amongst other comprehensive responsibilities coordinate the promotion of financial aid and who can more readily track of who has and has not applied for aid. As well, with the assistance of the financial aid representative and the student staff, a robust financial aid campaign can be developed to promote the availability and benefits of applying for financial aid.

2. Describe any additional methods used to assess program SLOs and reflect on the results of those assessments.

Anecdotal evidence provides that veteran students chose not to submit the FAFSA because it was too complicated and/or required too much documentation. For some others, they believed they didn't need the aid as their current GI Bill benefits were sufficient.

To better document the reasons for not applying for financial aid, VROC staff will develop a short survey focusing on why students did or did not apply for financial aid.

3. Examine the program to GE alignment. Which GE SLOs are supported or reinforced by the department/unit SLOs. What do the assessment results for the department/unit/ SLOs reveal about student attainment of the GE SLOs?

The VROC SLOs are most aligned with the Institutional GE SLOs of Quantitative Skills and Critical Thinking. This alignment is demonstrated by those students who completed and submitted the FAFSA and/or who applied for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver/ Both application processes entail some quantitative reasoning and critical thinking skills. Thus, those students who submitted the FAFSA and/or applied for the BOGFW demonstrated their ability to use both quantitative and critical thinking skills.

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 has been comprised of an hourly temp and more recently with a permanent .48 FTE Office Assistant, and several work study students.

Veteran's Center Visitations

From July 1, 2014 thru March 20, 2015 there were a total of 3,277 visits captured by SARS TRAK for a total of 2639 hours spent by students in the VROC. 687 students visited the VROC to complete homework, 22 to use a laptop, and 3 students identified their visit for the purpose of using Skype, 17 met with the financial aid representative, and 483 met at the Center to participate in a study group. Also, 2,022 students visited the Center to relax. Overall, there were 397 unduplicated count visits to the VROC. More recently, with the establishment of the NPower partnership, an additional 473 veterans participating in this vocational computer skills development based-program utilized the Center.

College personnel representing Financial Aid and Academic Counseling spend 4 hours a week in the 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. In fact, the latest representative is a recent CSM graduate who used to frequent the VROC as a student! The personnel providing services both inside and outside of the VROC are trained and aware of policies and regulations that govern GI Benefit

eligibly. In addition to the support VROC receives from Financial Aid and Academic Counseling inside the VROC, two Veteran Certifying Staff from A&R certify and perform monthly checks to student records for current SEPs and to assess academic progress. With a permanent Office Assistant now on staff, she is learning about the GI Bill certification process, basic financial aid information, and increasing her skill level with the Banner SIS.

A Student Satisfaction Survey was not conducted this year but the plan is to develop a student satisfaction survey at the end of the spring 2015 semester and then every semester thereafter. Results of the surveys will be incorporated into the next Program Review cycle. The 2013-14 Student Satisfaction Survey Results are included below and 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 way 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.

As captured by SARS TRAK, veteran students utilize the VROC for a variety of purposes with the majority of students finding the Center as a "safe zone" given that the majority of them use the Center primarily to relax. However, as also documented by SARS TRAK many veterans use the Center to meet with study groups, to use computers, to complete homework, to meet with the Financial Aid representative, to schedule appointments to meet with the counselor, and on a more limited basis meet with the psychological services counselor.

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 very efficient given that there are presently no full-time, permanent staff. As of February this year, the VROC now has a part-time (48% FTE) Office Assistant. In addition, the Center continues to be staffed primarily by 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 consistency in terms of service and attention to the veteran students' needs. During the three years the Center has been operating, a full-time staff member has yet to be approved. In its second year of operation, a faculty member had been appointed to the Center four days per week which was the equivalent of 80 percent FTE.

The VROC as a facility is relatively well-suited to providing appropriate resources to veteran students. For student use, there are four desk top computers available, two laptops and an all-in-one 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. There is also a multi-purpose room that is interchangeably used as a Zen Room and as a study room.

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 the ongoing conflicts including the war in Afghanistan. As well, the robust VA monthly housing allowance, one of the highest in the nation, is a lucrative draw for veteran students to CSM. A very significant 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, other brain injuries, as well as other war inflicted wounds may cause unexpected disruptions at the VROC and as well possibly in the classroom. The college is aware of these potential problems and has held various trainings to address these needs. Through its CSM CARES program and with Student Equity and SSSP funding, CSM will be able to continue to provide workshops and other trainings for faculty and staff.

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 Three-year Anniversary of the VROC

Outcome: Accomplished. A celebration of the three-year existence of the Center was held in February 2015.

Goal: Monitor the Effectiveness of the VROC

Outcome: A Satisfaction Survey was not administered during the current academic year, however, anecdotal assessment is that veteran students are generally satisfied with the VROC. A Student Satisfaction Survey will be conducted in Fall 2015 to assess satisfaction levels and to determine what other services students might be seeking.

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

Outcome: All student employees are on Federal or VA Work Study. All 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 counselor 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, 2013/14-2015/16**, 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 sustain existing services and to assess through a student satisfaction survey what other services student veterans are seeking.

1. Still first and foremost is the need to secure a full-time Program Services Coordinator for the Center. The now three-year old Center cannot excel as an independent student services department without a dedicated, full-time, appropriate level staff position such as that of a Program Services Coordinator. The Office Assistant has a very limited scope of responsibility as defined by its classification which limits the staff member's ability to carry out higher levels of tasks and responsibilities. An Office Assistant at a .48 percent assignment is not sufficient to carry out the many coordinator and operational needs of the Center including certifying veteran students for GI Bill benefits, managing a budget, supervising student staff, and conducting outreach to community organizations. Presently, on a daily basis student workers are unsupervised by a college staff member for nearly half the hours the Center is open. Institutional Priority 3.

