

2009

Veterans Services Office

This program review contains an analysis of the Veterans Services Office at Portland Community College. Included in this review is a history of the unit, an analysis of existing services and recommendations for holistic student support services



Portland Community College
December 11, 2009

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Introduction & Background

Portland Community College is a multi-campus institution that serves over 85,000 students. Of those, approximately 1,200 students annually are utilizing their veteran's education benefits to pursue a degree at the college. While these students are served by several departments within the college, the staff in the Veterans Services Office assist and support students through the often complicated and multi-layered veterans' educational benefit process.

The Veterans Services Office (the Office) has reorganized multiple times since its inception. During the 1970s and early 1980s, the Office was located at the Sylvania Campus and administered by a coordinator, a staff counselor, and two classified staff all of which served as certifying officials and also included a certifying official at located at the Rock Creek Campus. The reporting line for the coordinator fluctuated over time between the Dean of Students and the Director of Financial Aid. During this period, audit findings resulted in the closure of the Rock Creek Campus operations and a centralization of all veterans educational benefit functions at the Sylvania Campus.

In 1984 the Veterans Services Office was assigned again to the Director of Financial Aid. Between 1986- 1987 due to budget cuts the college chose not to fill the counselor position when it was vacated. During this same time frame, the two classified positions were converted to certifying officials. Additional budget cuts in 1997/1998 also resulted in the coordinator position not being filled. Until August 2009, all 1,200 students were served full-time by only the two remaining classified staff positions, both of which are veterans specialists and serve as certifying officials. In August 2009, the college added a third veterans specialist. In addition, the office hires a work-study student when one is available. All are housed at the Sylvania campus.

The level of student service provided by this office has varied over time in conjunction with available financial and human capital resources. Services have included administering educational benefits which often involved a more holistic approach including basic advising because the students were comfortable working with the staff, providing programs geared towards veteran services and specialized service for student veterans across their academic careers.

While the staff should be commended for the level of service they have been able to provide, the fluctuation in service level and centralized office structure has resulted in a less than optimum level of service for the college's large veterans educational benefit eligible population. Other campuses have recognized the gap in veterans educational services and have been begun to pilot additional support services. In particular, the Veterans Support Group Taskforce at the Rock Creek (RC) campus has been established increase support service to veteran students.

Who are our students receiving educational benefits?

Contrary to common belief, not all students who receive veterans' educational benefits are veterans themselves. Some educational benefits are for spouses and dependents of veterans. Additionally, not all veterans who are using their educational benefits are new veterans. Many are service members who did not use their benefits in the past but are now returning to college to pursue a college degree for the first time or to retool their experience for a new career.

*Veterans Educational Benefit Recipient Demographics**

Fall 2009

	Female	Male	Undeclared	Totals
Student of Cascade	40	118	1	159
Student of Columbia Gorge	9	29	0	38
Student of Extended Campus	5	30	1	36
Student of Rock Creek	36	213	2	251
Student of Sylvania	75	324	8	407
Student of Tillamook Bay	3	4	0	7
Totals	168	718	12	898

Spring 2008 and Fall 2009

	Female	Male	Undeclared	Totals
Student of Cascade	61	157	5	223
Student of Columbia Gorge	10	31	1	42
Student of Extended Campus	21	41	0	62
Student of Rock Creek	66	260	2	328
Student of Sylvania	98	424	9	531
Student of Tillamook Bay	4	7	0	11
Totals	260	920	17	1197

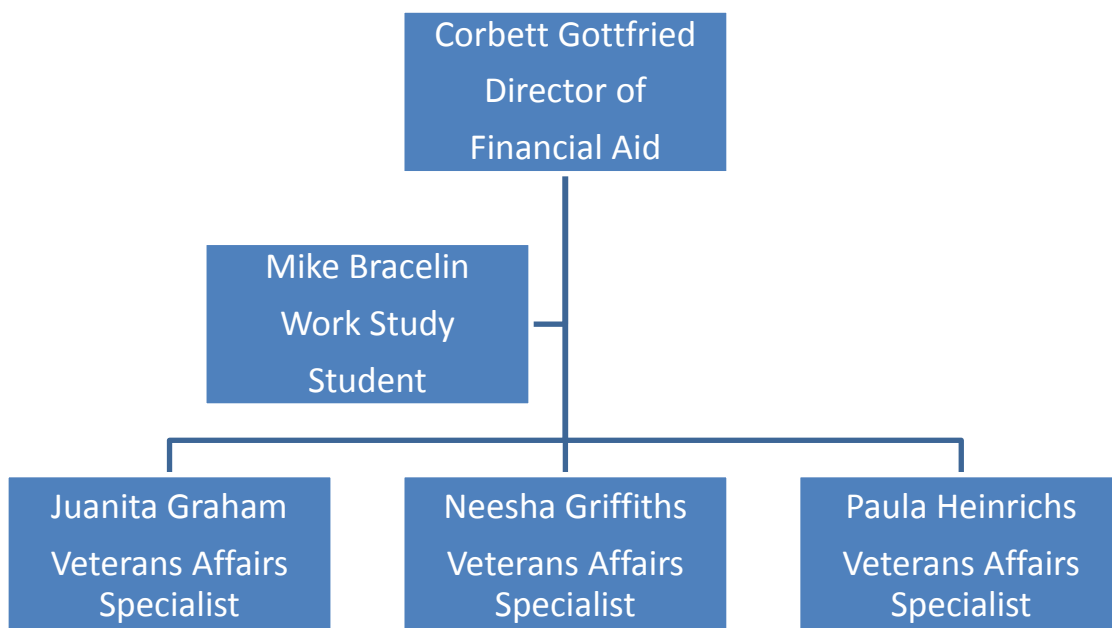
**These demographics reflect Veterans Students who are currently receiving Veteran Benefits*

Mission Statement

“We are here to help veterans and dependents of veterans use their benefits to support their college expenses. Portland Community Colleges recognizes the sacrifice of those who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Providing the best service to our veterans is our utmost priority!”

Organizational Structure

The three veterans affairs specialists (classified staff) and one work-study student report to the Director of Financial Aid.



Service Standards and Review Process

All staff must undergo an extensive state and college training before they are approved to be a certifying official. Yearly audits are conducted by the state to ensure the college remains in compliance and students are being served efficiently.

Although yearly audits are conducted from an outside source, the staff met in the fall of 2008 and felt it was important to develop our own service standards and review how veterans are served at the college. The staff met with both their supervisor and the dean of enrollment services to begin this process and continued to meet monthly in preparation for this program review. Our first steps was to ask ourselves what outcomes and values we hold in this area. The group agreed that it was important that we conduct a self-assessment of our internal process, conduct student focus groups, conduct institutional benchmarking and review our veterans services website. The group started by asking the following questions and developed categories of areas to review (Appendix B includes notes from the brainstorming session).

1. Is the Veteran Affairs information located on our web site helpful?
 - a. Does it contain content that is relevant and helpful to students?
2. There is a perception that it takes too long to process educational benefits.
 - a. Is this due to outside constraints or internal? Why does it take so long to process students through the VA internal systems? What can we do simplify the process?
3. Does the college adequately provide a holistic approach in serving this population?
4. Is the Veterans Services Office staff well equipped to handle the increasing volume of student seeking to use veterans' educational benefits at the college?
5. Do we provide sufficient outreach to both students and our internal customers?
6. Do our internal customers have sufficient information about the veterans' educational benefits process to assist student with basic information?

With these basic questions established, the group identified strategies to collect data and develop outcomes for research categories in which we used in the reviews below.

External Reviews

Within the last year Veronica Garcia, Dean of Enrollment Services and Corbett Gottfried, Director of Financial Aid and Veterans Services staff requested an external analysis of the Veterans Services Office. What resulted were two external analyses. One conducted by consultants with the American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers

(AACRAO) and the other by the Oregon State Veteran Affairs Approving Agency. The Approving Agency analysis focused on an assessment of current submission deadlines and state compliance concerns.

The AACRAO consultants were requested to interview and obtain feedback on from internal staff, students, advisors, faculty, counselors and administrators. The analysis resulted in a 50 page power-point report that included a program review of services, SWOT analysis, performance assessments and recommendations for improvement as well as a “blueprint” guide. The summary included recommendations for improvement as well as a cursory review of the SWOT analysis. A complete copy of the report is available to key personnel by contacting the Dean of Enrollment Services.

