

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**
VETERANS SERVICES



Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC)
Program Questionnaire FY 2015-2016



STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)

FY2016 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 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.

I. Executive Summary

MISSION

University of Houston Veterans Services (VS) cultivates student veteran success and engagement by providing support and advocacy through a variety of programs, services, and resources.

VISION

UH Veterans Services will provide student veterans with the highest level of support and dedication, fostering personal growth and academic success through graduation and rewarding careers.

Veterans Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

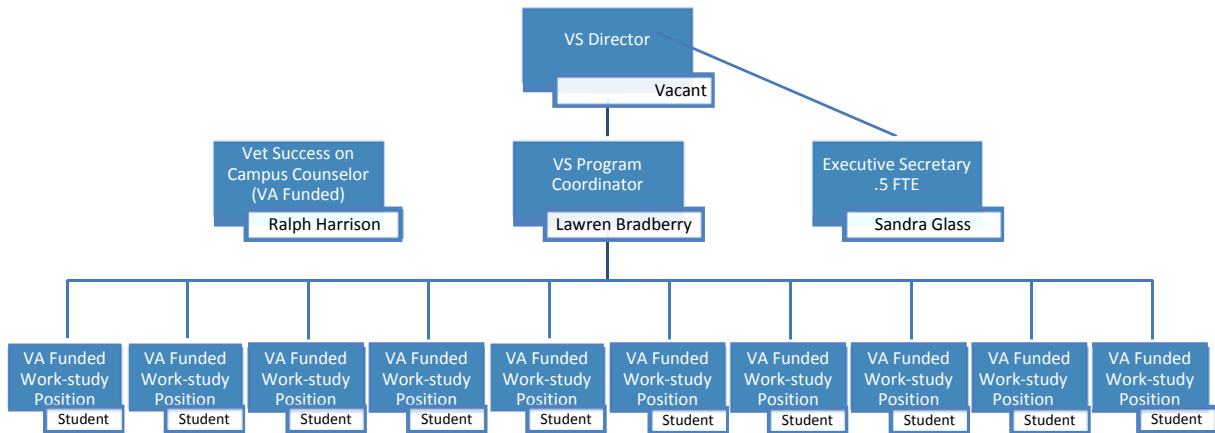
- professional and student staff with a wealth of knowledge and experience in using military benefits and transitioning from service to higher education;
- supportive services for academic, psychological, financial, vocational, and academic challenges;
- information on University policies and procedures, 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 Student Veterans of America

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 1,894 veterans and their dependents enrolled for fall 2013, VS provides resources to meet their unique needs. The fall 2013 numbers represent a 69% increase over fall 2010 (1,313 veterans and dependents).

Question 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.

II. Organizational Chart



Question 3

List your unit’s strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2013-2014 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.

III. Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiative 1: Leverage Veterans Success on Campus (VSOC) Site at UH

DSAES Strategic Initiatives: 1, 6

UH Goals: 2, 6

Action Step

Provide an on-site full-time Veterans Affairs experienced rehabilitation/occupational counselor on the UH campus.

Achieved: Ralph Harrison started as the UH Vet Success on Campus Counselor on October 21, 2013. Ralph Harrison has provided academic and vocational counseling to 357 students during FY 13-14.

Initiative 2: Expand Peer Mentoring Program

DSAES Strategic Initiatives: 1, 6
UH Goals: 2

Action Steps:

1. Expand Veterans Work-study (VWS) Peer Mentoring Initiative by adding additional V.A. funded student positions.

In Progress: After much discussion, UHVS decided to formalize this concept into an initiative separate from the VWS Work-study Program. After consulting the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Work Study Management, we retitled the position to VWS Peer Counselor and further developed the role.

VWS student staff are now identified as peer counselors. UHVS expanded the Veterans Work-study (VWS) program by adding 3 additional V.A. funded student positions--one graduate student, and two dependents.

