Overview

This academic year has seen the growth of our physical space to better serve student Veterans and an increase in our ability to promote student Veterans on campus. It has also seen a 7% growth in our overall student Veteran population from last year. There have been significant changes to Utah law to provide easier accessibility to institutions of higher education which, coupled with a large number of military separating from the service, has impacted enrollment. There has also been an increase in emphasis on recruiting qualified Veterans to the University of Utah by the Veterans Support Center in conjunction with the Admissions Office.

Key Activities.

Outreach

Goals - (1) Make Veterans on campus aware of the services available. (2) Provide assistance where needed.

Outcomes - (1) Overall usage reports based on specific categories. (2) An increase in visits and attendance at the U for Veterans. (3) Increased involvement in student Vet activity on campus.

- Advertisement of new Center – posters, signs, and radio spots to advertise the presence of the new Veterans Support Center
  - Goals – to increase the number of students using the Center and the services therein.
  - Utilization - Increase in visits from 4.5 to 8.2 per day. Top 5 reasons for visiting are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialize</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Benefits</td>
<td>387</td>
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<td>First Visit</td>
<td>381</td>
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<td>Computer/Printing</td>
<td>379</td>
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<td>Counseling</td>
<td>120</td>
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</table>

- Newsletter – monthly newsletter to all identified Veterans on campus to discuss activities, events, and news.
  - Goals – to provide information for student Veterans as discussed
  - Utilization – monthly editions have continued since 2011.
• **Veterans Advisory Committee** – comprised of faculty, staff, community, and student Veterans. Provides guidance and assistance in student Veterans activities on campus and in the community.
  - **Goals** – as discussed.
  - **Utilization** – meetings held twice per semester and resulted in modification to programs and assistance in community outreach.

• **Classes in Veteran Culture** – presented to staff and faculty to acquaint them with student Veteran culture at the U.
  - **Goals** – to provide education on Veteran culture and presence on campus as discussed.
  - **Utilization** – Classes were presented to:
    - College of Social Work
    - Admissions
    - Financial Aid
    - Human Resources
    - Staff Council

• **Veteran Services Working Group for PAC-012** – to provide for the exchange of ideas between Veteran offices of participant schools.
  - **Goals** – as discussed
  - **Utilization** – no formal process exists. Calls and emails are exchanged as needed.

**Student Support**

**Goals** – (1) Provide a safe place to ask for and receive needed support (2) Provide a place to receive knowledgeable academic advice (3) Provide a place to receive career counseling.

**Outcomes** - (1) Fewer drop outs and issues with faculty/staff. (2) Increase in GPAs over 3.5. (3) Desired employment following graduation. (Modified to drop 3)

• **New Veteran Support Center** – to provide a larger, more effective one-stop-shop for student Veteran support and assistance. Occupied November 2013.
  - **Goal** – To increase utilization of support services provided and centralize all student Veteran support services.
  - **Utilization** –
    - Relocated School Certification Official functions to the new Center.
    - Approximately 2074 student Veteran visits or 8.2 students per day who signed in. This effectively doubles the number of daily visits (4.5 per day)
from the brief period we were able to survey last year. The top five reasons for visiting are shown below:

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- **Vet Success on Campus** – support individual provided by VA to assist in transition and graduation of student Veterans.
  - **Goals** – to increase outreach to student Veterans and to provide them an effective means of coordination with VA on issues not pertaining to School Certifying Official function. E.G. changing their benefit program.
  - **Utilization** - During the 2013-14 academic year Vet Success on Campus (VSOC) served a total of 312 new student Veterans and 295 returning student Veterans for a total of 608. The top 5 reasons for visits were:

<table>
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<th>REASON</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Benefit Counseling</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services-VA Apply/Compare/Inquiry</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Issues/VA Education Service</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Exploration/Career Counseling</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL)** - VA program which provides one day a week counseling and referral to student Veterans in the areas shown below.
  - **Goals** – to provide for counseling support as discussed.
  - **Utilization** - This academic year this resulted in 165 total sessions with 69 student Veterans serviced in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTSD/anxiety</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression/Suicide</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Enrollment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship issues</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advising

Goals - (1) Provide assistance on VA issues. (2) Provide assistance on academic and career choices.