AACRAO Consulting Report Executive Summary

“Over the course of the two-day visit, the consultants observed that there is a great deal of institutional history and area expertise between the two veterans services program staff members and that this history and expertise is not known by anyone else interviewed for this review.

In light of limited number of staff with VA Program expertise, several strategic changes can be employed to enhance Veterans Services:

- a) Additional staffing within the central Veterans Services;
- b) Professional development for staff in the area of technology in order to streamline office processes and procedures;
- c) Increase education and communication between Veterans Services and other campuses (RC, CA, SE) and other centers about varying veterans’ benefits programs;
- d) Make available various electronic forms and resources on the web so that current and future veterans can complete paperwork without having to start within the Veterans Services office.”

The overall report was direct about the recommendations and changes that need to occur but it was also complimentary of the expertise of the employees. The four opportunities listed above have been the focus of the past twelve months. Additionally, there has been a strong focus on streamlining the veterans’ entry and recertification process. Appendix A contains all of the recommendations as interpreted by Veterans Services leadership

Oregon State Veteran Affairs Approving Agency Executive Summary

The Oregon State Veteran Affairs Approving Agency identified several areas of concern surrounding the report submission process of the college. The officer cited the college for failure to report updated information to the approving agency in a timely manner. The required timelines are within 30 days of an actionable item. The auditor acknowledged that the college's limited staff had a direct correlation with its' inability to meet deadlines. The auditor recommended that the college hire a third person to assist in meeting these deadlines or risk losing the ability to offer veterans' educational benefits to eligible students.

The second citation was for the 2007-2008 catalog. Sixty-five degree programs were not approved by the approving agency and therefore not eligible to receive funding. The auditor recommended the college put into a place a check and balance system for new degrees and certificates and for program modifications so that these additions and changes are communicated to the approving agency. All degrees and certificates must be approved by the Oregon State Veteran Affairs Approving Agency before allowing eligible students to receive veterans' educational benefits for these programs

Internal Review

The Rock Creek Campus Dean developed a taskforce in response to faculty and student requests for additional veterans' support services. The group met for the past 18 months and included the following staff: Narce Rodriguez, Holly King, George Tinker, Heather Lang, Dawn Tsongas, Ruth McKenna, Karen Sanders, Adrian Rodriguez, Melissa Rico, Mandy Ellerson, Dan Findley, Gratia Minor, Matthew Blankenship, Jessie Levine, Megan Ujakobich, Christine Paull, Lisa Salonga, Aron Mometz, Annette Murphy, Andrew Wolman, Katya Gibson, Paul Halloran, Chris Kernion and Melody McMurray.

The taskforce determined that there was a need to educate the RC campus about the student veterans in our educational environment at large. A journey of learning, listening and implementing goals provided the group an opportunity to embrace creativity and vision to best serve those who serve our country. The RC campus vision is to continue to communicate with veteran students, staff, faculty, management and external partners to implement best practices. The taskforce identified the following goals for the next 12 months:

1. Include a Social worker with expertise in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder to speak at the Student Development meeting.
2. Connect with already existing services in the community.
3. Provide a kiosk on the Rock Creek Campus.
4. Make sure that My PCC has a web link for resources for Vets on the front page

5. Conduct faculty trainings through the TLC about how to frame topics and facilitate discussion and critical thinking around hot button issues.
6. Find some way to have a peer mentoring support system.

Institutional Benchmarking

Veronica Garcia, Dean of Enrollment Service and Narce Rodriguez, Dean of Students visited the Clackamas Community College (CCC) Veterans' Center. The CCC setup provided a model space for how to set up a similar facility at Portland Community College. The space was developed at CCC for veteran students to meet with rehabilitation counselors and hold group workshops that addressed transitional/personal challenges for vets. Among other take-aways were how space should be utilized effectively and the benefits of providing this space to students as well as the fact that the space was important for connecting with the community and for veteran students to build support networks. In addition, CCC has a community coalition to target veteran students and create support networks. One such example that came from this coalition was the creation of CCC Military Family Scholarship Foundation. Finally, the Dean of Students at Clackamas graciously shared a white paper that Clackamas purchased. It is titled "*Structuring Veterans' Support Programs on Campus*" (Appendix D).

Veterans Services Office Annual Accomplishments

The Veterans Services Office has made several improvements in service over the past 12 months. Many of the accomplishments are a direct result of following the AACRAO Consulting recommendations as our blueprint for the future. In addition, the staff leadership have been working with the Rock Creek Dean to pilot on campus events to support our veteran students. Below are select accomplishments to date:

- The Rock Creek Veterans Support Group hosted a "Care Package Donation Drive" for our deployed troop in 2009, this was organized by students, led by Lisa Salonga – Veterans Club Student Coordinator.
- Veterans Resource Day – January 20, 2009 – This event was one of the goals that came from the RC Veterans Faculty/Staff & Student Support Group, led by Christine Paull, Women's Resource Center Coordinator. Seven local agencies attended and were very pleased with the response and made connections with each other. In attendance were:
 - Washington County Veteran's Service Office

- Oregon National Guard Office
- Washington County Disabled Veteran's Outreach (Employment)
- Salvation Army
- Veterans for Peace
- PCC Veteran's Office
- Rock creek In-Service Veterans presentation- Allen Brown, MSW from the Vet Center, presented fall 2008 at Rock Creek In-Service to all PCC/RC staff. His presentation consisted of informing all staff how to address student veterans in the classroom and in all areas of Student Services. This was organized by Narce Rodriguez, Dean of Students, and Ruth McKenna, Disability Services Counselor.
- Staff Retreat Professional Development Presentation - Allen Brown, Social Worker from the Portland Vet Center, did a presentation at the RC Student Development staff retreat fall 2009 at Jenkins Estate. Allen is a great presenter and easily holds the interest of the audience. He served in Iraq and now does readjustment counseling at the Portland Vet Center.
- Goals Met by Veteran Support Group Taskforce
 - Include a Social worker with expertise in Post Traumatic Stress to speak at the Student Development Retreat.
 - Connect with already existing services in the community and provide a table with resources at the Fall All Campus In-Service.
 - Conduct more faculty trainings through the TLC about how to frame topics and facilitate discussion and critical thinking around hot button issues.
 - Find some way to have a peer mentoring support system: "Academic Battle Buddy".
 - CG100C College Success and Survival course being offered Fall 2009 (syllabus included as Appendix C)
 - CG 145 Stress Management – 1 credit (this is a special section for combat veterans) Identifies specific, personal stressors and develops skills that enable students to more effectively deal with stress.
 - Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by both Dr. Rule and Portland Vet Center on 9/28/09
 - Ongoing professional development for all RC staff has included attending numerous training sessions as they relate to veterans and veterans issues. These workshops include retention of veterans, mental health trainings as well as brining speakers to the TLC.

- Rock Creek Fall In-Service 2009 had a veterans' student panel as one of the presentations to the campus at large. One of the established goals identified was to develop a space on campus for the Veterans students to gather similar to Clackamas Community College. Space has been identified at RC campus and the committee will resume fall term to come up with clear guidelines of how the space will be utilized. The goal is to have this space available by winter 2010.
- The Families of Veterans group meets every week at the Women Resource Center.
- The Student Outreach Leaders at RC led by David Martinez, hired veteran's students during the summer to help other veteran students who identified themselves during advising or testing. This group provided an additional connection for students while maneuvering registration and other student services.
- The entire set of VA student services website was revised and posted on November 2, 2009.
- Office process automations in progress and to be finalized by end of 2009 include:
 - Online authorization for continued certification.
 - Recording of student file comments in Banner and eliminating the need for retaining information in paper files.
 - Report created to trigger VA Once certification when a student registers for courses.
 - Simplifying the drop/add report for ease of use.

Other Recent Veterans Services Office Improvements

New Staff

The most prominent change is the restoration of a classified veteran staff position.

College-wide compliance

Plans for a system of checks and balances for compliance areas have been developed for both curriculum and student monitoring.

Professional development and training

A commitment has been made and priority placed on this effort so that staff may attend an annual state and national veterans' services conference.

Focus Groups

One form of the internal assessment performed for the program review was a focus group of Veteran Students who met with the AACRAO consultants and their input was incorporated into the consultant recommendations.

Identification of Veteran Students

On the PCC admission application we now have a place for Veteran Students to self identify. This will help the institution track the number of incoming students and provide us an additional venue of students to target our outreach efforts. In addition, we will annual survey this population reference to our services and scholarship opportunities.

