

Veterans Service Office

STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)

FY2014 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Executive Summary

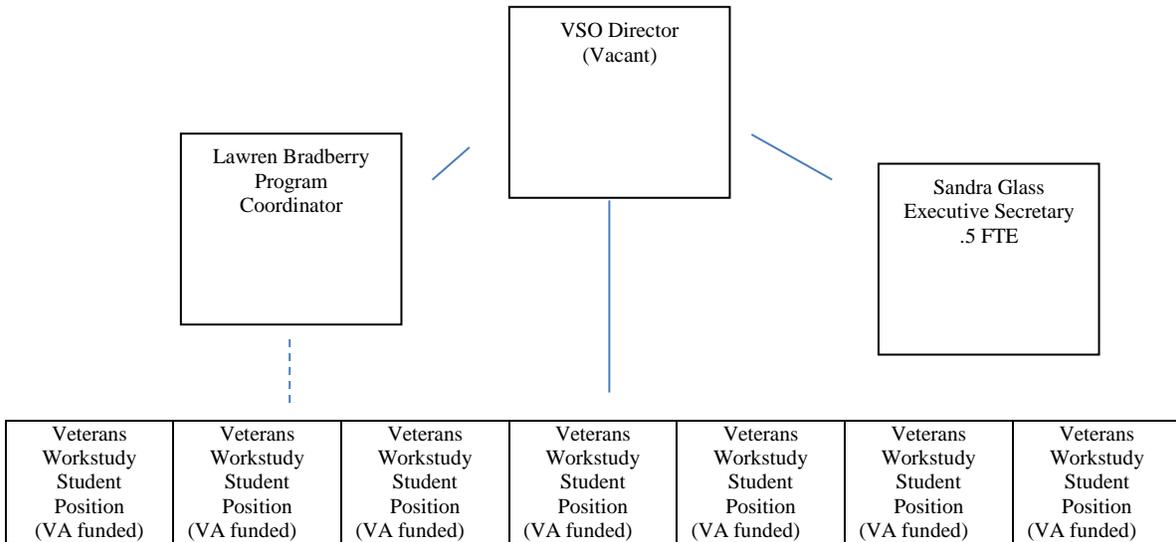
The mission of the Veterans Services Office (VSO) is to foster student veteran success by facilitating the transition of veterans from military to University life and assisting veterans, guardsmen, reservists, spouses, and dependents in receiving their military education benefits. The office accomplishes this through a set of initiatives which include:

- peer to peer counseling
- referrals for counseling in financial, vocational, and academic problems
- information on University procedures and changes in legislative regulations that affect veterans.
- student engagement through a safe and familiar veterans community center, including a computer lab, within the UH campus.

The VSO also increases campus awareness of student veteran issues and fosters a sense of belonging, community and well-being for all student veterans on campus. With over 1,500 veterans and their dependents enrolled for Fall 2012, the VSO provides resources and community to meet the unique needs of veterans. The fall 2012 numbers represent a 14% increase from fall 2011.

Starting in July 2012, while delivering ongoing programing and services, the VSO is undertaking a program evaluation and needs assessment. This project will support the office in refining its delivery of veteran services on campus.

1. Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and then more specific charts for each program. Where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g. counselor, advisor, etc.), note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.



2. List the objectives that you identified for the 2011-2012 academic year. Please comment on your success in achieving these objectives. If an objective changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new objectives, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these objectives.

| 2011-2012 Objectives | Outcomes |
|---|---|
| Develop the University of Houston model of a comprehensive resource center. | The VSO continues to refine its approach to the delivery of student services. The significant increase in the number of veterans at the University of Houston presents an opportunity to continuously improve of student services. |
| Initiate UH Military Mobile Tour | The initiative was never implemented. Starting in fall 2012 the VSO is working in conjunction with Admissions and the Transfer Assistance Program to conduct strategic recruitment and support of prospects and applicants at community college feeder schools. |
| Reclassify VSO Director to a Director 2 | This reclassification was completed. |
| Improve communication. | The VSO has launched an update newsletter format this fall. In addition, the VSO is working with Enrollment Services to develop |

| | |
|--|---|
| | new student and returning student communications that will support student success through more timely and accurate submission of VA and Hazelwood certifications. |
| Conduct UH outreach to feeder community colleges and military bases. | Starting in fall 2012 the VSO is working in conjunction with Admissions and the Transfer Assistance Program, to both conduct strategic recruitment of UH student veterans and support transfer student success. |

3. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned objectives and their importance as compared to other objectives that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

Currently the VSO evaluates the delivery of its services based on student usage and participation. Developing and implementing a more effective evaluation methodology is a key deliverable from the current program evaluation.