2. Implement procedures and provide training for peer counselors to make effective and timely referrals to VSOC counselor.

Achieved: Peer counselors make direct referrals to the VSOC counselor.

3. Continue to prepare peer counselors to support and effectively refer veteran students and family members to University and regional services.

Ongoing: We established a general job description and detailed areas of responsibility for the VWS peer counselors aligned with VBA policies. We also sent one VWS peer counselor and one officer of the Student Veterans of America to a national Student Veterans of America leadership conference.

4. Develop and implement a train-the-trainer model using VWS student employees.

Ongoing: We implemented competency-based training for current and new VWS peer counselors. We designated our senior VWS counselor as peer trainer.

5. Provide formal training updates to cover new V.A. or Hazlewood policies, such as Texas' Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement.

Ongoing: UHVS has partnered with UH VA Certifying Officials to develop comprehensive training for the VWS counselors.

Initiative 3: Develop Pre-New Student Conference Veterans Benefits Workshops

DSAES Strategic Initiatives: 1, 2, 6
UH Goals: 2

Action Step:

Offer VA/Hazlewood benefits workshops on evenings and Saturdays to admitted undergraduate and graduate applicants

On-going: VS restructured our current optional break-out sessions held during the NSO/ART conferences. UHVS implemented on-site sessions during NSO/ART orientation. We now partner with UH VA Certifying Officials, the UH VSOC Counselor, and the Student Veterans of America to conduct orientation sessions together. We also added a Military and Veteran Student Luncheon to the orientation schedule. In collaboration with Tara Boyle, UHVS developed and implemented a procedure to invite newly accepted students who self-identified as veterans or dependents to the Military and Veteran Student Luncheon.

Initiative 4: Benchmarking & Needs Assessment

DSAES Strategic Initiatives: 4, 6

UH Goals: 2

Action Step:

Implement the use of EBI Map-Works Assessment tools to more effectively assess VS programming and at the same time to bench mark our progress against national institutions.

In Progress: The survey, along with three subsequent email and listserv reminders, launched February 24 - March 21 of 2014. Of the 1604 veterans and eligible dependent students on campus, 141 responded. During our initial review of the data, services for new students topped the list. We will continue our assessment of the data in FY 15-16.

Question 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.

