

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: Veterans Services 2010-2011

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

College of San Mateo Veterans Services provides comprehensive support to all generations of veterans, active duty military, members of the Reserve as well as their dependents and family. Specific services include certification for the GI Bill, referrals to on-campus departments and off-campus community agencies, and providing information about financial aid, scholarships, and support in achieving educational goals. Two certifying officials are actively involved in outreach events to inform veterans about educational opportunities, and providing updated information about evolving changes to GI Bill benefits. As of census for fall 2010, 173 students were certified for benefits. The spring 2011 semester included 179 student veterans being certified for GI Bill benefits.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

- a. Briefly describe the department's assessment of SLOs. Which courses or programs were assessed? How were they assessed? What are the findings of the assessments?

During the past few years, Veterans Services Program have continued to grow as the number of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans return state-side and decide to enroll in college. The College of San Mateo has experience a dramatic growth in the number of veterans enrolling and, particularly in the number them who are seeking to become certified for GI Bill benefits. Many of these veterans are not only eligible for the GI Bill but possibly also eligible for financial aid. Thus, an SLO was developed to ensure that veterans seeking to become certified for the GI Bill were also informed about the availability of financial aid; specifically the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver. Thus, as prospective veteran students are informed about GI Bill certification, they are also informed and encouraged to apply for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver. For the 2010-2011 academic year, two SLOS were established for the Veterans' Program. The first SLO is that 80 percent of student veterans certified for the GI Bill will also apply for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver. The second SLO was that 40% of veterans certified for GI Bill benefits would also apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA. Both SLOs were assessed by reviewing each student's Print/Bill Schedule to determine if they had received the BOG an/or financial aid. The result for SLO one is that 45% of veteran students certified for GI Bill benefits received the BOG. Thus the first SLO did not meet the established benchmark of 80%. Similarly, the second SLO also did not reach

the established benchmark of 40% as only 33% of the certified veteran students applied for financial aid.

- b. Briefly evaluate the department's assessment of SLOs. If applicable, based on past SLO assessments, 1) what changes will the department consider or implement in future assessment cycles; and 2) what, if any, resources will the department or program require to implement these changes? (Please itemize these resources in section VII of this document.)

As noted above, during the current academic year, neither of the two SLOs reached the predetermined benchmarks. In order to try to ensure a higher rate of veteran students applying for the BOG, the certifying officials will follow up with these students to determine if they have applied for the BOG and/or financial aid. Greater emphasis to for apply for financial aid will be encouraged as the financial support can be significant. Relocation to the College Center along with the establishment of the Veterans Resource Center may be a catalyst as several more computers will be available in the new building and the VRC may serve as a safe environment thus more conducive to students following through with the application process.

Most advantageous in supporting the increasing numbers of veteran students would be creating the position of Program Services Coordinator, Veteran Affairs. This staff person would be dedicated to staffing the Veteran Resource Center, serving as a liaison, coordinating support services, and referring students to designated on- and off-campus programs and services.

- c. Below please update the program's SLO Alignment Grid below. The column headings identify the General Education (GE) SLOs. In the row headings (down the left-most column), input the course numbers (e.g. ENGL 100) or the student services program,; add or remove rows as necessary. Then mark the corresponding boxes for each GE-SLO with which each course aligns.

GE-SLOs→ Programs' and/or Courses ↓	Effective Commu nication	Quantitati ve Skills	Critical Thinking	Social Awarene ss and Diversity	Ethical Respon sibility
60% of veteran students certified for the GI Bill will apply for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver		x	x		x
40% of veterans who are GI Bill certified will apply for financial aid by completing the FAFSA.		x	x		x

III. DATA EVALUATION

For Student Services Programs Not Offering Courses:

- d. Analyze data regarding staffing, the numbers of students receiving services, and the types of services provided; indicate whether headcount is duplicated or unduplicated.

During the 2010-2011 academic year, a duplicated count of 352 students were certified for GI Bill benefits. Though all of these students were encouraged to apply for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver, only 45% of them received the BOG and only 224% applied for financial aid by completing the FAFSA. The current year data for the BOG is somewhat disappointing given that in the previous year 54 or 71% of certified veteran students received the BOG. It is difficult to ascertain why there was a dramatic decrease in the number of students applying for the BOG, however, one reason may be the dramatic increase in the number of veteran students being served (190% increase from fall 2008 to fall 2010) and having only two certifying officials who between the two of them dedicate approximately 30% (15% each) of their FTE to working with these students.

