

Student Services Comprehensive Program Review

Veterans Success Center

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General Information (Student Services Comprehensive Program Review)

Standing Requirements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (BRIEF SUMMARY, COMMENDATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) was established on May 14, 2009. In 2010, Citrus College was awarded a three-year grant from the United States Department of Education. The grant was titled "Funds for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education" (FIPSE). The FIPSE grant, in the amount of \$399,000, was used to expand and improve services for Citrus College student veterans. Since then, the VSC has received support from various donors and established itself as a model center for community colleges across the state.

The VSC's primary objective is to help veterans transition from military to civilian and student life. In addition, the VSC is dedicated to ensuring the academic progress and success of student veterans, given that many of them come to college with multiple transitional barriers and needs. The center oversees the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Government Issue (GI) Bill education benefits certification process and has certified approximately 2,065 student veterans to date.

Over the past five years, the VSC has brought awareness of the resources it offers to the college and community. The VSC also collaborates with faculty and staff to bridge the support provided to student veterans. The VSC coordinates numerous resources and activities, such as a veteran's resource fair and career panel, state and local community workshops, and new student and GI Bill benefit orientations to ensure that student veterans feel supported in their transition to Citrus College.

Commendations:

For nine consecutive years, Citrus College has been designated a Military Friendly School by VIQTORY, an organization that connects the military community to educational opportunities and civilian employment through its GI Jobs, Military Spouse, STEM Jobs, and Military Friendly brands. Being included on the Military Friendly Schools list means that Citrus College is among the top 15 percent of the nation's colleges, universities, and trade schools, demonstrating a commitment to embracing military service members and veterans by connecting them to the resources needed to ensure their success. Over the last five years, the degrees and certificates awarded to student veterans have increased by 73%.

With the support of the college leadership, the VSC has been able to increase its staff by hiring an additional full-time employee. Currently, the department has a full-time director, a full-time veteran services technician, full-time academic counselors, part-time VA work-study student employees, and a part-time Veteran Success on Campus Counselor (VSOC) provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Over the past five years, the Citrus College Foundation and the Citrus College Alumni Association, in collaboration with the VSC, has been able to raise more than \$200,000 to benefit student veterans.

For the past two years, the VSC has participated in Operation Veteran Center Funding (OVCF). During OVCF, Veterans Success Center staff and student veterans collaborate with other community colleges by traveling to Sacramento to encourage legislators to fund California community college veterans resource centers (VRC). Student veterans met with legislators, shared their experiences, and explained how the funding for VRCs would significantly enhance their educational experience and academic success. As a result of their advocacy efforts, the 2017-18 State Budget Act appropriated a five million dollar increase to support the expansion of California community college VRCs.

Since 2013, Auto Club of Southern California and Seidner's Collision Centers have partnered to give away one vehicle per year to a family in need, especially to households with former military members. Over the last five years, several Citrus College student veterans had the fortune of being the recipients of a free car, courtesy of Seidner's Collision Centers.

Challenges:

Based on the previous five annual program reviews, the challenges for the VSC have been obtaining full-time staff needed to support student veterans utilizing GI Bill education benefits. These challenges have been addressed with the help and support of the college leadership. The VSC currently has a full-time director, academic counselor, and veteran services technician. A sudden change in leadership during the spring 2018 term, made gathering data challenging. However, the VSC has implemented a structural system that will eliminate data gaps, should there be a sudden change in leadership in the future.

Recommendations:

To expand on the success of the previous five years, the VSC will work on: 1) increasing the number of student veterans attending Citrus College; 2) increasing the persistence, retention, and completion rates of student veterans; and 3) toward having one academic counselor

housed in the VSC 100% of the time.

Looking toward the future, the VSC will engage in the active recruitment of student veterans by collaborating with military bases to support military members transitioning out of active service. The VSC is also committed to the success of all student veterans by monitoring their academic progress and providing interventions to support retention and completion.

