

 Dept SS - (A&R) Veterans 

SS 2016-17 Program Review: 2016-17

SS 1a) Program Name: Veterans

SS 1b) Name(s) of the author(s) of this report: Tamica Ward, Dean of Enrollment Services /Bianca Lopez, Veterans Resource Specialist/ Shari Pasquali, Veterans Resource Specialist/ Kathleen Marquez, Veterans Counselor

SS 1c) Number students served annually & trend increasing, even, decreasing: We currently serve close to 500 Veterans. With the Armed Forces reducing its personnel strength, we predict that this number will only increase.

SS 1d) Who are the typical students served by this program? : The students we serve in this program are Veterans and their Dependents, Spouses and Active Duty Service Members.

SS 2a) What is the program Mission Statement?: The De Anza Veterans Program mission is dedicated to providing student-veterans and their dependents with services that support the attainment of their academic and career goals.

SS 2b) In what ways and to what extent does program assure the quality of its services to students?: The Veteran's Resource Specialist meets with each incoming Veteran student individually and reviews the 8-point checklist necessary prior to certification. This is the beginning stage of the certification process and requires one-on-one intake evaluation between The Veteran's Resource Specialist and the Veteran to ensure all proper documentation is collected and filed with both De Anza College and Veterans' Affairs. The Veterans program offers a veterans orientation and workshops that offers information regarding the process and procedures of the office and transiting to academic life. We have implemented a student focus group that offers data through community conversations and student surveys so we are able to assess the areas in which need improvement.

SS 2c) In what ways and to what extent does program support College Mission statement?: The Veteran's Resource Specialists work closely with the Veterans Counselor who prepares comprehensive educational plans to help Veterans stay on track towards successfully completing an AA/AS degree, transferring to a 4-year institution, or career preparation to obtain gainful employment. A new certification process was implemented ensuring Veteran students receive an orientation designed specifically for Veterans, which includes the various types of requirements for earning AA/ AS/ Certificate degrees as well as the certification process. Our new implemented process includes the certifying officials preparing the low GPA report for the Veterans Counselor and the Veterans Counselor follows up with each student in order to track their academic progress and provide support to make sure they are successful in increasing their GPA.

SS 3a) In what ways and to what extent does the program assure equitable access for all students?: The Veterans program is not accessible to non-Veteran students at De Anza, as it is specifically designed to assist and guide Veterans in obtaining their VA Educational Benefits and pursuit of higher education. However, our office works closely with various Equity partners to provide knowledge of what

our program has to offer and encourage collaboration. The Veteran's Resource Specialists have created multiple platforms to help spread vital information to the students (Veterans) that qualify to use this program. The most efficient tool the Veterans program uses is the Veterans portal on the De Anza website. Here, Veterans can address their most frequently asked questions to the Veterans office. While the website advises a 36 hour turn around rate, the questions are usually answered within 24 hours. The Veteran's Resource Specialists as well as the Veterans Counselor have been working towards creating a more effective relationship with the Student Veteran's Association. If this vision comes to fruition, this will be another outlet used to relay information to Veteran's campus-wide. With the help of the Veterans counselor the Veterans program has ensured equitable practices by implementing its own Probation Early Alert system. This system has been managed by the counselor. The probation process includes running a probation status report and reaching out to each student on the identified probation list and providing individual assessment and support on how to get back to Good Standing within the college.

SS 3b) State ways and extent that program encourages personal and civic responsibility.: While The Veteran's Resource Specialists provides one-on-one intake evaluation, the majority of the personal responsibility lies with the Veteran. Key documents, such as DD-214, Certificate of Eligibility and Transcripts are not accessible to the Veteran's Office, making it the Veteran student's duty to present originals of these documents in order to begin the VA Certification process. The Veterans Resource Specialists also makes sure to encourage Veteran students to schedule their appointments to retrieve comprehensive Educational Plans with the Veterans Counselor. By having a space for veterans to access their Counselor, Resources Specialists, Financial Aid, and Health Services has allowed students to have more access to the services they need for student success at De Anza College.

