



Veteran Services

Division of Student Affairs



SFAC FY24



STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)
2023 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.

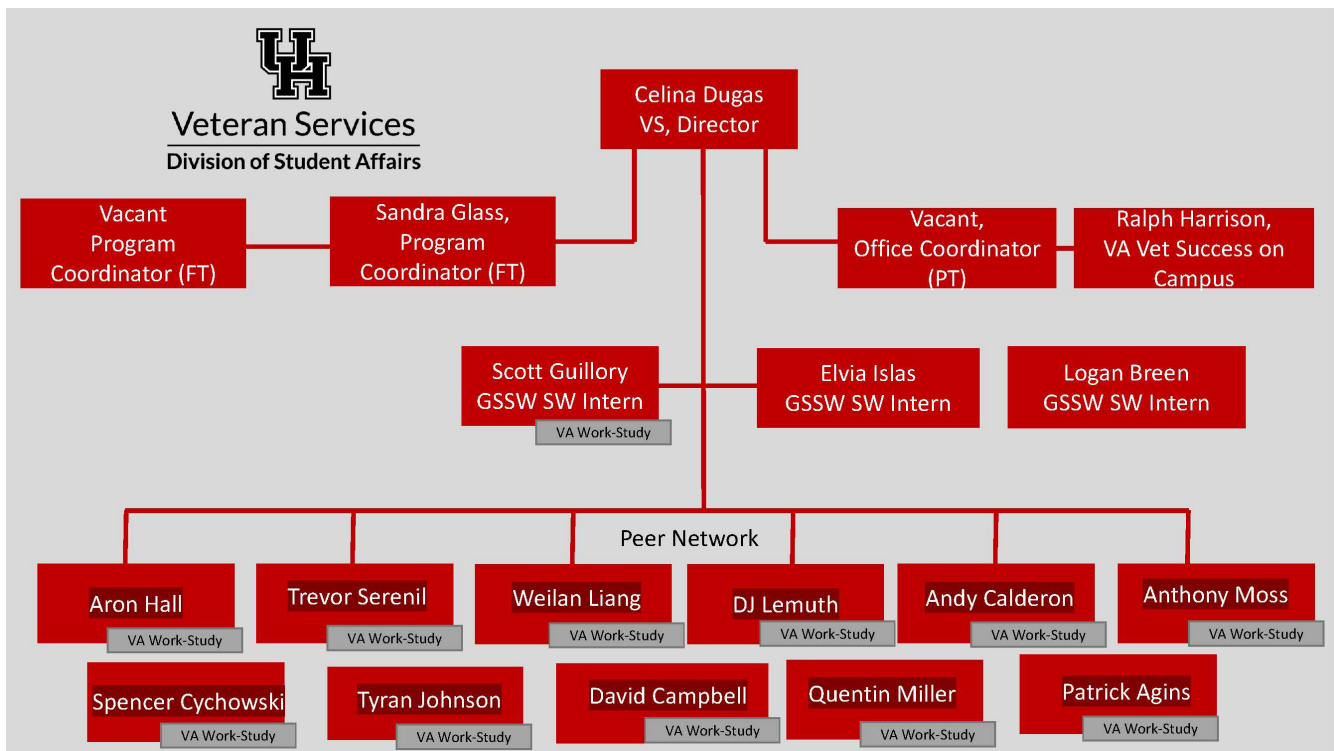
Veteran Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

- 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: 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 Status: Partially Established

Status narrative: VS is currently making staff adjustments in order to implement this Goal. Initially, we did not have the funding to upgrade our vacant office coordinator into a student facing position (Student Success Advocate). We recently lost a program coordinator and have been approved to merge these two vacancies to create an Assistant Director position, who can assist in implementing this programming.

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 Status: Partially Complete

Status Narrative: Veteran Services is prepared to submit a proposed name change to The Center of Military-Connected Student Success. The decision was made collaboratively with our current students. This name serves to be a more inclusive option for dependent students who have slowly outnumber the number of veterans on campus. In addition, it helps to clarify our purpose to students when they read the name. Our ultimate goal is to ensure the success of our Military Connected students.

