

Program	Veterans Program
Does this program have a CTE component?	Yes
Academic Year	2016/2017
Review Period	6 Year
Service Areas	

This section addresses the big picture. Prompts should help you describe your program and goals and the relationship to the institutional mission, vision and goals, and how the program is funded.

1. Describe the program and/or service area under review and how the program supports the mission of Santa Monica College.

Mission:

The mission of the Veterans Resource Center is to assist veterans in making a seamless transition to civilian life after serving in the military, to successfully acclimate them to academia and to remove barriers that student veterans face by providing transition support.

Vision Statement:

We strive to provide a welcoming and relaxed environment for veterans to connect with each other and a supportive staff that understands this population’s experiences and struggles. We encourage personal and intellectual growth by offering resources that assist them in achieving their goals. Students are tasked with;

- Examining long and short-term goals;
- Strategizing how to best accomplish these goals;
- Identifying on-campus support services;
- Explaining how to partner with outside veteran-serving organizations; and
- Discovering ways to maximize Veterans Administration benefits.

Veterans Resource Center services and course offering:

Counseling:

- Conducting intake interviews to determine student’s academic goals;
- Evaluating transcripts (when applicable) to assure accuracy of course planning;
- Developing education plans;
- Explaining distinct characteristics/benefits of the respective V.A. Chapters. (There are seven distinct chapters – Chapter 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 1606 and 1607);
- Preparing appropriate V.A. paperwork that validates: (1) courses/units enrolled in; (2) parent letters (which allows a veteran whose primary campus is SMC, to enroll in a course(s) for a given term at another California Community College); (3) change in program forms (required anytime a student changes academic goal/major or transfer site); (4) the student veteran’s intent to use benefits (certification agreement – a tangible agreement submitted to the VRC for each term benefits are used); (5) verifies residency/payment of out-of-state tuition and fees (the VACA form -- Veterans’ Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 must be completed by

non-resident students receiving benefits under the Post 9/11 G.I. bill); and (6) requests for technical equipment required to accomplish academic goal. (Example: A student participating in SMC's Interaction Design bachelors program which requires an Apple PC laptop with standard operation systems and hardware to accommodate course requirements. Software needed: Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Dreamweaver.);

- Certifying Official (assures meticulous reporting of units enrolled as they correspond to payment of monthly stipend);
- Book loan program (lending of textbooks in VRC's library for a given term);
- Emergency Relief Fund (Based on funding.) Requires 1) a clear indication of need; 2) verifiable evidence of the need (i.e., utility due bill, notice from a landlord, policy report or stolen property); and 3) evidence that student is enrolled in at least 6 units for the term funding is requested. Funds received are not to exceed \$300. Student must submit a VRC Emergency Fund Application which must be unanimously approved by three members of the VRC staff;
- Laptop loan program (Based on availability). Laptops can be checked out overnight, over the weekend or through the end of a given term;
- Math tutoring. Assistance provided by in-house student math tutor; math instructor volunteer hours 1.5 hours per week; one part-time math instructor (who takes on one student per term for individual tutoring), and student volunteers from Alpha Gamma Sigma.;
- Food Pantry. Pantries are available in special programs for students experiencing "food insecurity". In order to maintain a level of accountability, students are encouraged to complete information cards;
- Wellness Counseling. Students can schedule one-on-one appointments as well as attend group workshops. Sample workshop topics include:
 - Dialing Down Stress
 - Study Skills & Time Management
 - Communication 101
 - PTSD and TBI – What It Looks Like
 - Medication: The Truth Behind the Pills
 - The Social Hour: Drinking & the Psychology of Fun
 - Managing Your Money is a Mindset
 - Mind & Body Balance: Diet, Sleep and Working Out
 - Vet Ally seminars for faculty and staff
- Veterans Administration Work-Study (paid for by the V.A. as long as the student is enrolled ¾ time);
- Computer lab, printing and scanning (6 computers/1 printer);
- Veteran Lounge/Study Room;
- Weekly visits from SMC's TBI/PTSD Specialist;
- Student Veterans' Association Advisement; and
- One section of Counseling 20 (recommended for veterans who served in the U.S. military)

Veterans Resource Center services are available to all veterans, dependents, survivors and reservists, regardless of discharge status and/or whether or not they are receiving V.A. education benefits.

2. Identify the overarching goal(s) or charge/responsibilities of the program or service area. If appropriate, include ensuring/monitoring compliance with state, federal or other mandates.

The VRC's primary responsibility is to ensure that veterans receiving benefits are compliant with Veterans Administration regulations. VRC counselors and certifying officials work in tandem to assure conformity.

Students must have a specific academic goal and be enrolled in classes that lead to that goal. They can only be certified (approved) for classes that strictly adhere to their VRC drafted education plans. The number of units a student is enrolled in determines the amount of their monthly stipend.

Certifying officials play a crucial role in recordkeeping and abide by instructions in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, School Certifying Official Handbook, Revision 5.1 (5th Edition). Responsibilities include:

- Inputting student information into the V.A.'s electronic enrollment certification software called VA-Once;
- Keeping the V.A. informed of the enrollment status of Veterans and other eligible persons;
- Keeping up-to-date on current V.A. rules and benefits;
- Maintaining records of V.A. students and making records available for inspection. Records should include copies of all V.A. paperwork, SMC transcripts, grade reports, add/drop slips, tuition and fee charges, transcripts from previous schools with evaluations of same, student's school application, records of disciplinary action, program outline, a curriculum guide or graduation evaluation form, and any other pertinent forms;
- Resolving payment problems;
- Disseminating and/or posting information on V.A. education benefits, programs and contact points;
- Ensuring that students receiving benefits are fully aware of their responsibilities to the school; and
- Apprising supervisors of any internal problems that may affect service to V.A.

As a result of the efficiency on the part of VRC certifying officials, the Veteran Administration's audit of student files, conducted July 2016, was completed "satisfactorily". The V.A.'s Education Compliance Survey Specialist found "no discrepancies" and commended the VRC for "doing such a great job administering the veteran's program".

3. If applicable, describe how the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Supporting Goals, and/or Strategic Initiatives of the institution are integrated into the goals of the program or service area.

Institutional Learning Outcome #1. Personal Attributes: Acquire the self –confidence and self-discipline to pursue their intellectual curiosities with integrity in both their personal and professional lives.

The Veterans Resources Center strives to empower students with tools and resources that demonstrate our commitment to guide them through the academic process. We provide math tutoring, time management workshops, computer labs, personal counseling, etc. We encourage students to utilize services in hopes that each additional support tool will strength their resolve to successfully navigate academia. We help steer them in the direction that leads to self-efficacy.

Institutional Learning Outcome #2. Analytic and Communication Skills: Obtain the knowledge and academic skills necessary to access, evaluate, and interpret ideas, images, and information critically in order to communicate effectively, reach conclusions, and solve problems.

Although the Veterans Resource Center offers 30-minute counseling appointments, we maintain an "open door" policy and encourage students to ask questions or "check-in" with us to discuss how they are doing. Oftentimes our counsel is sought to provide feedback on "how-to" access on-campus services outside of the VRC (i.e., Writing Lab, Learning Disabilities

High Tech Office) or discuss a dilemma they need to resolve. We make every effort to provide feedback that helps them make decisions to assure the best possible outcome.

Institutional Learning Outcome #5. Authentic Engagement:

Demonstrate a level of engagement in the subject matter that enables and motivates the integration of acquired knowledge and skills beyond the classroom.

The Veterans Resource Center works with veteran-friendly organizations that provide opportunities for internships, scholarships and volunteer experiences that utilize acquired skills. We maintain alliances with the following programs: (1) The Mission Continues matches student veterans with corporations, foundations and other nonprofit organizations that seek to address key educational, environmental or social issues; (2) Stanford Summer Session/Veteran Accelerator, an 8-week, full-scholarship program designed for military veterans in their first two years of study who are headed towards a four year degree or beyond. The program builds on a veteran's significant military experience to further develop academic, professional and personal skills needed to thrive at a four-year institution. The Veteran Accelerator allows students to take two to three courses during the Summer Quarter at Stanford, while living on campus as participates in an active learning community; and (3) The American Legion Auxiliary, Pacific Palisades Chapter 283 mentors veterans by promoting Americanism (justice, freedom, democracy, peace and goodwill) while building comradeship through community service, social events and donations of time and resources.