Future Enhancements

This is the first program review of this kind for the Veterans' Office we have followed a non-traditional format in hopes of learning and much as we could and expanding our analysis by including not only an internal assessment but also benchmarking, focus groups and outside consultants to enrich our assessment of current practices. There continues to remain a considerable amount of work that needs to be done in providing services to the students we serve. Future projects include:

- Develop a support program on each campus for our Veteran Students that will create a central place for veterans to find support and information about campus and community services.
- Coordinate relationships with representatives in various offices to allow and be ready for informed referrals. Evaluate the possibility of reinstating the Veteran Coordinator position.
- Increase awareness about veterans' needs and expand the number of people on campus advocating for this special population.
- Decentralized some services to assist students so they do not have to come to Sylvania for basic services.

- Continue to streamline processes and procedures to simply and improve the process for students.
- Develop follow up surveys and assessment of service to the college community and students.

Conclusion

The most common type of service to veterans on campus is through the institution's veterans' administration certifying officials. The college has had a longstanding commitment to providing a holistic student support services to this population but as a result of financial constraints, the much needed additional services have often been far too limited. It is the recommendation from this program review that the institution continue to implement the following recommendations:

- Develop support programs on each campus for our veteran students.
- Hire a Veterans Services Coordinator who can coordinate relationships with representatives, network with the community and provide support to the campuses veteran centers.
- Expand the number of people on campus advocating for this special population.
- Decentralize some of the basic services.
- Continue to streamline processes and procedures.

Implementing the above recommendations would assist the department in meeting national best practice guidelines for providing a holistic approach to serving this special population of students. Establishing professional development for faculty and staff on how to serve this special population would benefit the entire college community.

Acknowledgements

The Veterans Affairs department wishes to acknowledge the following people/departments who have contributed to the compilation of the Veteran Affairs office program review assessment.

- AACRAO Consulting, Dr. Wendy Kilgore and Dr. Peter Schmidt- external assessment and consultation
- Bill Zuelke, Dean of Students at Clackamas for meeting with us and providing support documentation for veteran centers.
- Donna Reed, Karen Sorensen, Dr. Wendy Kilgore and Luis Menchu for the redesign of the veterans' services website
- Narce Rodriguez, Dean of Students, for spear-heading many of the campus pilot projects.
- The Rock Creek Veterans' Support Taskforce
- Veronica Garcia, Dean of Enrollment Services
- Corbett Gottfried, Director of Financial Aid
- Juanita Graham, Veterans Services Specialist
- Neesha Griffith, Veterans Services Specialist
- Paula Heinrich, Veterans Services Specialist

Appendix A: AACRAO Consulting Recommendation as Interpreted by Veterans Services Leadership

Staffing

- Add staffing to the Veterans Services Office including a staff member who could roam to other college locations or free up the existing staff to do so.
 - Currently veterans are directed to contact the PCC Sylvania Campus, creating a hardship for students who live a distance away from campus and frustration for employees on those campuses who desire to better serve students.
- Expand the use of the VA workstudy students beyond basic filing to answering the phones and addressing FAQs.

Training

- Using the VA Program staff expertise, provide regular training for advisors, counselors and disability services counselors on the basics of VA Educational Benefits.
 - By demystifying the processes and procedures of Veterans Services this will empower other departments to provide better customer service, ease the workload of Veterans Services staff, enhance collaboration, communication, and esprit de corps within student services.
- Send the unit director to VA educational benefits training as soon as possible.
 - We are recommending the Western Association of Veteran Education Specialists (WAVES) conference because it is in Portland in July.
- Train all VA Program staff to serve vocational rehabilitation students.
- Provide Banner training and technology training for VA Program staff.

Outreach

- Create a veterans' club for students.
- Create a resource table and invite various veterans' agencies to visit campus at established locations and times.
- Create a Veterans Support Team (VST), comprised of leadership and key stakeholders within student services to include participation from community agencies such as the VFW, American Legion and Veterans Affairs, to assist as an advisory team on how best to address the needs of veterans.

- The VST would also promote the interaction of Veterans Services staff with other offices and personnel i.e., counselors, advisors, OSD staff, admissions, etc. by establishing liaisons to each office.
- Provide a work space (as soon as possible) where all students have the ability to hold confidential discussions with the VA Program staff.
- Publish a quarterly newsletter for internal use.
- Create a brief video introducing staff and vet services that can be available to vets on-line and for those waiting for assistance.
- Organize and label resource rack outside of Veterans Services office.
- Offer group orientations or online orientations for most students and allow for one-on-ones if needed.
- Develop a veteran's tab for the portal.
- Routinely survey veteran students who access the Veteran Services website and office about their experiences with the services and the campus.

Customer Service

- Upgrade manual forms to include step-by-step procedures for completing materials and forms. Collaborate with college marketing to enhance appearance and consistent look of all forms (use of college letterhead).
- Enhance Veterans Services website to include sections on: frequently asked questions, highlighted various VA Chapters, directions to VA resources and links, links to credentials evaluator and appropriate forms, electronic forms submission tool.
- Remove the personal e-mail addresses from the web pages.
- Make the educational program information sheets widely available to both students and other PCC departments.
- Create a 1607 program information sheet.
- Clearly advertise services at all campus locations.
- Simplify the drop/add report.
- Eliminate the need for the "green sheet" by developing online certification process or at the very least an online submission for requesting certification.
- Create a step-by-step guide for VA educational benefits and distribute widely.
- Update the VA section of the catalog to include information on credit articulation and earning credits with the DD214.
- Add language to catalog and other documents regarding DANTES, SMART and CCAF.

- Educate the college as a whole as to the location and availability of accurate program checksheets on the web.
- Publish or advertise Student Military Bill of Rights provided by Service members Opportunity Colleges Consortium.
- Provide a decision tree regarding VA educational benefits on web.
- Refer students to VONAPP to apply for educational benefits online, allowing for the option for students to file in person if they have questions or concerns.
- Ensure that each student receives his/her program check sheet within the first few weeks of the first term.
- Assign blocks of time where one certifying official is able to perform voc rehab processing and work with the regular vet population rather than keeping the functions separate between staff.
- Use the backup certifying officials during peak time to help certify students in a timely manner.
- Assign a credential evaluator as point of contact to the Veteran Services Office.
- Assign veteran transcripts priority status for evaluation.
- Once veterans have submitted information electronically, acknowledgement of receipt to ease the mind of the veteran that the information has been received. This applies to campus as well as federal paperwork.
- Rather than have one memorandum per person, add list of names to the Release of Advance Pay memo.
- Utilize the student portal to send custom e-mails through portal. For example, it would be helpful to send a reminder about when documents are due.

Internal

- Secure the paper files as soon as possible.
- Use Banner comment screens to record information about students.
- After confirmation with state VA liaison, transition away from storing comments and images from Banner screens in the paper files. Ideally, the paper files should contain documents that are not able to be reproduced from or stored in Banner and that do not exist in VAOnce.
- Continue the current process of centralizing the degree check sheets into one single web location.
- Create a referral form that veterans can take to other offices in order to clarify purpose of visit.

- Use Banner to record and store information currently kept on spreadsheets and to prevent faxing of information.
- Learn technology to automate reports i.e., automate incompletes.
 - Approach Institutional Effectiveness Office to run annual reports.
 - Communicate catalog changes to VA Program staff.
- Use incomplete grade report instead of a manual process.
- Begin a program to assess attrition of veterans.
- Create a program that monitors the tuition dollars brought to campus by veterans.