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

Goal status: In progress

Status Narrative: Veteran Services is currently working to restructure our staff in order to complete this goal. As we fill our roles with the right people, we will be able to continue with our recruitment efforts.

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 Allies, 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 welcomed the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to provide training to staff during our Spring Semester training. This training allowed our students to become more familiar with the services that are offered through the Center.

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 Continues to cultivate relationships with Career Services and employers across the area who have an interest in hiring veterans.

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. In addition, we have added a “dependent” category so that we can identify dependent students. This improvement will bring in many more students into the center.

- 4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the 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 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 afore mentioned 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

Fall	Spring	Summer
6522	7385	2856
Total Check in to VS Office		16763
% Increase since previous year 4854		345% increase since previous year



Veteran Services Program Attendance/ Engagement 2020-2021

UH Veteran Services Utilization Reports

Weeks of Welcome (open house and pop up photo booth)	9/2, 3, 4	175
Explore the Power House		78
Parents Weekend (open house and pop up photo booth)	9/23-24	350
Weeks of Welcome: Welcome back breakfast	9/2	91
Remembering 9/11	9/10	45
Remembering 9/11 Photo Exhibit	9/10	3974
Student Veterans Meeting	9/2, 9/16, 9/30, 10/14, 10/28, 11/25, 12/9	70
Veteran Success on Campus: Ralph Harrison	Fall	79
New Student Orientation	12/9, 12/14, 12/17, 12/21, 12/22, 1/5, 1/7, 1/11, 1/14	1540
Director Dugas Student Advocacy	Fall/ Spring/ Summer	1472
Program Coordinator Glass	Fall/ Spring/ Summer	865
Program Coordinator Selvera	Fall/ Spring/ Summer	539
SW intern Advocacy		55
Office Utilization/ checkins	Fall/Spring/ Summer	6522/7385/2856 = 16763
Veterans Day Program	11/11	350
Staff Training Retreat	Fall	16
Thanksgiving Gathering	11/23	20 staff and students
NATCON: Leadership Conference	1/5-1/9	2 staff and 10 students
Texas Higher Education Symposium	10/5-6	1 staff
Military and Veteran Cording Ceremony	12/3	146
Spring Orientation		230
Spring Welcome Back Breakfast	1/25/2022	62
Spring Pancake Socials		57
Office Lunch and Learns		62
Under Secretary Luncheon		42
Student Appreciation		40
City of Houston Veteran Event		100
Astro Game Veteran Social		50
Federal Resume Work Shop		15
National Guard Education/Job Fair		100
Spring Cording Ceremony		56
Summer Orientation	Resource Fair/ Face to Face/ Virtual	4050
National Guard Event		160
TOTALS:	Total Fall Face to Face Engagement Office Utilization: Targeted Emails/Texts through navigate:	14902 16763 21246

5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (FY2022) 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. For Fall 2021, We hired 6 new work study staff and will maintain this number and will adjust our staff numbers as necessary. In summer, we saw the lowest number of work study students we have ever had. High gas prices and low wages prevented VS from being able to fill our work study positions like we usually have. Students reported not finding it cost effective to drive to campus due to high costs. Work- Study pay is based on the low state minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. Because our wages are paid by the VA, we had not been able to bump our students to the \$8 wage paid to work study across campus.

Semester	Total Number of VA Work-Study Contracts	Total Number of Hours Contracted	Total Dollars Paid By VA
Fall 2021	12	4800	\$34,800
Spring 2022	12	4800	\$34,800
Summer	5	1250	\$9063
Total:	29	10,850	\$78,663

Since, our previous report, Veteran Services recently said goodbye to our ½ FTE Office Coordinator, and one of our Program Coordinator. VS is using this opportunity to reimagine the work that we can accomplish, with an updated vision of our staff. In order to achieve our goals, VS will work with Human resources to make these updates.

In terms of budget changes, in 2022, 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 due to a reduction in services.

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.