4. If your program receives operating funding from any source other than District funds identify the funding source. If applicable, note the start and end dates of the funding (generally a grant), the percentage of the program budget supported by non-District funding, and list any staff positions funded wholly or in part by non-District funds. Do not include awards for non-operational items such as equipment (ex. VTEA) or value added activities (ex Margin of Excellence).

The VRC received operating funding from:

FIPSE Grant:

Duration: 3 years

Began: October 2010

Ended: September 30, 2013

Amount: \$399,613

Percentage of the Program Budget Supported by Non-District Funding: **60%** (District budget \$263,000 + FIPSE \$399,613 = \$662,613 Total Budget)

Grant Purpose and Overview:

The goal of the FIPSE grant was to develop a model Veterans Resource Center that integrates nationally-recognized best practices, address the unique needs of SMC's students, and serve as a resource for faculty and staff as they work to create a

teaching and learning environment that is conducive to the academic success of student veterans.

Ralph M. Parsons' Grant:

Duration: 2 years

Began: July 1, 2013

Ended: June 30, 2015

Amount: \$100,000 (\$50,000/yr.)

Percentage of the Program Budget Supported by Non-District Funding: **16%** (District budget \$263,000 + Parsons' \$50,000 = \$313,000 Total Budget)

Grant Purpose and Overview:

The purpose of the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation grant was to continue and expand the programs and services offered through the SMC Veterans' Resource Center. The goals of the grant was to improve student satisfaction and success and raise awareness amongst the campus community of the needs and concerns of student veterans.

American Legion:

Duration: 9-1/2 months (two 16-week semesters/one 6-week session)

Began: Fall 2012

Ended: Summer 2013

Amount: \$48,234

Percentage of the Program Budget Supported by Non-District Funding: **15.5%** (District budget \$263,000 + American Legion \$48,234 = \$311,234 Total Budget)

In the summer of 2012, the VRC's faculty leader was contacted by the Commander of American Legion, Post 283, who wanted to know how the Legion could support student veterans. The Legion was interested in growing membership, by recruiting younger veterans, in exchange for invitations to Student Veteran Association meetings and social gatherings. As a result, a mutually beneficial alliance was formed.

In response to SMC's budget shortfall (fall 2012-spring 2013), the Legion stepped in to pay counseling salaries. Without their assistance, it would have been impossible to provide adequate counseling services, which would mean a delay in processing paperwork and ultimately late payment of benefits.

In speaking with the current president of the Legion's Auxiliary, I was informed that, due to extenuating circumstances, there is no clear paper trail of SMC proposals to the Legion. According to the VRC's faculty leader, she would typically draft a proposal letter to the Legion conveying VRC needs. If approved, the Legion would write a check to the SMC

Foundation on behalf of the VRC.

Equity:

Duration: Ongoing

Began: Winter 2015

How money was used: Salaries (winter/spring/summer)

Winter/Spring/Summer 2015

- (Percentage of the Program Budget Supported by Non-District Funding: **34.7%** (District budget \$263,000 + Equity \$139,676 = \$402,676 Total Budget)

Fall 2015-Summer 2016

- (Percentage of the Program Budget Supported by Non-District Funding: **41%** (District budget \$263,000 + Equity \$180,046 = \$443,046 Total Budget)

Fall 2016-Summer 2017)

- (Percentage of the Program Budget Supported by Non-District Funding: **41%** (District budget \$263,000 + Equity \$139,676 = \$402,676 Total Budget)

B. Populations Served

In this section you will provide information that describes who your program or service area serves. When comparing data from different periods, use a consistent time frame (ex. Compare one fall term to another fall term)

Area/Discipline Information Pertains To

Veterans Program

1. Describe the students your program serves in terms of ethnicity, race, gender, age, residency status, citizenship, educational goal, enrollment status, and full/part-time status. Note any changes in student or enrollment data since the last program review.

Ethnicity/Race. In fall 2011, the largest percentage of veteran students were White (35.2%). This number has decreased yearly falling to 28.7% fall 2016. The next largest population of veterans are Hispanics/Latinos. This group has increased steadily over the past six years from 28.7% fall 2011 to 35.5% fall 2016, followed by African American (whose numbers peaked in fall 2013 to 19.5% and have decreased to 14.8% fall 2016), Asian Pacific Islanders' numbers rose from a high of 13.0% fall 2014 to a steady 12.8% fall 2015 and 2016. The number of American Indian veterans peaked at 0.8% fall 2012 and were 0.5% fall 2016.

Gender. SMC student veterans are predominately male. This number peaked at 81.9% fall 2011 and dropped slightly to 78.6% fall 2016. Conversely, the number of female veterans has increased steadily from 18.1% fall 2011 to 21.4% fall 2016.

Age. The average age of student veterans at SMC 25-29. This number has remained relatively unchanged from a high of 30% fall 2012 to 29.7% fall 2016. The second largest age group of veteran students is 30-39. This number has also remained relatively unchanged from a high of 23.5% fall 2011 to 21.4 fall 2016.

Residency Status. Veterans comprise a larger percentage of California residents and out-of-state students than SMC's college-wide average. The out-of-state veteran student population showed a marked increase from 3.3% fall 2012 to 9.1% fall 2016.

Citizenship. Not applicable.

Educational Goal. The three educational goals of student veterans ranked high to low are transfer, certificates and associates degree.

Enrollment Status. The total number of veterans enrolled at SMC has fallen from a high of 653 fall 2013 to a low of 603 fall 2016.

Full-Time/Part/time Status. The number of student veterans attending SMC full-time has fallen from a high of 47.2% fall 2013 to a low of 40.8% fall 2016. Part-time enrollment of student veterans increased from a low of 52.8% fall 2013 to a high of 59.2% fall 2016.

2. Compare your student population with the college demographic. Are the students in your program different from the college population? Reflect on whether your program is serving the targeted student population.

Ethnicity/Race. Based on the six year average (fall 2011-fall 2016), veteran students at SMC have a larger population of African Americans, American Indians and White students than SMC's college-wide population, whereas the Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino student veteran populations are smaller than the college-wide demographic.

Gender. The gender gap of veteran students is in stark contrast to SMC's college-wide percentage. Veterans are predominately male (fall 2016 -- 78.6%) whereas SMC's college-wide population is female (fall 2016 – 53.1%).

Age. The age range of student veterans at SMC falls into two groups, 25-29 (25%) and 30-39 (29%). The average age of SMC students college-wide is 20-24 (41%).

Residency Status. Veterans comprise a larger percentage of California residents as well as a larger percentage of out-of-state students than SMC's college-wide average. The out-of-state student veteran population showed a marked increase between fall 2015 and 2016, as a result of the agreement by the V.A. to resume paying "out-of-state" fees for Chapter 33 (Post/9-11). In Fall 2011 the V.A. paid in-state and out-of-state fees. They later rescinded and only paid in-state tuition. This decision left out-of-state veterans with balances that they often could not pay after their first term at SMC. As a result of their inability to pay, they were blocked from enrolling for future terms and unable to request official transcripts of SMC coursework. In the summer of 2014, the V.A. reinstated the policy to pay out-of-state fees that took effect summer 2015.

Citizenship. Not applicable.