Appendix B: Notes from Initial Brainstorming Session

<p>DOCUMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we store information? Shared Drive • How can student obtain Forms • Do we have appropriate Marketing Material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Hand outs an, Cheat Sheets</i> ▪ <i>Military Right Poster</i> ▪ <i>Info-10 Things a Vet should know</i> ▪ <i>Scholarships Info</i> 	<p>VETERAN CENTERS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Should PCC have Veteran Centers?</i> • <i>Who do we ask ASPCC?</i> • <i>Computer's for Veterans to use: work studies can help students fill out forms</i> • <i>Club can Meet</i> • Do we need them at each campus <p>FAIRS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Schedule Events</i> 	<p>WEB PAGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do our Web pages contain certain or relevant information for our target population? • Can forms be downloaded or completed? • Is information easily found? • Are the current links to other resources current and are we missing any? 	<p>OUTREACH/RECRUITMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we provide sufficient outreach to our target students reference to potential scholarships, processes or eligibility? • How can we identify students who are veterans but are not receiving benefits? For outreach efforts • How can we increase our communication to our college community about our Veteran services student needs?
<p>LOCATIONS</p> <p>SYLVANIA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Remodel</i> • <i>Storage/files</i> • <i>Temporary work locations</i> <p>ROCK CREEK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Office (FH)</i> • <i>To have privacy</i> • <i>Computer/copier scanner</i> <p>CASCADE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Office (FH)</i> • <i>To have privacy</i> • <i>Computer/copier scanner</i> <p>SE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Voc Rehab Visits</i> 	<p>COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Meet Monthly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Set up list-serve</i> • <i>Progress for Program Review</i> • <i>Issue/Concerns</i> <p>Set up Meet With</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Counselors BY</i> • <i>Campus-Field</i> • <i>Advisors</i> <p>Develop Support Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to develop support teams and who should be involved? 	<p>STAFFING Needs</p> <p>Do we have the right staffing for Veteran Affairs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>1 VA Specialist?</i> • <i>Coordinator???</i> • <i>Veteran Counselor</i> on each campus • <i>Referral to each campus for services?</i> • <i>Office Clerk-level 15?</i> • on each campus do we need? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ <i>Scanning Intake, counter work?</i> ➢ <i>Basic questions answering phones?</i> ➢ <i>Supplemental income assistance?</i> 	

Appendix C: CG100C College Success and Survival (VETERANS ONLY) Syllabus

CRN: 44577 Tuesday 3 – 3:50

Instructor: Dawn Tsongas

Office Location: Bldg. 9 Room 110

Office Hours: Mon. and Tues. and some Wednesdays by appointment or I will always stick around after class.

Email: dtsongas@pcc.edu

Phone: 503-614-7262 To make an appointment to see me, call 503-614-7300

Required Material

PCC's special edition of "On Course" by Skip Downing

2 "Examination Blue Book", 8.5x7 (small size) about 20 cents in the bookstore

Goals of the course:

- *Understand the importance of college resources and how to access them to meet your academic goals.
- *Take personal responsibility for your actions and behaviors as a student.
- *Improve self management. Learn strategies for taking control of your time and energy.
- *Develop mutually supportive relationships. Learn how to develop meaningful relationships with people who will support you to achieve your goals and dreams as you assist them to achieve theirs.
- *Learn college terminology, important dates, college policies.
- *Gain an understanding of college degrees, majors, and create an academic plan to map out your college coursework to achieve your academic goals.

Expectations:

Attendance: Attendance is essential. This class consists of many in-class group discussions and exercises. Much of what you will be learning in this class will be from one another so attendance is essential. By not being here, you are depriving your classmates and me of your valuable life experiences and input. If you do have a true emergency and need to miss a class, please notify me via email in advance of your absence.

Classroom conduct: All class members will act in a way that respects the dignity of others. This includes:

- *Listen attentively when another person is speaking.

*Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices before entering the classroom.

*Arrive on time to class and stay the whole time.

*Disagree respectfully.

Participation: Active participation is crucial to learning in this class. Active participation includes:

* Listening

*Taking notes

*Asking questions

*Expressing ideas and opinions respectfully

*Coming to class prepared (readings, assignments and journals completed) **Bring your book and your journal to each class.**

Grading

Attendance: 110 points. 11 each day

Success Journal: 70 points. 10 points each

Participation: 30 points

Assignments: 60 points. 10 points each

Grade Scale

A= 243-270 points

B= 216-242 points

C= 189-215 points

D= 162-190 points

F= 161 points and below

Success Journals: Your success journal provides an opportunity to explore your thoughts and feelings as you experiment with the success strategies presented in the “On Course” material. I will be collecting your journals on the day that they are due, making comments and returning them the next week. I will not be looking at grammar or spelling but please do the best you can. More important to me is your depth of thought and analysis. **A well-written journal entry is generally at least 250 words** although there is no length restriction.

Please copy the directions for each step of your journal entry (just the bold print).

Then, be spontaneous, write the first thing that comes to your mind about this topic.

Be honest, be creative then “dive deep”.

To help you in this process, use the 4 E’s to generate specific and sufficient support for your writing. The 4 E’s represent four questions that almost always need answering as you write.

Can you give an EXAMPLE of that?

Can you give an EXPERIENCE to illustrate that?

Can you EXPLAIN that further?

Can you give EVIDENCE to support that?

Assignments and Homework: Assignments will be given in class and are due the week after they are given. I will also be posting the homework every week on MyPCC in case you miss it or have questions. I will accept assignments one week late for half credit but after that, there will be no credit. If you must be absent, you are still responsible for getting the assignment in for that day on time via email or another student.

AGENDA:

Week 1 (9/21):

Syllabus, introductions

Homework (Due Week 2):

- *Read Chapter One

- *Complete the Self Assessment on line at:

http://college.cengage.com/collegesurvival/downing/on_course/5e/student_home.html Click on General Resources, On Course Assessment, complete assessment and make a copy to bring to class.

- *Complete Journal Entry 1 in textbook,

- *Student Information Sheet.

Week 2 (9/28):

Course Overview

Characteristics of a successful student

- *Homework given in class (Due week 3)

Week 3 (10/06):

Guest speakers: Paula Heinrich and Juanita Graham from PCC Vet Services

- *Homework (Due week 4): Read Chapter 2

Week 4 (10/13):

Victim/Creator Role

Home work (Due Week 5):

- * Journal Entry 4

- *Assignment: How has the military influenced my tendency to be a victim and/or a creator

Week 5 (10/20):

Wise Choice Process

Homework (Due week 6):

- * Journal Entry 5

Week 6 (10/27):

MyPCC, Panther Tracks and Map: Heidi Edwards

Homework (Due week 7):

- *Read chapter 3 and complete Journal Entry 8
- *MyPCC homework

Week 7 (11/03):

Motivation

Homework (Due week 8):

- * Complete Journal Entry 10
- * read Chapter 4

Week 8 (11/10):

Time Management

Homework (Due week 9):

- *Journal Entry 12

Week 9 (11/17)

More Time Management

Week 10 (11/24):

Guest Speaker: Jason from advising

Homework (Due week 11):

- * Develop an academic plan with an advisor for the next 3 terms.
- *Read Chapter 5

Week 11 (12/01):

Interdependence / Success Team

Homework (Due week 12):

- *Journal Entry 16
- * Scavenger Hunt

Week 12 (12/08):

Scavenger hunt review and wrap up

This schedule is tentative and can change based on class progress and speaker availability. Please check the website after every class for the most up to date homework assignments and due dates.

PCC Policy

It is against PCC policy for any member of the college community to engage in harassment or discrimination of another member based on his/her race, color, religion, ethnicity, use of native language, national origin, age, gender, marital status, height/weight ratio, disability, sexual orientation or veteran's status.

PCC encourages students who have disabilities to contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (503-977-4341 for assistance in requesting classroom accommodations.

Appendix D: Student Affairs Leadership Council “Structuring Veterans’ Support Programs on Campus” Custom Research Brief



**SENIOR
ANALYST**
Adrienne Draper,
M.A.

**MANAGING
CONSULTANT**
Liz Rothenberg,
PhD

STUDENT AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Bill 17
Appendix D

Structuring Veterans’ Support Programs on Campus

Custom Research Brief • March 6, 2009

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THE ADVISORY BOARD COMPANY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & PARAMETERS

Project Challenge:

A member institution approached the Council with the following questions:

- What are some of the key challenges that student veterans face on campus?
How do other universities coordinate their support services for veterans?
- How are veterans' services organized administratively (e.g., staffing, reporting structure)?
 - What services do support offices provide for student veterans?
 - What campus offices and community organizations do offices collaborate with?
 - What are the advantages & disadvantages of the different models for providing veterans' services?

Sources:

During the course of the research, the Council searched the following resources to deepen their understanding of the topic:

- Advisory Board's internal and online (www.educationadvisoryboard.com) research libraries
- Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) <http://www.eric.ed.gov>
- The Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com>
- Internet, via search engines and multiple Web sites, including:
 - American Council on Education. *Serving Those Who Serve: Higher Education and America's Veterans*. 2009. <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/MilitaryPrograms/serving/index.htm> (accessed February 9, 2009).
 - National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators. *National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators Web*. <http://www.navpa.org/web.htm> (accessed February 10, 2009).
 - Student Veterans of America. *Student Veterans of America Resource Library*. 2008. <http://www.studentveterans.org/resourcelibrary/> (accessed February 5, 2009).

