

# UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

## VETERAN SERVICES



### Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC)

Program Questionnaire  
FY 2019-2020

- 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 Student Veterans, 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 student veterans 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:

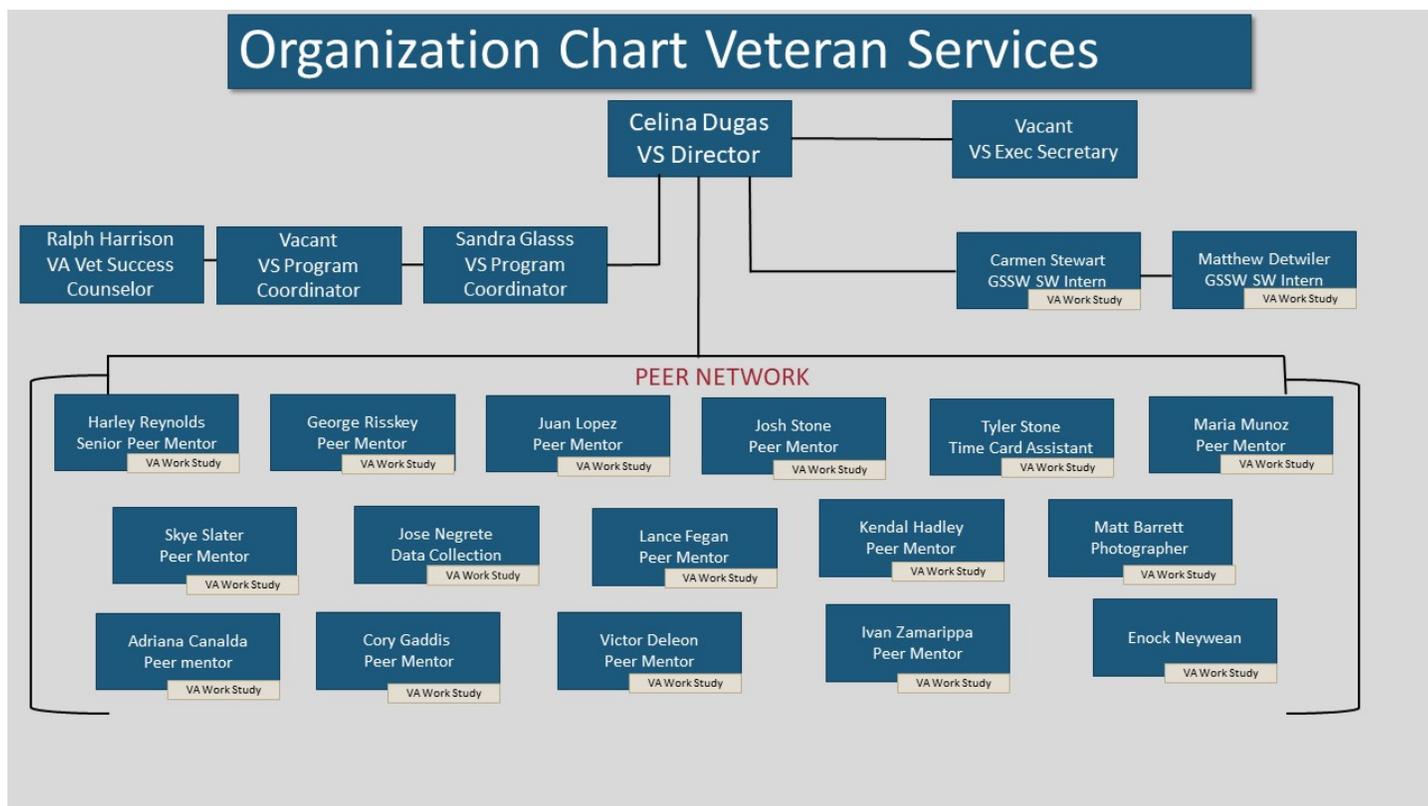
- professional and student staff with a wealth of knowledge and experience in using military benefits and transitioning from service to higher education;
- supportive services for academic, psychological, financial, vocational, and academic challenges;
- information on University policies and procedures, 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; and
- 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 student veterans' issues. These partnerships encourage a sense of belonging, community and well-being for all student veterans on campus. With 2997 veterans and their dependents enrolled for fall 2018, VS provides resources to meet their unique needs. The Fall 2018 numbers represent a 61% increase over fall 2013 (1,856 veterans and

dependents).