IV. STUDENT SUCCESS EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

- a. Considering the overall "Success" and "Retention" data (for your program and/or for the College as a whole), briefly discuss how effectively the program addresses students' needs relative to current, past, and projected program and college student success rates.

Veterans Services at this time is not involved with assessing student success rates other than on a cursory level. However, Mario Mihelcic and Jeremy Mileo, the two veteran certifying officials, serve as the primary contacts for veteran students but are not involved with assessing academic progress or satisfaction with courses. Rather, the two staff are primarily involved with providing information about GI Bill certification and ensuring these students maintain their GI Bill eligibility. In addition, because the two certifying officials are often the first contact these students have with the college and given that the two staff members essentially become their liaison, the veteran students regularly turn to them as their key contact for assistance on a variety of matters including college policy issues as well as some students who are homeless and need an immediate referral to a community service agency. Thus, referrals to both on and off-campus resources are regularly conducted.

Indirectly, Jeremy and Mario are contributing to the success of veteran students here at CSM. Though they are not directly involved in supporting academic endeavors, the support they provide to these students outside of the classroom by readily responding to their questions allows the students to devote more time to their studies rather than having to contend with unnecessary bureaucratic barriers. The results of the Veterans Student Satisfaction Survey included in section V. b below highlights the outstanding job that these two staff members are carrying out in supporting this group of student veterans.

If applicable, identify unmet student needs related to student success and describe programmatic changes or other measures the department will consider or implement in order to improve student success. *(Note that item IV b, below, specifically addresses equity, diversity, age, and gender.)*

Veteran Resource Center

The establishment of the Veterans Resource Center will very likely both directly and indirectly provide needed support for veteran students as they will have a safe place where they can congregate, have access to computers, meet with community agency representatives, periodically meet with financial aid and other designated college staff, and just have a place to just plain socialize. Further, it is expected that some student veterans will be hired as work study students to staff the VRC which in turn will allow them to further integrate with both the academic and social aspects of the institution.

- b. Briefly discuss how effectively the program addresses students' needs specifically relative to equity, diversity, age, and gender. If applicable, identify unmet student needs and describe programmatic changes or other measures the department will consider or implement in order to improve student success with specific regard to equity, diversity, age, and gender.

Student veterans are a group who comprise a diverse demographic including men, women, students of color, students who are affected by war injuries such as PTSD and TBI, and vary in age from their early 20s to late 50s. The one thing that these students have in common is their war veteran status and that they want an education. Veteran Services staff provide the same high quality service to each and everyone of these students.

V. REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS AND PROGRAM/STUDENT

- a. Using the matrix provided below and reflecting on the program relative to students' needs, briefly analyze the program's strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for and possible threats to the program (SWOT). Consider both external and internal factors. For example, if applicable, consider changes in our community and beyond (demographic, educational, social, economic, workforce, and, perhaps, global trends); look at the demand for the program; program review links to other campus and District programs and services; look at similar programs at other area colleges; and investigate auxiliary funding.

	INTERNAL FACTORS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
Strengths	Dedicated and committed Veterans Staff	Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to produce veterans who will return to pursue their education at CSM.
Weaknesses	Limited staffing which is approximately 30% FTE between two A&R staff members.	Constrained state budget will continue to impact funding to higher education.
Opportunities	Establishment of a Veteran Resource Center.	-Collaborating with community agencies to serve veteran students. -Collaborating with sister colleges to share information and best practices in serving veterans.
Threats	Continued budgetary constraints that impact staffing and services.	State budget impact on funding for community colleges.

- b. If applicable, discuss how new positions, other resources, and equipment granted in previous years have contributed towards reaching program action steps and towards overall programmatic health. If new positions have been requested but not granted, discuss how this has impacted overall programmatic health. (You might reflect in this section on data from *Core Program and Student Success Indicators* (if applicable)) or other data you have collected about the students served by your program.)

Student Satisfaction Survey Results

Though the number of respondents is from a relatively small group, the degree of satisfaction provided by Veterans and other students services is strikingly positive though there is room for improvement. Specific data from the Student Satisfaction Survey for Veterans Services is highlighted below.

- Satisfied with CSM Veterans Staff
100% Very Satisfied

Comments:

- CSM Veterans staff made the process seem simple and convenient with a clear explanation of the GI Bill benefits and process.

- Ability of Veterans staff to answer questions
86.7% Very Satisfied;
13.3% Satisfied

Comments:

- Mario and Jeremy have an answer for every question I've ever had.
- Jeremy was very punctual responding to my emails and phone calls.
- They are always helpful and always get back to me with any new information within a timely manner.