The VSO collects data for student usage via a *myUH* id check in system. Prospect and applicant data is currently collected manually. This year the VSO experienced a significant increase in student participation and requests for service. The VSO has approximately 350 student “visits” per week. The VSO experiences a significant increase in student traffic associated with the opening of each term’s enrollment cycle as well as the start of a new term. 72% of visits to the VSO are students who visit 3 or more times in a semester, 12% of the visits are students who visit 1-2 times in a term, and 16% of the visits are from prospects and applicants seeking guidance regarding the University of Houston’s certification and Hazelwood procedures.

4. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2013) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections. In addition, if your unit concluded FY2012 with a Ledger 3 Fund Equity balance, please describe the conditions which caused the fund balance.

In October of 2011, the VSO hired a Program Coordinator to support the growing number of student veterans at the University. This position provides valuable support to students as they transition from military service to higher education. In June 2012, due to reporting irregularities, Veterans Affairs made the University ineligible to participate in the Veteran’s Workstudy Program. Following a thorough review of the University’s oversight and reporting practices the program was reinstated on June 27, 2012. The VSO is currently approved by the VA for 8 Veteran’s Work-study positions. Scott Sawyer is currently serving as Interim Director of the VSO. The VSO

had a funded equity of \$38,473. This funded equity is due to the salary of the vacant Director position.

5. The terminology for responding to this item has been amended to be consistent with the strategic planning framework. Therefore, SFAC requests that you report your success measures in terms of strategic initiatives and action steps versus goals and objectives as previously requested. To this end, please list your 2013-2014 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) you implemented to accomplish your stated initiative.

Understanding the profile of veteran students at the University is fundamental to identifying and prioritizing VSO strategic initiatives. Included in this section is a profile of fall 2011 veteran students. Certified fall 2012 data will be available for the November committee presentation.

| Fall 2011 | | Veterans (n = 1,477) | | Non-Veterans (n = 38,343) | |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| Benefits | VA Benefits | 1,058 | 71.6% | | |
| | Hazelwood | 153 | 10.4% | | |
| | Both Hazelwood and VA | 110 | 7.4% | | |
| | No Veteran Related Benefits | 156 | 10.6% | | |
| | | | 0.0% | | |
| Gender | Female | 343 | 23.2% | 19,498 | 50.9% |
| | Male | 1,134 | 76.8% | 18,845 | 49.1% |
| Ethnicity | White | 678 | 45.9% | 12,518 | 32.6% |
| | African American | 264 | 17.9% | 4,572 | 11.9% |
| | Hispanic | 358 | 24.2% | 9,010 | 23.5% |
| | Asian American | 87 | 5.9% | 7,578 | 19.8% |
| | Native American | 9 | 0.6% | 89 | 0.2% |
| | International | 1 | 0.1% | 3,364 | 8.8% |
| | Unknown | 13 | 0.9% | 273 | 0.7% |
| | Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 4 | 0.3% | 108 | 0.3% |
| | Multiracial | 63 | 4.3% | 831 | 2.2% |
| Status | New Student - Undergrad | 53 | 3.6% | 3,579 | 9.3% |
| | New Student - PostBac | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| | New Student - Graduate | 72 | 4.9% | 2,006 | 5.2% |
| | New Student - Special Professional | 16 | 1.1% | 479 | 1.2% |
| | Transfer - Undergrad | 234 | 15.8% | 3,876 | 10.1% |
| | Transfer - PostBac | 11 | 0.7% | 288 | 0.8% |
| | Transfer - Graduate | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| | Transfer - Special Professional | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| | Continuing Student - Undergrad | 901 | 61.0% | 21,809 | 56.9% |
| | Continuing Student - PostBac | 58 | 3.9% | 955 | 2.5% |
| | Continuing Student - Graduate | 108 | 7.3% | 4,205 | 11.0% |
| | Continuing Student - Special Professional | 24 | 1.6% | 1,146 | 3.0% |