IV. 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 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.

		FALL 2013 (1910)				Nonvt n=xxx	SPRING 2014 (1920)				Nonvt n=xxx	SUMMER 2014 (1930)				Nonvt n=xxx
		Vet n=1,336		Dep n=558			Vet n=1,274		Dep n=545			Vet n=617		Dep n=261		
		n	%	n	%	n	n	%	n	%	n	n	%	n	%	n
Benefits	VA Benefits	840	63%	68	12%		799	63%	64	12%		405	66%	23	9%	
	Hazlewood	140	10%	460	82%		114	9%	449	82%		57	9%	219	84%	
	VA & Hazlewood	144	11%	30	6%		151	12%	32	6%		65	10%	19	7%	
	No Vet Benefits	212	16%	n/a	n/a		210	16%	n/a	n/a		90	15%	n/a	n/a	
Military Status	3=Vietnam Era Vet	1	< 1%	*	*		1	< 1%	*	*		1	< 1%	*	*	
	4=Other Protected Vet	3	< 1%	*	*		2	< 1%	*	*		1	< 1%	*	*	
	5=Service Medal Vet	2	< 1%	*	*		1	< 1%	*	*		1	< 1%	*	*	
	6=ActiveDuty>90;not clas	11	< 1%	*	*		51	4%	*	*		0	0%	*	*	
	D=Vietnam Era Spcl Disabl	0	0%	*	*		65	5%	*	*		0	0%	*	*	
	E=Svc Medal JVA DisabVet	1	< 1%	*	*		0	0%	*	*		0	0%	*	*	
	F=Svc Medal Spcl Disabl	0	0%	*	*		0	0%	*	*		0	0%	*	*	
	G=Other Prot.Spcl Disabl	2	< 1%	*	*		0	0%	*	*		0	0%	*	*	
	P=Spouse/Dependent	0	0%	*	*		0	0%	441	81%		0	0%	*	*	
(All except spec)	V=Veteran	1265	95%	*	*		1153	90%	104	19%		614	99%	48	22%	
	W=Surviving Spouse	0	0%	*	*		0	0%	*	*		0	0%	1	< 1%	
	Y=Other Prot. JVA Disabl	0	0%	*	*		1	< 1%	*	*		0	0%	*	*	
Gender	Female	233	17%	143	27%		281	22%	116	21%		125	20%	52	20%	
	Male	857	64%	103	18%		933	73%	83	15%		385	62%	38	15%	
Ethnicity	White	522	39%	82	15%		423	33%	78	14%		202	33%	36	14%	
	African American	216	16%	64	11%		181	14%	53	10%		99	16%	26	10%	
	Hispanic	364	27%	58	10%		302	24%	68	12%		155	25%	22	8%	
	Asian American	85	6%	7	1%		74	6%	4	< 1%		33	5%	3	1%	
	Native American	6	< 1%	0	0%		3	< 1%	0	0%		1	< 1%	0	0%	
	International (NHISP)	2	< 1%	0	0%		0	0%	0	0%		0	0%	0	0%	
	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	5	< 1%	2	< 1%		3	< 1%	27	5%		1	< 1%	1	< 1%	
	Not-Specified	11	< 1%	2	< 1%		10	< 1%	1	< 1%		4	< 1%	1	< 1%	
	Unknown	74	5%	0	0%		68	5%	352	54%		21	3%	172	66%	
Admit Status	New Students	15	1%	97	17%		1064	83%	545	100%		527	85%	261	100%	
	Transfer Students	147	11%	55	9%		48	4%	58	11%		22	4%	30	11%	
	Continuing Student--other	9	< 1%	15	2%		16	1%	1	< 1%		3	< 1%	*	*	
	Unknown	1114	83%	403	72%		*	*	*	*		21	3%	177	68%	
Averages:																
Average Age		30	n/a	23	n/a		28	n/a	22	n/a		33	n/a	24	n/a	
Av Units Earned	Total	15	n/a	19	n/a		16	n/a	16	n/a		13	n/a	8	n/a	
Av Current GPA	Total	2.73	n/a	2.77	n/a		3.03	n/a	2.97	n/a		2.84	n/a	2.70	n/a	
	UG-Undergraduate	2.66	n/a	2.72	n/a		2.71	n/a	2.65	n/a		2.83	n/a	2.46	n/a	
	PB-Postbaccalaureate	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	
	GRAD-Graduate	3.07	n/a	3.39	n/a		3.31	n/a	3.17	n/a		2.96	n/a	2.94	n/a	
	SP-Special Professional	2.88	n/a	2.33	n/a		3.08	n/a	3.09	n/a		2.74	n/a	*	n/a	

Question 5

Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2015) 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 FY2014 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity, please describe the conditions which caused the addition.

V. Budget and Organizational Changes

In October of 2014, VS welcomed Ralph Harrison who serves as the UH Vet Success on Campus counselor. This VA funded position provides our students with a direct link to VA assistance. The VSO is currently approved by the VA for 10 Veteran's Work-study positions.

Question 6

Please list your 2015-2016 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.

