Overview

This academic year has seen the solidification of the new center as a place where student Veterans can come to find common cause with other Veterans. Attendance has grown and long term use of the facility for study has increased. Our student population has grown by 4% over last year as well. We have been able to obtain scholarships for student Veterans and Tuition Gap Funding from the Utah legislation that make it easier for qualified Veterans to continue their studies.

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 – signs, articles, and radio spots to advertise the presence of the Veterans Support Center
  - Goals – to increase the number of students using the Center and the services therein.
  - Utilization - Increase in visits from 8.2 to 12.6 per day. Top 4 reasons for visiting are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socialize</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Visit</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/Printing</td>
<td>634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Services (VA, etc.)</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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 – No classes were presented this year. This shortfall is being addressed.

- Veteran Services Working Group for PAC-12 – 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/or issues with faculty/staff. (2) Increase in average undergraduate GPA to over 3.5.

- Veteran Support Center – to provide a more effective, approachable one-stop-shop for student Veteran support and assistance.
  - 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 3341 student Veteran visits or 12.6 students per day who signed in. This is an increase of 4.4% over last year.
    - The average undergraduate GPA is 2.91.

- Vet Success on Campus – support provided to student Veterans 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 289 new student Veterans and 418 returning student
Veterans for a total of 707, a 14% growth over last year. The top 5 reasons for visits were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefit Counseling</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Services-VA Apply/Compare/Inquiry</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Issues/VA Education Service</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Exploration/Career Counseling</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>69</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 resulted in 152 total sessions (7% drop from last year) with 58 student Veterans serviced (16% drop from last year) in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PTSD/anxiety</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression/Suicide</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar Disorder</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Enrollment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship issues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Scholarships** – Secured the Chad and Laura Stoker Endowed Scholarship for undergraduate Veterans ($2500 annually) and the Laurence T. & Janet T. Dee Foundation ($5000). This will allow us to provide three $2500 scholarships to deserving students.

- **Work Study** – During the course of the year we have employed six student Veterans as work studies to help in the office and with research projects. Salary for these students was provided by the Veterans Administration.

### 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)

- **Sponsorship of New Students**
Goal – to provide an avenue into the university for marginal student Veterans.

Utilization - Work with Admissions to provide sponsorship from the Veterans Support Center for eligible Veteran applicants. Will go into effect Spring ’16.

Advocacy for student Veterans

Goal – To provide a ‘friend in court’ for student Veterans with issues with faculty or staff.

Utilization – Coordinated with Dean of Student and college deans on issues pertaining to individual student Veterans. Also with individual instructors on problems resulting from drill and other service related requirements.

Coordination

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

Staff and Faculty Veteran sensitivity training

Goal – to provide training to staff and faculty on the Veteran culture and answer questions surrounding Veterans on campus.

Utilization – No faculty or staff elements received Veteran cultural training this year. In conjunction with the President’s office initiated with the office of the VP of Academic Affairs to pursue wider presentation of Veteran cultural training.

Input on Veterans policy –

Goal - To provided updates and changes to university policy where needed in order to adjust for specific Veteran or serving student requirements.

Utilization – Coordinated with Admissions to conduct direct recruiting of Veterans from Guard and reserve units in the state. Also on providing early class registration for student Veterans starting Spring ’16.

Increase Veteran Enrollment –

Goal – The intent is to raise the student Veteran population from the current 1.2% of the student body (according to standards set by VA) to the national average of 4%.

Utilization – Sponsorship for incoming Veterans who do not meet admissions requirements but who are considered a ‘good risk’ by the Veterans Support Center has been approved and will be implemented Spring ’16.

Student Affairs Presentations
o Presenter, Roger L. Perkins, University of Utah; David Vacchi, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Nikki Cole, University of Connecticut; Janine Wert, University of Massachusetts Lowell. February 2015. I Want to Start a Veterans Services Center. NASPA Veterans Conference, Louisville, KY.


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. This is an on-going project.

Improved Metrics –

- **Goal** - Implement a more concise and accurate methods to collect information on visits to the Veterans Support Center.
- **Utilization** – Increased emphasis on manually counting visits which did result in great accounting but it is still an awkward system prone to error. 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.

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.
**Staff Excellence**

- Sylvia O’Hara accepted the position of Director of Veteran and Military Services at Westminster College in June ‘15. She was the executive assistant in the Veterans Support Center for four years.

- Audra Thompson is our new executive assistant and is a serving member of the Army Reserve and a geoscience major at The University of Utah. Audra started in June ‘15.

(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)
STUDENT AFFAIRS PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Veterans Support Center Presentations

- Presenter, Roger L. Perkins, University of Utah; David Vacchi, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Nikki Cole, University of Connecticut; Janine Wert, University of Massachusetts Lowell. February 2015. *I Want to Start a Veterans Services Center*. NASPA Veterans Conference, Louisville, KY.
