# UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

## VETERAN SERVICES



60 YEARS OF COMBINED EXPERIENCE

UNIVERSITY of
**HOUSTON**
VETERAN SERVICES



#COOGVETS

COOGS
VETERAN
SERVICES



Student Fee
Advisory
Committee
(SFAC)
Program Questionnaire
FY 2018-2019

1. **Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.**

## Executive Summary

### Mission

The University of Houston recognizes that our military and veteran population is a very diverse group that brings to our campus vast experiences and knowledge. The Mission of UH Veteran Services is to acknowledge these experiences and accomplishments by supporting the interests of our Nation's current and former military service members and their families. We recognize the importance of providing our unwavering support and advocacy to our Military-Connected Students, to help foster success in their academic, personal, and career goals. UH Veteran Services will accomplish this mission through education, collaboration, and outreach utilizing all available resources within and outside of the University of Houston.

### VISION

UH Veteran Services (VS) will provide Military-Connected Students with the highest level of support and dedication, fostering personal growth and academic success through graduation and rewarding careers. In doing so, we will strive to be a benchmark institute and a leader in veteran support and advocacy.
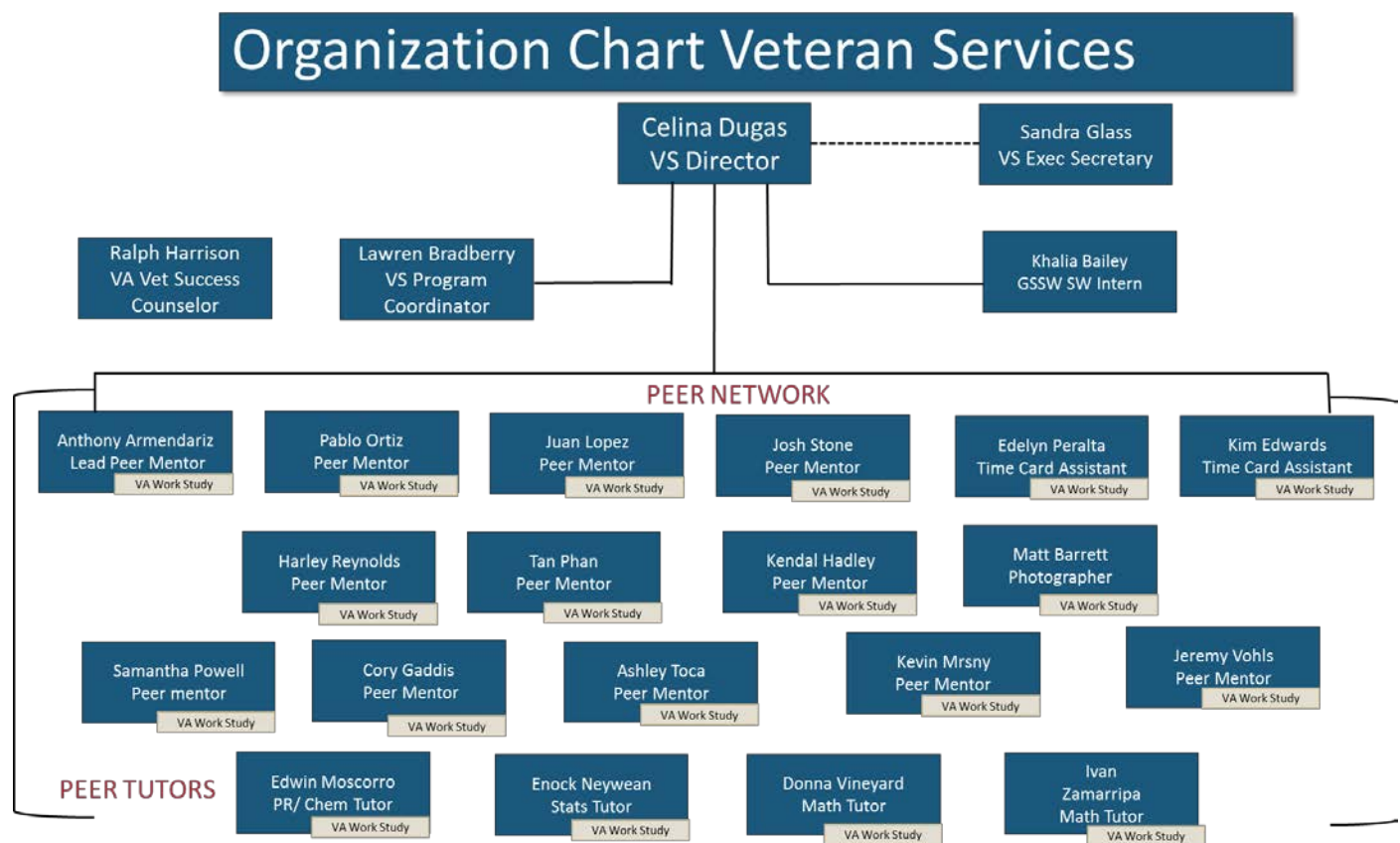
Veteran Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