| Fall 2011 (Continued) | | Veterans (n = 1,477) | | Non-Veterans (n = 38,343) | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|
| | | n | % | n | % |
| Classification | Freshman | 145 | 9.8% | 6,070 | 15.8% |
| | Sophomore | 247 | 16.7% | 6,099 | 15.9% |
| | Junior | 313 | 21.2% | 7,187 | 18.7% |
| | Senior | 483 | 32.7% | 9,908 | 25.8% |
| | Post Bac | 69 | 4.7% | 1,243 | 3.2% |
| | Masters | 150 | 10.2% | 4,349 | 11.3% |
| | Doctoral | 30 | 2.0% | 1,862 | 4.9% |
| | Special Professional | 40 | 2.7% | 1,625 | 4.2% |
| Full-Time/Part-Time | Full-Time | 1070 | 72.4% | 27,765 | 72.4% |
| | Part-Time | 407 | 27.6% | 10,578 | 27.6% |
| | | AVG | | AVG | |
| Average Age | | 29.1 | - | 23.8 | - |
| Average Units Earned | Total | 10.5 | - | 10.5 | - |
| | UG | 10.9 | - | 11.0 | - |
| | PB | 7.9 | - | 7.2 | - |
| | GRAD | 8.0 | - | 8.1 | - |
| | SP | 13.2 | - | 13.0 | - |
| Average Current GPA | Total | 2.9 | - | 3.0 | - |
| | UG | 2.8 | - | 2.9 | - |
| | PB | 3.3 | - | 3.2 | - |
| | GRAD | 3.6 | - | 3.6 | - |
| | SP | 3.1 | - | 3.2 | - |

FY 2014 Strategic Initiatives

- Support broad student access and institutional excellence through an expanded peer mentoring initiative. At the core of this initiative is a formal training program designed to prepare student peer mentors to accurately answer federal and state benefit questions as well as provide guidance regarding the University of Houston procedures. In addition, the program will prepare peer mentors to support and effectively refer veteran students and family members to University and regional services. This initiative will be supported by updated VA Work-study job descriptions. This initiative will also include training for peer mentor supervisors as well as a program evaluation methodology.
- Support broad student access by developing and implementing a set of programs to meet the needs of women veterans. The University is experiencing an increase in the number of female veterans. This fall the number has grown 5% with 28% of our veteran students being women. This growth is in alignment with national trends that reflect the significant growth of women in military service. Women returning from service often have a set

of unique needs that require focused programming. This programming will be developed in collaboration with campus partners such as Counseling and Psychological Services. This initiative also includes the development of peer mentoring training content to meet the needs of both men and women veterans.

- Support broad student access by expanding the communication tools used to inform students and grow veteran student engagement. This initiative includes the development of multimedia content as well as refined communication practices that target veteran students at critical stages of their entry and return to the University.
- Support the effective use of University of Houston resources to foster student success by completing a thorough needs assessment of the VSO. The VSO is committed to delivering services that increases student engagement and foster student success. Veteran students often have a unique set of needs that change during their time at the University. The VSO will continue to evaluate its programming through the lens of both student engagement and success.

6. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.

Currently, the VSO receives private donations targeted for the University of Houston's Veteran community. The VSO currently has \$2,622 in a private gifts cost center. The VSO received \$200 in gift monies in FY 2012.

7. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

The Veterans Certification unit within Registration & Records processes VA benefits for students. This unit processes certification and ensures that veteran students are making progress towards their degree as required by law. This unit is a much like financial aid- in that they are responsible for timely and accurate processing and the disbursement of federal dollars. The VSO works closely with the Certification unit and is most often the initial point of entry for veteran students who need to know next steps at the University.

Making effective referrals as well as fostering a supportive path to University services is a critical component to the VSO's mission. Veterans start at the VSO because they have a significant comfort level discussing their issues and identifying their needs with other veterans. Helping veterans take advantage of the services available both at the University and in the community is key to the office's success.