

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

VETERAN SERVICES



Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC) Program Questionnaire

FY2023



STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)
2022 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

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.

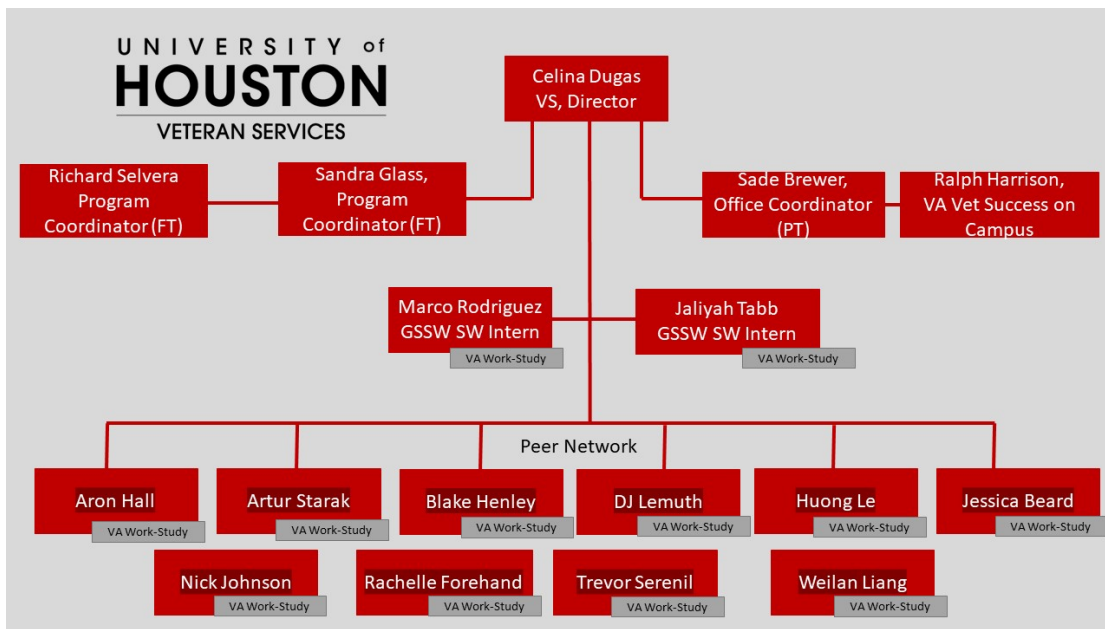
Veteran Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

- 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;
- Educate the campus community on Veteran Issues.

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 2965 veterans and their dependents enrolled for fall 2020, VS provides resources to meet their unique needs.

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.



3. List your unit’s strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2020-2021 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/about/mission/>)

Goal 1: Implement an early warning system for identifying and assisting Military connected students with academic success. (Goal 1 Student Success & Strategic Plan: Student Success)

Description: In collaboration with Academic Affairs and using the EAB Navigate App VS would like to identify and outreach to students who are on academic probation or suspension and connect these students to campus resources to ensure academic success.

Action Steps

1. Meet with stakeholders who can assist in planning this Student Success program (Academic Affairs,
2. Assist all VS staff to gain access to EAB Navigate App to expand reach.
3. Plan, Implement, and assess success using assessment tools.

Goal Status: Completed

Staff of Veteran Services have identified 400 students who will be called by phone and emailed individually. To date 160 phone calls and 160 emails have been sent to students who's GPA was 2.50 or below. These students were Identified at the end of the Fall 2020 semester and called when we returned in the Spring.

VS reached out to 391 students.

VS was able to contact 87 via phone or an email.

The top three issues they wanted help with:

1. Assistance/ Issues with VA benefits
2. Securing job placement
3. Financial assistance due to loss of job or delay in VA benefits Other issues identified- ability to access Microsoft Teams and
4. requests for assistance with VA disability claims.

Goal 2: Culture of Diversity and Inclusion

Description: Identify areas in which to improve the Culture of Diversity and Inclusion within the VS Center. Provide resources and a space and culture of D&I learning and exploration to include Programming, Training, and Education. (UH Goal 3 Social Responsibility & Strategic Plan: Division Cohesion)

Action steps

1. Audit and assess current needs
2. Partner with Division, campus partners to bolster D&I Culture

Status: Ongoing

VS has routine conversations regarding D&I and is open to having space for Conversations regarding D&I Topics

Strategic Plan Sub Tactics

DC1.3.1: (Division Cohesion)

Progress: Ongoing

Description:

Identify Veteran Services Liaisons within the departments that can address the specific needs of veterans.

Results: Veteran Services has identified a liaison in the area of Admissions, Student Financial Aid, CAPs. We have also identified persons in CLASS, College of Tech, and Bauer who can address the specific needs of veterans. Having these people identified assists us in being able to provide quick and reliable services to students who may have issues in these areas.