- Overall level of courtesy and respect from Veterans Staff
100% Excellent

Comments:

- Mario was excellent at helping me set up my benefits. He made it as simple as possible and it really seemed like he cared.
- You have the single best Veteran's benefits counselors. Your veterans staff go above and beyond to exhaust all channels to try and find us an answer. (Jeremy and Mario)
- It was a welcoming experience by friendly staff that informed me of many benefits and opportunities that might interest me.

- Service Provided by Financial Aid Liaison
50% Excellent
29% Very good
7% Good

Comments:

- I love how quick they let me know if there are any issues or if they need more information from me.

- Eric is always available and knowledgeable.
- Another staff member went so far as to text me to let me know my appeal had been approved, knowing that I had been very stressed out.
- Just a fabulous group of people there that go above and beyond for us.

-Quality of Service provided by the Academic Counselor

- 33% Excellent
- 53% Very Good
- 7% Good
- 7% Poor

Comments:

- On two different occasions, with two different counselors, I was given two different answers concerning classes that I did or did not need which contradicted the information in the CSM Catalog. I was too confused to say anything.
- Martin is incredible. I have had to change my academic goals for numerous reasons and he is always happy to help and do a new ed plan. I just let him know the issue that has arisen, he gives me my options to address the issue, and we come up with a new plan.

-Overall quality of Veterans Services

- 93% Excellent
- 7% Very Good

Comments:

- I am very pleased with their initiative, willingness to help and professionalism.
- The Veterans Services at CSM has been the best I have experienced and this is coming from a student who has attended 4 other colleges. I like the emails that are sent out to inform me of activities going on that are especially for veterans. CSM definitely takes care of their soldiers. Thank you!
- Mario and Jeremy go above and beyond to help us both personally and academically. Their ability to remember my name from the first time I met them surprised me. Jeremy went so far as to email the school I thought I would transfer to and got the information I needed to make an informed decision to transfer.
- Mario and Jeremy are always there for us and support us with so much more than just processing VA paperwork. This is my second school where I have used my VA benefits and while the other school was good, that VA services dept can't hold a candle to CSM's.

VI. Goals, Action Steps, and Outcomes

- a. Identify the program's goals. Goals should be broad issues and concerns that incorporate some sort of measurable action and should connect to CSM's *Institutional Priorities 2008-2011, Educational Master Plan, 2008*, the Division work plan, and GE- or certificate SLOs.

- Goal 1. Establish the Veteran Resource Center by Fall 2011.
- Goal 2. Monitor the effectiveness of the Veteran Resource Center
- Goal 3. Secure VA or CSM Financial Aid Work Study Funds to support Veteran Resource Center.
- Goal 4. Secure a Program Services Coordinator, Veterans Services staff person.

Goal 5. Ensure that counselors are trained and aware of policies and regulations that govern GI Bill eligibility.

Goal 6. Ensure veteran students are aware of and apply for the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver, federal financial aid and various scholarships.

- b. Identify the action steps your program will undertake to meet the goals you have identified.

Goal 1. Will work with the Vice President's Office, the Associated Students, ITS, DSPS, Financial Aid Office and Scholarship Office to ensure necessary equipment, furniture and staffing is provided to fully operationalize the Center.

Goal 2. Conduct a survey of veteran students who use the VRC to assess their satisfaction with the Center.

Goal 3. Apply for Veteran Administration Work Study funds and/or CSM Financial Aid Work Study Funds.

Goal 4. Submit to a request to the appropriate College Governing Body the substantiated need for a Program Services Coordinator, Veterans Services.

Goal 5. Collaborate with the Dean of Counseling to assess the effectiveness of veteran counseling services.

- c. Briefly explain, specifically, how the program's goals and their actions steps relate to the *Educational Master Plan, 2008*.

As taken from the Educational Master Plan, 2008, Planning Assumptions, Student Success and Retention, "The increasing changes in student demographics will include students who are unprepared for college level work for increasingly varied reasons. These new populations will require pedagogies appropriate to ensure their retention and persistence."

Each of the goals identified impact student success and retention. By supporting veteran student with the establishment of a Veterans Resource Center, hiring veteran students to staff the Center, and providing quality student support services will enhance these students opportunity for success.

- d. Identify and explain the program's outcomes, the measurable "mileposts" which will allow you to determine when the goals are reached.