	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	College-Wide Fall 2016
Grand Total	565	631	653	633	616	603	30830
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
African American	89	107	130	99	93	89	2782
	15.8%	17.0%	19.9%	15.6%	15.1%	14.8%	9.0%
American Indian	2	5	4	3	4	3	48
	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.2%
Asian P/I	64	64	65	82	79	77	4695
	11.3%	10.1%	10.0%	13.0%	12.8%	12.8%	15.0%
Hispanic/Latino	162	188	203	205	211	214	12303
	28.7%	29.8%	31.1%	32.4%	34.3%	35.5%	39.9%
Two or more races	37	47	43	46	43	38	1251
	6.5%	7.4%	6.6%	7.3%	7.0%	6.3%	4.1%
Unknown race/ethnicity	12	10	14	11	7	9	1361
	2.1%	1.6%	2.1%	1.7%	1.1%	1.5%	4.4%
White	199	210	194	187	179	173	8390
	35.2%	33.3%	29.7%	29.5%	29.1%	28.7%	27.2%

Educational Goal. The three educational goals of veteran students are **associates degree** (which fell to a low of 2.1% fall 2015, but grew to 2.7% fall 2016, slightly above the college-wide average of 2.4% fall 2016) , **certificates** (fell from a high of 3.8% fall 2013 to a low of 2.1% fall 2015, with a modest increase fall 2016 to 2.3%, compared to SMC's fall 2016 average of 1.5%), and **transfer** (more than 70% of student veterans indicated their educational goal as transfer from a high of 76.8% fall 2014 to a low of 71.5% fall 2016, compared to SMC's college-wide average of 72.4% fall 2016). The percentage of veteran students with undecided/unreported education goals increased from 1.6% fall 2014 to 9.0% Fall 2016. This increase could be an indication that this population of student veterans are not receiving education benefits.

Enrollment Status. The total number of veterans enrolled has fallen from a high of 653 fall 2013 to a low of 603 fall 2016. This could have occurred as a result of the V.A. flip-flopping their decision to pay out-of-state fees (as previously mentioned).

Full-Time/Part-time Status. Full-time status of student veterans fell from a high of 47.2% fall 2013 to a low of 40.8% fall 2016. However, even at the low level of 40.8%, veterans' full-time percentage is higher than SMC's college-wide average 36.7% fall 2016. Insofar as veterans' monthly stipend is tied to units enrolled, they often strive to attend full-time. It is noteworthy that statistical data defined part-time status as students enrolled in 0.5 to 11.5 units. Part-time status of student veterans has consistently been over 50%, with a low of 52.8% Fall 2013 to a high of 59.2% fall 2016, compared to SMC's college-wide average of 63.3% fall 2016.

3. Discuss any significant change(s) in the population(s) served since the last full program review and the possible reasons for the change(s).

Veterans Restraining Assistance Program (VRAP):

In mid-2011, the V.A. signed and rolled out a new program to take effect July 1, 2012. The program was called VRAP and offered up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed Veterans. Participants were at least 35, but no more than 60 years old, received other than a dishonorable discharge, ineligible for any other education benefits, not receiving V.A. compensation due to employability and not enrolled in a federal or state job training program. The program was limited to 45,000 participants from July 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, and 54,000 participants from October 1, 2012 through March 31, 2014. Participants had to enroll in a V.A. approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an Associates Degree, Non-College degree, or a certificate in a "high demand occupation." Students were expected to attend college full-time. Benefits included payment of tuition, books and fees as well as a monthly stipend of \$1,473.

VRAP presented the VRC with a myriad of challenging personalities and a range of experiences in academia. Working with this population was no easy task since SMC programs were limited by what this group was willing to take on. The majority of the students enrolled in the Solar Photovoltaic Program with varying degrees of success. When the 12 months of entitlement were exhausted, the VRC bore the brunt of their anger that the V.A. did not extend the program/benefits to allow them more time for completion.

C. Program Evaluation

In this section programs/units are to identify how, using what tools, and when program evaluation takes place. Evaluation must include outcomes assessment as well as any other measures used by the program. Please use Section D to address program responses to the findings described in this section.

Programs/units with multiple disciplines or functions may choose to answer the following questions for each area. If this is your preferred method of responding, begin by selecting a discipline/function from the drop down, answer the set of questions and click "Save", your answers will be added to the bottom of page. Do this for each discipline/function. If you would like to answer the questions once, choose "Answer Once" from the drop down.

How would you like to answer these questions?

C. Saved Information For Program Evaluation

Area/Discipline Information Pertains To

Veterans Program

1. List your student or instructional support service SLOs or UOs.

SLOs are specific, measurable statements of what a student should know, be able to do, or value when they complete a program/course or sequence of activities. An SLO focuses on specific knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors that students will demonstrate or possess as a result of instruction or program activity.

UO statements focus on service or operational outcomes such as:

- *Volume of unit activity*
- *Efficiency (responsiveness, timeliness, number of requests processed, etc.)*
- *Effectiveness of service in accomplishing intended outcomes (accuracy, completeness, etc.)*
- *Compliance with external standards/regulations*
- *Client/customer satisfaction with services*

The VRC does not have SLO's unique to our program. In fall 2013, The Counseling Department developed departmental SLO's which encompass all Counseling areas.

Counseling Department SLOs:

- As a result of participating in a counseling session, students will articulate and prioritize the appropriate coursework needed for the subsequent term according to their stated academic goal.
- Using assessment or transcript evaluation results, students will identify their eligibility for, and the proper sequencing of, English/ESL, and math courses leading to their educational goal.

2. Describe when and how the program assesses these SLOs and UOs and uses the results to inform program planning including:

- **how outcomes are assessed and how often**
- **the assessment tool(s) used**
- **the sample (who gets assessed)**
- **how and when the program reviews the results and who is engaged in the process**

- **How are outcomes assessed and how often?** SLOs are assessed by individual VRC counselors following student counseling sessions.

- **What assessment tool(s) are used?** At the end of every counseling session, the counselor reflects on whether or

not the SLO was met by that student and enters that response into the SLO portal.

- **Who gets assessed?** Veterans who receive counseling.
- **How and when the program or discipline reviews the results and who is engaged in the process?** There has been inconsistency in reviewing program results. This is an area for improvement.
- The decision was made not to use **UOs** since we use the individual counseling sessions as a means of assessing SLOs. At the insistence of our Dean and Department Chair, IT created a Counseling SLO portal where all special counseling programs house their counseling SLO results

3. What other evaluation measures does your student or instructional support service use to inform planning? (For example, surveys, longitudinal data, support service use etc.) Note trends, differences in performance by group (ethnicity, gender, age), and any unusual patterns in student success and retention.

The FIPSE and Parsons' grants afforded the VRC an opportunity to develop surveys that look at student satisfaction with services and programs and afforded us an opportunity to work with Institutional Research in determining retention and other student success measures. In addition, the VRC developed a VRC Student Satisfaction Survey. Results of each is discussed below.

The FIPSE Grant sought to establish a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success with a two –pronged approach to address the teaching and learning needs of student veterans and improve their academic student success rates. The first component of the project formalized the emerging Veterans' Resource Center and expanded the direct service offerings available, coordinating their delivery with other campus entities, including disabled students. New services included faculty and peer tutoring and mentoring, a computer-mediated study center, on-site transfer advising facilitated by regional four-year institutions and on-site financial aid and career planning workshops. The second component of the project raised awareness among the campus community of the needs and concerns of student veterans through professional development activities targeting students, faculty, staff and administrators. This addressed a campus climate that veterans report is at best uncomfortable, and at worst hostile. By the end of the three year project, the college expected to serve 80 percent of the student veterans enrolled each year, provide professional development activities to a minimum of 150 faculty and staff, and increase veteran student success by 12 percent (including retention, persistence, and completion).

Objective 1: By September 2013 retention rates of student veterans at SMC will increase to 80% over a 2009 baseline of 68%. Retention will be measured by the number of students who successfully complete attempted coursework with a grade of "C" or better, as defined by the FIPSE grant.

