

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

VETERAN SERVICES



Student Fee Advisory Committee (SFAC)

Program Questionnaire

FY2022



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.

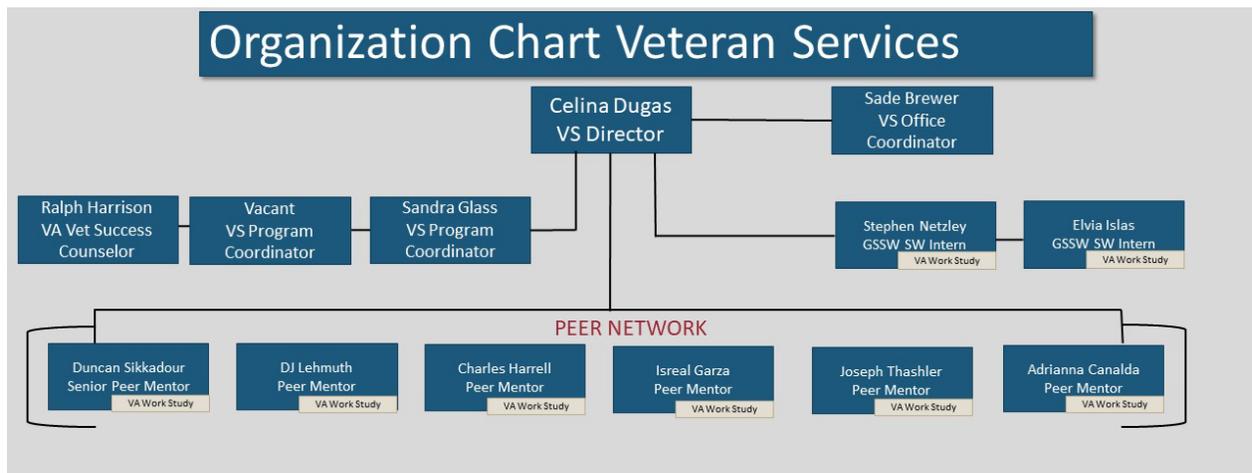
Veteran Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

- 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 2019-2020 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: Review Current Student Programs: VS has 3 Student led programs that need to be reviewed, revamped, and relaunched. VS Orientation, Peer Mentoring, Peer Tutoring (Student Success, Resources)

Action Step:

- Conduct a needs assessment among student users to determine programmatic needs.
- Conduct a focus group of current student leaders leading the programs to determine feasibility of these students leading these programs and how to ensure successful turn over.
- Implement Changes.

Status: Partially Achieved.

Veteran Services was able to conduct the assessment portion of this goal. Needs assessments and a focus group was conducted to gain a better idea of how to meet the needs of our military-connected students. Due to Covid-19 the changes that we hope to implement have not been completed. We have drastically cut our student staff who provide oversight for these student led programs. We hope to relaunch these programs in the future.

Goal 2 Enhance Veteran Services culture of Diversity and Inclusion: Enhance culture of diversity and inclusion by bolstering training and education with division partners. (Division Cohesion, Student Success)

Action Steps:

1. Conduct D&I Audit of Veteran Services as a Department
2. Increase Trainings offered to staff: LGBTQ, CAPS, WOMEN & GENDER, D&I, Others
3. Explore and plan department IDI training for department

Status: Achieved

Veteran Services had a strong start to this goal in fall of 2019. We participated in the division Diversity & Inclusion audit and this helped to gain a better understanding of where our regular and student staff were in terms of diversity and inclusion. As a department we decided to invite several campus partners in to our office to train our staff and we were able to host Lorraine Schroder in to our office to provide a training for our staff. We also partnered with CAPS and had our CAPS Liaison provide a training

during a staff meeting. We had planned to continue on this path with a staff retreat and additional trainings, but unfortunately we had a difficult start to our Spring Semester with a personal absence of VS Director, followed by a global pandemic. Veteran services moved to a virtual format in March 2020. We participated in several virtual discussions surrounding D&I issues during one of the most difficult times in our country. Students and staff were given opportunities and time to process their thoughts and feelings surrounding the current cultural climate. It is our goal to always have D&I as a central focus, both for our staff to grow in our cultural competency, but also to help our campus community grow in their military and veteran culture competency.

Strategic Initiative Sub-tactics for Veteran Services

Division Cohesion DC1.3.1:

Description:

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

Progress: Ongoing

Results: Veteran services, has identified liaisons, in financial aid, CAPS, Financial Aid, and enrollment services. Having these specific people identified makes it easy for students to go directly to those liaisons so that their issues can be addressed in a timely manner. VS will continue people across campus that can provide our mil connected student's services in a more streamlined way.

Partnerships P1.1.1:

Description:

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

Progress: Ongoing

Results: Our Green Zone program is still available to staff and faculty. We lost budgeted funds (one-time funds) that were authorized in order to help grow the program. The funding was proposed to bring all our green zone trained staff together so that we could answer questions, review important topics and celebrate our Green Zone Staff. We hope to get funding to continue to grow this program.

Partnerships P1.3.1:

Description: Develop our VS Liaison network and have those persons Identified on VS Web page.

Progress: Ongoing

Results: Some of our identified liaisons have left the university and so having them on our web page may not be feasible. Veteran services will keep those people identified internally.

Partnerships P4.2.1:

Description: Develop Marketing plan and marketing materials to showcase VS to our current and Future Students in the community

Progress: Ongoing

Results: We continue to work on this strategic plan sub-tactic. Staffing shortages have prevented us from fully completing this task. VS has assigned this task to an intern who will begin working on a brochure to send out to our students.