SS 3c)State ways & extent program designs, maintains and evaluates counseling &/or academic advising: The Veterans Program hired a Veterans Counselor in August 2016. The Veteran's Resource Specialists works closely with the veterans counselor to ensure Veteran students are on the correct educational path. Before certifying a Veteran for each quarter, the Veteran's Resource Specialists ensures that each individual schedule matches that of the Veterans Educational Plan. This is done for two reasons: one, so the Veteran is taking the appropriate classes towards his/her degree plan and two, so that VA policy is not violated by taking classes that are not required. The Veterans Resource Specialists also make sure that each student that does not have an Educational Plan, is scheduled an appointment with the Veterans Counselor. The Veterans counselor gets is evaluated and observed by the Dean of Enrollment Services to ensure students are receiving academic advising based on their educational goal. The Veterans program has creates student learning outcomes to assess and address other areas of need.

SS 3d)State ways & extent program support/enhances student understanding & appreciation of diversity: While our Program is not accessible to the non-Veteran student population at De Anza College, it is a diverse program within itself. Our Veterans range in age, sex, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation with an emphasis on reaching each student where they are at the time of assistance. Within that diverse demographic we encourage all our Veterans campus-wide to utilize our student services, to include, Disability Support Services (DSS), Financial Aid, Counseling, and Health Services. We have implemented every Wednesday, a one-stop shop within our program office in which students can receive assistance from those following (particularly for our Ch. 31- Vocational Rehabilitation benefit students.

SS 3e) State ways & extent program regularly evaluates admissions & placement practices: While we do not conduct academic testing or evaluations, part of the 8-point checklist is that the Veteran has completed the necessary testing to place in the correct courses. The

program also ensures that all prior credit has been awarded and that the Veteran is now ready to have a Comprehensive Education Plan completed with the Veterans Counselor. Students who are having difficulty in classes or other challenges to college success are referred to the Educational Diagnostic Center for assessment, and DSS. These departments' testing practices are monitored by the state/department.

SS 3f) State ways & extent program maintain student records securely & confidentially?: The Veteran Resource Specialists requires that all files pertaining to Veterans be maintained in a secured and controlled environment. This is crucial, as most of these documents must be kept on file for a minimum of three years upon completion of the last certification. All records are destroyed with the exception of legal documents (DD-214, Transcripts etc). These documents are scanned and stored permanently in our internal database. In addition, the program requires anyone handling such files to complete FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) training. The Veterans Program has also implemented scanning all files so that the file is permanently stored within our database and the Veterans Counselor will have access to paperwork that directly deals with academic counseling within the file electronically.

SS 4a) Have there been any significant staffing changes since the last CPR?: There has been three significant staffing change since 2008. The Veteran's Program Coordinator position was upgraded from level 41 Veteran's Program Coordinator to level 46 and reclassified as Veteran's Resource Specialists due to the complexity of multiple on-going changes and reporting requirements to the Veterans Administration. An additional Veterans Resource Specialist was hired in January 2016 to provide for an additional certifying official as we are servicing over 300 student veterans. The program also hired a full time Veterans Counselor in August 2016.

SS 4b) Are there any significant staffing changes that will be needed over the next five years?: Currently, there are three people serving over 500 veterans, dependents, spouses and active duty student needs. This starts with obtaining and maintaining VA Educational benefits each quarter. We would like to increase our FTES by one person within the next five years. This would ensure meeting mandates and higher incidences of student need more efficiently and more quickly. With VA benefits constantly evolving and limited staff, it makes it difficult to create a standard process for certification. In addition, veterans frequently have significant life challenges that require Veterans' staff to connect them to other community and campus resources, and spend both planned and unplanned time with them to determine need and support the student's circumstances. Without a receptionist and limited student work study hours it is hard to serve students administratively and complete the certification process in a timely manner.