- professional and student staff with a wealth of knowledge and experience in using military benefits and transitioning from service to higher education;
- supportive services for academic, psychological, financial, vocational, and academic challenges;
- information on University policies and procedures, federal and state education benefits, and changes in legislative regulations that affect veterans;
- camaraderie and peer to peer mentoring;
- student engagement through a safe, casual, and familiar space for students to study, relax, and network, including a computer lab, within the UH campus;
- referrals to the Veterans Administration, other University departments, and community agencies.
- faculty advisor for the SVA

VS fosters a "military friendly" campus community by engaging in strategic partnerships with University departments and community agencies to increase awareness of military-connected student issues. These partnerships encourage a sense of belonging, community and well-being for all military-connected students on campus. With 2775 military-connected students enrolled in the Spring of 2017, VS provides resources to meet their unique needs. The Spring Enrollment Numbers represent a 23% increase since the Fall 2016 enrollment of 2255 military-connected students.

2. 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.

Organizational Chart

## Organization Chart Veteran Services

Celina Dugas
VS Director

Sandra Glass
VS Exec Secretary

Ralph Harrison
VA Vet Success
Counselor

Lawren Bradberry
VS Program
Coordinator

Khalia Bailey
GSSW SW Intern

### PEER NETWORK

Anthony Armendariz
Lead Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Pablo Ortiz
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Juan Lopez
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Josh Stone
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Edelyn Peralta
Time Card Assistant
VA Work Study

Kim Edwards
Time Card Assistant
VA Work Study

Harley Reynolds
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Tan Phan
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Kendal Hadley
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Matt Barrett
Photographer
VA Work Study

Samantha Powell
Peer mentor
VA Work Study

Cory Gaddis
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Ashley Toca
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Kevin Mrsny
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

Jeremy Vohls
Peer Mentor
VA Work Study

### PEER TUTORS

Edwin Moscorro
PR/ Chem Tutor
VA Work Study

Enock Neywean
Stats Tutor
VA Work Study

Donna Vineyard
Math Tutor
VA Work Study

Ivan
Zamarripa
Math Tutor
VA Work Study

3. List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2016-2017 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items. DSAES Plan: (http://www.uh.edu/dsaes/about/strategic_plan.html) UH Goals: (http://www.uh.edu/president/vision-priorities/)

### Strategic Initiatives

(1) Support Student Success and engagement by implementing and Orientation Team to provide early engagement of our Military-Connected Students. (1)
   (i) Select Top Student Staff to lead Orientation Team
   (ii) Engage New and Transfer Students providing a one on one approach to provide
   (iii) Assess the O-Team's effectiveness with ongoing assessment measures.

VS implemented the O- Team with great success. With the help of admissions orientation coordinator, we were able to meet with almost 600 new and transfer military connected students, which is more than ever. The VS O-team allows us to put a face to the VS office and make those important connections right away. This student led initiative allows our VS peer mentors to work and plan all aspect of VS orientation and helps us to make stronger connections with our new students.

(2) Expand collaboration and networking with our University and Community Partners by increasing programing and community involvement. (6)
   (i) Continue to provide meaningful programming to Military Connected population.
   (ii) Continue to seek meaningful partnerships with University and Community organizations.
   (iii) Finalize our Veteran Advisory Board

Veteran Services ended some of our previous partnerships and continues to foster new partnerships both on and off campus. We continued with our partnerships with our on campus departments and worked very had this Spring to create better partnerships with those in academic affairs. In order to grow these partnerships, VS went on a Spring long road show to meet Deans from the College of Technology, Engineering, Education, Social Work, Liberal Arts, and Bauer. In addition, we met with staff at the UH Law School to make connections. These meetings have already improved the way we serve our students and having these connections has proven to be very valuable.
VS is still waiting on appointments to the Veteran Services Advisory Board from SGA, and Faculty Senate, but already has two appointments from Staff Counsel and we continue on working diligently to get our Veteran Advisory Board up and running.