Explanation of Progress: Explanation of baseline data: The numbers that were collected for 2012 were for "retention": all non-W's divided by the total credit enrollments for Fall term only (1547/1812). Thus, the percentage was 85%. Grades of "C" or better as stated in the objective are "success rates" by definition (all "C/P" or better grades). When calculated correctly, and for the entire academic year, we have a 65.6% success completion rate. If 2012 was collected accurately, the numbers should have read: 3110/4553 at 68.3% success rate. Our retention rate for veterans for 2010-2011/2011-2012/2012-2013/2013-2014 is 85.3%/85.6%/81.6%/82.4\$ respectively. However, if looking at success rates as measured by the definition of "C/P? or better, our veterans rate at 68.9%/68.3%/65.6%/64.7% for 2010-2011/2012-2012/2012-2013/2013-2014 respectively. It is important to note tat our success rates for the general SMC

population has ranged between 60-70% for all academic departments. It is also important to note that our student veterans who enrolled at SMC for winter 2013 and spring 2013 completed with an 81% success rate, most likely due to increased counseling hours that the VRC received. We have continued these additional resources into Fall 2013, so we are hoping to see an increase in our success rate for 2013-14 reporting.

Objective 2: Increase Fall to Fall persistence rates of student veterans.

Explanation of Progress: Persistence rates were measured utilizing the schools MIS database. When looking at the original performance measure, it was expected that the VRC would exhibit a 75% persistence rate for this reporting period, however, for this reporting period the rates were lower than expected. There are some explanations for this. One major area of concern with persistence is the current budget deficit in California, and its effects on the Community Colleges during 2010-2011, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years. Classes were reduced by 34% summer 2011, and reductions continued through the rest of the grant period. While veteran students on campus receive priority registration, many may not have been able to register for enough classes to be considered full-time which may have effected them returning for subsequent semesters. Many times, students were forced to look at options at other community colleges. To address this problem, veterans have been sent various emails, letters, etc., asking them to ensure enrolling on their scheduled dates in order to get the classes they need. In addition, veterans are encouraged several weeks prior to enrollment to see an academic counselor to create an education plan. This approach has mediated this problem and we expect to see increased persistence rates as outreach/communication is made a priority and CA budget stabilizes over 2013-2014 academic year. The Center has also increased its' counseling hours as of Fall 2013 and we expect to see positive effects from increased counseling services and course availability.

Objective 3: Increase the goal completion rates of student veterans.

Explanation of Progress: It was necessary for the Veterans Resource Center ("VRC") to change the scope of the performance measurement for "increasing the goal completion rates of student veterans", by shifting from "graduation rates" to "transfer directed" rates. Graduation with a degree or certificate is not the only performance measure indicative of academic success, or attainment of academic goals, this is mainly because Santa Monica College is known as a transfer school, whereby student veterans may never earn a degree or certificate, but do transfer to a 4-year institution. If the VRC only reported those students that graduated with a degree or certificate, it would be a gross misrepresentation of the actual progress made by veterans on campus, and the increased efforts of the Veterans Resource Center.

This performance measure represents a decrease from the previous reporting period. When looking at this goal, we divided each year into cohorts of freshman attending school for the first time that were veterans and if after two years they were transfer directed. One major problem that we have encountered with this statistic is that new students may miss priority enrollment dates, and math and English are the most popular classes. With many community colleges not offering summer or winter courses due to the California budget reductions, Santa Monica College has seen an influx of applicants making it very competitive to get courses necessary for being transfer directed. In addition, depending on assessment tests, many students may have more than 1-2 years of Basic Skills level English or math to complete (60-70 incoming SMC students are not college ready). And very important to note are that students may have been new to SMC, but were NOT a new college student, so completing English and math at SMC may not have been necessary or in their academic plan. This year we are focusing on the early dissemination of information, and working to get all veterans to register for their classes on their priority enrollment date.

Objective 4: Create a campus climate that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of student veterans and supportive of their campus environment.

Explanation of Process: Since the VRC has adopted the Vet Net Ally training program, it has been a phenomenal success on the SMC campus. 205 staff and faculty have participated in the trainings, with an additional 79 community members that have been present in community presentations about the VRC at SMC. These workshops continue to get great feedback, and participants report the veteran panel as most helpful. When participants finish their training, they get a Vet Net Ally sticker to post in their workspace so that veterans know they have a better understanding of what they have been through. Both veterans and faculty report this program as being extremely helpful.

We found that faculty and staff who participated in workshops reported that the program activity increased their awareness of veteran students. In addition, workshop participants reported higher levels of overall satisfaction with the workshop, perhaps for reasons related to high satisfaction with helpful workshop materials and clear workshop concepts. These results may help explain why the vast majority of respondents would participate in another workshop.

When we access Project Performance Measure 2.1.b (By June 2013, 80% of participants in professional development activities will report taking active steps to improve the teaching and learning environment for student veterans, we see that an equal percentage (96.3%) of all respondents reported that the workshop increased their awareness of veterans issues and that they will likely use workshop materials in their work. Further, we know that some respondents did indeed take active steps to improve the teaching and learning environment.

When we asked about improvements to the teaching and learning environment for student veterans, most respondents affirmed that they changed how they think of veterans as students and their approach to working with veterans in the classroom.

Objective 5: Increase the student satisfaction with the teaching and learning environment.

Explanation of Progress: In interpreting these findings in the broader campus environment, we can assess Project Performance Measure 2.2a (By June 2013, 75% of student veterans enrolled each year at SMC will report satisfaction with the teaching and learning environment) in terms of the overall social experience, we find that fewer than 75% of respondents on the pretest (50.4%) are satisfied or very satisfied but also find that this percentage increases to 60.9% upon completion of a program of study among veterans. This finding seems consistent with the increases in levels of agreement among respondents that they feel connected to the campus and that students in their classes understand veterans' issues. These findings are consistent with what we witnessed in our analyses – related to veteran student connections to campus (low but increasing), student-friendliness toward veterans (moderately high and stable), staff-friendliness toward veterans (high but declining), and faculty respect for students (high but declining) – and paint a picture of a campus climate that is a mixed bag for student veterans.

Objective 6: Increase the engagement of student veterans in campus activities.

Explanation of Progress: The number of students reporting participating in activities outside of the VRC nearly doubled from Year 1 to Year 2. However, the second and third years are nearly identical. When we access Project Performance

Measure 2.3.a (By June 2013, 60% of student veterans will self-report participating in student activities and services outside of the Veteran’s Resource Center), we find that a composite measure consisting of six survey items (on the pre- and post-test surveys) reveals that 36.7% of respondents reported participation in activities and services outside of the Veteran’s Resource Center. We derived this figure from a mean score of the post-test of the following six items: 4. Seeking academic help from instructors or a tutor (33.3% vs. 55.8%); 6. Visiting faculty during office hours (22.1% vs. 31.8%); 10. Participating in group assignments or projects (65.6 vs. 60.5%); 12. Developing relationships with students outside of class (24.6% vs. 32.6%); 13. Volunteering in the community for a class assignment (10.8 vs. 14.7%); and 14. (2.3a), the figure clearly falls below 60% (36.7) but increased from 29.6% on the pretest. It is important to note here that the 2012 annual report noted a 31% rate on this objective, however, the numbers used were derived from only ONE activity (visiting faculty outside of office hours). However, for this reporting period, we felt that using a number of activities from the student satisfaction surveys were more reflective of our object, while still inclusive of our original reporting; Seeking academic help from instructors or a tutor, visiting faculty during office hours, participating in a group assignment or projects, developing relationships with students outside of class, volunteering in the community for a class assignment, participating in student organizations, clubs or sports. We collected a 36.7% on this measure.

While below the 60% mark required by the performance measure, several additional measures saw an increase in student veterans engaging in activities/services outside of Veterans Resource Center: seeking academic help from instructors or a tutor, helping classmates understand class material better, visiting faculty during office hours, presenting class assignment, and participating in student organizations, clubs, or sports. Clearly, there were gains in many items where students participated in student activities and services outside the Veterans Resource Center and there were several items where 60% or more of respondents indicated engagement in these types of activities. On one final measure of social experience in college at program completion, which signifies not only an increase over the period, but also a result that exceeds the 60% threshold of the performance measure.

The Parson Grant sought to improve student satisfaction and success and raise awareness amongst the campus community of the needs and concerns of student veterans.