Outcomes - (1) Increase in graduation/retention. (2) Decrease in program issues with students. (In addition to VSOC and VITAL mentioned above)

- Career Services. A representative for the University of Utah Career Services Center (a Veteran) comes to the Center weekly to work with Veterans on career development, resume development, interview preparation, and other career related issues.
  o Goals – as discussed
  o Utilization – No metrics available at this time.

- Marriott Library. - A representative (a Veteran) from the Marriott Library visits the Center weekly to provide support and guidance to student Veterans on how to use the library services, conduct research for papers, and other functions provided by the library.
  o Goals – as discussed.
  o Utilization – no metrics available at this time.

- Advocacy for student Veterans
  o Goal – To provide a ‘friend in court’ for student Veterans with issues with faculty or staff.
  o Utilization – no metrics available at this time.

Coordination

Goals - (1) Provide input on Veterans issues to other staff elements. (2) Provide input on Veterans legislation and policy to state government.

- Input on Veterans policy –
  o Goal - To provided updates and changes to university policy where needed in order to adjust for specific Veteran or serving student requirements.
  o Utilization – Recommended change to Policy 600-100, sec O, to allow excused absences for National Guard students for the purposes of duty.

- New state Legislation
• **Goal** – To provide input to the development of legislation dealing with student Veteran needs.
• **Utilization** – provided input to several new pieces of legislation plus studies by the Board of Regions. Resulted in Tuition Gap Funding (to provide funds for student Veterans who’s GI Bill has run out) and Residency for Veterans.

• **Bias Response Team**
  • **Goal** – membership to identify and manage incidences of bias against Veterans as a protected category.
  • **Utilization** – no data at this time.

**Plans for the Future**

**Social Work Veteran Cohort** –
  • **Goal** - In coordination with the College of Social Work institute a cohort system for Veterans pursuing social work degrees.
  • **Utilization** - The intent is to provide specific support for student Veterans and lay the groundwork for a Veteran Issues minor (or something similar) for those who wish to concentrate in that area. Initially it will take the form of study groups and peer mentors but ultimately the idea, if practical, is to develop a specific course of study to train social workers to work with Veteran issues.

**Evaluation of Military Credit toward majors** –
  • **Goal** – In coordination with the College of Business to produce a common evaluation process for military credit transferred in for a major.
  • **Utilization** - The intent is to have a standard for evaluation and acceptance/rejection of military credits so the process is more consistent across the university. This would need to be coordinated with other colleges to address the specifics of their requirements as well. This process would provide a consistent process for the evaluation and acceptance of military transfer credit across the university and remove the inconsistencies existing in the current process.

**Improved Metrics** –
  • **Goal** - Implement a more concise and accurate methods to collect information on visits to the Veterans Support Center.
  • **Utilization** - This may require purchasing, in conjunction with Student Affairs, an electronic system of accountability. The intent is to provide more precise accounting of services rendered to student Veterans and to create a broader tool for analysis of trends. This could indicate which types of services were needed or not, allow for tailoring of available support for best use and economy, plus provide data on student Veteran habits and performance. The end result would share data across Student Affairs and link with PeopleSoft for additional input.
Increase Veteran Enrollment –

- **Goal** – The intent is to raise the total student Veteran population from the current 3% of the student body to the national average of 4%.
- **Utilization** - In coordination with Utah National Guard and reserve commanders and the Utah Office of Veteran and Military Affairs create a program to bring GI Bill eligible individuals to the U. Increase visits to drill sites and other locations where Veterans who are looking to use their education benefits will be in attendance, focus marketing on Veterans and Veteran needs, provide a visible process for Veterans to enroll and perform at the university through the Veterans Support Center.

Increase Faculty Veterans awareness –

- **Goal** – Increase faculty and staff awareness of student Veteran issues and programs.
- **Utilization** – Multiple programs are being looked at to accomplish this goal. Some are:
  o Establish a Faculty Veteran Mentor program using faculty Vets as points of contact for students. Several faculty Vets have already volunteered.
  o Increase the frequency of Vet Awareness training for faculty and staff by reaching out to deans and directors at the different colleges.
  o Develop and put our training program for use by interested parties.

(Please refer any questions or comments on this document to Roger L. Perkins, Director, Veterans Support Center, The University of Utah. 801-587-7722 or rperkins@sa.utah.edu)