Each of the goals are readily measurable. For example, goal one will be reached when the Veteran Resource Center is established and a ceremony announcing its existence is held. Student satisfaction surveys will be collected at least twice per year to assess the effectiveness of the Center and to determine what can be done to enhance the Center. Securing work study students will confirm achievement of this goal. Though more challenging given constrained budgetary times, securing a Program Services Coordinator, Veterans Services will fulfill this goal. Lastly, reviewing

feedback about the Veterans Services Student Satisfaction Survey will provide data on the effectiveness of counseling services for veteran students.

VII. SUMMARY OF RESOURCES NEEDED TO REACH PROGRAM ACTION STEPS

- a. In the matrices below, itemize the resources needed to reach program action steps and describe the expected outcomes for program improvement.* Specifically, describe the potential outcomes of receiving these resources and the programmatic impact if the requested resources cannot be granted.

* *Note:* Whenever possible, requests should stem from assessment of SLOs and the resulting program changes or plans. Ideally, SLOs are assessed, the assessments lead to planning, and the resources requested link directly to those plans.

Full-Time Faculty Positions Requested (if applicable)	Expected Outcomes if Granted and Expected Impact if Not Granted	If applicable, <u>briefly</u> indicate how the requested resources will link to achieving department action steps based on SLO assessment.
Input text here.	Input text here.	Input text here.

Classified Positions Requested	Expected Outcomes if Granted and Expected Impact if Not Granted	If applicable, <u>briefly</u> indicate how the requested resources will link to achieving department action steps based on SLO assessment.
Program Services Coordinator, Veterans	<p>The PSC for veterans will be dedicated to developing programs and managing support services that contribute to veteran students acclimation to college and promotes student success.</p> <p>If not granted, quality of services will be diminished, needed support and attention to needs of this at-risk population will be neglected due to limited staffing and resources.</p>	<p>A dedicated staff person will enhance service to veteran students, serve as an advocate for this population, and ensure these students are aware of and utilizing available college and community resources. Further, the PSC for veterans can work individually and with small groups to assist with applying for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver and in completing the FAFSA. Lastly, the PSC for veterans will monitor veteran students academic progress and refer identified students to the Learning Resource Center for tutoring and other types of assistance.</p>

- b. For instructional resources or program resources including equipment and materials, please list the exact items you want to acquire and the total costs, including tax, shipping, and handling. Include items used (such as computers and furniture) and all materials designed for use by students and staff as resources (such as lab equipment, books, CDs, technology-based materials, educational software, tests, non-printed materials, etc). Add rows to the tables as necessary. If you have questions as to the specificity required, please consult with your dean. Please list by priority.

Resources Requested	Expected Outcomes if Granted and Expected Impact if Not Granted	If applicable, briefly indicate how the requested resources will link to achieving department action steps based on SLO assessment.
Item: Input text here. Number: Input text here. Vendor: Input text here. Unit price: Input text here. Total Cost: Input text here. Status*: Input text here.	Input text here.	Input text here.

*Status = New, Upgrade, Replacement, Maintenance or Repair.

VIII. Course Outlines (Applicable only for Programs Offering Courses)

- a. By course number (e.g. CHEM 210), please list all department or program courses included in the most recent college catalog, the date of the current Course Outline for each course, and the due date of each course's next update.

Course Number	Last Update Date	Six-year Update Due Date
Input text here.	Input text here.	Input text here.

IX. Advisory and Consultation Team (ACT) (Applicable only for Programs with Advisory Groups)

- a. Please list non-program faculty who have participated on the program's Advisory and Consultation Team. Their charge is to review the *Program Review and Planning* report before its submission and to provide a brief written report with comments, commendations, and suggestions to the Program Review team. Provided that they come from outside the program's department, ACT members may be solicited from faculty at CSM, our two sister colleges, other community colleges, colleges or universities, and professionals in relevant fields. The ACT report should be attached to this document upon submission.

List ACT names here.

Attach or paste ACT report here.


- b. Briefly describe the program's response to and intended incorporation of the ACT report recommendations.

X. PROGRAM REVIEW PARTICIPANTS AND SIGNATURES

Date of Program Review evaluation:

Please list the department's *Program Review and Planning* report team:

Primary program contact person: Mario Mihelcic
Phone and email address: 358-6856 / mihelcicm@smccd.edu
Full-time faculty:
Part-time faculty:
Administrators
Classified staff: Jeremy Mileo
Students:


Primary Program Contact Person's Signature 3/30/11
Date

Full-time Faculty's Signature Date

Part-time Faculty's Signature Date


Administrator's Signature 3/30/11
Date


Classified Staff Person's Signature 3/30/11
Date

Student's Signature Date

Dean's Signature Date