VI. FY 2015-2016 Strategic Initiatives

Initiative 1: Interact with newly-enrolled student-veterans early in their college careers to foster student engagement and student success. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1a, 2a, 6a; UH Goals: 2)

- Collaborate with Enrollment Management Production Services to establish a query for prospective and current student-veterans.
- Survey participants after each event
- Compare the rate at which students who attend orientation apply for VA education benefits versus those who do not attend orientation
- Conduct focus groups to assess needs of new students prior to acceptance through their first semester

Initiative 2: Support student success and engagement by fostering leadership development and a peer mentoring initiative in the Student-Veteran Organization (DSAES Initiative: 1a, 1c, 1d, 1f; UH Goals: 2, 6)

- Veteran student leaders and Veteran peer mentors will receive on-line and face to face training specific to assisting student-veterans.
- Survey participants before, during, and after each mentorship cycle
- Conduct focus groups with participants to assess the effectiveness of the program

Initiative 3: Implement an early alert system to ensure all Veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 4c, 6e)

- Collaborate with the office of institutional research to establish a uniform set of data tools to collect and track student-veteran information.
- Collaborate with LSS, CAPS, and UH Wellness to develop targeted interventions for student-veterans.

Initiative 4: Collaborate with the administrative and academic departments in developing and implementing methodologies to educate the campus community about issues facing student-veterans and inform the campus community about the programs and services offered by Veterans' Services. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1b, 6a; UH Goals: 2, 6)

- Collaborate with LSS, CAPS, and UH Wellness to develop targeted interventions for student-veterans.
- Collaborate with key DSAES and academic departments for programs
- Conduct focus groups to gauge areas of interest and concern

Initiative 5: Cultivate the development of a broad-based standing Veterans Services Advisory Committee, encompassing individuals and organizations within the University community as well as external entities who are actively committed to serving the educational and developmental needs of student-veterans. This goal will carry-over into FY 2015 (DSAES Initiative: 1b, 3a, 3b, 4a, 5d)

- Form a committee of Collaborate with key departments and stakeholders to select members for the Veterans Services Advisory Committee

Initiative 6: Create and implement a comprehensive training program for VA Work-Study Peer Counselors to ensure, including delineation of responsibilities, customer service, reception of guests, conflict resolution, attendance and punctuality, and knowledge required to address the most frequently-asked questions. (DSAES Initiative: 2a, 2e; UH Goals: 2, 6)

- Coordinate with, HR, VA certifying officials, and other key departments to develop training program.
- Provide VA peer counselors with comprehensive on-line and face to face training specific to assisting student-veterans
- Test student proficiency using computer based tests each term; a passing score of 80% or above will be considered a demonstration of a basic understanding of VS services and VA benefits process at UH.

Question 7

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.

VII. Funding Sources

Currently, the VSO receives private donations targeted for the University of Houston's Veteran community. The VSO received \$585.39 in gift monies in FY 2012.

Question 8

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.

VIII. Similar Services

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.

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON
VETERANS SERVICES



Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC)

One-Time Allocation Requests FY 2015
Base Augmentation Request FY 2016



**FY2015 One Time Funding and
FY2016 Base Augmentation Requests**
Veterans Services

The mission of Veterans Services (VS) is to foster student-Veteran success by facilitating the transition from military to civilian and university life. VS respectfully submits seven requests for FY2015 One Time Funding. All of the requests will support the transition from military to higher education, student success, and engagement. A cost summary of all five requests is included at the end. Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Military and Veterans Orientation

The Military and Veterans orientation consists of two presentations each morning during each UH Transfer Student Orientation and a lunch session to allow more time for new student veterans to ask questions and get to know the staff and peer counselors. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1a, 2a, 6a; UH Goals: 2)

Funding Request

T-Shirts	\$ 500.00
Handouts and Printing	\$ 250.00
Lunch	\$ 4,750.00
Marketing/Promotions	\$ 250.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$ 345.00
Total	<hr/> \$ 6,095.00

Veterans Welcome Back Mixer

The Veterans Welcome Back mixer is held each fall and spring term. New student Veterans will have an opportunity to meet other Veteran students and hear from Veteran Student mentors about their transition into academia. It will build camaraderie and encourage student engagement. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1a, 2a, 6a; UH Goals: 2)

Funding Request

Venue/Food	\$ 2,500.00
Marketing/Promotions	\$ 100.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$ 156.00
Total	<hr/> \$ 2,756.00