Research Parameters:

- Based on the member institution's request, the Council primarily focused on large research universities and other public institutions with notable veterans' support programs.
- Over the course of the research, the Council spoke with directors and administrators of veterans' support programs.

II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

A Guide to Universities Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location & Affiliation	Carnegie Classification	Enrollment (UG/Grad) (2006)	VA Certified Student Enrollment
University A	West Coast Public	Medium, Master's University (medium programs)	6,650 / 7,450	N/A*
University B	Southeast Public	Large, Research University (high research activity)	12,600 / 12,600	436
University C	West Coast Public	Large, Research University (high research activity)	27,900 / 27,900	756
University D	Southwest Public	Large, Research University (very high research activity)	28,450 / 28,450	534
University E	West Coast Public	Large, Research University (very high research activity)	23,900 / 23,900	N/A*
University F	Rocky Mountains Public	Large, Research University (very high research activity)	26,400 / 31,700	579
University G	Southwest Public	Large, Research University (high research activity)	27,400 / 34,300	702
University H	Midwest Public	Large, Research University (very high research activity)	21,500 / 28,200	329
University I	Midwest Public	Large, Research University (very high research activity)	29,600 / 41,000	N/A*

Source: National Center for Education Statistics; Demographic and Usage Data for ACE Conference, June 5, 2008¹

*Veterans population less than 300 and not provided in the report

¹ Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/MilitaryPrograms/WilsonDemographicData.pdf>

II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW (CONT.)

Introduction

The most common mode of serving veterans on campus is through the institution's Veterans Administration (VA) certifying official, a required position for universities enrolling students that receive VA educational benefits. The certifying official is typically supported by one or more VA work-study students who are paid out of VA funds to support the needs of veterans on campus. Individual offices, such as admissions and disability services, may also work with and support veterans, but these interactions are not coordinated systematically across the institution.

Developing Models for Supporting Veterans on Campus

Several universities contacted by the Council have, in recent years, taken the next step in supporting veterans. Rather than simply administering educational benefits, these institutions are investing resources in providing programs and specialized services for student veterans across their academic careers. The catalyst for change at these institutions was key stakeholders taking an interest in student veterans on campus. As a result of high-level interest, these universities pursued a variety of follow-up actions, including an inventory of campus resources, surveying current veterans about their needs, and creating a committee to decide on an action plan moving forward.

The Council has identified four models for veterans' services implemented by universities across the country:

- Model 1: One-Person Office
- Model 2: One-Person Office & Campus Working Group
- Model 3: Cross-Functional Liaison Network
- Model 4: Comprehensive Resource Center

Key Challenges for Student Veterans

As colleges and universities consider how to support veterans on their campuses, they must first understand some of the primary obstacles veterans face on campus. The Council's contacts cited the following issues as primary challenges for their student veterans:

Administrative Challenges

- **Obstacles in the admission process:** Veterans tend to have less successful high school careers with poor or no scores on college entrance exams, but have significant life and world experiences from the military. These factors make it challenging to evaluate their applications.
- **Complex benefits and financial aid needs:** Veterans, independent of their parents and/or with families of their own, have to navigate complex VA benefits and financial aid processes to ensure they have the resources to pay for their education.
- **Educational credit for military service and experience:** Universities and individual academic programs vary widely in the application of military training and service experience for academic credit (e.g., how much credit; what type of credit, elective or major).
- **Lack of knowledge about local veterans' resources:** Veterans tend to have little or no knowledge about benefits and services available through local veterans' organizations (e.g. VA hospitals, counseling centers).

II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW (CONT.)

Key Challenges for Student Veterans (cont.)

Transitional/Personal Challenges

- **Developing an identity and sense of community on campus:** It may be difficult for veterans to relate to the traditional 18-24 year old college student due to factors such as: age (tend to be older), family status (e.g., spouse, children, independent from parents), work/job status (e.g., part-time job), and world experience and perspective.
- **Managing the transition from a regimented military environment to an independent university lifestyle:** The flexible nature of higher education institutions (e.g., optional class attendance, movable deadlines) may confound veterans who are used to respecting and following strict rules and regulations.
- **Reluctance to seek support/help:** Service members are trained to be strong and independent, and seeking help from faculty and staff may be perceived as a weakness. ~~Veterans are much more open to support from other veterans.~~
- **Difficulties in knowing their limits:** After being taught to challenge themselves in the military, veterans are more apt to take a heavy course load that they may not be prepared for, while attempting to balance other responsibilities such as a family and/or part-time job.
- **Mental health issues:** Some veterans returning from combat require mental health support to address everything from adjustment to civilian life to PTSD and TBI. However, they may be reluctant to seek help due to the stigma of mental illness.
- **Apprehensive about being singled out:** Recognition of the entire veterans' community for their service is generally appreciated, but individual veterans may feel uncomfortable being singled out or asked to speak about their experiences.

II. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW (CONT.)

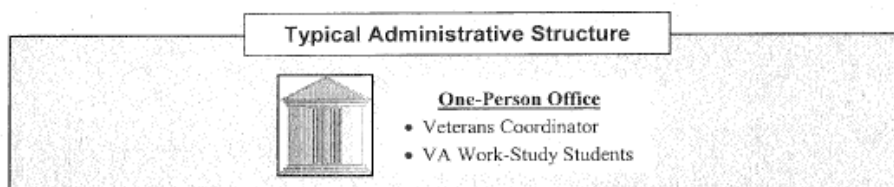
Key Observations

- ❖ The primary purposes of veterans' service offices are to: (1) ensure veterans receive targeted support in navigating campus resources and pursuing their academic goals, (2) develop a sense of community among veterans on campus, and (3) educate the campus community about the needs and interests of veterans.
- ❖ Council research demonstrates that knowledge of all available services/resources and how to access them is critical to supporting veterans on campus. Offices need not supplant services for veterans that already exist on campus and in the community. Rather the office serves as a central resource and advocate for student veterans' needs. The coordinator can offer student veterans targeted referrals by leveraging the services of experts from various campus offices (e.g., financial aid, admissions, counseling center) and veterans' community groups (e.g., VA hospital, American Legion).
- ❖ The number and range of services provided by veterans' services offices varies by administrative model, the number of veterans on campus, and the office's budget. All contacts note the importance of involving student veterans when determining services appropriate for each campus. Some of the most common services and programs include: organizing referrals to specific campus resources, coordinating with local veteran groups, conducting veterans' orientation sessions, and advising the student veterans' organization.
- ❖ VA work-study students play a critical role in staffing these offices and are employed by nearly all universities contacted by the Council. The number of work-study students supported by the VA per campus depends on the veteran population, but all institutions cite the importance of having veterans directly inform and support the work of the office. VA work-study students may manage the office, handle questions, and help process certification documents.
- ❖ Allocating office and/or lounge space for student veterans is an important aspect in developing a sense of community for veterans on campus. Veterans appreciate having a central place to seek support from professional staff and one another, and staff is able to host on-campus presentations and guests. The most common office space includes a central reception area with adjoining offices for private consultations and sometimes a larger conference room for student gatherings and presentations. Other office amenities include: kitchens, computer labs, and resource libraries.
- ❖ Through the institution's Web site, a comprehensive overview of veterans' services and resources should be readily accessible. Online access to information about the office demonstrates the university's commitment to veterans and allows service members and veterans around the world to gain a sense of the resources and services available on campus. Contacts note having a link to veterans' resources on the university's home page and links to and from coordinating offices (e.g., financial aid, admissions) is important.
- ❖ Identifying veterans through the admissions and enrollment processes and generating a contact list is important to ensure that all veterans are aware of resources and services on campus. Several universities have changed or added application questions to capture information about students' active duty, veteran, or military-related status in the student information system. Veterans' offices can then pull contact information to send targeted outreach and information about services and programs.
- ❖ These offices extend their reach beyond student veterans offering services to active duty personnel, military families, and dependents as well. All of the aforementioned groups may take advantage of educational and other military-related benefits and may be affected by their direct or associated involvement in the military. In addition to general support, targeted programs for these groups exist on various campuses, such as mentoring for active duty members called to service and support groups for spouses, families, and dependents.