2. Maintain workshops and other types of institutional training that educates the college's faculty and staff to veteran student's 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. As also previously noted, a full-time Program Services Coordinator is invaluable to supporting and coordinating the aforementioned training. 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 a Learning Community 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. The inclusion of a full-time Program Services Coordinator can assist with the development of the learning community and help promote this community to veterans. 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 immediate response above for 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 assisting veteran students and the nuances of sustaining GI Bill Benefits eligibility
- Offer veteran only orientation workshops that can help to form veteran learning partnerships or communities

Transfer Center

- Have college and university transfer representatives spend time at the VROC
- Continue to have the Transfer Coordinator periodically share transfer information at the VROC

Financial Aid

- Continue the weekly presence 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 to develop internships and other opportunities for student veterans
- Publicly acknowledge the financial support individuals and organizations 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

- Dedicated part-time counselor to serve the needs of veteran students

Equipment and Technology

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

Instructional Materials

N/A

Classified Staff

Full-Time Program Services Coordinator, Veterans' Services

- Manage the daily operations of the VROC
- Supervise student staff; direct and coordinate the work of student assistants
- Manage the VROC budget
- Conduct college orientation for veteran students
- Liaison between program students and the Veteran's Administration
- Certify with the Veterans Administration GI Bill eligible students
- Monitor veteran student's academic progress
- Ensure veteran students about financial aid and scholarship opportunities
- Exchange information with other educational institutions, community and business representatives, vendors, and governmental agencies and the general public regarding programs, services, eligibility requirements, policies, timelines and required forms
- Travel to various off-site locations to confer with veteran and community organizations, governmental agencies, businesses and other entities to recruit veteran students to College of San Mateo
- Conduct outreach activities to promote CSM and the VROC
- Plans, conducts and participates in job fairs, and program services in conjunction with management, faculty and other staff
- Network with community service organizations that can support veteran students and their families
- Coordinate and promote awareness of veteran student needs to college faculty and staff
- Serves as liaison between the VROC and various instructional and student services departments
- Identify and secure needed services for veteran students
- Coordinate workshops and other training for faculty and staff relating to veteran students' needs
- Participates in planning and implementation meetings with college and outside groups and representatives
- Plans joint events with other college departments and programs such as counseling, financial aid, transfer center, and with outside business and community representatives such as the VA, American Legion, etc.
- Serve as a liaison to the District's Foundation by helping to coordinate financial donations to the VROC
- Interprets language on student forms and printed information; refers students to community, business, governmental and other resources
- Assists students in determining existing job skills and the skill requirements of various career opportunities
- Refers students to career and other counselors, instructional programs and to other college offices as appropriate
- Enters, modifies and retrieves online data
- Uses a variety of software to compose, format and prepare correspondence, memoranda, publicity materials, surveys, brochures, flyers, bulletins, reports, presentations, and other materials
- Sets up and maintains confidential and other files
- Plans and coordinates lay-out, graphics, photography and other artwork, editing, printing, multimedia enhancements, web page information, distribution and other services in conjunction with other staff, students and/or vendors as appropriate.

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, 2013/14-2015/16**. 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; enhance engagement with the college
Institutional Priority 1: Student Success

5. Resource Requests

Itemized Resource Requests

List the resources needed for ongoing program operation.

Faculty

NOTE: To make a faculty position request, complete **Full-time Faculty Position Request Form** and notify your Dean. This request is separate from the program review.

Full-time faculty requests	Number of positions

N/A	

Equipment and Technology

Description	Cost
3-4 laptop computers	4,800
3 desktop printers	1,200

Instructional Material

Description	Cost
N/A	

Classified Staff

Description	Cost
<p>Program Services Coordinator, Veteran's Services</p>	<p>60,000 plus benefits (Currently an OAI is budgeted thus actual salary expenditure will be reduced by the elimination of the OAI position salary of approximately \$24,000)</p>
<p>Full-Time Program Services Coordinator, Veterans' Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the daily operations of the VROC • Supervise student staff; directs and coordinates the work of student assistants • Manage the VROC budget • Conduct college orientation for veteran students • Liaison between program students and the Veteran's Administration • Certify with the Veterans Administration GI Bill eligible students • Exchange information with other educational institutions, community and business representatives, vendors, and governmental agencies and the general public regarding programs, services, eligibility requirements, policies, timelines and required forms • Travel to various off-site locations to confer with veteran and community organizations, governmental agencies, businesses and other entities to recruit students to College of San Mateo • Makes presentations to small and large groups as a program and college representative • Conduct outreach activities to promote CSM and the VROC • Plans, conducts and participates in job fairs, and program services in conjunction with management, faculty and other staff • Network with community service organizations that can support veteran students and their families • Coordinate and promote awareness of veteran student needs to college faculty and staff • Serves as liaison between the VROC and various instructional and student services departments • Identify and secure needed services for veteran students • Coordinate workshops and other training for faculty and staff relating to veteran students' needs • Participates in planning and implementation meetings with college and outside groups and representatives • Plans joint events with other college departments and programs, and with outside business and community representatives • Interprets language on student forms and printed information; refers students to community, business, governmental and other resources • Assists students in determining existing job skills and the skill requirements of various career opportunities • Refers students to career and other counselors, instructional programs and to other college offices as appropriate • Enters, modifies and retrieves online data • Uses a variety of software to compose, format and prepare correspondence, memoranda, publicity materials, surveys, brochures, flyers, bulletins, reports, presentations, and other materials 	

Sets up and maintains confidential and other files

- Plans and coordinates lay-out, graphics, photography and other artwork, editing, printing, multimedia enhancements, web page information, distribution and other services in conjunction with other staff, students and/or vendors as appropriate.

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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
Carolina Avalos, 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 2016