Objective 1.1: To increase the retention rates of student veterans. By June 2015, 80% of student veterans will successfully complete attempted coursework with a “C” or better.

Outcome: The target goal was not met, however data did indicate progress in this area. The annual Success Rate for student veterans increased from 64.8% in 2013-2014 to 67.3% in 2014-15. In addition, if success Rates are broken down by semester and compared to campus-wide data, student veterans showed an increase from fall 2013 (63.3) to fall 2014 (65.6), while campus-wide data showed a slight decrease from fall 2013 (68.1) to fall 2014 (67.7). Consequently, even though the target goal was not achieved, Successful Course Completion for veterans is moving in a positive direction and is becoming more closely reflective of campus-wide data.

Objective 1.2: To increase fall to fall persistence rates of student veterans and, by September 2015, 75% of student veterans who receive services through the Center will persist to the next academic year.

Outcome: Results indicate that in fall 2013 to fall 2014, persistence for student veterans was 44.8%. Fall to spring persistence for this same group was 69.5%. Target goals were not met in this area, however, once again data does point to

positive signs when viewed in comparison to college-wide statistics.

College-wide data for fall to fall persistence for fall 2013 was 62.3 and fall to spring persistence was 78.2%. While veteran data appears to be significantly lower than the general student population, a more accurate comparison would be to look at first time student veterans. This comparison is a more accurate assessment since college-wide persistence rates report on first time freshman. Data for first time veteran students for fall 2013 indicate a 58% persistence rate to fall 2014 and 84% for fall 2013 to spring 2014. In this context, first time veterans surpass college-wide data for fall to spring persistence and the percentage for fall to fall persistence, while still lower than college data, indicates a smaller achievement gap between the general student population and veterans.

Objective 1.3: To increase the goal completion rates of student veterans and “by June 2015, 15% of student veterans served in the Center will graduate”.

Outcome: In reviewing data over two years, 49 students were awarded a Certificate of Achievement and/or an Associate in Art/Science Degree during the 2013-2014 academic year. This represented 7.2% of those served. For the 2014-2015 school year, 51 students received a certificate and/or degree which accounted for 8.2% of those served. While the objective was not met, goal completion rates did increase year over year.

Goal #2 – Campus Climate:

Objective 2.1: To increase the awareness of faculty and staff of the needs and concerns of student veterans. Outcomes for this measure were twofold. One, by June 2015, 75 faculty and staff would participate in professional development activities addressing the needs of student veterans. Two, by June 2015, 80% of the participants in the professional development activities would report taking active steps to improve the teaching and learning environment.

Outcomes for participating were met. Over the course of the grant period, a total of 125 faculty and staff attended a professional development workshop focusing on student veteran issues. One extremely successful professional development activity was a student veteran panel presentation coordinated for the English Department. A significant outcome from this presentation was the recruitment of English faculty to volunteer tutor in the VRC. In contrast, outcomes for improving the teaching and learning environment were not met.

In surveying participants after the first year of professional development activities, only 62.5 reported changing what they do to improve the teaching and learning environment for student veterans. Due to this low percentage and in trying to better understand survey responses, the Professional Development survey was modified to allow respondents who “disagreed” with the statement “. . . you have changed what you do to improve the teaching and learning environment to student veterans” to provide additional information regarding their response. Results from the second year survey again showed a lower percentage of respondents making changes (57.1), however the additional information gathered provided a basis for the responses. Of those who indicated that they did not make any changes, half reported that changes were not necessary while others provided more detailed explanations that expressed pre-existing positive environments for student veterans in their classroom such as “. . . my classroom is already vet friendly. . . .” “I basically have been using all the approaches recommended by the veterans . . . it was good to hear directly from the students.”

Objective 2.2: Focused on increasing the satisfaction of student veterans with the overall academic environment and stated that “by June 2015, 75% of student veterans enrolled each year at SMC will report satisfaction with the teaching and learning environment.”

Outcome: This objective was met. Responses on the fall 2013 survey showed 73.7% of veterans agreed that instructors were sensitive to student veterans’ experiences. In fall 2014 this positive response increased to 76.6%.

Objective 2.3: Examined ways of increasing student veteran participation in campus activities. The outcome measure proposed that “by June 2015, 60% of student veterans will self-report participation in student activities and services outside of the Veterans’ Resource Center.”

Outcome: This goal was met. For reporting purposes, participation in activities and utilization of services outside the VRC were examined separately.

On the fall 2013 survey, 86.5% of respondents reported using college resources outside the VRC. This percentage increased to 89% in fall 2014. In reporting on participation in activities, 65.8% reported participation in campus-wide activities in 2013-2014 and 59.% in 2014-2015. With regards to participation in student organizations and clubs, students reported an increase from 44.7% to 60.9% over the two year survey period.

Summary

In conclusion, with the help of the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation Grant, the Veterans’ Resource Center was able to continue and expand much needed services to our student veterans. With increased support and efforts, gains were made in course completion, persistence, and satisfaction with campus climate for student veterans. Challenges faced over the grant period were space and addressing the transitional challenges that impact performance for student veterans.

The VRC was somewhat limited in its ability to expand services due to space constraints. Additional services, provided by both the VRC and outside veteran-serving organizations, meant working and scheduling within limited available office space. This hampered efforts to expand services, such as tutoring and visits from outside agencies that could provide assistance in areas outside of the scope of the VRC. Coordination of services with outside agencies was possible through other means of service delivery such as mobile vans, though this may not be an option for all agencies. Space is an ongoing issue for the VRC and the campus as a whole, but continuing efforts are being made to address this issue.

Meeting the various needs of veterans is also critical to their success and transition to civil life. In examining the results of the student survey in year two, overall satisfaction and utilization of resources increased from year one to year two. It was noted that a higher percentage of continuing students responded to the survey year two versus those students who had only been in school one semester. While no direct correlation can be made, the fact that continuing students reported greater satisfaction, points to the importance of meeting the needs of veterans during that first critical semester of transition. Because this transition can be complex, providing comprehensive resources is essential in easing this transition. Achieving this requires continuing outreach efforts and coordinating with outside veteran serving organizations and identifying funding sources to sustain and expand VRC services.

Veteran Resource Center Front Counter Feedback Survey

Reason for Visiting Veteran Resource Center

- Information about VRC Services: 20
- Ed Plan Assistance: 25
- Assistance with V.A. Benefits: 10
- Other: 15

Total Number of Surveys: 33

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	N/A	%
VRC staff provided information I needed.	30			3		90
VRC staff knowledge-able about the services.	33					100
VRC staff is courteous and friendly.	33					100
Overall experience with VRC was satisfactory.	33	1				97
VRC helped me achieve my academic goals.	29	4				88

Total Percentage of Agreement: **95%**

Summary: Based upon Total Percentage of Agreement ninety-five percent of veterans that responded to the survey agreed that VRC services were satisfactory.

*Numbers overlap due to students using various VRC services.

D1. Objectives

As part of the planning process, programs are expected to establish annual objectives that support the program's goals. Please document the status of the program/function's previous year's objectives. Add comments if you feel further

explanation is needed.

Objective:

1. Offer two veteran student panels for SMC students to create awareness of veterans at Santa Monica College.

Status: Completed

Comments:

The VRC offered panel presentations to students in the Black Collegians and Adelante Programs. Four (4) students attended. The students on the panel left feeling good about their presentations which were well received. Audience members were kind and welcoming to veteran panelists, creating a relaxed atmosphere.

The audience members expressed their gratitude to veterans and commented on some of their family members' experiences in the service, the impact service had on these family members and their families. Audience members thanked the panelists and many wanted to continue discussions with panelists once the presentation ended. Faculty leaders of the programs involved indicated that they felt it was a good exchange between the groups of students.

Objective:

2. Bring three outside agencies to campus.

Status: Completed

Comments:

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) brought their mobile unit to SMC and assisted student veterans in navigating the V.A.'s medical system, applying for V.A. health cards, filing disability claims and completing paperwork for housing.