III. MODEL 1: ONE-PERSON OFFICE

Overview of Model

For universities looking to quickly ramp up and coordinate services for student veterans, the one-person office is the easiest model to implement. The first step is to identify a coordinator for veterans' support services who will be the primary contact for programs and resources. In some cases, the person selected as coordinator evolves from the Veterans Administration (VA) certifying official position. This person may work informally with other offices on campus to support veterans, but no formal collaboration or office structure exists. Universities vary in where veterans' offices are placed administratively, but the majority of offices report to either enrollment management or student affairs. The final step in setting up a one-person office is to designate a formal space as the veterans' service office. Depending on the available resources, this space can range from a desk to a suite of offices to an independent building.



Benefits

- ✓ Provides a central location for veterans to seek support services
- ✓ Leverages existing administrative personnel and is easy to implement
- ✓ Does not require a large investment of resources to get started

Challenges

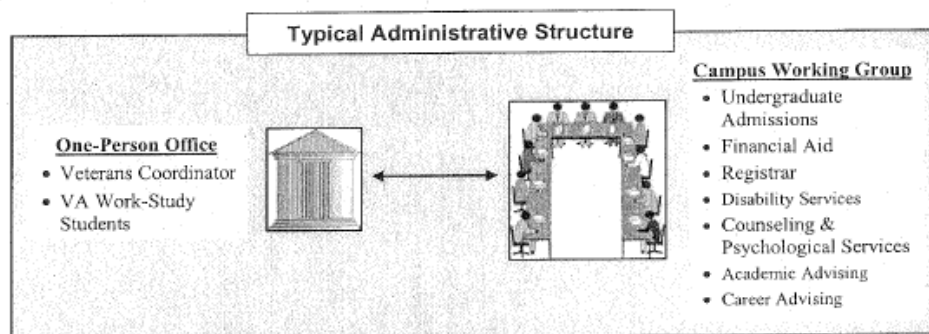
- Coordination with other offices can be minimal
- Veterans are reliant on the coordinator as there are no specific contacts in other campus offices
- Working with student veterans is typically only part of the coordinator's job description; often the coordinator splits their time with duties in other offices

Profile: University A	
Office Organization	
Reporting Structure:	Enrollment Management
Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Certification Officer</i>: Part of collateral duties as enrollment manager; supports all veteran applicants • <i>VA Work-Study Students</i>: (9) support certification officer; help manage veterans' support programs
Office Space:	Office space in learning commons near disability and academic support services that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reception & processing area - Kitchen (coffee, snacks available) - Offices (4) - Counseling room (couch, conference table)
Program Highlights	
Veterans Orientation:	Break-out sessions for veterans and their families during orientation where services and campus resources are discussed and members of the veterans' office are introduced. <i>*In fall 2009, a 7-day Outward Bound orientation program funded by the Sierra Club will be offered.</i>
Local Veterans' Services On Campus:	Local veterans' organizations are invited to campus and hold open hours and/or appointments with veteran students, such as the Vet Center (psychological counseling), County Vet Services, and Veteran Employment Development office.

IV. MODEL 2: ONE-PERSON OFFICE & CAMPUS WORKING GROUP

Overview of Model

Like the first model, this structure has a veterans' coordinator and an office. What distinguishes it, however, is the addition of a campus working group. This advisory committee consists of representatives from different campus offices that interact regularly with student veterans. This group can also include faculty members, students, and other individuals on campus interested in veterans' issues. Council contacts explained that it is best to keep group membership flexible in order to accommodate new members. The working group partners with the veterans' coordinator to understand the challenges facing student veterans on campus. In particular, group members leverage their expertise in areas, such as admissions and financial aid, to adjust service delivery and policy to accommodate veterans' needs. These groups meet anywhere from once a week to once a semester depending upon their agenda and the state of veterans' services on campus.



Benefits

- ✓ Creates a central place for veterans to find support and information about campus and community services
- ✓ Coordinator's relationships with representatives in various offices allows for easy and informed referrals for veterans
- ✓ Having a working group facilitates greater awareness about veterans' needs and expands the number of people on campus advocating for this special population

Challenges

- Working group members are not personally responsible for providing services to veterans
- A large working group can create challenges in terms of priorities, focus, and sustaining momentum
- Since working group members are volunteers, recruiting replacements when people leave their position or the institution can be difficult

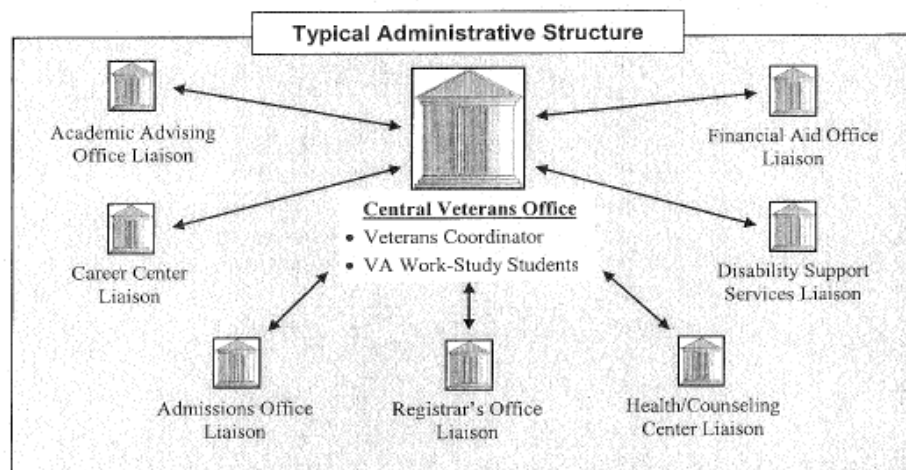
IV. MODEL 2: ONE-PERSON OFFICE & CAMPUS WORKING GROUP (CONT.)

Profile: University C	
Office Organization	
<i>Reporting Structure:</i>	Enrollment Services
<i>Staff:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Veterans Center Coordinator:</i> manages veterans' programs and services; serves as central contact for veterans; advises Student Veterans Organization (SVO) • <i>VA Certifying Official:</i> (1.5) processes VA educational benefits • <i>VA Work-Study Students:</i> (8) supports office staff
<i>Office Space:</i>	Private office & lobby space with chairs; serves as meeting/gathering space for veterans. (<i>Donations secured for a larger office space with conference room, coming soon</i>).
Campus Network	
<i>Troops to College Working Group:</i>	<p>Formed in 2006, the committee has representatives drawn from departments across campus and meets every 6-8 weeks to discuss veterans' issues and goals. Department heads in the following offices were asked to select representatives to serve of the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment Services • Financial Aid & Scholarships • Military Science Department • Cashier's Office • Alumni Association • Division of Undergraduate Studies • Student Disability Services • Counseling and Psychological Services • College of Extended Studies <p>Representatives from the Student Veterans Organization are take part in the group.</p>
Program Highlights	
<i>Student Veterans Organization (SVO):</i>	Led by an executive board, the SVO co-sponsors the majority of programs offered to veterans and serves both active duty and veteran students. Open meetings are held every two weeks, and numerous social and educational programs are offered each term.
<i>"Wounded Warrior Days"</i>	A two-day event sponsored by the SVO and Veterans Center where students engage with wounded veterans from the local VA hospital. Students visit the hospital for lunch and the wounded veterans come to campus for a sit-down dinner, tour of campus, and basketball game the following day. The program allows veterans to make connections with the local community and raises awareness about the university's veterans' program.

V. MODEL 3: CROSS-FUNCTIONAL LIAISON NETWORK

Overview of Model

Similar to the first two models, the cross-functional liaison network has a central office and dedicated veterans coordinator, but advances veterans' services one step further. In addition to the central point of contact, designated liaisons in various campus offices are available to directly serve the needs of veterans. Liaisons are expected to be aware of veterans' needs and how to best address them in their unit and are typically chosen or self-selected for their personal interest in veterans or status as a veteran. Similar to the working group, the liaison network meets on a regular basis to strategize about veterans' services and policies across campus.