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



3. List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2017-2018 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](http://www.uh.edu/dsaes/about/strategic_plan.html)) UH

Goals: (<http://www.uh.edu/president/vision-priorities/>)

## 17-18 Strategic Initiatives

**Initiative 1:** Customer Service: Provide top-notch customer services encompassing all aspects of DSAES Customer Service Standard. (UH Value: Accountability)

### Action Steps:

1. Ensure that all regular and full time staff receive training in DSAES customer services standard principles.
2. Assess customer service on a regular basis to ensure that student's needs are being met
3. Implement a process to receive feedback from customers to include students, faculty and staff.
  - a. **Status: Achieved:** Training has been implemented on an ongoing basis to ensure that student staff are trained in the under the principles of DSAES. Staff Trainings were held in Aug 2017, in anticipation of the start of the Fall Semester and in December in Anticipation of the Spring Semester. All 22 Staff were presents and training was led by our Customer Service Champion Rep Sandra Glass. Customer Services Standard Pre-Test were sent out in Baseline
  - b. Customer Service Satisfaction surveys have been sent out to student post contact with VS. While we have had limited responses in some areas we have had good responses in others. We continue to train staff in the Customer Service Standard and have implemented training into quarterly retreats for Staff.
  - c. Customer Service Surveys are sent out on a regular basis post events. VS has struggled to get higher rates of participation in after event surveys. We continue to brain storm and invent new ways to get better participation.
  - d. As a start, VS has created a new data base to track student data. With this system, VS has included an opportunity for Students and visitors to discreetly leave comments and ratings of their service while at Veteran Services. We are hoping to have some data at the end of the Spring Semester. This is an ongoing effort to improve customer service.

**Initiative 2:** Increase Awareness of Veteran Services Programming via social media campaigns, incentives for participation, and meaningful collaboration with student veteran's organization. (UH Value: Innovation)

### Action Steps:

1. Provide adequate marketing campaigns for all VS programming to ensure maximum attendance.
  2. Review Current Staffing needs to ensure all areas of marketing is properly covered.
- a. **Status Achieved:** VS has significantly increased our digital media foot print over the last Semester. In order to complete this task, VS staffed 3 student staff members to tackle our social media campaigns. We hired a video and photographer. We also hired two student staff members to routinely maintain our FB, Instagram, and Twitter accounts. UH VS has continued to receive National recognition for its use of Social Media to engage Student Veterans, as a result our

presentation to present on this topic has been selected 4 times in national proposals.

**Initiative 3:** Use of Technology: Maximize the use of technology to simplify assessment efforts.  
(UH Value: Innovation)

Action Steps:

1. Review Current assessment tools for effectiveness.
  2. Update current methods of data collection
- a. Status: Achieved: VS converted to the Compliance Assist method of reporting and has gone completely to using Baseline for survey assessment. In addition, VS has added a new method for assessment of services on our new data collection system. Previous system was a 9-10 year old access database created by a student. The computer which housed the program as old and there was no way for IT to make updates to that computer for fear that we would lose the data. As, difficult as it was to let go of that system, VS hired a WS student to complete a revamp of the system. Within that change, VS sought to collect more meaningful data that we could use for annual assessment. The issue that we are now having is that it is more cumbersome for the student who is "signing in" for the first time, because we are requesting data. We continue to encourage students walking in to make that first time data collection sign in. Also, the new system when into effect late December so we have one semester on the old system and one semester on the new system. Despite the uncertainty, VS will continue on the new updated system.
- 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. If available, please provide program benchmarking data from comparable institutions.**

#### **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 10,000 sign-ins a year. We anticipate that we will continue at this level. VS 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, our Student programming saw a slight decrease, due to not doing 2 large scale conferences that were done in the previous year. We attribute this to our ramped up marketing

efforts, we will continue to strive to increase in our program attendance, engagement, and services utilization. Also, it was our time to complete an external review and Veteran Services welcomed 3 benchmark institutions to review our department staff, processes and programs. This external was extremely important in assisting VS in recognizing the steps needed to take the department to the next level. We have focused on 19-20 on accomplishing some of the recommendations from these benchmark institutions so that we can move ahead.

**Veteran Services Progress Card**  
 Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment  
 Services

FY15      FY16      FY17      FY18

<b>Operational Data</b>					
Visits:	<b>Total Office Visits</b>	<b>12,157</b>	<b>11,842</b>	<b>10,401</b>	<b>10,742</b>
	fall counts	4,554	5,123	4,625	39,667
	spring counts	5,126	4,337	4,576	3,780
	summer counts	2,477	2,382	1,200	2,955
	<b>Total Community Engagement</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>2,411</b>	<b>6,395</b>	<b>5,694</b>
	fall counts	1,117		2,150	2,772
	spring counts		1,523	2,639	2,280
	summer counts		888	1,606	642
	<b>Unique Student Engagement</b>		<b>1,046</b>	<b>2,907</b>	<b>1,236</b>
	fall counts		422	1,197	605
	spring counts		624	1,261	426
	summer counts			448	205
Programs:	<b>Total number of community engagement opportunities</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>
	internal programs		19	22	29
	outreach		8	6	3
<b>Student Success Data (on unique students)</b>					
based on unique:	<b>Persistence</b>				
	Fall to Fall Persistence		81.86%	80.86%	
	<b>Graduation Rate (FTIC)</b>				
	Number of FTIC Students		48	27	
	4-year		1/1 = 100%	9/17=52.9%	
	6-year		1/2 = 50.00%	0/2=0%	
	<b>GPA</b>				
	Average GPA		2.87	2.85	