PROGRAM MISSION/DESCRIPTION (MISSION STATEMENT)

Program Mission and Relationship to College Mission:The Veterans Success Center (VSC) supports the college's mission of "providing student support services that lead to the successful completion of degrees, transfer, certificates, and career/technical education" by removing barriers student veterans face when acclimating to academics, student life, and civilian life. The VSC also strives to empower student veterans and provide them with the skills necessary to compete globally.
Program Description:The Veterans Success Center (VSC) provides a one-stop location for student veterans to receive assistance with Government Issue (GI) Bill educational benefits and support services. The VSC staff certify eligibility, process benefits, verify coursework, schedule counseling appointments, provide academic counseling, assist with referrals, provide information regarding priority registration, and advocate on behalf of student veterans. Student veterans also receive information about various services including, veteran-specific workshops, Veterans Affairs (VA) Vocational Rehabilitation services, community resources, the Veterans Network Club, and information regarding a three-unit transferable counseling course (COUN 161) designed to help student veterans transition from military to civilian life.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS (ALPHABETIZED BY LAST NAME, LEFT TO RIGHT, THREE COLUMNS)

Maria Buffo	Rosa Moncada	David Rodriguez
Maryann Tolano-Leveque		

ORGANIZATION CHART



STAFFING

Staff preparation and training.

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) is staffed by a full-time director, a full-time veteran services technician, a full-time academic counselor, and part-time Veterans Affairs work-study students. The VSC is a busy hub offering support services to help student veterans utilize their Government Issue (GI) Bill benefits as well as achieve both their educational and personal goals.

1. The minimum qualifications for the VSC director is a master's degree in clinical psychology with a license to practice psychotherapy from the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. The director holds a master's degree in clinical psychology and is a licensed marriage and family therapist.
2. The minimum qualifications for the counselor is a master's degree in academic counseling with two (2) years experience in community college academic counseling, preferably experience working with the Veterans Administration requirements for academic and educational goals.
3. The minimum qualifications for the veterans services technician is an associate degree and the completion of the Department of Veterans Affairs Online School Official training.

KEY FUNCTIONS (USING BULLET FORMAT - POPULATE WITH TEXT FROM THE PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEW, EFMP OR ENTER NEW TEXT.)

- Comply with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Government Issued (GI) Bill Educational federal mandates;
- Coordinate recruitment and outreach efforts;
- Coordinate student recognition events;
- Develop and promote resources for student veterans;
- Increase student retention and academic success by providing services that support a student veteran's transition from military life to civilian student life;
- Organize campus events to provide student veterans with information about community resources;
- Oversee the certification process of GI Bill education benefits;
- Manage student engagement, recruitment and outreach;
- Promote the development of skills needed by students to succeed in their transfer and professional lives;
- Provide individual and group tutoring services for student veterans;
- Provide textbook loan services; and
- Provide work-study and job development opportunities.

SERVICE DEMOGRAPHICS (POPULATE WITH DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FROM INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING OR EFMP)

Over the previous five years, student veteran demographics remained consistent, with an average 81%:16% male to female ratio and Hispanic/Latinx students accounting for over half of the student veteran population. The average age of a student veteran is 29.

Demographics	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total veterans	426	100%	414	100%	411	100%	430	100%	384	100%
Female	60	14%	71	17%	66	16%	74	17%	69	18%
Male	359	84%	334	81%	334	81%	349	81%	310	81%

Unknown	7	2%	9	2%	11	3%	7	2%	5	1%
Asian	29	7%	28	7%	30	7%	26	6%	22	6%
African American	28	7%	22	5%	28	7%	33	8%	29	8%
Hispanic/Latino	244	57%	231	56%	226	55%	251	58%	232	60%
Two or more races/Other	14	3%	3	1%	13	3%	13	3%	12	3%
White	108	25%	14	3%	111	27%	103	24%	86	22%
Unknown	3	1%	116	28%	3	1%	4	1%	3	1%
Average Age	29.4		29.0		29.2		29.7		29.7	

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (DESCRIBE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.)

The eligibility requirement for student veterans is a certificate of release or discharge from active duty document (DD214). Verification enables student veterans to receive priority registration and access to all services provided by the Veterans Success Center (VSC). The VSC is open to all student veterans and their dependents, active duty, and reservist regardless of whether they are receiving the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Government Issue (GI) Bill educational benefits.

In order to remain eligible for GI bill educational benefits, student veterans must apply for eligibility through the VA website, obtain a Certificate of Eligibility, and submit the certificate to the VSC. To process student eligibility, student veterans must complete the following to be certified: 1) have an academic counselor approved Student Education Plan (SEP); 2) register for classes that match their SEP; and 3) submit an intent form. All three items must be submitted to the VSC for benefits certification to be processed and sent to the VA through the VAOnce online system. VAOnce is an online system shared between the VA and college, where GI Bill education benefit requests are certified for payment. Student veterans repeat this process each semester or when they make changes to their academic class schedule, increase or decrease of credit hours, or change their major. Each student veteran or veteran dependent using GI Bill education benefits has different certification criteria depending on their GI Bill benefit eligibility.