Benefits

- ✓ Defined network of contacts that have direct responsibility for serving veterans in specified offices.
- ✓ The network spreads the responsibility for serving veterans among the liaison network, institutionalizing veterans' services
- ✓ The liaisons serve as proponents for veterans' needs in their respective offices and help educate the campus community about the challenges facing this special population

Challenges

- Relies on constant communication between the coordinator and liaisons, which can be challenging to organize
- Liaisons have other responsibilities within their unit that may distract them from serving veterans
- Delivery of services may not be consistent across liaisons and offices

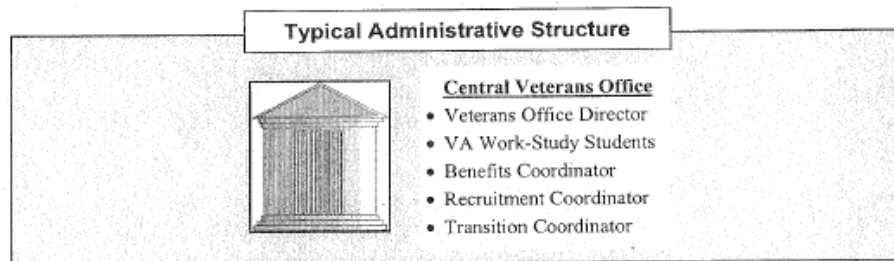
V. MODEL 3: CROSS-FUNCTIONAL LIAISON NETWORK (CONT.)

Profile: University E	
Office Organization	
<i>Reporting Structure:</i>	Transfer, Re-Entry, & Student Parent Center; Division of Undergraduate Education
<i>Staff:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Veterans Program Coordinator:</i> Serves as central contact for veterans' services; works closely with liaisons across campus; has other responsibilities working with transfer students • <i>Work-Study Students & Student Interns:</i> (2-4) Support coordinator in managing veterans' programs and services (e.g., mentoring program)
<i>Office Space:</i>	No official space beyond the coordinator's office
Liaison Network	
<i>Campus Veterans' Advocates:</i>	<p>The coordinator contacted offices around campus that serve veterans and worked with department leaders to select advocates who are responsible for directly serving student veterans. The advocates are expected to have knowledge of veterans' needs and their names and contact information are listed on the veterans' program Web site. Advocates include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar's Office • Financial Aid (2) • Undergraduate Admissions (2) • New Student Services/Orientation • Career Center • University Health Services/Counseling & Psychological Services • Disabled Students Program • College of Letters and Sciences Advising Office <p>The coordinator also works with representatives from the Office of Media Relations and Housing, but no official contact has been identified in these areas.</p>
Program Highlights	
<i>Priority Enrollment Program:</i>	Veterans who verify their veteran status with the Registrar's office are eligible to register for classes during the first phase of the registration process rather than waiting for their assigned group. The program is intended to help veterans ensure that they have the appropriate classes that count towards their degree program in order to continue receiving benefits. Anecdotally, the program may also provide incentive for veterans not receiving VA benefits to self-identify in order to receive priority.
<i>Veterans Transition Course:</i>	<p>A one-unit (upper division credit) course is offered to incoming veterans each fall. The course helps veterans with the transition to the university and helps develop a sense of community among incoming veterans; course topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warning signs for PTSD & TBI - Adjusting to the academic work load - Study strategies - Setting realistic expectations and academic goals <p>Student facilitators support the instructor (a non-veteran) in the course, helping veterans better relate to the material.</p>

VI. MODEL 4: COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE CENTER

Overview of Model

The comprehensive resource center represents the frontier in supporting veterans on campus. In addition to the coordinator/director, this model employs additional staff members to provide a greater amount of services for veterans within the central office. This model requires a significant amount of resources and the support of university leaders to acquire the necessary funding. Rather than relying on volunteer representatives from other offices to work with veterans, staff members in the veterans' service office become responsible for managing support areas, such as recruitment, transitional support, and benefits processing. Similar to other models, the central office coordinates with various units across campus to tap into existing support programs (e.g., financial aid, counseling & health center, housing, disability services). By having a centralized and robust set of resources, staff members have opportunities to build their expertise and explore innovative options for developing new services and programs.



Benefits

- ✓ Additional services available for veterans in central office; referrals to other campus resources not always necessary
- ✓ Consistent delivery of services for veterans due to central coordination
- ✓ Development of an expert center for veterans on campus allows for services to expand and improve rapidly
- ✓ Increased ability to secure external funding and grants
- ✓ University's commitment to veterans gives staff a strong platform to educate the campus community (e.g., faculty, staff, students) about veterans' needs

Challenges

- Very resource-intensive, requires significant support from university administration
- Difficult to start with this model, must grow programs and services gradually
- Depending on the size of the veteran population, creating in-house experts may not be necessary at all institutions

VI. MODEL 4: COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE CENTER (CONT.)

Profile: University B	
Office Organization	
Reporting Structure:	Dean of Students Office; Student Affairs
Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Director</i>: Oversees veterans' services for the university; advocates for veterans' needs with university leaders; serves as faculty advisor to veteran students' organization • <i>Veterans Benefits & Program Coordinator</i>: Responsible for managing and consulting with students on all benefits, grants, and scholarship opportunities (university & external) for veterans • <i>Veterans Transition Coordinator</i>: Aids veterans in the transition to college through collaborations with housing, academic advising, and career counseling • <i>Veterans Recruit Coordinator</i>: Responsible for educating potential and current students about the veterans' office services and programs; collaborates with admissions on recruitment efforts • <i>Veterans Administration Supervisor</i>: Serves as the VA certifying official, supporting students process their VA educational benefits • <i>Office Associate</i>: Supports office administratively • <i>VA Work-Study</i>: (6) Supports VA certifying function and other staff in outreach and programming efforts • <i>Graduate Assistant</i>: Assists with various office programs, including the student veterans' organization
Office Space:	Private offices, lounge areas, meeting space, and student computer lab for veterans.
Program Highlights	
Veterans Support Group:	The office and student counseling center partnered to create a support group for veterans on campus. The group gives veterans structured opportunities to meet and discuss issues related to the transition from military to civilian and student life. The group is facilitated by a professional counselor.
Campus Education Series:	The director and coordinators lead workshops upon request across campus to educate different constituencies, such as faculty and staff, about the needs of veterans and service members.

VII. SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS

Summary of Veterans' Support Programs					
Institution	Model	Office(s)	Reporting Structure	Staff	History of Formation
University A	One-person office	Veterans Enrollment & Transition Services	Enrollment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certification officer - VA work-study students (9) 	1990s: Evolved from VA Certification Officer Role 2007: Received office space
University B	Comprehensive resource center	Center for Veterans	Dean of Students; Student Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director - Assistant coordinators (4) - Office associate - VA work-study students (6) - Graduate assistant 	2006: University President led efforts to create veterans' center
University C	One-person office & campus working group	Veterans Services Center	Enrollment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veterans center coordinator - VA certifying official (1.5) - VA work-study students (8) 	2006: state govt. called for coordinated veterans' services at state universities Fall 2006: VA certifying official role expanded to include veterans' programs
University D ²	Cross-functional liaison network	Veterans Education & Transition Service (VETS)	Disability Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VA work-study students (5) 	2008: Received grant to form VETS office and coordinating services
University E	Cross-functional liaison network	Veterans Student Services	Re-Entry Student Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veterans program coordinator (1/2) - Work-study students (2-3) 	2006: State govt. called for coordinated veterans' services at state universities 2007: Coordinator assigned to lead effort
University F	One-person office & campus working group	Office of Veterans' Affairs	Division of Student Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director³ - VA work-study students (3) 	2005: Formed committee to assess veterans' services 2007: Hired director, office formed
University G	One-person office & campus working group	Veterans Service Office	Student Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director - Veterans advisors (2 PT) - VA work-study students (7) 	Office in existence since World War II
University H	One-person office & campus working group	Veterans Center	Enrollment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veterans Director - VA work-study students (3) 	2007: Formed task force Fall 2008: Hired veterans' coordinator
University I	Cross-functional liaison network	Veteran's One Stop	Office of the Dean of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Veterans Coordinator 	2008: Hired veterans' coordinator

² See Appendix, page 15, for office organizational chart

³ See Appendix, page 14, for job description

VIII. APPENDIX

University F: Job Description for Office of Veterans Affairs Director

June 26, 2007

Professional Exempt Position

Title: Director of the Office of Veterans Affairs

Minimum Qualifications:

This position requires a Master's degree or equivalent, substantial active duty experience within the United States military and substantial experience with higher education operations. Desired qualifications also include (1) demonstrated leadership in development of new programs or initiatives, (2) demonstrated ability to work with minimal direct supervision or guidance, (3) high commitment to veterans and their connections to the university mission, (4) substantial knowledge about the organizations devoted to veteran's issues to include the federal government, the state government and various associations, (5), strong interpersonal communication skills both verbal and written, (6) commitment to a student-oriented style of support organization, (7) commitment to enhancing campus diversity, (8) willingness to accommodate a varied schedule sometimes including evening and week-end responsibilities. This person must be able to coordinate with veterans—students, staff, or faculty--contemplating return and transition into the higher education environment to include many elements of the campus academic enterprise such as the faculty and the staffs of academic departments, the financial aid office, career services, advising, various student organizations, and numerous external entities which relate to veterans. This person will need to be able to both develop and implement strategic and tactical plans for the enhancement of a welcoming, encouraging and supportive campus environment for military veterans. This person will need to be an effective campus leader and champion for veterans and other military personnel such as Reserve and National Guard members who are also university employees.