Resources R1.3.1:

Description: Evaluate and implement a swipe system for student check in to create efficiency with the process.

Progress: Ongoing

Results: VS has worked with DSAES staff throughout the semester to figure out a ways to implement a swipe system. We were able to upgrade the computer, which was very outdated. IT staff were also able to transfer the access data base over to a new computer system that uses a touch screen to our sign in desk. We still have not implemented a swipe system and we hope to do so once staff have returned to campus.

Student Success SS2.2.1:

Description:

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

Progress: Ongoing

Results: Veteran services was able to partner with several departments to schedule training sessions with our staff to increase and enrich our Cultural Competency in many areas to include LGBTQ, Women and Gender, Caps and Diversity and inclusion. VS will continue to schedule these training sessions annually to insure that our staff has a wide range of knowledge in these areas.

Student Success SS5.4.1:

Description:

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

Progress: Ongoing

Results: Still in progress. Staffing shortages has prevented us from having a dedicated staff member to maintain this partnership. Career services does have a staff member identified. We will continue to cultivate this important partnership once our position has been filled.

Student Success SS5.4.2:

Description:

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

Progress: Ongoing

Results: Veteran Services has been using EAB navigate as a tool to track Veterans progress and to schedule appointments. VS plans to use the system to send targeted emails to student who are falling below a 2.00 GPA. VS interns will be able to follow students and place notes into the system so that we can track student intervention/ progress.

2. 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 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	338	370
Daily Users	4976	2961
Virtual Office Check in's	N/A	276
		Total: 8921
		47% Drop due to Covid-19 closure

Veteran Services Program Attendance/ Engagement 2019-2020

Event Fall 2019	Attendance
Welcome Back Breakfast - Fall	185
Welcome Back Breakfast- Spring	80
Campus Prowl	175
Green Zone Brief/ enrollment	280
9/11 Memorial Observance Program	86
9/11 Photo Exhibit	3000
Staff Training Workshop - Fall	17
Student Leadership Conference	10
Veterans Day Luncheon	191
Veterans & Military Cording Ceremony - Fall 2019	127
Veteran Orientations (Spring)	103
Student Resource Fair - Aug 12	125
Move-in Day - Aug 15-16	225
Cougar First Impressions - Aug 20	140
Pride to Hire - Aug 29	90
Combined Arms: Education Committee	40
Combined Arms: Annual Convening	100
Combined Arms Training - Sep 5	20
Fresh Check Day - Sep 12	175
VA Discussion Group - Sep 17	40
HEB and Bauer Event - Oct 4	100
Missions Continues - Dec 11	26
Professional Growth Committee - Dec 12	22
Information Fairs - Dec 17 and 18	175
National night out (Campus Police)	200
Virtual Orientation Presentations	804
Total VS Programming Engagements: face to face	6532

Virtual Contacts During Covid-19 Remote Services Spring 2020	
Individual Contacts Q/A via Email/ Skype/ Zoom	2957
Individual Contacts Q/A via Phone	2036
Individual Virtual Appointments	284
Individual Faculty Interactions	52
Individual Interactions with non DSAES, Alum, Parents	811
Targeted Informational Emails Sent to Mil Connected Community	14825

Total Virtual Advocacy (not including targeted emails sent):	6140
Including Emails:	(20965)

Total VS Engagement for 19-20 Combined Face to Face and Virtual Advocacy	12,672
---	---------------

3. 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 work spaces has led to this reduction. We hope to increase our numbers as we are able to return safely.

Semester	Total Number of VA Work-Study Contracts	Total Number of Hours Contracted	Total Dollars Paid By VA
Fall 2019	17	6630	\$48,068
Spring 2020	15	6210	\$45,023
Summer	7	1260	\$9,135
Fall 2020	7	2800	\$20,300
Total:	46	16900	\$122,525

In addition to student staffing changes, in July of 2019 after completing another round of

interviews Jason Williams was hired in the Program Coordinator role. After only six months, in January of 2020, Jason Williams left the program coordinator position, for a higher paying position. The VS Program Coordinator, pay is rather low, at 39K, and VS should complete an equity analysis to determine whether or not this position may need to be reclassified. It is my opinion that this pay makes it difficult to find and keep good quality staff.

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. 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.

Lastly, as mentioned in our 2021 SFAC Questionnaire, VS was in desperate need to replace our computers in our computer lab. They were out date and slow and we were advised that we would not receive an assistance from DSAES IT. VS with the assistance of a gift from Chevron Phillips Chemical and unused M&O funds from spring 2020, was able to replace all our computers in our computer lab. While this was a large expense, it was a very much needed expense and it is our hope that these new computers will last VS for several years.

4. If your unit concluded FY2020 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 2020, Veteran Services returned a Fund Equity of \$39,988

SFAC Only - FY2020 Recap

	FY 2020	FY 2020	FY 2020	FY 2020	FY 2020
	Base Budget	Final Budget	Actual Expenses + Commitments	Approved Equity Carryforward	Funds to be Returned to Reserve
Salary/Wage/Fringe	234,723	237,862	201,100		36,762
Maintenance&Operations/Travel	23,467	57,575	57,349		226
Utilities	-	-	-		0
Fund Transfers for Maintenance					0
SFAC Totals	258,190	295,437	258,449	0	36,988

Funds to be Returned to Reserve 36,988

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.

5. Please list your 2020-2021 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: Implement an early warning system for identifying and assisting Military connected students with academic 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 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.

Action steps

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

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

6. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2022 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



7. 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 19-20, 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	\$6000
Private	\$65
Total:	\$6065

- 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.**

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.