FACILITIES/LOCATION

In 2014 the VSC moved from Hayden Hall (HH) to its current location in the Integrated Services (IC) building, between the Educational Development (ED) and the Liberal Arts/Business (LB) buildings. This move was made in order to better accommodate the needs of the VSC and the students it serves by providing a larger space for workshops, trainings, and studying.

The VSC is housed in a 3,700 sq. ft. space, has four office spaces for staff, a reception and lobby area, a computer/study room, a multi-purpose room, a kitchen, a private bathroom, and an outdoor patio. The VSC has 11 computers and three printers available for students.

The multi-purpose room has one 42-inch television for student use and one 72-inch monitor for presentations, trainings, and workshops. The VSC welcomes non-veteran students and visitors, although services are reserved for student veterans and certified dependents. One of three campus food pantries is located at the VSC.

COORDINATION

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) collaborates with the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (IRPE) in gathering data pertaining to demographics, graduation rates, student veteran persistence rates, enrollment trends, and other information to identify students' educational needs. The Technology and Computer Services (TeCS) office provides student data, including: contact information, enrolled units, units completed, the number of full-time equivalent students (FTES), grade point averages (GPA), and other information as needed. The support that is provided by the TeCS office is critical in maintaining the email, SARS system, telephone systems and computer systems. Student veterans rely heavily on the internet, social media, and email to stay connected to the college and the center. Student veterans are also dependent on the VSC website and internet to stay connected academically and with the student veteran community.

The VSC coordinates with the Admissions and Records Office to obtain verification of veteran and/or military status. This process is needed for the certification of VA educational benefits. The Admissions and Records Office staff provides biweekly admissions reports of military applicants by term.

The VSC also collaborates with the Office of Student Life and Leadership Development (SLLD) and the Student Health Center (SHC) to provide the campus community with workshops and events to maximize resources while meeting both the personal and social needs of student veterans. Events such as Saluting Our Veterans promotes collaboration between student veterans and the general student population.

The VSC collaborates with the SHC to provide mental health services for student veterans. The SHC also provides workshops such as anger management, anxiety support groups, mental wellness workshops and smoking cessation programs for student veterans.

The VSC collaborates with the Citrus College Foundation in raising money for the center and its students. The foundation also funds resource fairs, open houses, and appreciation luncheons for student veterans throughout the year.

The Financial Aid Office assists student veterans in applying for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The Financial Aid Office also hosts scholarship workshops to encourage student veterans to apply for various scholarships offered.

The VSC has collaborated with the office of Student Affairs, the SLLD office, Azusa Pacific University and the Citrus College Visual and Performing Arts Division for the past 13 years in the production of Saluting our Veterans, a Veterans Day celebration.

BUSINESS OFFICE (DESCRIBE HOW THIS PROGRAM WORKS WITH THE BUSINESS OFFICE TO MONITOR BUDGETS AND FISCAL REPORTING?)

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) works closely with the Fiscal Services office staff to monitor budgetary information on a monthly basis and as needed. This includes expenditures, planning future costs, and outlays. The Fiscal Services office staff work with the VSC to provide information on fees that are submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and help to coordinate VA payments, in an effort to prevent students from being dropped for non-payment or overpayments.

LINKS TO PLANNING (LIST HOW THIS PROGRAM IS ALIGNED WITH THE INTEGRATED PLAN AND THE STRATEGIC PLAN)

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) ensures that program goals are aligned with the strategic plan by incorporating goals that support the 2016-2021 strategic plan into its program review and Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) activities. The VSC goals are aligned with the following focus areas:

1.2 Improve the transition of enrolled students to collegiate courses

2.1 Institutionalize scheduling that responds to the needs of traditional and nontraditional students, increases course/program completion, and maximizes college resources.

5.1 Enhance services to students through the implementation of relevant, intuitive technology.

5.2 Adopt a service environment that is driven by student perspectives and needs.

5.3 Increase and promote efficient and effective student support services.

Student Success – The VSC contributes to student success by promoting and pro-actively maintaining a convenient one-stop location where student veterans can access services for their Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) educational benefits, academic counseling, college and community resources, tutoring services and find camaraderie with other student veterans.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) – The VSC measures SLOs on an annual basis to ensure program outcomes are met and program services continually improve.