This will be a full time, twelve month Professional Exempt position reporting directly to the Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education.

Job Responsibilities

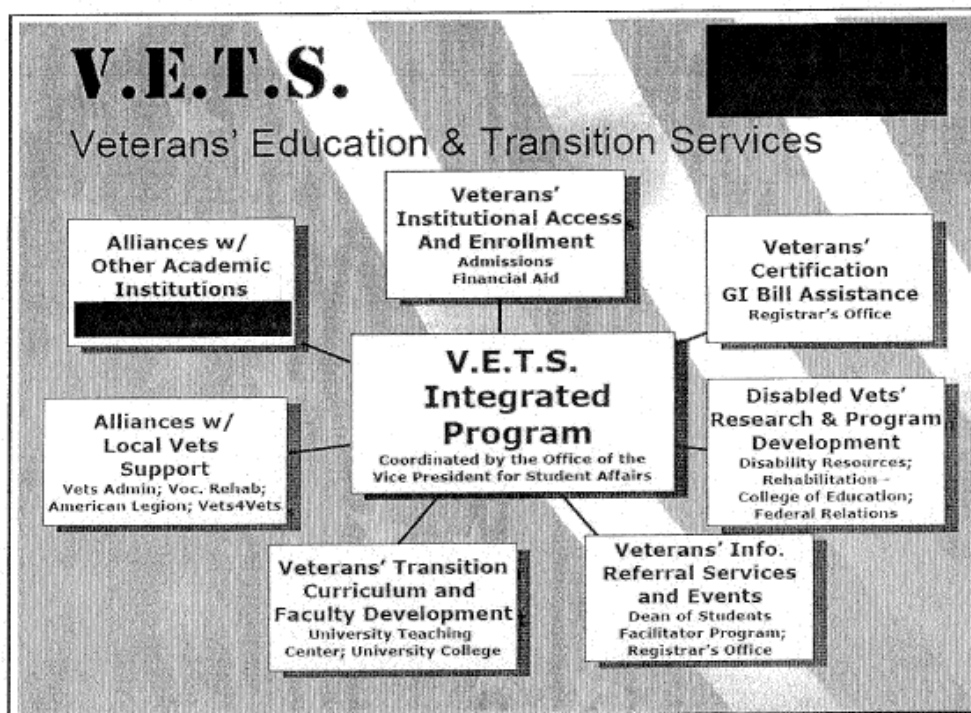
Time Spent

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Provide advocacy, retention services, assistance with a variety of issues and facilitate accessing services including information and referral for both on-campus and off-campus services. | 40% |
| 2. Provide a transition program from military to campus life and periodically perform follow-up contacts with these individuals. This program will include a welcoming packet of pertinent information, help with housing, social events, and general counseling. It will also encompass a mentoring program for newly arrived veterans, whereby a continuing student military veteran is paired with a new military veteran to help orient the latter to campus and maintain regular contact to provide assistance. | 10% |
| 3. Develop and maintain a comprehensive website with information for military veterans, develop a list serve of military veterans and send periodic emails with relevant information for these individuals. | 10% |
| 4. Create an active and informal veterans network/support group which will meet periodically and engage in substantive activities such as community service/civic engagement and develop campus and off-campus events to better welcome and recognize veterans and their contributions. | 10% |
| 5. Work with the Office of Admissions to actively promote the university to veterans, recruit veterans to [redacted] and accurately track the number of student military veterans on campus for planning and other purposes. | 5% |
| 6. Periodically conduct military veterans' needs assessments to determine current issues facing these individuals and plan/revise services accordingly. In coordination with assessments, regularly evaluate all services provided by this office. | 5% |
| 7. Serve as the university's liaison and maintain positive and productive relationships with pertinent local, state and federal veterans' offices and organizations, [redacted] communities and the general public. Keep apprised and involved in relevant local, state and national legislation and programs. Use internal and external media to promote veterans and their contributions. | 5% |
| 8. Advise university leadership regarding veterans' concerns and legislative issues. | 5% |
| 10. Actively fundraise for scholarships and services for military veterans. Coordinate services with Financial Aid's Office of Veterans Services. | 5% |
| 11. Collaborate with other [redacted] universities and colleges on programs and issues regarding veterans. | 5% |

Total= 100%

VIII. APPENDIX

University D: Veterans' Education & Transition Services Program organizational chart



Professional Services Note

The Advisory Board has worked to ensure the accuracy of the information it provides to its members. This project relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and The Advisory Board cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information or its analysis in all cases. Further, The Advisory Board is not engaged in rendering clinical, legal, accounting, or other professional services. Its projects should not be construed as professional advice on any particular set of facts or circumstances. Members are advised to consult with their staff and senior management, or other appropriate professionals, prior to implementing any changes based on this project. Neither The Advisory Board Company nor its programs are responsible for any claims or losses that may arise from any errors or omissions in their projects, whether caused by The Advisory Board Company or its sources. 1-PDN4N

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Appendix E: Veterans Specialist Job Description



TITLE: Veterans Specialist

CLASS: Classified

EXEMPT STATUS: Non-exempt

GRADE: 20

NATURE AND SCOPE OF WORK:

Under the general direction of the Director of Financial Aid, provides veterans with a variety of services. Incumbent is responsible for certifying veterans' educational benefits under state and federal regulations and for interpreting and implementing policies and procedures in support of federal and state statutes and guidelines. Ensures that each eligible veteran receives their share of benefits that fall within the federal guidelines. Acts as a resource for any veteran in the community at large. Interpersonal contacts include students, faculty and staff, the public, federal and state agencies, military departments, and others affiliated with similar programs at regional colleges and universities. Job requires patience in communication and well-developed verbal skills to present and exchange technical or complex information. Work situations require consideration and interpretation of circumstances or information to choose the most effective responses. Responsible for producing journey-level work output on an independent basis subject to supervisory direction and review.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES: (Includes some or all of the following)

1. Performs certification of veterans' educational benefits, authorizing payment of benefits in accordance with the Department of Veterans Affairs regulations and procedures.
2. Conducts veteran student orientations to advise students of federal, state and institutional compliance requirements, documents and policies. Guides and assists student veterans with choice of academic major consistent with Veterans Affairs regulations and policies.
3. Collects file data and prepares student certifications authorizing state and federal payments. Conducts audit of student schedule and transcripts against degree requirements of declared major. Notifies students if courses do not apply toward their declared course of study.
4. Monitors, evaluates and verifies satisfactory academic progress of students receiving veterans' entitlements. Notifies the Veterans Affairs and students of insufficient grades and unsatisfactory academic progress standing at the end of each term.
5. Creates, maintains and audits student files for state/federal accountability purposes.

6. Collects student data for regular reports on a weekly and monthly basis and inputs into database.
7. Prepares for and participates in annual federal and stated compliance surveys.
8. Processes and distributes several thousand dollars in "advance pay" checks from the Veterans Administration to students each term.
9. Participates in annual veterans program training. This includes reviewing changes to program policies and procedures as well as new laws governing the administration of veterans education programs. Maintains active participation in professional organizations and continuing education.
10. Guides and directs the work of student employees.
11. Performs other related duties as assigned.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed in an office environment with some exposure to noise. Exposure to a video display terminal will occur on a regular basis. Some evening and Saturday work is necessary on a rotational basis. Job demands can be difficult due to heavy work flow, the meeting deadlines, continual interruptions, changing regulations and competing priorities.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Learned physical skill is required for keyboarding. Position requires standing with varied frequency.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Associate's degree in business, social science or related area. Experience performing the duties of the job may substitute for the degree requirement on a year-for-year basis.

Two years experience providing technical assistance and guidance to others, working with complex procedures and regulations, analyzing and interpreting data, and records management (both electronic and hard copy). One year of this experience must be in a college setting.

Must have good communication skills to effectively interact with a variety of people.

REV: 4/ 8/2004

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