SS 4b) Are there any significant staffing changes that will be needed over the next five years?:

SS 5a) Have there been any significant facility changes since the last CPR?: A space was designated for Veterans in Learning Center West in the basement in 2010. The space use to house a Veterans Work Force Specialist from EDD, an Outreach Readjustment Specialist from the Peninsula and San Jose Vet Centers, which were available one day a week. This was unsupervised space and the Library staff were reluctant to support continued use of this space after the remodel in 2014 is complete. We also no longer provide services for Veterans students within this space. The Student Veterans Association decided to change the name of the location in which they have taken the responsibility to try and make it a lounge for Veteran students. We currently do not have a lounge space for our Veteran students which makes it difficult for Veteran students to gain comradery amongst their Veteran peers. In November 2016, we moved from the Admissions & Records area to sharing space with Psychological Services. Through this new transition, the Veterans Resource Specialists have been able to meet with students individually in offices which provides confidentiality for students during the one on one intake process. The Veterans Counselor also has their own office to meet with Veteran students individually. However, the shared space with

Psychological Services has been a challenge as our Veterans program receives a lot of traffic during the certification peak times and makes it difficult to provide an area in which the Veteran students can hang out and do their homework and converse with their peers socially.

SS 5b) Are there any significant facility changes that will be needed over the next five years?: Research shows that veterans thrive in a college setting when they have dedicated space for both academic, social, and resource purposes. Ideally in the next five years we would like a “one-stop shop” complete with computers, printers and where informational speakers and workshops can be held. It will also be a place where Veteran Academic Counselors and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors can meet with Veteran students. The hope is by creating an extension of the Veteran’s office, more Veterans will be encouraged to take advantage of the many Veteran services offered at De Anza College.

SS 6a) Have there been any significant equipment changes since the last CPR?: Since 2008, two computers have been donated to the Veteran’s Program. The addition of these two computers to the Veterans Resource Center has made the transition easier for Veterans without a computer, utilizing this resource allows the Veterans to keep up with homework assignments until a computer was acquired. We now have 6 iPads which makes it easier for the Veterans Counselor to be able to assist students with navigating and understanding how to use their DegreeWorks to change their major and review their educational plans. The Veterans Resource Specialists, use the iPads to assist veteran students through applying for the G.I. Bill benefits during the initial intake process. The high tech center located at De Anza has dedicated several computers ready with the most current software to donate to the Veterans Program for the resource center, however, without a dedicated space, they cannot be installed and as a result they become unavailable to the Veterans on campus. Having a dedicated resource center with the computer resources from the High Tech center would significantly increase efficiency and our ability to assist Veterans more effectively. We have also gained three scanners within the Veterans program to start scanning all of the files as we transition into becoming a paperless program.

SS 6b) Are there any significant equipment changes that will be needed over the next five years?: The next five years will prove crucial to the equipment needs of the Veteran’s program. The VA wants to go paperless, which means scanning all of the documents directly to them. Our office currently has three scanners and is transitioning into scanning all of the current inactive and active files in our database.

SS 7a) Have there been any significant operational cost changes since the last CPR?: The VA provides annual stipends based on the number of veterans served in a calendar year and is referenced as the annual reporting fee. This payment is intended to support the work of the Veterans Office and the Certifying Official at each school. These funds are used for the annual WAVES conference which requires out of state travel. The stipend is paid in lieu of any other compensation or reimbursement for reports or certifications that the school is required to submit to VA by law or regulation. De Anza receives \$9.00 for each student receiving VA benefits under Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill; Chapter 31, Vocational Rehabilitation; Chapter 32, Veterans Educational Assistance Program; Chapter 33, Post- 9/11 GI Bill; Chapter 35, Dependent’s Educational Assistance; Chapter 1606, Selected Reserves and Chapter 1607 (REAP) Reservists Educational Assistance Program. This stipend is always paid in March and we have implemented a process of checking and balancing the report to make sure that the students that were certified are not duplicated for the calendar year that we are receiving a stipend for.

SS 7b) Will any significant operational cost changes be needed over the next 5 years? : The funding above has been reallocated to a grant-type account that allows the money to roll from year to year. Currently the program relies on both Foundation and DASB funds to support book vouchers; however, there is a need to provide more direct service for food cards and emergency funds for our program.