Communication – The VSC provides communication through the college website, email, the veterans Facebook page, VSC brochures, department presentations, community presentations, workshops, the Citrus College catalog, portal announcements, and through college electronic marquees.

PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Veterans Success Center SLO Set

VSC - SLO 1

The Veterans Success Center will provide support and contribute to the academic success of student veterans to gain the tools and knowledge to pursue their educational and vocational goals.

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 5.2 Service environment, 5.3 Effective student support services

VSC - SLO 2

The Veterans Success Center will empower student veterans by providing them with the skills necessary to be successful as they transition to civilian life.

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 2.4 Marketing and promotion plan, 5.6 Diversify methods to connect with students

VSC - SLO 3

The Veterans Success Center will increase the participation of female student veterans in the activities, workshops, and services provided. Female student veterans will be able to identify the VSC as a supportive environment.

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 5.3 Effective student support services, 5.5 Increase participation in support programs

PAST PROGRAM REVIEW (UPLOAD PRE-TASKSTREAM PROGRAM REVIEWS HERE.)

The Taskstream system does not currently allow for the uploading of documents in this section. Dave Kary is aware of this problem and is working on it. However, the previous five years of annual program reviews have been uploaded into the Taskstream template.

Previous 5-Year Assessment Cycle/Upcoming 5-Year Planning Cycle

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: A: ACCESS (ACCESS – DESCRIBE HOW THIS PROGRAM IS ACCESSIBLE TO STUDENTS.)

1. Compare demographic data from the college to the program, including ethnicity, gender, age, and students with disabilities (provide trend data and analysis if available).

In the last five years, the student veteran demographic trends have remained consistent. Some of the major differences between the veteran and non-veteran student population are that a little over half of the general student population are female (52.4%) while only 18% of the veteran population is female. There is a similar correlation between the Asian population. While 12.1% of the general student population identified as Asian, only 6% of the student veteran population identified as Asian. However, the general student population for African Americans is 3.8% and the student veteran population is a little more than double at 8%. The average age of a student veteran is 29 while the average age of a non-student veteran is between 20 and 24-years-old.

Demographics	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total veterans	426	100%	414	100%	411	100%	430	100%	384	100%
Non-Veterans	17,910		18,597		19,591		19,746		19,564	
GENDER										
Female		14%		17%		16%		17%		18%
Non-V Female		52%		50.9%		51.2%		51.7%		52.4%
Male		84%		81%		81%		81%		81%
Non- V Male		45.8%		46.2%		45.9%		45.0%		44.4%
Unknown		2%		2%		3%		2%		1%
Non-V unknown		2.1%		2.%		2.9%		3.3%		3.2%
RACE/ETHNICITY										
Asian Veteran		7%		7%		7%		6%		6%

Asian Non-Veteran		9.3%		9.1%		9.3%		9.2%		12.1%
African American Veteran		7%		5%		7%		8%		8%
African American Non-Veteran		4.7%		4.2%		4.2%		3.9%		3.8%
Hispanic/Latino Veteran		57%		56%		55%		58%		60%
Hispanic/Latino Non-Veteran		58.8%		60.3%		61.2%		60.8%		61.8%
Two or more races/Other Veteran		3%		1%		3%		3%		3%
Two or more races/other Non-Veteran		2.7%		2.8%		2.8%		2.7%		N/A
White Veteran		25%		3%		27%		24%		22%
White Non-Veteran		20.2%		18.9%		17.5%		15.6%		15.7%
Unknown Veteran		1%		28%		1%		1%		1%
Unknown Non-Veteran		1.4%		1.7%		1.8%		3.8%		3.6%
AGE										
Average Age Veteran	29.4		29.0		29.2		29.7			
Average Age of Non-Veteran	20-24		20-24		20-24		20-24		20-24	

2. Describe the effectiveness of the program in enabling success for underprepared and underrepresented students.

Some student veterans come to Citrus College academically unprepared and have some difficulty transitioning from military to civilian life. For those veterans who need help with transitioning, the Veterans Success Center (VSC) provides a place to seek support among veteran peers. For those who need help with transitioning, the VSC offers academic counseling and the Veterans Network Club, which

serves as a social support group that bridges the gap between military life and college life. The VSC also provides mental health counseling, study groups, tutoring, and peer-to-peer support, test proctoring, food pantry access, and advocacy for student veterans that need extra support from faculty. The VSC staff have military backgrounds, which helps to ease a students' transition from military life into civilian and academic life.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: B STUDENT SUCCESS

1. Number of degrees/certificates awarded, transfer-prepared students, and transfers.

The following table shows a consistent increase in the number of degrees and certificates awarded to student veterans. The drop in awards during the 2016-17 academic year was the lowest. However, the previous year (2015-16) was the largest cohort of student veterans that were awarded degrees and certificates. The table also shows what percent of student veterans received degrees and certificates compared to the general population over each of the last five years.