(3) Assist Military-Connected Students with Successful transition from active service to the classroom by providing a variety of services and programs to help foster success in all areas of their lives. (3)
   (i) Continue to enhance our Programming
   (ii) Evaluate core programming to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our population

The application of Transition Theory to our programming model, gave us a good foundation about how we approach our programming.  We continue to focus on this model as it works well with the way we would like to meet the needs of our clients.  We have worked on becoming more fluent in our methods of assessment and still struggle in getting student buy in to the assessment tools.  We continue to work on ideas to incentivize the assessment process in order to better the process.

4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting these data.

### Means to Evaluate Success

Currently, VS 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.

VS collects data for student usage via a myUH id check- in system. Prospect and applicant data is currently collected manually. This year the VSO has demonstrated that we have stabilized our office capacity at approximately 12000 sign-ins a year.  We anticipate that we will continue at this level. 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. While our office utilization has balanced out, Student programming and engagement continues to grow and we saw a 64% increase.  We attribute this to our ramped up marketing efforts and we will continue to strive to increase in our program attendance, engagement, and services utilization.

In addition, we have worked hard over the last 3 years to establish good reporting methods that would allow us to assess whether or not we are successful in our ultimate goal of graduating veterans successfully.  Our progress card has helped us with this evaluation and while a lot of the data is new, it is valuable in helping us see the way ahead in where we need to make improvements. While we continue to struggle to get significant participation in our after program assessment surveys, we have received feedback from our students and we strive to listen to them and make real time changes to enhance our services.

# Veteran's Services Progress Card
## Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

| | | FY15 | FY16 | FY17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Operational Data** | | | |
| Visits: | **Total Office Visits** | **12,157** | **11,842** | **10401** |
| | fall counts | 4,554 | 5,123 | 4625 |
| | spring counts | 5,126 | 4,337 | 4576 |
| | summer counts | 2,477 | 2,382 | 1200 |
| | **Total Community Engagement** | **1,117** | **2,411** | **6395** |
| | fall counts | 1,117 | | 2150 |
| | spring counts | | 1,523 | 2639 |
| | summer counts | | 888 | 1606 |
| | **Unique Student Engagement** | | **1,046** | **2907** |
| | fall counts | | 422 | 1197 |
| | spring counts | | 624 | 1261 |
| | summer counts | | | 448 |
| Programs: | **Total number of community engagement opportunities** | | **27** | 28 |
| | internal programs | | 19 | 22 |
| | outreach | | 8 | 6 |
| | **Student Success Data (on unique students)** | | | |
| based on unique: | **Persistence** | | | |
| | Fall to Fall Persistence | | 81.86% | |
| | **Graduation Rate (FTIC)** | | | |
| | Number of FTIC Students | | 48 | |
| | 4-year | | 1/1 = 100% | |
| | 6-year | | 1/2 = 50.00% | |
| | **GPA** | | | |
| | Average GPA | | 2.87 | |

1. Utilizations Reports :

| Office Utilization | Check-ins | Advocacy |
|---|---|---|
| September | 1621 | 379 |
| October | 1438 | 247 |
| November | 1237 | 392 |
| December | 329 | 179 |
| January | 971 | 405 |
| February | 1351 | 270 |
| March | 899 | 212 |
| April | 1053 | 236 |
| May | 302 | 138 |
| June | 331 | 101 |
| July | 304 | 107 |
| August | 565 | 241 |
| **Total:** | **10401** | **2907** |

## Fall 2016 Events/ Student Engagement

| | |
|---|---|
| Fall Mixer | 90 |
| 9/11 Event | 93 |
| Veterans Day Appreciation Luncheon | 200 |
| VS Tutoring: Total Math/Chemistry | 300 |
| Graduation Cording Ceremony | 103 |
| Veteran Support Advocacy | 1197 |
| Vet Success on Campus | 134 |
| Finals Week | 33 |
| **Total Event Attendance:** | **2150** |