SS 8a) Have there been any significant organizational alignment changes since the last CPR?: The reclassification of the Veterans program coordinator to Veterans resource Specialist at a higher level, hiring of an additional Veterans Resource Specialist, as well as hiring of a full time Veterans Counselor has been a significant organizational alignment to the Veterans program.

SS 8b) Are there any significant organizational alignment changes that will be needed over the next : A receptionist and unshared space would be beneficial to the Veterans program to provide a lounge area for students to do homework, utilize computers and converse socially with their peers. As Servicemembers come home, they will use the GI Bill benefits they have earned, many of them starting at the community college.

SS 9a) Have there been any significant changes in regulations/laws/policies since the last CPR?: New reporting requirements along with changes in record keeping, and additional compliance audit requirements are just a few of the additional responsibilities held by the School Certifying Official. This benefit is extremely complex and is constantly evolving. The VONAPP application is one of the new steps created to streamline the eligibility process. School Certifying Officials are now in charge of assisting with the online application process, this includes reviewing applications for completeness and accuracy, resolving issues or concerns of students as needed or directing them to the appropriate personnel. The additional compliance requires that school officials maintain current knowledge of rules, regulations and procedures of VA Educational benefits.

VA education benefits are constantly changing. Most cases are typically done on an individual basis. Regulations and policies, both at a Federal and State level evolve constantly. To the point that our Veteran's Resource Specialists/School Certifying Officials makes a strong effort to keep both Veterans and staff informed with the most current changes.

SS 9b) State significant changes in regulations/laws/policies affecting program over next 5 years.: As stated before, the regulations put forth by the VA could change at any moment within the next five years. The only step we can take is to be as prepared as possible. By satisfying our equipment and staffing needs we will be better able to tackle any challenges that lay ahead.

SS 10a) State any significant professional development activities for the program since last CPR.: De Anza College is a current member of the Western Association of Veteran's Education Specialists (WAVES). Training is held every July in conjunction with the Veteran's Administration. The conference is a useful tool in that it teaches according to the state in which the school is located. This is crucial, as state and federal laws differ greatly. By attending these annual conferences, our VA office has the opportunity to train and network among other VA certifying officials and post-secondary institutions. Sessions include training on certifying procedures as well as session presenters from the VA central office in Muskogee and the State of California.

This year we also attended our first Veterans Counselor/Certifying official Training which was a free training held at American River College and in the next two years, they will be the host for this training as well as the cost being free.

De Anza College in collaboration with Palo Alto VA hosted a co-sponsored campus wide faculty and staff PTSD/TBI/Mental illness training.

The Veteran's Resource Specialist also attends annual training conducted by the VA Regional office, San Diego. Each year, they come to Northern California and hold a conference specially designed to inform and train certifying officials on new procedures or any changes

that may have taken place to a procedure.

In addition to attending these two conferences, The Veterans Resource Specialist attends conferences and workshops throughout the year that proves to be invaluable for the knowledge required to assist Veterans with their education benefits.

The Veteran's Resource specialist is also De Anza's Institutional Representative for the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Consortium (SOC). De Anza is a member of SOC Consortium as a non-LOI school. A non-LOI school does not have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Army Continuing Education System (ACES), and therefore, Veteran students are required to pay tuition out of pocket and be reimbursed after the certifying official has posted grades in (GoArmyEd) for courses that fit within their designated degree program from the college. GoArmyEd is the portal through which tuition assistance is approved and invoiced. Attending the SOC Consortium conferences has taught our office that not all college credits that the military accepts are transferable to a non-LOI school including non-regionally accredited Institutions. The knowledge acquired during these forums is important in helping our Veterans take advantage fully of their educational benefits.

At a local level, we conduct regional quarterly meetings with other VA certifying school officials. This network of VA professionals is an integral part of maintaining a successful VA program.