Degrees and certificates awarded to veteran	2013-2014				2014-2015				2015-2016				2016-2017				2017-2018			
	Veteran	% awarded to veteran	Campus wide	% awarded Campus wide	Veteran	% awarded to veteran	Campus wide	% awarded Campus wide	Veteran	% awarded to veteran	Campus wide	% awarded Campus wide	Veteran	% awarded to veteran	Campus wide	% awarded Campus wide	Veteran	% awarded to veteran	Campus wide	% awarded Campus wide
Associate Degree	79	4%	1979	10.6%	69	3%	2383	12.5%	122	4%	2953	14.7%	57	2%	2966	14.7%	104	3%	3306	16.5%
Certificate	14	3%	410	2.2%	39	3%	1223	6.4%	57	4%	1350	6.7%	33	2%	1580	7.8%	62	3%	2261	11.3%
Grand Total	93	4%	2389	12.8%	108	3%	3606	19.9%	179	4%	4303	21.5%	90	2%	4546	22.5%	166	3%	5567	27.9%

2. Number of transfer-prepared students:

According to the Chancellor's Office, 'transfer prepared' refers to completion of 60 UC/CSU transferable units with a GPA of 2.0 or higher. The 2018 scorecard data was used to obtain the number of transfer prepared students.

The 2018 scorecard tracks a cohort of students who first enrolled in 2011-12, giving them six years to achieve various outcomes, including the 'transfer prepared' status. In 2013-2014, the number of student veterans awarded a certificate was higher than certificates awarded collegewide. The highest achievement was in 2015-2016 with a total of 179 student veterans awarded a degree or certificate.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: C NON-CREDIT GOALS

N/A

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: D EXEMPLARY PRACTICES AND SERVICES (LIST EXEMPLARY PRACTICES AND SERVICES OFFERED THAT COULD BE SHARED WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS.)

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) is a one-stop center that is open more than 55 hours each week. The VSC provides exemplary services such as free mental health services, academic tutoring, academic counseling, peer support groups, and a textbook lending program all in one location. The VSC also hosts student veteran orientations twice a year to welcome new veterans and ensure their academic success. The VSC assists student veterans in completing paperwork for the Government Issue (GI) Bill education benefits, Student Educational Plans (SEP), and certifies GI bill benefits. The VSC creates a culture of trust and connectedness between staff, faculty, and students. In addition, veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming. The VSC is centrally located to support inclusivity for all student veterans, military dependents, and active duty students. The VSC collaborates with various college departments and local community organizations, including government agencies, to support student veterans' academic and professional development.

The VSC is exemplary in that few California community colleges offer these services and none offer all of them in one location. For this reason, the VSC was the recipient of generous grants from the Ludwick Foundation (2013) and the Walmart Foundation (2010). The center was also featured in a video about community colleges that was presented at the White House (2010) and has been recognized as a "Military Friendly School" for nine consecutive years (2009-2018). The VSC has also received commendations from State Senator Anthony Portantino (2015), Assemblymembers Roger Hernandez (2016) and Blanca Rubio (2018), Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (2017), and Los Angeles County Supervisors Karen Barger (2018) and Hilda Solis (2017) for its exceptional service to student veterans.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: E COMPLIANCE

1. Provide an overview of how this program meets applicable minimum requirements of law.

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) must meet federal mandates set by the Veterans Affairs (VA) office when certifying student veterans for their educational benefits. The VSC compiles the documentation requested and maintains these files as required by the VA for future review and audits. The guidelines are specific to the student veteran population and their educational goals. In addition, the VSC maintains files in adherence with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The VSC director attends regular trainings and conferences to ensure compliance with laws and to stay up-to-date with changes to VA educational benefits.