VS Office Utilization for 17-18

Fall 2017	Sept 17- Dec 17	3937
Spring 2018	Jan 18- May 18	3780
Summer	May 18- Aug 31	2955
Total:		10742

Program Utilization/ Attendance

<b>VS Programs FY 17-18</b>	<b>Semester/ Date</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Veterans Welcome Back Mixer	Fall 2017	83
Campus Prowl	Fall 2017	214
9/11 Remembrance	<b>Fall 2017</b>	52
Veterans Day	Fall 2017	388
Fresh Check Day	9/14//2017	89
Student Leadership/Mentorship 6 Events	Fall 2017- Spring 2018	Fall 66 Spring 66 Total: 132
Student Veterans Academic Intervention: 4 Tutors	Contact Hours 1:1 Tutoring	1240
Military/ Veteran Cording Ceremony	12/2017 Spring 18	Fall: 104 Spring: 130 Total: 234
VA VSOC	Fall-Summer	555
Mil-Vet Orientations/ Tabling	Spring/Fall	Spring 112 Summer Fall: 271 Combined Tabling 400 Total 783
VS Advocacy	Face to Face with Staff	Fall 605 /Spring 426/ Smmer:205 Total: 1236
Welcome Back Breakfast	Spring/	108
Women In Combat	Spring	18
Women In Industry	Spring	20
Deloitte Service Day	June	50
Fox News Day of Service	June	112
Student Worker Appreciation	5 Events	125
External on campus Trainings (2)	Spring 2018	40
Veterans Advisory Board	Fall 2017	15
Out of the Darkness Walk	Spring 2018	75
Finals Week		125
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>32 Event/ programs</b>	<b>5694</b>

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2019) 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

VS continues to employ a team of Student Workers, who make up are Peer Support Mentors. Research done by Syracuse University’s IVMF (Institute for Veterans and Military Families) tells us that Peer support contributes to academic support for veterans. In addition, Veterans want to have a sense of belonging and purpose. It is our desire to continue to operate with a high number of student peers, but recognize the addition strain on budget to train and support these student staff. In addition, our efforts, to do more, to be better, and to engage our students at the highest level is proving to be successful and as a result we are seeing increased demand for services, and as such an impact on our budget.

Semester	Total Number of VA Work- Study Contracts	Total Number of Hours Contracted	Total Dollars Paid by VA
Fall 17	22	8800	\$63,800
Spring 18	22	8800	\$63,800
Summer 18	9	2475	\$17,940
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>20,075</b>	<b>\$145,544</b>

In September 2018 VS long-time program coordinator, Lawren Bradberry took a promotion within the College of Technology. We posted both open coordinator positions and interviews have been completed. On 1 October the newly funded program coordinator was filled and as of 15 October 2018, a candidate has been identified and is pending an offer. We anticipate having both Program Coordinator positions filled as of 1 November 2018 Since the new program coordinator was promoted from within, a half time Secretary II position is currently open in VS. VS is reviewing the job description and will request changes to the description as needed.

VS has worked diligently to maintain a high level of activity despite the reduction in staff. As an MSW, Celina Dugas does supervise 1-2 Graduate Students from the Graduate College of Social Work, these students have assisted in filling the gaps as necessary. While it is an additional duty, we feel like we have a mutual benefitting partnership between GCSW and UH Veteran Services.

**6. If your unit concluded FY2018 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity 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.).**

Veteran Services was granted a one-time fund request to fund a new program coordinator. While the budget was originally requested salary for January-August, the funds were approved and available on March 13, 2018. Given that Veteran Services was in its year to have and host an External Review, which was done in Feb of 2018. It was our desire to have our office and staffing structure reviewed by the External Review Team prior to posting the position. VS, made the decision to wait to hire until we were sure that this new team member would be used to it fullest potential. In summer of 2018, a new job description was submitted and approved by Dr. Walker. The position was posted and was filled as of 1 October, 2018 we promoted from within our office, Dr. Sandra Glass. The process took longer than we originally thought it would, hence we returned the \$38,500 in one time lapse salary funds. In addition, it was reported that VS returned \$6249 in M&O and Travel. Unfortunately despite our best efforts, to spend and report our spending in a timely manner, it appears that quite a bit of spending that was done in July/August did not "hit" the books so to speak until after September 1. This lag in processing time is detrimental to our overall budget, because VS typically runs a tight budget and spends accordingly. We have weekly budget meetings with our business office to ensure that spending was done and reported in a timely manner and internal records showed that VS would have very few dollars returned at the end on the fiscal year. The return of those funds means less funds to work with during 2019-2020.