The Veterans Leadership and Mentorship Program

The Veterans Leadership and Mentorship program (VLMP) will create an environment of camaraderie, advocacy, and pride amongst the UH student Veteran community. Incoming student Veterans are paired with students trained to aid in facilitating their transition from the military to civilian life. Mentors will participate in the Applied Suicide Skills Intervention Training (ASIST) for Soldier mentors and "battle buddies" who are in a position to have contact with military and veteran persons at risk for suicide. (DSAES Initiative: 1a, 1c, 1d, 1f; UH Goals: 2, 6)

The VLMP offers the following opportunities:

- to adjust to civilian and academic life
- to achieve academic success
- to gain knowledge about university resources
- to foster personal and professional networks

- to learn leadership, event planning, and mentoring skills

Funding Request

Peer Mentor Training	\$	400.00
Marketing	\$	300.00
First meeting food	\$	150.00
T-Shirts	\$	500.00
Binders and handouts	\$	300.00
Team Building Retreat	\$	2,500.00
Community Service supplies	\$	400.00
Activities Budget	\$	500.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$	303.00
Total	\$	5,353.00

Student Veterans Academic Intervention Program

“Line of Sight” (LOS) is a supportive and advocacy based program for student veterans at risk for academic probation that will refocus students’ academic and personal goals. It will provide student veterans with tools to assist in overcoming transition challenges while navigating collegiate life. Students will be paired with VLMP mentors. Students will receive education and training to foster resiliency and academic success. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1b, 6a; UH Goals: 2, 6)

What skills does the LOS Program focus on?

- self-regulation
- optimism
- mental agility
- strength of character
- connection

Funding Request

Binders and handouts	\$	500.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$	30.00
Total	\$	530.00

Military and Veterans Awareness

VS collaborates with the DSAES and academic departments to provide programs to educate the campus community about issues facing student-veterans and inform the campus community. Our focus for this year is veterans in higher education. These events include panel discussions with military and civilian experts and “Vets Speak” sessions where civilian students and veteran student connect and learn about the student veterans experience on a college campus. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1b, 6a; UH Goals: 2, 6)

Funding Request

Marketing/Promotions	\$1,350.00
Handouts and printing	\$600.00
Venue/Food	\$2,500.00

6% Administrative Fee	\$267.00
Total	\$4717.00

Military and Veterans Cording Ceremony

Every fall and spring term, graduates will be presented with a red, white, and blue Military & Veteran Patriot Cord to wear during the commencement ceremony. These cords signify the appreciation that the UH community feels toward our military and veteran community for their personal and academic accomplishment. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 1b, 6a; UH Goals: 2, 6)

Funding Request

Cords	\$1,505.00
Programs	\$395.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$114.00
Total	\$2,014.00

Marketing and Promotions

VS requests funding to increase and centralize the marketing and promotion efforts for the Veterans Services office. Marketing and promotion efforts rests solely with “word of mouth”. This leads to disparity in resources and a lack of a centralized message regarding the programs and services offered by Veterans Services. VS aims to provide a central location for print items, digital media, and promotional items designed to increase VS awareness and engagement. (DSAES Strategic Initiative: 5; UH Goals: 2)

Funding Request

Testimonial Videos	\$350.00
Marketing and promotional	\$4,400.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$285.00
Total	\$5,035.00

Summary of FY2015 One Time Funding Requests:

Military and Veterans Orientation	\$5,750.00
Veterans Welcome Back Mixer	\$2,600.00
The Veterans Leadership and Mentorship Program	\$5,050.00
Student Veterans Academic Intervention Program	\$500.00
Military and Veterans Awareness	\$4,450.00
Military and Veterans Cording Ceremony	\$1,900.00
Marketing and Promotions	\$4,750.00
6% Administrative Fee	\$ 1,500.00
	\$26,500.00

FY16 Base Request

Same itemization as above

Thank you again for your consideration of these requests. Please let us know if there is any additional information we can provide.