P1.1.1: (Partnerships)

Progress: Ongoing

Description: Grow our green Zone trained faculty and staff, by completing a Road Show to all Colleges.

Results: Green Zone trained staff and faculty has maintained at 47 Green Zone Trained Allys, 32 "in Progress" 18 Registered "not Started" for a total of 97 staff and faculty who have accessed the training to date.

We will continue to grow our program as we begin to return to campus post Covid

SS2.2.1: (Student Success)

Progress: Ongoing

Description: Enrich staff Training with D&I by partnering with other departments on campus

Results: Veteran Services reduced staff by over 50 % going from 20 staff including student workers to 9 total workers and even during the summer we were down to only 2 student staff. Due to the loss of staff, VS did not partner with other departments and conversations of revolving around D&I were kept to small conversations among staff and regarding current events in our greater community. Moving forward we will continue to welcome partnerships and training opportunities with our DSAES partners.

SS5.4.1: (Student Success & Partnerships)

Progress: On Going

Description: Develop a partnership with UH Career Services within the Division and the Colleges to increase student awareness for internships and full-time employment

Results: VS will follow up with CS to begin the planning process. We had started these conversations when Jason Williams was with us and then stopped when he left. With the addition of new staff, we are eager to start these conversations again.

SS5.4.2: (Student Success & Partnerships)

Progress: Ongoing

Description: integrate the use of EAB Navigate to improve outreach to students and strengthen our partnership with Academic Affairs

Results: VS has welcomed the use of EAB Navigate into our daily work. It has expanded our opportunities to engage with our students on a different level, and has increased our access to students with tools such as targeted emails and texts. We will continue to utilize this valuable resources.

- 3. 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 other that you might pursue. Where data exist, discuss the number of persons and/or unique students 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

The aforementioned strategic initiatives

Currently, VS evaluates the delivery of its services based on student usage and participation. We also collect data for our VS progress card.

VS collects data for student usage via a MyUH id check- in system. Prospect and applicant data is currently collected manually. Despite an abrupt halt to in person services, VS rapidly and without hesitation stood up Virtual Services and offered online and phone services to all military connected students. VS continues to offer virtual services in conjunction to having our physical office opened as well.

UH Veteran Services Usage Data

Veteran Services Office Utilization

Office Utilization Sign Ins	Fall office Sign ins	Spring/ Summer office sign ins
First time in Office	450	450
Daily Users	1077	3092
Virtual Office Check in's	280	405
		Total: 4854
		59% Drop due to Covid-19 closure



Veteran Services Program Attendance/ Engagement 2020-2021

Event Fall 2020: VS Staff returned Aug 2020 Limited to 2-3 persons in office.	Attendance
Veterans Day Drive Through Event	128
Virtual ZOOM Graduation Celebration	47
Oriental: Virtual	150
Resource Fair: In Person	210
Webpage Visits	13927
Targeted Emails Sent Via Mil-Affiliated List Serve	1680
Targeted Emails via EAB Navigate	3390
Work Study Processes (Contracts/Training/Etc)	88
Student Advocacy Via Direct/Phone/Teams appointments	1870
Total: Fall 2020 Engagements:	2304
Total: Fall 2020 Engagements including Email/Text	7374
Spring 2021: Staff limited:	Attendance:
Social Distance Drive through Grad Celebration	55
Student Advocacy via direct Phone/ Teams/ in person	1545
Student Employee Appreciation	15
Student Success Phone Campaign	360
Federal Zoom Resume Class	22
Targeted Emails Sent Via Mil-Affiliated List Serve	2880
Targeted Emails via EAB Navigate	3372
Total Spring Engagement	3232
Total Spring 2021 Engagement including Email and Text	6252
Summer 2021 Through 8/31/2021	Attendance:
Oriental	58
Resource Fairs Face 2 Face	800
Weeks of Welcome	197
Explore the Power House Face 2 Face	78
VS Housing Welcome Collab: via direct Phone/ Teams/ in person	150
Student Advocacy:	1170
Targeted Emails Sent Via Mil-Affiliated List Serve	2000
Targeted Emails via EAB Navigate	6256
Total Summer Engagement	4276
Total Summer Engagement with Emails/Text	8356
Total Student Engagement	9812
Total Student Engagement Via Email or text	21982

4. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2021) 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. SFAC Q, p.2.

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. Due to Covid-19, Veteran services has drastically reduced the number of student worker staff. We do maintain a virtual office and our center in the Student Center is open Monday through Friday 8am-5pm. The drop of students visiting the center and our efforts to maintain safe distances in our workspaces has led to this reduction. For Fall 2021, We hired 6 new work study staff and will maintain this number and will adjust our staff numbers as necessary.