## Spring 2017 Event/ Student Engagement

| | |
|---|---|
| National Leadership Conference | 20 |
| Spring Mixer | 35 |
| Orientation and tabling | 211 |
| Veteran Support Advocacy | 1261 |
| Vet Success on Campus | 160 |
| Women Veteran's Expo | 150 |
| Veteran Networking Luncheon | 60 |
| Spring Veteran Job Fair | 128 |
| May Graduate Cording | 130 |
| Student Appreciation Week | 22 |
| Veteran Peer Tutoring | 245 |
| VS College Road Show | 48 |
| Out of the Darkness Walk | 82 |
| Service B-day Celebrations | 62 |
| Leadership Retreat | 25 |
| **Total to-date** | **2639** |

Summer 2017 Events/Student Engagement

| Orientations and Tabling | 644 |
|---|---|
| Veteran Entrepreneur Summit | 186 |
| Leadership/Mentor Retreat | 22 |
| VS Tutoring | 120 |
| Vet Success on Campus | 78 |
| Veteran Support Advocacy | 448 |
| Welcome Breakfast | 108 |
| Total to 8/31 | **1606** |

| TOTAL EVENT/ STUDENT ENGAGEMENT 2016-2017 | 6395<br><br>64% increase over last year |
|---|---|

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2018) 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.

### Budget and Organizational Changes

In 2016 VS reported to the SFAC Committee that in an effort to broaden our reach and provide support to a wide range of students, VS increased its work study student staff from 10 VA funded to over 22 VA funded Student staff. While we know that the research supports the use of Peer Staff when working with Veterans, logistically it has not been feasible to maintain such high numbers of peer staff. VS student staff are limited to a customer service "Bull Pen" area and the additional staff made the Veteran Services Office's already crowded center more difficult to navigate. As a result, we made the tough decision to limit the number of active peers to approximately 15. Despite the reduction in student staff we continue to see an increase demand for our services and as such an impact on our budget.

As demonstrated in the previous question, Veteran Services continues to grow in the number of students that we serve. With the continued growth, we struggle with the level of staffing that we currently have. Despite, having the growth there are many areas that are lacking and could use improvement.

6. If your unit concluded FY2017 with a Student Service Fee (SSF) Fund 3 addition to the SSF Reserve in excess of $5,000, please describe the conditions which caused the addition and provide a line-item identification of the budgetary source(s) of the addition (i.e. lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).

Not Applicable: Veteran Services did not have any SSF funds left in reserve.

7. Please list your 2017-2018 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific   Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston    Strategic Goals to which they relate. 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.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.

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**2017-2018      Department Goals**

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1) **Goal 1:** Provide top-notch customer service encompassing all aspects of DSAES Customer Service Standard. DSAES Value: Accountability
   a) Ensure that all regular and full time staff receive training in DSAES customer service standard   principles.
   b) Assess customer service on a regular basis to ensure that student's needs are being met. Implement a process to receive feedback from customers to include students, faculty and staff.

2) **Goal 2:** Increase Awareness of Veteran Services Programming via social media campaigns, incentives for participation, and meaningful collaboration with student veteran's organization. DSAES Value: Collaboration
   a) Provide adequate marketing campaigns for all VS programming to ensure maximum attendance.

3) **Goal 3**: Maximize the Use of Technology to simplify assessment efforts. DSAES Value: Innovation

   a) Utilize in office tools and other tools available to VS to improve and simplify assessment efforts to ensure on-time and accurate assessment efforts.

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2019 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the FY2019 base budget augmentations and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5% in your total approved FY2018 base Student Service Fee budget and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

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**Implementing a 5% Base Budget Cut**

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In implementing a 5% Cut, Veteran Services would cut $9723 dollars from its base budget.  In doing so, we looked at cutting the majority of Travel and Professional Development for our VS staff. While there are always different ways of developing ourselves professionally than to travel, the ability to travel to National Conferences allows us to stay globally competitive amongst our peers across the Nation.  In the last 2 years, Veteran Services has submitted 5 proposals to present various veteran centric topics at National and regional conferences and we have been selected 5 times.  In addition, each time that Veteran services has presented at a National Conference, we have also afforded our Student Leaders the opportunity to take part in the process of submitting proposals, and presenting alongside VS Staff. These opportunities are a valuable learning experience for our Military-Connected Students.

