UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

VETERAN SERVICES

Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC)

Program Questionnaire
FY 2017-2018

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.**

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Executive Summary

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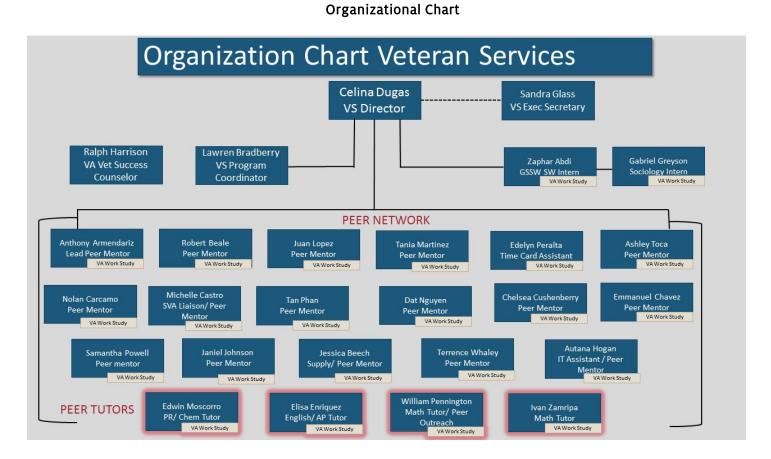
Veteran Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

- 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 2255 veterans and their dependents enrolled for fall 2016, VS provides resources to meet their unique needs. The Fall 2016 numbers represent a 22% 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 2015-2016 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/)

<center>Strategic Initiatives</center>

Initiative 1: Expand collaboration and networking with our University and Community Partners by increasing programming and community involvement. (DSAES Initiative: 6 UH Goals: 3, 6)

Action Steps:
1. Develop comprehensive programming model based on Schlossberg's Transition Theory.
2. Collaborate with on campus partners to provide this programing.
3. Collaborate with off campus partners to provide comprehensive programming.

    a. **Status:** Achieved. The past academic year has brought some new collaborations. We collaborated with Career Services on two initiatives that were successful. We held our first Veteran and Employer Networking Luncheon and hosted over 60 employers and veterans to a lunch and panel. This programming supports veterans as they prepare to graduate and transition successfully into the workforce. In addition, in partnership with Career Services we hosted our very first Veteran and Military Job and resource fair. Veterans could come to the event and find valuable contacts needed to land the jobs and internships they desire and, provide additional resources to aid in their successful transition the event brought together over 50 employers and veteran services organizations. We hosted events with Women and Gender Resource Center, and with Wellness to bring attention to topics sound rounding women and sexual assault awareness. This summer we hosted over 270 community leaders and providers of Veteran Mental Health from the City of Houston, including Mayor Sylvester Turner and Congress Woman Sheila Jackson Lee. This event not only brought our city's spotlight to our Campus, but it also allowed us to expand our reach to multiple Veteran Service Organizations. In addition to the mental health summit, Veteran Services was also able to lock in partnerships with Target, Bechtel, Spectra Energy, HEB Central Market, and the VA which brought important programming to campus, but also netted $1500 in grants for Veteran Services.

Initiative 2: Support student success and engagement by fostering leadership development and a peer mentoring initiative within our Student worker network (DSAES Initiative: 1 UH Goals: 2, 6)

Action Steps:
1. Veteran and dependents working as staff for Veteran services will be provided training specific to assisting student-veterans.
2. Provide Opportunities for Student Leaders in our office to lead: Local and National Conferences
3. Conduct focus groups with participants to assess the effectiveness of the program

Status: On going. Veteran Services continues to develop our Peer Student Network within the Veteran Service office. We employ 23 student veterans who comprise our student peer network. We host regular in house training to develop our young staff. In January of 2016, Veteran Services office took 6 student staff to Student Veterans of America Conference.   Attending this conference provided staff an opportunity to network and learn from the Nation's top Student Veteran Leaders. There were many topics covered at the conference surrounding Student Success, and diversity and inclusion.   We also, took 2 student staff to regional conference at Texas A&M in the spring. Student staff have taken advantage of local in-services to expand their training.

We hope to enhance our student's knowledge by encouraging them to stay up to date on the issues that impact student veterans on our campus.

We developed an Orientation Team (O-Team) that mirrors the Admission's O- Team to start the mentorship process early in our Transfer student's career. The O-team successfully interacted with over 200 transfer veterans streamlining the process and easing the transition into our UH Campus.

These student Peers are the face of our Veteran Services and are often the first voice or face that a new student will see or hear. It imperative that we nurture and train the best peer mentors.

Also, with the implantation of a Tutoring Program developed with in our peer mentor network, Veteran Services served over 625 military connected students within our offices with tutoring in Math, Chemistry and Bio Sciences. Programs such as these are important to the overall success of our military connected students.

Semester	Number of Student Staff	Hours Worked/per semester	Dollars Paid per Semester by VA
Fall	23	9200	$66700
Spring	22	8800	$63,800
Summer	15	3000	$21,750
Total:		21000	$152,250

Initiative 3: Initiative 3: Assist Student Veterans with Successful transition from Military to Classroom by providing a variety of services and programs to help foster success in all areas of their lives. (DSAES Initiative: 3 UH Goals: 2, 6)

Action Steps:

1. Enhance programming modeled after Schlossberg's theory of transition.
2. Offer core programming for Students Transitioning into College.
3. Offer core programming to sustain and support students with persisting in college
4. Offer core programming to support students in transitioning out of college

Status: Achieved. In the last year Veteran Services, has worked diligently to create programming that successfully assists our Military connected students as they transition from Military to the classroom. We provide a variety of Core Programming that Support students as they "Move in" to College; "Move through" College; and "Move Out" of College. Programing represented in the chart below have become the core of Veteran Services programming. We continue to assess the needs of our Students in order offer the most up to date and comprehensive programming to UH's Military Connected Students. Due to our commitment to develop and offer meaningful programing for our students and the support of SFAC; VS saw a 71% increase in our programming utilization and attendance in FY 16, Serving 3528 military connected students.