Semester	Total Number of VA Work-Study Contracts	Total Number of Hours Contracted	Total Dollars Paid By VA
Fall 2020	7	2800	\$21,000
Spring 2021	6	2400	\$18,000
Summer 2021	6	1680	\$12,600
Fall 2021	12	4800	\$36,000
Total:	31	11,680	\$87,600

In addition to student staffing changes, VS was able to fill our open program coordinator position. We conducted interviews and Hired Richard Selvera. Richard comes to us from UH Downtown where he served as the Director of Veteran Services.

In terms of budget changes, in 2020- 2021, VS has lost 50% of our one-time budget. We also lost our approved one-time funding to expand our Green Zone Program. Due to the campus being remote for the year, Veteran Services saved money in many areas. We were able to conduct business, despite the cut in funding.

Veteran Services continues to rely on SFAC one-time funding for all program funding. This

method of requesting funding from year to year, can be stressful and difficult in during planning, as we are dependent on these funds to provide quality services to our Military-Connected Students, without these funds we would not be able to provide quality programming.

5. If your unit concluded FY2021 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.).

At the conclusion of 2021, Veteran Services returned a Fund Equity of \$21,039

<i>SFAC Only - FY2021 Recap</i>					
	FY 2021	FY 2021	FY 2021	FY 2021	FY 2021
	Base Budget	Final Budget	Actual Expenses + Commitments	Approved Equity Carryforward	Funds to be Returned to Reserve
Salary/Wage/Fringe	233,127	233,127	218,955		14,172
Maintenance&Operations/Travel	28,390	46,940	40,073		6,867
Utilities	-	-	-		0
Fund Transfers for Maintenance					0
SFAC Totals	261,517	280,067	259,028	0	21,039
					Funds to be Returned to Reserve
					21,039

As shown the spread sheet above, the majority of this fund equity is due to lapse salary, incurred due to our empty program coordinator position. We are currently in the process of conducting interviews to fill this position.

6. Please list your 2021-2022 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: Develop Student Success Programming

Description: Veteran Services will focus on helping to retain veterans and promote student success through a more focused student support programming

Action Steps

1. Meet with stakeholders who can assist in planning this Student Success program (Academic Affairs,
2. Assist all VS staff to gain access to EAB Navigate App to expand reach.
3. Plan, Implement, and assess success using assessment tools.

Goal 2: Explore a name Change

Description: Veteran Services will identify several options for a more inclusive Name Option for the Department which will be more inclusive for all students served by Veteran Services

Action steps

1. Conduct research to determine other options for a name change
2. Submit proposal to leadership for approval

Goal 3: Increase Veteran Recruitment Efforts

Description: Explore moving the needle in the Military Connected Student Population on Campus

Action Steps

1. Build relationships with feeder schools.
2. Build relationships with nearby Active Duty Bases
3. Increase outreach to Active Duty Populations through all avenues. Ex: Education Fairs, advertisements

7. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2023 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 FY2021 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.

In implementing a 5% Cut, Veteran Services would cut \$13075 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 3 years, Veteran Services has submitted multiple proposals to present various veteran centric topics at National and regional conferences and we have been selected multiple 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 2020, VS presented nationally at the Student Veterans of America Conference in Los Angeles on the topic of toxic masculinity, to over 150 attendees. This conference continues to allow UH VS to present ourselves as leaders in the area of serving military-connected students.

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. We have also have added a goal to add more trainings on Diversity and Inclusion and many others. While the student staff is paid during training we have valued being able to provide them a meal during the 4-6 hour trainings.

Lastly, printing is a very nice benefit that we have been able to offer our military-connected students. Through a very generous contract provided by the owner of Laser Printing, a military father, we have been able to offer free printing from our center, however with a 5% Cut we may not be able to continue at the rate we are going. We would have to make some cuts.

Base Budget: \$261, 518	Proposed Cut 5%\$13,075
Awards	\$1100
Business Meals	\$1500
Office Supplies	\$1600

Professional Development	\$1000
Travel	\$4200
Uniforms	\$2000
Printing for Students	\$1675
Total:	\$13075



8. That 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.

In FY 20-21, VS received both corporate gifts and private gifts from donors. We have continued to receive small corporate gifts from Bechtel, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company and Shell. In addition, we receive small donations from private donors who have donated one time donations through giving campaigns. We work with DSAES, development officer to ensure that VS is fostering relationships that could turn into a donation for VS Projects.

2019-2020 Gift Funding	
Corporate Gifts	\$4000
Private	\$1000
Total:	\$5000

9. Please describe any services that are similar to yours 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 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.