SS 10b) State any significant professional development needs for the program for the next 5 years.: While the conferences we attend for professional development are good, we need them to be great, and in order to do that, we require funding. Throughout the state of California and the Western Region, VA related workshops and seminars are being conducted. Our Veterans Services office would love an opportunity to expand our network of training resources. In the next five years, we hope to become members of more organizations and attend more seminars, whose primary objective is Veteran services. By allocating the funds for these goals we stand to make both our Veteran program and our Veteran student body stronger.

SS 11a) Have there been any significant curriculum since the last CPR?: N/A

SS 11b) State any significant curriculum issues that will affect the program over the next 5 yrs.: N/A

SS 11c) State the aggregate student success rate in the instructional portions of the program?: N/A

SS 11d) State gap of student success rates with targeted groups.: N/A

SS 12a) Have there been any other significant program changes since the last CPR?: The Veterans Resource Specialists are currently managing the Veterans portal on the De Anza website. This portal allows The Veterans Resource Specialist to post updates, information and upcoming events that would benefit Veterans campus-wide. Along with maintaining a full service program, The Veterans Resource Specialists also instituted and began utilizing The VA work-study benefit. By introducing this additional "man-power", the program has been able to keep up with the constant demand and changes constantly being made to the Veterans program. We hope to keep using this benefit, as it helps Veterans interact with other Veterans and get them on the path to success at De Anza. In March 2016, we launched our first Work-study training in which we gained an additional five work-study students.

Another significant program change that has taken place since 2008 was De Anza college signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Veterans Affairs Office. This allowed The Veterans Resource Specialist to be listed as the POC for the GoArmyEd website, to approve and process tuition assistance invoices and post grades.

SS 2b) Are there any other significant issues that will affect the program over the next five years?: The next five years will be more effective if we can allocate unshared space for our Veteran's resource center. As mentioned previously, we have no dedicated space for students to do homework, work on computers or converse socially. With each training and conferences we attend, the research indicates the need for a dedicated space is key to the success of the Veteran population. The De Anza Veterans Office serves close to 500 Veterans, Dependants, Spouses and Active Duty Service Members per quarter. Unshared space is warranted as our population continues to grow.

SS 13a) How will the new 3SP orientation requirements affect the program over the next five years?: Veterans Orientation was introduced in March 2014 as a part of the Veterans Program Checklist, but was a part of the General Counseling Orientation. In September 2016, we launched our own Veterans Orientation that involved the certifying officials and new hired Veterans Counselor which we continued each quarter thereafter. This orientation is not given for credit and needs to be implemented as a credit course requirement for 3SP. New Veterans attending De Anza for the first time are required to attend and must do so no later than the start of their 3rd quarter. The orientation includes meeting with Veterans Counselor to discuss basic "getting started" information for the certification process and knowledge of the various degree requirements. At this time, the Veteran will be given an appointment at their earliest convenience to lock in and finalize their abbreviated/comprehensive education plan. After that process is complete, Veterans will be responsible for following up on referrals (if applicable) to financial aid, career workshop, transcript evaluation and tutoring services. This process is critical in ensuring that Veterans are following 3SP.

SS 13b) How will the new 3SP assessment requirements affect the program over the next five years?: Assessment has always been an important part of intake for new Veterans enrolling at De Anza. It is critical that testing is done in order to place the Veteran in the appropriate courses. De Anza also does not accept very much military credit, CLEP exam results, or use multiple measures broadly, which all impact student's transfer credit and progress through their programs.

SS 13c) Effect of the new 3SP student education planning requirements over next 5 years.: Student education planning has always played an important role in the academic lives of Veteran students. Having a abbreviated/comprehensive Veteran Education plan is the only way to ensure that VA educational benefits are paying for the correct courses. This step was further simplified by the creation of the electronic education plan, which made it easier to access on DegreeWorks. Student progress is also better monitored with DegreeWorks.

SS 14a) What are the current/active program outcome statements?: The Veterans Services Office Program expects to serve 10% more students and improve course completion rates by 2% and in order to achieve this outcome we plan on conducting questionnaires to help determine what interventions we need to help support the students. In May 2017 we launched a student focus group that will help our office improve all services including academic counseling for the Veteran students.