Veteran Services Core Programming

Modeled after Schlossberg's Theory of Transition

"Moving In"	"Moving Through"	"Moving Out"
Weeks of Welcome Events	Peer Tutoring Program	Military and Veteran Cording Ceremony
Mil-Vet Orientation	Peer Mentor Program	Military and Veteran Career and Resource Fair
Peer Mentoring Program	Veteran Success on Campus	Employer Networking Luncheon
Peer Leadership programming	Vet Center Readjustment Counseling	Corporate Mentor Programming
	Advocacy Program	
	Peer Appreciation Programming	
	Veteran Issue Awareness Programming/Education	

Initiative 4: Collaborate with DSAES Marketing and UH branding to develop marketing strategies to increase awareness to the campus Community about issues faced by Student Veterans and increase awareness of the programs and services offered by Veteran Services. (DSAES Initiative: 5 UH Goals: 5)

Action Steps:

1. Develop innovative ways to reach our students
2. Utilize assessment to determine the most effective ways to market our programming
3. Continue towards the goal of making University of Houston Veteran services a Benchmark department in Veteran programming

Status: Achieved Veteran Services has worked diligently to ramp up our marketing. We implemented a Facebook Page, Instagram, and we stepped up our Twitter game. Additionally, with the assistance of SFAC funding we have been able to purchase a host of marketing and promotional items that highlight our department. These efforts primarily led by our Student Public Relations staff, have helped us gain an impressive 71% increase in our programming attendance and our overall engagement with students.

Also, UH Veteran Services has received two impressive national designations. First, in January of 2016, Veteran Services Student Leaders along with Student Veterans of America was named 2015 National Chapter of the Year, after being choses number 1 out of 1300 chapters nationwide and in 4 countries. This Honor brought national and local recognition to our Department and Student Veterans of America.

Secondly, the University of Houston received the "Top 25 Military Friendly" Schools in the Nation. This publication is the flagship issue for Military Friendly Schools with over 130,000 copies distributed and is the go-to reference guide for transitioning military service members looking for educational opportunities.   UH Veteran Services has worked to leverage this coveted recognition to increase awareness of our services.

We recognize that we need to continue to assess our marketing efforts and will continue to focus on meeting the need of our students.

1. 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 our Student programming saw a 71% 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.

VSO Utilization- Denotes Monthly Office Sign-ins			
	FY16	FY15	
September	1970	1561	
October	1531	1498	
November	1180	1025	
December	442	470	
January	411	769	
February	1502	1592	
March	1025	1297	
April	1399	1468	
May	632	642	
June	638	497	
July	405	474	
Aug	707	864	
Total Utilization:	FY 16: 11842	FY 15: 12157	

Fall 2015 Events

Fall Mixer	90
9/11 Event	115
MG Price Leadership Luncheon	62
Veterans Day Appreciation Luncheon	250

Apple Veterans Employment event	20
Employer/Student Network Luncheon	60
Staff and Faculty Training	15
Graduation Cording Ceremony	83
VS Student Support Advocacy	422
Total Event Attendance:	**1117**

Spring 2016 Events

National Leadership Conference	22
Student Worker Week	72
Spring Mixer	70
Invisible War	18
Women in the Military	17
Career Fair	100
Bechtel Event	21
EY Event	25
Cording Ceremony	150
CEB	8
Math Tutoring Program	364
Chemistry Tutoring Program	**32**
VS Student Support Advocacy	432
Total Event Attendance/Engagement	**1523**

Summer 2016 Events

Orientation Engagement	200
VA Mental Health Summit	277
VS Math Tutoring program	187
Chemistry Tutoring Program	32
VS Student Support Advocacy	192
Total Attendance/Engagement	**888**

TOTAL VS ENGAGEMENT:	**3528**
FY 15: 2067 FY 16: 3528 = 71 % Increase in Engagement	

2. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2016) 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 FY2015 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity, please describe the conditions which caused the addition.

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Budget and Organizational
Changes

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In 2016, VS 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. 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.

Also, Veteran Services was identified in 2016 as the lead department to plan and fund the cost of the 9/11 memorial events. Historically, this project had not been a Veteran Service initiative as the 9/11 artifact was brought to campus as an SGA initiative, and student life had previously funded these events. Veteran Services is committed to take the lead on this initiative and provide meaningful programming that will honor this historic event and we anticipate a significant impact on our programming budget.

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.

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

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

3. Assist Student Veterans 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)
    a. Continue to enhance our Programming
    b. Evaluate core programming to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our population

4. 4. Increase office usage by 10% by creating a more effective marketing plan. (5)
    a. Continue to enhance our marketing efforts to achieve maximum participation and engagement

3. **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.**

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Possible Funding Sources

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In 2016, without the assistance of a development officer, VS Director met with various off campus partners in regards to Department sponsorship. Through those efforts VS was able to apply for and successfully win a $1000 grant from Target for Programming.   VS also received $500 grant from Bechtel to support VS programing. Lastly, VS received a private donation of $300 to support student success. Currently, we are not anticipating any additional funds for 2017-2018.

2016 Grant Funding	
Target	$1000
Bechtel	$500
Private	$300
Total:	$1800

4. **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.**

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Similar Services

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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.