A representative from Cal-Vet visited the VRC twice. During the visit he provided referrals for housing, legal aid, V.A. benefits and discussed job search strategies.

U.S. Vets provided the VRC with a psychologist six (6) hours per week to meet with veterans and family members over the age of 18. Discussions focused on the veteran's military experience. The psychologist led panel presentations and offered a series of workshops for student veterans.

Objective:

To implement college orientation sessions early in the transition process. Many veterans have expressed feelings of alienation in class and often allude to being confused and overwhelmed during their first terms because they are not sure where to turn for assistance.

Status: In Progress

Comments:

The goal of this objective is to assist students in making a smooth transition into academia.

Objective:

Survey veterans on satisfaction of VRC services.

Status: In Progress

Comments:

The goal of this objective is to improve services offered.

D1. Looking Back

In this section, please document what you did last year as a result of what you described in Section C.

1. Describe any accomplishments, achievements, activities, initiatives undertaken, and any other positives the program wishes to note and document.

- Vet Net Ally Seminars offered to SMC faculty and staff. The Vet Net Ally program is an awareness program that develops a network of faculty, staff and administrators committed to creating a welcoming and supportive campus environment for military service members and veterans that study at SMC. Created by Dr. Marshall Thomas, Director of Veterans Services at CSULB, Vet Net Ally has given presentations to staff and faculty of major community colleges and universities nationwide. The Vet Net Ally focuses on the needs and concerns of military service members and veterans studying at 2- and 4-year colleges. The first Vet Ally Seminar was held March 15, 2012, as a Flex Day workshop spring 2012. The seminar includes: Vet Net Ally program mission and SMC’s approach to assisting veterans in their academic pursuits; veterans’ experiences in the classroom; military and post-service culture; why I joined? (an experiential activity addressing the reasons why men and women join the military); veterans issues in higher education; student veteran panel; and becoming an Ally. At the end of the seminar, participants are given a decal to display in their workplace to show that they are allies for SMC’s student veterans.
- On September 27, 2012 student veterans co-sponsored Lt. Colonel Tammy Duckworth, who was campaigning for Illinois’ 8th Congressional District and is now a U.S. Senator. Senator Duckworth is a recipient of the Purple Heart and a Black Hawk pilot who lost both legs after being shot down in Iraq. Senator Duckworth is the former Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, and was appointed in 2009 by President Obama to be Assistant Secretary of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs for the U.S. Department of Veterans, where she oversaw the

V.A.'s efforts to end veteran homelessness, led initiatives for female veterans, and increased accessibility and accountability.

- Conducted professional development workshops and a brown bag lunch opportunity for faculty.
- A student veteran panel presentation was conducted for 50 members of the English department during Department Flex Day. As a consequence of the panel presentation to the English department, five faculty members approached the VRC regarding serving as volunteer tutors.
- The VRC coordinated a Resume Writing workshop for students which was facilitated by SMC's Career Services Center staff.
- Business Department faculty conducted a personal finance workshop for veterans.
- Financial Aid staff conducted a Financial Aid workshop for veterans.
- The VRC hosted a "Female Veterans' Meet and Greet" as well as the second annual event for Women's Military History Week, moderated by Brenda Antrim (SMC Librarian and USAF veteran) and featured guest speaker Nancy Cattell (former SMC faculty member, SMC Trustee and Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC)).
- The VRC regularly hosts social events for student veterans including "Welcome Back BBQs and Taco Thursdays" as well as a sit-down Thanksgiving luncheon for veterans and their families.
- The VRC acquired two additional offices in the Liberal Arts Bldg., Room 135, previously occupied by Facilities;
- As a result of student veteran panels and dialogue, which highlighted the need to enhance and expand services for students, Equity proposals were written and funded additional hours for a psychologist, an additional student services clerk and a part-time academic counselor who focuses on at-risk students.
- Organized Veterans and Memorial Day remembrances for students and faculty.
- Arranged campus tours for veteran students to Loyola Marymount University, University of California, Los Angeles, and University of Southern California.
- The VRC received textbooks donations from the Business Department.
- Established an Emergency Relief Fund with generous donations from the American Legion for student veterans with unforeseen financial circumstances (i.e., payment of utility bills, groceries, textbooks and supplies, emergency airfare to help care for a critically ill family member);
- The VRC faculty leader and two student veterans flew to Sacramento, California to show support for veteran initiatives; and
- Configured a computer lab with six computers and one printer for student use.

2. Summarize how the program or service area addressed the recommendations for program strengthening from the executive summary of the previous six-year program review.

Executive Summary Recommendations for Program Strengthening.

- Develop SLO assessment tools and document assessment results. There has not been much improvement here; still an area for continued program strengthening.
- Ensure that the collecting and reporting of data is consistent and that it is clear what the numbers represent. Collection of data has not been consistent since the FIPSE and Parsons' grants ended. As part of the accountability for each grant, Project Managers ensured that data was periodically collected and evaluated, this has not been the case since. Henceforth, we anticipate working closely with Institutional Research.

Develop strategies for engaging students who declare veteran status but do not use the Veterans Resource Center.

In an effort to engage with students who declare veteran status, but do not use the VRC, we frequently (1) send emails to all self-identified veterans notifying them of our Center, services offered and any benefit changes; (2) invite veterans to VRC social events; (3) reach out via social media (Facebook); and (4) maintain an up-to-date homepage on SMC's website. In addition, we recently added signage on the exterior door of the Liberal Arts Building (notifying student veterans of our location).

Expand efforts to improve veteran resilience through social interaction and integration into the general student population.

We have sought to expand efforts that improve veteran resilience through social interaction and integration into the general student population by encouraging students to participate in clubs and organizations which offer students opportunities for fellowship, leadership, recreation, and meaningful interaction with faculty, staff, and students; bringing student awareness to internships and discussing the benefits of pairing an internship with academic coursework; highlighting the positive impact on personal and professional development, relationship building, networking and community building; and guiding students towards programs and activities that fit their long and short-term goals.

Seek opportunities to gain wider recognition of the Veterans Resource Center as a model program.

The VRC has sought to broaden recognition of the VRC as a model program by (1) streamlining access to V.A. services; (2) providing financial aid assistance and information on scholarships; (3) offering book stipends; (4) establishing a book loan program; (5) increasing Wellness counselor appointments, (6) offering veteran student workshops and facilitating student panels; (7) increasing the number of veterans that participate and hold office in Associated Student Body; and (8) the Student Veterans Association has participated in Club Row events and activities.

Continue efforts to seek additional funding.

Since the Spring 2011 Program Review, the VRC has closed out the FIPSE Grant, written a proposal for, and been awarded, the Parson's grant, where we made progress towards meeting grant objectives, created a strong alliance with the American Legion (who has proven to be an invaluable partner), utilized Equity funding and provided scholarships to student veterans as a result of the efforts of the VRC Advisory Committee (discussed in greater detail under "Community Engagement", No. 2, third bullet point) and the American Legion.

3. Describe any changes or activities your program or service area has made that are not addressed in the objectives, identify the factors (e.g., licensure requirements, state or federal requirements, CCCO mandates,

regulations, etc.) that triggered the changes, and indicate the expected or anticipated outcomes.

We have added an additional certifying official and part-time counselor to help better serve student veterans. These additions have increased efficiency in processing V.A. paperwork and decreased wait time to speak with a counselor.

4. If your program received one time funding of any kind indicate the source, how the funds were spent and the impact on the program (benefits or challenges).

The VRC received funding from the American Legion 3/1/2016 in the amount of \$26,395. The mandate for using the funds was to:

- Hire a math tutor for 20 hours per week summer 2016, fall 2016 and spring 2017 (providing academic support to student veterans struggling in math);
- Purchase textbooks for our most popular classes to add to our lending library;
- Purchase 5 laptop computers to loan to students who do not yet have computers;
- Purchase graduation “cords” to acknowledge veteran status and branch of service;
- Purchase t-shirts for the Student Veterans’ Association (to identify student veterans and promote military pride);
- Purchase caps with the VRC logo to market our program on campus and during outreach visits to the V.A.;
- Purchase a canopy with SMC Student Veteran logo to be used at various on and off-campus events; and
- Purchase 16 chairs to be used at campus events on and off campus.