**7. Please list your 2019-2020 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.**

**Goal 1 Increase Military Cultural Competency among Faculty and Staff.**

Plan, develop and Implement a Military Cultural Competency Training for Staff and Faculty to improve the cultural competence across campus.

**Action Steps:**

1. VS will learn the current level of Military Cultural Awareness prior to implementing the Military Cultural Competency Course.
2. Research current programs used at Benchmark Institution.

**Goal 2 Improve Certification Processes for Military-Connected Students:**

Working with Student Business Services, Ensure that benefit eligible military connected students are placed in a student group to prevent being dropped from Classes. This will ensure improved transition.

**Action Steps:**

1. VS will review the current process for Certification and payment of classes in order to prevent the dropping of classes for those military connected students that are pending Federal or State payments.
2. Working with the office of the registrar, VS will assist in helping to streamline current processes to ensure timely certification and payment to our military connected students.

### **Goal 3 Department Staff Re-organization:**

Review Current Department Organization and develop and reorganization strategy to assist Veteran Services to work more efficiently to provide services to our military population.

#### **Action Steps:**

1. Review Current Staffing and job descriptions as recommended by External Review Team and hire necessary staff to take VS to the Next Level.
2. Fill Additional Program coordinator Position
3. Review empty positions to determine feasibility in job description and update as

**8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2020 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5% in your total FY2020 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

#### **Implementing a 5% Base Budget Cut**

In implementing a 5% Cut, Veteran Services would cut \$12,599 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. In 2019, VS will once again, along with 3 student leaders will present nationally at the Student Veterans of America Conference in Orlando. This Conference continues to allow UH VS to present ourselves as leaders in the area of serving student veterans.

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.

Also, we may have to cut some of our services to our veterans, such as printing and copying. Without the ability to fund supplies needed to offer these services, Veteran Services would not be able to fund these items.

Lastly some programs would need partially to be cut. For Example, due the inability to purchase awards we most likely would need to cut the Veterans cording ceremony. Many of these programs honor our Military Veterans and their accomplishments and it would be detrimental if they were cut.

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		Budget Request for 2019-2020
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Salaries and Wages</b>		
Exempt Category Employee Salaries		76,409
Non-Exempt Employee Wages		96,772
Student Workers Wages (NCWS)		
Student Workers Wages (Graduate Students)		
Other Temporary Workers Wages		
Longevity		240
Graduate Insurance Stipend		
Shift Differential Wages		
Overtime Wages		
<b>Salaries and Wages Total</b>		173,421
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>Fringe Benefits Total</b>	54,710
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Advertising		
Awards		1,100
Business Meals		1,500
Clinical/Lab Supplies		
Competition Fees		
Computer/Hw/Sw Supplies/Repairs		
Construction/Renovation		
Consulting Services		
Cost Of Goods Sold		
Facilities Work Orders		300
Financial/Legal		
Office/General Supplies		1,600
Other Expense		
Parts/Furniture		
Printing/Postal/Freight		100
Professional Development		1,000
Programs/Events		40,000
Prospective/New Employee		
Rental/Lease		4,000
Repairs/Maintenance		
Scholarships/Stipends		
Security Services		
Services		
Student Leadership Stipend		
Teaching Food		
Teaching Supplies		
Telecom Services/Supplies		3,000
Temporary Staffing		
Travel		4,250
Travel/Guest		
Travel/Student		
Uniforms		2,000
Utilities		
<b>Other Itemized</b>		

Base Budget \$258,191	Proposed Cut 5% \$12,599
Awards	\$1,100
Business Meals	\$1,500
Office Supplies	\$1,600
Professional Development	\$1,000
Rental/Lease	\$1,150
Travel	\$4250
Uniforms	\$2000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>



9. 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.

**Possible Funding Sources**

In FY 2017-2018, VS received both corporate gifts and private gifts from donors. We have continued to receive small corporate gifts from Bechtel and Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. In addition, we have various private donors who have donated one time gifts. We work closely with Andrea Ward from Development and Corporate relations to foster relationships with corporations that may want to fund VS projects. We have maintained the funds in a private fund account for the purpose of being a back fund for any unexpected shortages. (Example: return of M&O Funds due to fund processing lag) We will continue to do the work necessary to foster these relationships in order to maintain any private gift that we receive.

2018 Gift Funding	
Corporate Gifts	\$3015
Private Gifts	\$1538
Total:	\$4553

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.