The Department of Defense, Education, and Veterans Affairs have collaborated to develop the 8 Keys to Veterans' Success and the Principles of Excellence, which are guidelines for educational institutions receiving funding from the VA. The Citrus College Veterans Success Center is recognized as a Principles of Excellence school and follows the 8 Keys to Veterans' Success. These are steps taken to assist veterans and service members' transition to higher education, completing their college programs, and obtaining career-ready skills. The 8 Keys to Veterans' Success are:

1. Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans.
2. Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.
3. Implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
4. Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space for them (even if limited in size).
5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans.
6. Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention, and degree completion.
7. Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
8. Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

The VSC is committed to implementing the VA Principles of Excellence, which delineates the requirements for a successful student veterans program at community colleges. These standards include:

- Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentations.
- Accommodate Servicemembers and Reservists absent due to service requirements.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advice.
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of federal student financial aid programs.

2. Describe compliance initiatives undertaken since last program review.

The California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE) is responsible for approving and reporting all post secondary school's courses to the VA. This process is done annually and compliance audits are conducted at least once every three years. The VSC successfully completed and passed a program compliance audit in June 2016. The VSC is currently working on digitizing student files and placing them on a shared database that is accessible to the VSC and the dean of students. The VSC has signed on to comply with the Principles of Excellence, Assembly Bill 2478, exemption for active duty or veterans from paying nonresident tuition, Assembly Bill 2133, priority registration for student veterans and Senate Bill 860, Cal Grants offered. The VSC staff have attended various conferences and trainings that increase their professional development and knowledge about working with student veterans. The VSC staff have attended the Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists (WAVES) conference to enhance their knowledge of professional standards, policies and ethical practices. The California Community College Veterans Summit is a collaborative among community colleges seeking ways to improve the educational experience of student veterans and to ensure that information and effective practices can be shared between faculty, administrators and staff who work with student veterans. The WAVES conference and the California Community College Veterans Summit have been attended annually by staff that work directly with student veterans.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: F ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT (HOW HAS THE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTED TO A GREENER CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT.)

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) certification of Government Issue (GI) Bill education certification of benefits is done online through the VAOnce system eliminating the use of paper. The VSC staff and student veterans are conscientious of the environment and participate in a recycling program. There are three recycling containers in the center, and the VSC is currently working on digitizing its student files to help reduce the use of paper. The VSC kitchen is equipped with a water filter machine to encourage students to bring reusable water bottles. The kitchen cabinets are filled with dishes that students can use for coffee and their lunch to reduce the use of single-use paper and plastic products.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: G DATA REPORTING

1. Describe data gathering and submission processes, including challenges in submission.

Tracking data for the VSC is a collaborative effort between the Technology and Computer Services (TeCS) office, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE), the Admissions and Records Office, and the Veterans Affairs (VA) Once Certifying system. The VAOnce certifying system is used to certify Government Issued (GI) Bill educational benefits and maintains student veteran data each semester. During the data collection process, the VSC encountered challenges reconciling the correct numbers between the three different data collection sources. A sudden change in VSC leadership made it difficult to obtain data for the past five years. Moving forward, the VSC will request technical support and use software systems such as Argos and Banner to track data accurately.

2. Explain changes in data collection, access, and submission since last program review.

In 2016, the Argos reporting system was introduced. This program is a user friendly, web-based reporting system that is used to obtain and share student information with other departments.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: H TECHNOLOGY NEEDS (EXPLAIN HOW FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, STAFF, AND STUDENTS INTERACT WITH THIS PROGRAM.)

1. List technology needs that currently exist in the program (include justification).

The VSC staff could serve student veterans more efficiently by uploading the Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD214) form into the Application Xtender document management software (Xtender). Currently, students must go to the Admissions and Records office to add the DD214 form into their student files. Another benefit to having direct access to Xtender is the ability to track student veterans that are not using Government Issued (GI) benefits. Scanning directly into Xtender would allow the VSC to keep data records for all self-disclosed veterans. The VSC is working with the Technology and Computer Services (TeCS) office to ensure that VSC computer systems are compatible with the Xtender system.

PROGRAM SELF-EVALUATION: I INTERACTION

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) interacts with various departments on campus. If student veterans experience academic challenges, the VSC staff can intervene before it becomes unmanageable for the student. Faculty have the full support of the VSC staff to help with any challenges student veterans may face. College employees may encounter student veterans through the various support services provided to students, such as financial aid, career transfer, health center, and various workshops throughout the academic year. Faculty and support programs have conducted study skills, technology information, career transfer, SmartPen use, and self-care workshops at the VSC. The Veterans Success Center participates in several events on campus, such as a financial aid literacy fair, career transfer fair, health and wellness, and a foster kinship community fair. Student veterans have also received support from the Career/Transfer Center, through career panels, resource fairs and guidance through the transfer process.