The Veterans counselor expects to service 10% more students by using SARS reports to track the number of students being served and the transfer rate of Veteran students by 100%. In order to achieve this outcome the counselor will do the following: make sure that 5% of additional students successfully transfer to an accredited institution or career preparation to obtain gainful employment and this will be measured by tracking our graduation rates and academic progress.

SS 14b) How many SSLO/SLO statements have been assessed since the last CPR?: Four SSLO/SLO statements have been assessed. The fifth statement is still under review for the results and is indicated as inactive. We have also added two additional SSLO's that we have made active.

SS 14c) Summarize the outcomes assessment findings and resulting program enhancements since last CPR: Changes were made to the veteran's website for better access. Intake was evaluated and changes made in the process. Workshops were held in collaboration with the counseling and evaluations department to educate students using DegreeWorks. In Spring 2014, we implemented a new process for veteran students at intake to include assigning veterans orientation to each new veteran student attending De Anza. The student will receive an abbreviated education plan for their first term of attendance, which will greatly reduce the number of veterans who do not receive benefits on time due to the processing time for certification. Changes were made to how the Veterans receive an education plan. They are referred to our Veterans counselor immediately for a first quarter assessment and an appointment is made for follow-up comprehensive educational plan once assessment and prior credit is completed by evaluations. This will significantly reduce any delays in the processing of education certifications to the VA.

SS 14d) What are the program outcome assessment plans for the next five years?: To continue to evaluate results, and as space and resources become available, identify and implement additional resources for veterans.

SS 15) Analysis of the program from last CPR to now to 2018-19.: Since 2008, The Veteran's Program at De Anza has flourished into a full service program dedicated to serving Veterans, spouses and dependents. With the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, many changes occurred over the course of a small period of time. Now that the Veterans Resource Specialists has been tasked with booking appointments it has added on their current workload and since the Veterans program is growing, the need for a part-time or full time receptionist is evident. In addition to this, a dedicated space for the Veteran students is highly needed.

SS 16a) Name of the Division and the names of the programs.: Enrollment Services Division: Admissions and Records, Assessment, Evaluations, Veteran Services

SS 16b) Who wrote the Divisional Perspective?: Tamica Ward, Dean of Enrollment Services /Bianca Lopez, Veterans Resource Specialist/ Shari Pasquali, Veterans Resource Specialist

SS 16c) Summarize the CPRs written by the programs of the Division.: The Veterans' Services department has seen an enormous increase in regulations, compliance, and technology changes in the last five years, at the same time the student veteran population at De Anza has increased from less than 50 students served to almost 500. The Veterans' Specialist, along with the support of the dean, has been the sole certifier and De Anza intake/admissions person assigned to this group. The Veterans Resources Specialists have had to expand their role to include collaboration with other departments to increase and coordinate services, participate in training and educational sessions throughout the state, entertain VA and other community representatives interested in working with De Anza and De Anza veterans and manage SARS. Their role and expertise, attention to the needs of veterans, and leadership with student staff has made it possible for De Anza to serve more and more vets; however, two people cannot be expected to handle this work load or the expected increase in veteran staff alone. Additional FTEs should be budgeted for supporting this area.

The Admissions Division oversees all facets of Admissions, Records, Transfer, Graduation, Veterans, Assessment, 320 and other

regulatory compliance, and faculty support in the area of rosters, etc. The division underwent a 30% decrease in the last five years, during Banner implementation, and enormous regulatory and process changes from the state (repetition, repeatability, SSSP, ADTs,). As De Anza moves to meet these challenges, evaluation of Student Services and staffing is critical to determine rebuilding both to meet mandates and to ensure access, equity, and success are uniformly addressed and supported. Additional changes at the state level, including Common Assessment, will require division staff to participate in professional development, communicate change to the campus community, and participate in state-wide pilots. Insufficient staff will limit De Anza's ability to be on the cutting edge of change as well as be a voice to bring innovation and concerns to the broader system and community.