D2. Moving Forward

Discuss and summarize conclusions drawn from data, assessments (SLO, UO) or other evaluation measures identified in Section C and indicate responses or programmatic changes planned for the coming year(s) including:

- **how the assessment results are informing program goals and objectives, program planning, and decision-making**
- **specific changes planned or made to the program based on the assessment results**

	SLO 1 Total	SLO1	SLO 2 Total	SLO2
Term	Assessed	%Success	Assessed	%Success
Fall 2012	40	98	40	100
Spring 2013	44	100	44	100
Fall 2013*				
Spring 2014	27	100	37	100
Fall 2014*				
Spring 2015*				

Fall 2015	117	100	104	100
Winter 2016	84	98	75	99
Spring 2016	127	100	116	99
Summer 2016	102	99	95	100
Fall 2016	143	99	108	98
Winter 2017	56	100	56	100
Spring 2017	150	100	139	100

***Not Assessed.**

The above chart shows that the VRC has made progress in recording SLOs and that overall, students have a better understanding of how to articulate and prioritize appropriate coursework needed for subsequent terms as well as how to identify eligibility for, and proper sequencing of English and math requirements needed to meet their educational goal. We are using these results as a baseline of student knowledge that we can build upon.

The FIPSE Grant

One of the primary objectives of the FIPSE grant was to increase completion rates of student veterans, using graduation with a degree or certificate as an indicator of academic success. Once statistics determined that most veterans lean towards transfer to a 4-year college, the decision was made to utilize the “transfer-directed” performance measurement.

The Parsons’ Grant

Results highlighted the necessity of meeting the needs of veterans as critical to their success and transition to civilian life. Because this transition can be complex, providing comprehensive resources is essential in easing transition. We are using this information to encourage student veterans to take advantage of the plethora of on-campus support services and introducing them to outside veteran servicing organizations.

Planned changes based on assessment results:

- As a result of assessed SLOs, we have been able to improve how we disseminate information, emphasizing clarity and using subsequent counseling appointments to build on and reinforce existing knowledge.
- As a result of data collected for the FIPSE grant and institutional research statistics on transfer as the primary goal expressed by student veterans, we have concentrated our efforts on ensuring that our students are geared towards transfer, while simultaneously obtaining an associates’ degree for transfer.
- As a result of information gleaned from the Parsons’ Grant, we have brought several veteran-serving institutions to campus.

D2. Objectives (Moving Forward)

Objective #1

Objective:

To implement college orientation sessions early in the transition process. Many veterans have expressed feelings of alienation in class and often allude to being confused and overwhelmed during their first terms because they are not sure where to turn for assistance.

Area/ Discipline/ Function Responsible: Veterans Program

Assessment Data and Other Observations:

Institutional Research Data

External Factors:

Program Review Committee Recommendation

Timeline and activities to accomplish the objective: We would like to offer 1-2 orientation sessions prior to fall 2018.

Describe how objective will be assessed/measured: Objectives will be measured by surveys provided to attendees at the end of the orientation.

Comments: The goal of this objective is to assist students in making a smooth transition into academia.

Objective #2

Objective:

Survey veterans on satisfaction of VRC services.

Area/ Discipline/ Function Responsible: Veterans Program

Assessment Data and Other Observations:

Institutional Research Data

External Factors:

Program Review Recommendation for Institutional Support

Timeline and activities to accomplish the objective: We would like to conduct a student satisfaction assessment by the end of spring 2019.

Describe how objective will be assessed/measured: Students will be asked to respond to the survey at the end of the counseling session.

Comments: The goal of this objective is to improve services offered.

F. Community Engagement

In the prompts that follow, please delineate the partnerships you have with the rest of the SMC community as well as those you have with external organizations.

1. If applicable, describe how your department staff members engage in institutional efforts such as committees and presentations, and departmental activities.

- VRC's faculty leader sat on several hiring committees for full-time tenure track positions and co-facilitated Vet Ally training with our clinical psychologist.
- VRC's Student Services Specialist Certifying Official is First V.P. of California Employees Association (CSEA) and also part of the District Planning and Advisory Council's (DPAC) Planning Committee.
- The Faculty Leader and Student Services Specialist Certifying Official advise and coordinate the Veterans' Club (chapter of National Student Veterans' Association). Members of the department make presentations to faculty, staff, students and community groups to the General Advisory Board (GAB) about the program, the previous Faculty Leader served on the College Wide Benefits Committee.
- One of our adjunct counselors served on the Human Resources Committee for DPAC and is also a Faculty Association officer.
- The manager of the Parson's grant served on the Academic Senate.
- Our previous clinical psychologist served in an advisory role to the Crisis Prevention Team.

2. If applicable, discuss the engagement of program members with the local community, industry, professional groups, etc.)

- Our previous faculty leader volunteered at the Veteran's Administration P.O.S.T (PTSD Outpatient Services Team), which works with veterans who have combat-related Post Traumatic Stress. Program participants include social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. The P.O.S.T. Program serves 2,500 – 3,000 veterans from World War II, up to the more current Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraq Freedom and Operation New Dawn (DND). They offer individual and group therapy as well as a variety of workshops including a large Alcoholics Anonymous group.
- The Parsons' grant manager was active in Team RWB (Red, White & Blue), whose mission is to enrich the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity.
- As a result of a presentation to the General Advisory Board (GAB) in Fall 2015, the VRC was approached by a local business group about creating a community advisory board. The VRC Community Advisory Board was established to help support SMC's VRC goals in general and, specifically student veterans. They plan fundraising events, projects and promote the VRC in the community. The advisory board consists of Ho Nguyen, Linda Sinclair, Steve Chapin, Nick Banning, Allison Armstrong, Vicky Wozniak, Ricardo Johnson, Elaine Blaugrund, Leigh Brumberg and Bill and Carolyne Edwards. In spring 2017, the VRC Community Advisory Board provided five (5) scholarships to SMC veterans. Awards ranged from \$250 to \$1,000.

- The VRC has been fortunate to have support from Calvary Baptist Church in Santa Monica in the form of generous scholarships. We hope to expand our scholarship donors in 2018/2019.
- The VRC has a long-standing positive relationship with American Legion, Post 283 in Pacific Palisades. SMC's own Jere Romano is currently Post Commander and his wife, Martha Romano is Auxiliary President. In spring 2017, the Legion awarded two \$3,000 scholarships to student veterans.

3. Discuss the relationship among program faculty and staff, between program faculty, staff and students, and the involvement of program faculty and staff with other programs or areas.

- The relationship among program faculty and staff is collaborative and congenial. We work together to provide the best possible support and services to our veteran students.
- We strive to create a welcoming, relaxed environment and work together towards the mutual goal of student services. There has been little discord between program faculty, staff and students.
- The VRC has established valuable working relationships with other special programs, including but not limited to Black Collegians, Adelante Program, Disabled Student Services and the Learning Disabilities Program.

G1. Current Planning and Recommendations

The following items are intended to help programs identify, track, and document unit planning and actions and to assist the institution in broad planning efforts.

1. Identify any issues or needs impacting program effectiveness or efficiency for which institutional support or resources will be requested in the coming year. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request support or resources through established channels and processes].

In an effort to impact program effectiveness and efficiency in the coming year, we would like to: (1) Work with institutional research to collect veteran-specific data on the respective branch of military service; number and type of certificates and associates degrees awarded (distinguishing between traditional associates' degrees and associates degrees for transfer); as well as develop questions that address satisfaction with support services in general and specifically those offered in the Veterans Resource Center; and (2) work with Grant Development and Management to research potential grant options and assistance with writing grant proposals.