| | B | F |
|---|---|---|
| | | **Projected Actuals for** |
| **Expenses** | | |
| **Salaries and Wages** | | |
| Exempt Category Employee Salaries | | 73,443 |
| Non-Exempt Employee Wages | | 78,095 |
| Student Workers Wages (NCWS) | | |
| Student Workers Wages (Graduate Students) | | |
| Other Temporary Workers Wages | | |
| Longevity | | 1,880 |
| Graduate Insurance Stipend | | |
| Shift Differential Wages | | |
| Overtime Wages | | |
| **Salaries and Wages Total** | | 153,418 |
| | | |
| **Benefits** | **Fringe Benefit** | 53,696 |
| | | |
| **Other Expenses** | | |
| Advertising | | |
| Awards | | 1,250 |
| Business Meals | | 1,350 |
| Clinical/Lab Supplies | | |
| Competition Fees | | |
| Computer/Hw/Sw Supplies/Repairs | | 250 |
| Construction/Renovation | | |
| Consulting Services | | |
| Cost Of Goods Sold | | |
| Facilities Work Orders | | 500 |
| Financial/Legal | | 200 |
| Office/General Supplies | | 5,750 |
| Other Expense | | |
| Parts/Furniture | | 1,450 |
| Printing/Postal/Freight | | 1,000 |
| Professional Development | | 2,281 |
| Programs/Events | | 24,078 |
| Prospective/New Employee | | |
| Rental/Lease | | 2,326 |
| Repairs/Maintenance | | |
| Scholarships/Stipends | | |
| Security Services | | |
| Services | | |
| Student Leadership Stipend | | |
| Teaching Food | | |
| Teaching Supplies | | |
| Telecom Services/Supplies | | 2,624 |
| Temporary Staffing | | |
| Travel | | 6,000 |
| Travel/Guest | | |
| Travel/Student | | |
| Uniforms | | |
| Utilities | | |
| | | |
| **Other Itemized** | | |
| Projects-Furniture & Equipment CAPITAL | | |
| Projects-Construction (equity transfer) | | |
| Debt Service | | |
| Deferred Maintenance | | |
| Transformation - CIP | | |
| Admin Charge (6% of Total Expense) | | 14,592 |
| Bad Debt Expense | | |
| **Other Expenses Total** | | 63,651 |
| **TOTAL EXPENSE** | | 270,765 |

| Base Budget: $194,465 | Proposed Cut 5% $9723 |
|---|---|
| Travel | $4842 |
| Professional Development | $2281 |
| Business Meals | $1350 |
| Awards | $1250 |
| Total Cuts | $9723 |



In addition, Veteran Services would be required to cut funding allocated for business meals. Business meals occur 2-3 times a year during vital and mandatory staff trainings. As our student staff changes and we are charged with providing excellent customer service standard it is imperative that we keep our staff trained. While the student staff is paid during training we have valued being able to provide them a nice meal during the 4-6 hour trainings.

Lastly, we chose to fully cut funding towards our Awards. At Veteran Services, we are honored each year to celebrate the success of our students. The funding used towards awards has historically gone to purchase the honor cords and challenge coins that are presented to our graduating Seniors during the Military Cording Ceremony. While it is a "nicety" done for our students, we feel that it is just a small token of our appreciation for the sacrifices they have made for us. We did consider partially cutting the funds for these awards, however, we felt that if we could not provide the award for every veteran graduate wanting to attend the celebration, then we would not be able to do it at all.

9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (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 the SFAC spreadsheet

## Possible Funding Sources

In 2016-2017, without the assistance of a development officer, VS Director met with various off campus partners in regards to Department sponsorship. In 2017, through contacts made by the VS Director, VS was awarded a $4500 dollar grant from Conoco Phillips Chemical. $2500 was earmarked for Student Leadership/Conference travel and $2000 was earmarked for a scholarship for Military-Connected Students. In addition, BP Oil and Gas gifted Veteran Services an additional $1500 to support our students. Unfortunately, with the heavy work load required by Students needing one on one support and the large number of programs requiring support, VS Director had very little time to dedicate to fund raising.

| 2017 Grant Funding | |
|---|---|
| Conoco Phillips Chemical- M&O | $2500 |
| Conoco Phillips Chemical Scholarship | $2000 |
| BP | $1500 |
| Grace After Fire | $400 |
| Various Donors | $95 |
| Total: | $6495 |

10. 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.

## Similar Services

The Veterans Certification unit within the Office of the University Registrar 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.