AWARDS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

- Citrus College is a member of Region VIII Veterans Consortium
- Designated a Military Friendly School by VIQTORY GI jobs magazine for nine consecutive years

- Featured in a video about community colleges that was presented at the White House (2010)
- Member of Mental Health Consortium for Congresswomen Grace Napolitano
- Received commendation from Los Angeles County first District Supervisor Hilda Solis in 2018
- Recognized as a Principles of Excellence school by the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Received a commendation from State Senator Anthony Portantino in 2015 for exemplary service to student veterans
- Received a commendation from Assemblyman Roger Hernandez in 2016 for exemplary service to student veterans
- Received a commendation from Congresswoman Grace Napolitano in 2017 for exemplary service to student veterans
- Received a commendation from Assemblywomen Blanca Rubio in 2018 for exemplary service to student veterans
- Received a commendation from Los Angeles County Supervisor Karen Barger in 2018 for exemplary service to student veterans
- Received a commendation from Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis in 2017 for exemplary service to student veterans

SUMMARY OF PAST RECOMMENDATIONS/GOALS

VSC Goal 1: Explore funding sources to support the needs of the growing veteran population.

This goal is ongoing. The Veterans Success Center has received numerous donations from community organizations. The Citrus College foundation has supported the donation process that has led to the creation of a book lending program and smart pen loan program. In 2018 the Veterans Success Center participated in Operation Veteran Center Funding. Veterans Success Center staff and student veterans collaborated with other community colleges by traveling to Sacramento to encourage legislators to fund California Community College Veterans Resource Centers (VRC) throughout the 114 colleges. Student veterans met with legislators, shared their experiences, and explained how the funding for Veterans Resource Centers would greatly enhance their educational experience and academic success. As a result of their advocacy efforts, the 2017-18 State Budget Act appropriated a five million dollar increase to support the expansion of California Community College Veterans Resource Centers (VRCs).

VSC Goal 2: Create programs and systems to welcome female veterans.

VSC Goal 3: Increase female participation in Veterans Success Center activities by 15%.

In 2015 this goal was assessed with a survey that resulted in hiring female student veteran mentors. Three female empowerment luncheons were held during the spring 2015 semester. Unfortunately, goals were not assessed during the following years. Due to a sudden transition in leadership, not all objectives were completed and some data was not available. However, the population of female veterans enrolling at the college steadily increased by 4% over the five-year period.

SUMMARY OF PAST LEARNING OUTCOMES

Past Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

VSC SLO 1: Explore funding sources to support the needs of the growing veteran population.

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) has received numerous donations from community organizations. The Citrus College Foundation has supported the donation process that has led to a book lending program and smart pen lending program. In 2018, the VSC participated in

Operation Veteran Center Funding. Veterans Success Center staff and student veterans collaborated with other community colleges by traveling to Sacramento to encourage legislators to fund California Community College Veterans Resource Centers (VRCs) throughout the 114 colleges. Student veterans met with legislators, shared their experiences, and explained how the funding for Veterans Resources Centers would greatly enhance their educational experience and academic success. As a result of their advocacy efforts, the 2017-18 State Budget Act appropriated a five-million-dollars increase to support the expansion of California Community College Veterans Resource Centers (VRCs).

VSC SLO 2: Create programs and systems to welcome female veterans.

Both VSC PLO 2 and 3 were abandoned due to the low trend in female student veterans. Due to a sudden change in leadership, data was not collected at the appropriate time to mark the goals as completed.

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VSC SLO 3: Increase female participation in Veterans Center activities 15%.

Both VSC PLO 2 and 3 were abandoned due to the low trend in female student veterans. Due to a sudden change in leadership, data was not collected at the appropriate time to mark the goals as completed.

VSC SLO 4: Increase accuracy and expediency of the certification process by 25%.

The actions needed to accomplish this goal were not completed due to a sudden change in leadership therefore data was not available. Although this SLO was not measured, steps were taken to improve the accuracy and expediency of processing GI education benefits. The request for hiring a full-time veteran success technician, who is dedicated to the processing of educational benefits, was granted and the VSC is in the process of posting the position.

VSC SLO 5: Increase the campus community's awareness of veteran culture by 20% by providing VET NET ALLY workshops and department/division trainings.

The Veterans Success Center hosted VET NET ALLY workshops throughout the previous five years, helping staff and faculty to become culturally competent in the veteran culture. In 2016, the VET NET ALLY training was conducted and attended by 10 employees. One hundred percent of all attendees stated the training made them more knowledgeable about the challenges that student veterans face.