2. If applicable, list additional capital resources (facilities, technology, equipment) that are needed to support the program as it currently exists. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

- Identify a new location for the VRC;
- Replace computers more than four years old, add additional computers to our computer lab and upgrade computer software; and
- Minimize the use of file cabinets that house inactive files, we would like to purchase two Scan Snap IX500 by Fujitsu. This scanner/software/server was successfully used by Disabled Student Services.

3. If applicable, list additional human resources (staffing, professional development, staff training) needed to support the program as it currently exists. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

Staffing:

- One full-time counselor
- Increase clinical psychologist weekly hours from 12 to 18.
- Hire a part-time instructional assistant for math.

Proposed Professional Development Workshops:

- Grant Research and Development
- Issues and Challenges Related to Veterans and their Families
- Resources for Homeless Students

Staff Training (In-Service Training):

- Shifting from a Regimented Military Environment to an Independent Lifestyle
- TBI/PTSD/Concussions
- Understanding the Anxiety of the Student Veteran Experience

4. List all current positions assigned to the program.

The VRC currently employs:

- One full-time faculty leader
- Three part-time counselors. Each counselor works 18 hours/week.
- One full-time Senior Student Services Specialist Certifying Official
- One full-time Student Services Assistant
- One part-time clinical psychologist (12 hours/week)

G2. Future Planning and Recommendations

The following items are intended to help programs identify, track, and document unit planning and actions and to assist the institution in broad planning efforts.

1. Projecting toward the future, what trends could potentially impact the program? What changes does the program anticipate in 5 years; 10 years? Where does the program want to be? How is the program planning for these changes?

Trends: A trend that could potentially impact the Veterans Resource Center is passage of HR2108 – G.I. Bill STEM Extension Act of 2017), which extends the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. Approval of this extension would mean an in-flex of veterans returning to college to complete major preparation. Based thereon, the VRC may need additional funding to accommodate these students.

Changes:

The most significant change is relocation of the VRC. It is imperative that we be relocated since the Liberal Arts Building will be demolished and, given that we are not part of the schematic for the new Student Services Building. Questions center on the amount of space we will have and whether or not it will be vet-friendly/inviting (rather than an underground bunker), will it be permanent, or yet another “temporary” location”.

Looking Ahead:

The VRC would like build on existing services that assist student veterans in transitioning to civilian life, navigating academia and building confidence in their ability to move forward in pursuit of advanced degrees and/or careers. This will be accomplished by continuing to connect students with on-campus and community based resources and services.

2. If applicable, list additional capital resources (facilities, technology, equipment) that will be needed to support proposed changes. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

Support needed to incorporate proposed changes hinges on the VRC being accorded adequate office space and a Faculty Leader who advocates for and organizes efforts that facilitate change.

3. If applicable, list additional human resources (staffing, professional development, staff training) that will be needed to support proposed changes. [This information will be reviewed and considered in institutional planning processes but does not supplant the need to request resources through established channels and processes].

The following human resources would be beneficial in facilitating proposed changes:

- Hiring a permanent part-time Instructional Assistant would be an exceptional addition to our program and provide continuity of tutoring services.
- Hiring and training student veterans to become Veteran Outreach Team Peer Mentors.
- It would be advantageous to have a financial aid technician available once a week to assist veterans in applying for FAFSA/California College Promise Grant.
- Since 80% of the VRC’s faculty leader’s time is committed to administrative tasks, it would be beneficial to have an additional full-time counselor.

4. If applicable, note particular challenges the program faces including those relating to categorical funding, budget, and staffing.

We are reliant on Equity funding for the salaries of our full-time Student Services Assistant, one part-time academic counselor and one part-time Clinical Social Worker. Should that funding source dry up, it would be impossible to continue the level of service we currently provide. Our recourse would be to appeal to the district to have salaries covered by Equity absorbed into the District budget and to seek out grant options/opportunities.

5. Summarize any conclusions and long term recommendations for the program resulting from the self evaluation process.

Conclusions:

The biggest takeaway of this self-evaluation process is how well the VRC is doing in spite of challenges with space, funding and staff. We are in-step with the minimum standards associated with “high-functioning” Veterans Resource Centers outlined by the Chancellor’s Office Veterans Services and Advisory Committee. Those standards are:

- Minimum of 500 square feet of space
- ADA compliant facility
- Reception desk for intake services
- Computer lab with a minimum of two computers/laptops and one printer
- Study Area (designated space)
- Two Confidential Offices for Counseling and/or VA Benefit Certification
- Designated Signage
- Student Veteran Lounge Area
- Financial Aid Assistance
- Veteran Specific Tutoring
- Peer to Peer Mentoring
- Textbook Loan Program and/or Book Voucher Program
- Mental Health Services for Veterans on Campus (may include outside organizations)
- Bridge to External Services such as Housing, VA Services, and Mental Health Support
- Coordination with other Campus-Based Programs such as DSPS, Financial Aid, Health Center, and Student Equity
- All services provided in a single “one-stop” location
- One FTE Certifying official per 300 certifications annually
- One FTE Dedicated Director/Coordinator
- One FTE Academic Counselor with Veteran Specific Training
- Student Veteran Workers to Support Program Operations

Although in compliance with the majority of standards, we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We can do better. All special programs are important, but this is a population that has literally put their lives on the line to ensure our right to live in a democratic society. They deserve the best resources and services we can provide.

Of paramount concern is office space with ventilation. Our office is sweltering in the summer. The faux air in the Liberal Arts Building does not filter into the VRC. Even with fans, the heat is unbearable. Additional space will allow us to invite representatives from outside veteran servicing agencies to routinely visit our office and speak with students, provide a defined space for students with mobility challenges and secure space for a quiet study area. Other worthwhile improvements include increasing VRC’s visibility on campus and bringing in a financial aid technician once a week to

assist students with financial aid questions and concerns.

Long Term Recommendations:

We would like to elevate the caliber of services we provide student veterans by:

- Creating a Peer to Peer mentoring program facilitated by the VRC faculty leader and co-facilitated by peers;
- Providing sensitivity training for college personnel on military culture and the challenges faced by veterans post-deployment;
- Hosting V.A. healthcare events;
- Expanding college tours to 4-year colleges/universities; and
- Creating a campus work group that spans departments

We are planning for these changes by reaching out across SMC to partner with other support service and instructional departments as well as local veteran facilities, veterans service organizations and nonprofits to form a support-based alliance.

6. Please use this field to share any information the program feels is not covered under any other questions.

There have been several changes in the VRC since spring 2017. Listed below is information deemed pertinent regarding our program:

- Our faculty leader, Linda Sinclair, retired December 2017;
- We applied for, and were awarded funding from the California Chancellors office in the amount of \$63,285, to be used for a math tutor, supplies, guest speakers, conferences and off-campus printing (brochures and banners) new computer monitors and smart pens and book vouchers. Funding must be expended by June 30, 2019;
- A proposal to hire a full-time Faculty Leader for the VRC was presented to the Counseling Department and ranked No. 1 to go forward to the Full-Time Faculty Hiring Ranking Committee;
- The Veterans Administration approved hiring a Voc Rehab counselor to work in the VRC two days a week beginning mid-spring 2018. We are sharing this person with UCLA. The VetSuccess Counselor will be our V.A. liaison. They will assist in streamlining V.A. services and making referrals for other off-campus services (i.e. housing and programs for individuals experiencing food insecurity); and
- The VRC recently hired a Licensed Clinical Social Worker to work in VRC 12 hours a week. This person replaces Dr. Todd Adamson, who left SMC December 2017 for new opportunities.

Evaluation of Process

Please comment on the effectiveness of the Program Review process in focusing program planning.

The Program Review is an effective tool that examines strengths of the Program as well as areas for growth. Although there is good reason to be proud of what we have done thus far, we must not rest on our laurels. We need to build on our success by seeking innovative ways to better serve student veterans.

These fields to be filled out by the Program Review committee. Reports will be sent to the program and will be available on-line to populate relevant fields in the annual report and the next 6 year report.

Narrative

Program Evaluation

Commendations

Recommendations for Program Strengthening

Recommendations for Institutional Support

Attached File

Attached Files