6. 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 2022, Veteran Services returned a Fund Equity of \$7,776

	FY 2022	FY 2022	FY 2022	FY 2022	FY 2022
	Base Budget	Final Budget	Actual Expenses + Commitments	Approved Equity Carryforward	Funds to be Returned to Reserve
Salary/Wage/Fringe	239,100	242,423	237,757		4,666
Maintenance&Operations/Travel	22,417	46,482	43,845		2,637
Administrative Charges	-	17,263	16,790		473
Utilities	-	-	-		0
Fund Transfers for Maintenance					0
SFAC Totals	261,517	306,168	298,392	0	7,776
					7,776

As shown the spread sheet above, most of this fund equity is due to lapse salary, incurred due to our empty office coordinator position. We are currently in the process of creating a position using these funds that will ensure that we can continue to meet our department goals. In addition, we were hesitant to make any branded purchases towards the end of the fiscal year, due to our much-anticipated name change, a change in our Division Name and some branding logo updates.

7. 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: Support Military Connected Dependents on Campus

Description:

Provide inclusive services to all military-connected students and implement programming targeting military dependents.

Action Steps: plan and implement 2-3 dependent activities to support military connected dependents.

1. Provide monthly programming
2. Create direct contact with dependents
3. Expand Graduation Cording Ceremony to include Dependents

Goal 2: Target Veteran Recruitment

Description:

Collaborate with Community College to assist with successful transition to UH

Action Steps: Plan and implement recruitment efforts by collaborating with Community Colleges to ease transition from CC to UH

1. Make connections at each feeder college
2. Document needs assessment from students who desire to transfer to UH
3. Develop programming surrounding those needs.

Goal 3: Diversity & Inclusion

Description:

VS strives to provide services that are equitable to all military-connected students on Campus.

Action Step: Create Equitable Materials for all Military Connected Students.

1. Review all written materials/ webpage/ social media and update to include more inclusive language.
2. Create a Glossary of words to ensure that military/ Veteran terminology is understandable to all.

8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2024 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 3.5, 5.0 or 7.5% in your total FY2024 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made. A spreadsheet has been created to assist in this process. Please include a copy of the spreadsheet with your questionnaire submission.**

In implementing a 3.5% cut, VS would cut \$9481. This would take a great deal from our regular budget that would include Awards, Business meals to include training meals for our staff and student workers. Office supplies, and Professional Development and travel. While we would have some funds for these items we would have to cut at least 50% of those budgets.

In looking at 5% Cut, Veteran Services would cut \$13554 from its base budget. In doing so, we looked at cutting all 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 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.

When looking at a 7% cut, we would be cutting \$18,962, In addition to the above mentioned cuts, we would also cut the maintenance to our center and we would have

to cut staff. With the growing numbers of our military connected students and our desire to expand our programming to include the growing number of dependents on campus, this cut would be detrimental to Veteran Services.

VS Base Budget		Base \$270,889
Proposed % Cut	Proposed \$ Cut	
3.5%	\$9481	
5%	\$13,544	
7%	\$18,962	

Base Budget: \$270,889		Proposed Cut 3.5% : \$9481
Awards		\$1000
Business Meals		\$1000
Office Supplies		\$1000
Professional Development		\$1000
Travel		\$4200
Uniforms		\$1000
Printing Services		\$281

Base Budget: \$270,889		Proposed Cut 5% \$13,544
Awards		\$1100
Business Meals		\$1500
Office Supplie		\$1600
Professional Development		\$1000
Travel		\$4200
Uniforms		\$2000
Printing Services		\$1675

Base Budget: \$270,889		Proposed Cut 7% \$18,962
Awards		\$1100
Business Meals		\$1500
Office Supplies		\$1600
Professional Development		\$3000
Travel		\$5000
Uniforms		\$2500
Printing Services		\$1675
Facilities/ Work orders		\$300
Wages/Staff		\$2287



9. 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 21-22, VS received both corporate gifts and private gifts from donors. We have continued to receive small corporate gifts from Enbridge, Chevron Phillips Chemical Company. 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.

2021-2022 Gift Funding	
Corporate Gifts	\$11,000
Private	\$3500
Total:	\$14,500

10. Please describe any services that are like 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 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.