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS/GOALS

2018-2020 Recommendation/Goals

2018-2022 VSC Goal 1:

Increase student veteran enrollment by 5% per year. Person(s) Responsible: VSC director and veterans services technician

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 2.2 Recruitment, admissions, and enrollment

2018-2022 VSC Goal 2:

Improve the GI Bill benefits certification process online. a. Introduce a secure system to send and receive forms and petitions through the student portal. b. Improve communication with students through the student portal, phone calls and email. c. Scan student veteran DD214 forms directly into ApplicationXtender document management software (Xtender). Person(s) Responsible: VSC director and veterans services technician

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 2.2 Recruitment, admissions, and enrollment, 5.1 Enhance services through technology

2018-2022 VSC Goal 3:

Develop a promise program for student veterans that funds college tuition and fees that are not covered by the GI Bill education benefits (e.g. supplies, books, parking). Person(s) Responsible: VSC director and dean of students

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 2.2 Recruitment, admissions, and enrollment

2018-2022 VSC Goal 4:

Improve the academic success of student veterans through adopting the guided pathway model. a. Introduce a math boot camp to help student veterans refresh their math skills. b. Develop a student veteran tracking system to support academic progress (track GPA, course failure, transfer ready) and provide interventions to promote success and completion. c. Encourage the completion of first year English and math courses. d. Participate on the advising team for the career and academic pathways (CAPs) Person(s) Responsible: VSC staff and dean of students

Mapping

Strategic Plan Focus Areas: 2.2 Recruitment, admissions, and enrollment, 3.1 Innovative curriculum and instructional pathways, 4.2 Non-credit ESL, vocational, and workforce preparation, 5.2 Service environment

SLO EVALUATION PLAN

VSC-SLO 1: Student veterans and college employees will identify the Veterans Success Center as a place that provides support and contributes toward the academic success of student veterans.

VSC-SLO 2: Student veterans will identify the Veterans Success Center as a place for peer support, counseling support, and tutoring support.

VSC-SLO 3: Female veterans will identify the Veterans Success Center as a supportive environment that contributes toward their academic success.

The Veterans Success Center will conduct student veteran surveys at the end of the fall and spring semesters. The data collected from these surveys will measure the number of students who receive support and which support services are needed. The surveys will also be used to collect data on demographics, veteran status, use of GI benefits, academic goals and college major.

PAST BUDGET SUMMARY (SUMMARY OF RECENT YEARS' BUDGET PROPOSALS)

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) director position is funded by the Student Equity and Achievement Program (SEAP) funds. The veteran services technician position is funded by two different sources, 35% is funded from the district budget and 65% from on-going categorical funding. The VSC also receives an annual \$2,000 supply budget, which was established during the 2017-2018 academic year. The Foundation has been effective in providing funds to support various VSC activities and programs. The following are the VSC program

review budget requests for the last five years:

Year	Budget Request
2014-2015	\$340,951
2015-2016	\$342,451
2016-2017	\$141,474
2017-2018	\$86,828
2018-2019	\$84,072

BUDGET PLANNING (NARRATIVE DISCUSSING MAJOR BUDGET PLANS FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS)

The budget plan for the Veterans Success Center is to establish a Veterans Promise Program to help student veterans with the cost of attending college. The GI bill education benefits funds up to 36 months of education benefits. Therefore, some students elect not to use their education benefits for the first years of college in order to save their benefits for attending a university or graduate school. Offering additional benefits for students that elect not to use their GI educational benefits will support student veterans in reaching their academic goals at Citrus College. The Veterans Promise Program would cover tuition, fees and provide a book stipend for student veterans. Some GI benefits do not cover other student fees, such as the student services fee, student representation fee, and books. The goal of the Veterans Promise Program would be to remove the financial barriers that often prevent student veterans from pursuing higher education.

Another budget plan would be in support of guided pathways. The removal of remedial education at community colleges poses challenges for veterans who are not coming directly from high school and who have been out of school longer than the average student. For example, using high school math performance may be a disadvantage for some veterans. Additional supportive tutoring or introducing a mathematics "boot camp" before the beginning course at Citrus College would help student veterans to refresh necessary math skills that will support their academic success. The math boot camp can help student veterans with math skills during an intensive one-day course (5 hours) at the beginning of the spring and fall semesters. Funding for this project is estimated at \$900 for an adjunct faculty to teach the course and cover materials (i.e. calculator, pencils, paper). No books would be required.