Student & Community Advancement Program Review

VETERANS SERVICES
PROGRAM REVIEW

I. Overview

A. Program Profile

Instructions: The program profile should contain the program name, primary objectives, funding source(s), a profile of the students or clients served, and any other information that will provide the reader with a more complete understanding of the program.

The program under review here is Veterans Services of Admissions and Records. It is a fund 11 program commingled with other programs in the A&R Division. It also receives a small amount of funds from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. These funds are placed in fund 12 accounts.   Veterans Services serves the interests of all students who are veterans or dependent of veterans of the military branches of the United States of America.   The educational and training benefits offered are through three major programs:

1. Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty Educational Assistance Program
2. Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserves Educational Assistance Program
3. Training and Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service Connected Disabilities
4. Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program
5. Survivors' & Dependents Educational Assistance
6. Educational Assistance Test Program
7. Educational Assistance Pilot Program
8. The Omnibus Diplomatic Security and Antiterrorism Act of 1986

B. Status of Previous Recommendations

Instructions: List the current status of recommendations that were provided in the last program review.

There were three recommendations made in the previous program review:

Enhance the Veterans Services Component of the Web

This recommendation was delayed because the district did not have a web developer for a considerable length of time. With the hiring of a web developer and the introduction of a new website this recommendation will become a reality in the coming months.

Place Forms in PDF Format on the Web

Again, as in the first item above, we delayed implementation until the new web was created. We anticipate loading some of the forms used by veterans over the course of this summer.

Provide Veterans with Easy Access to Literature

A stand with veterans' education literature was placed adjacent to the Veterans Services window.

C. Continuing Recommendations

Instructions: List the recommendations that are expected to continue as a result of this program review.

1. Enhance the Veterans Services component of the web.
   This will continue through the next program review. Updating a web site is a work in progress and is always subject to change.

2. Place forms in PDF format on the web.
   We will add or remove forms as they are introduced or eliminated by the VA.

3. Provide veterans education programs literature in the Admissions waiting area.
   We will continue to provide this material.

II. Program Data

A. Student/Client Satisfaction

Instructions: List and analyze the results of the student or client satisfaction survey. Based upon the analysis what program improvements should be made. Assistance from Institutional Research and Planning will be necessary to create, distribute, and tally the survey.

There were an insufficient number of respondents to analyze the surveys for Veterans Services.

B. Student/Client Outcome Data

Instructions: This section requires the analysis of student or client program data (i.e., metrics) that has been collected over the past three years. Metrics should be thought of as program specific data such as the number of students/clients who utilized various segments of your service over a specific period of time.

Examples include the number of students who met with a counselor, successfully completed their financial aid packet, applied on-line, referred to a company for an interview, or completed training.

1. Analyze program data. Identify and list trends found in the data.

There are slightly over 200 students at El Camino College who participate in the services offered through Veterans Services.   Based on the current number of persons serving in the armed forces of the United States, the National Guard, and Active Reserves, we anticipate growth in this program.

2. Based upon the trends and performance indicator data (e.g., metrics) what changes, if any, should be made to improve the program? All program improvements must be tied to the data.

      1) Expand the Veterans Services web page.

      2) Allow for flexibility in the space assigned to Veterans Services in the new Student Services Center. This includes signage.

      3) Create a Veterans Services email address similar to the AdmissionsHelp@elcamino.edu email address.

      4) Create a Veterans Services newsletter.

C. Campus/Community Collaboration

Instructions: List collaborative efforts with the campus and external community that are designed to benefit the program. List how the collaborative efforts should be strengthened and what new collaborations or partnerships should be pursued to improve the program.

1. What program functions are dependent upon external collaborations or partnerships with other programs or services on campus or in the community? Describe the effectiveness of each collaboration or partnership.

Counseling

It is critically important that counselors correctly advise students who are receiving veteran's benefits. Not all courses are eligible for reimbursement by the VA and miss-advisement can be costly to the student. In the past, there was a counselor dedicated to working with veterans. However, this is now a shared responsibility which increases the risk of advisement error.

Veterans Administration

Communication must exist between the VA and ECC's Veterans Services Program. This communication not only keeps program personnel up-to-date, but ensures compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

2. How can program personnel strengthen these collaborations or partnerships?

The Veterans Services Program can receive and post information form Veterans Centers as well as Unemployment Offices in the area.

3. What other collaborations or partnerships should program personnel pursue for program improvement and why?

The Veterans Services Program can exchange information, class schedules, and catalogs, with Veterans Centers, Clinics, and Unemployment Offices in the area.

D. Program Data Recommendations

Instructions: Compile all program data recommendations from A – C.

A. Student/Client Satisfaction

   None

B. Student/Client Outcome Data

   1. Expand the Veterans Services web page.
   2. Allow for flexibility in the space assigned to Veterans Services in the new Student Services Center. This includes signage.
   3. Create a Veterans Services email address similar to the AdmissionsHelp@elcamino.edu email address.

C. Campus/Community Collaboration

   1. Continue to work with Counseling and external stakeholders in promoting the services of Veterans Services.
   2. Provide more material on veterans' educational benefits on and off campus.

III. Program Requirements
A. Program Support

Instructions: List campus departments that are essential to the success of this program, the impact of those departments on the program, and what is being done to strengthen the partnership between each.

1) All programs depend upon the support of other departments on campus. What is the impact of those departments on this program and what can program personnel do to further strengthen those relations?

Counseling

It is critically important that counselors correctly advise students who are receiving veteran's benefits. Not all courses are eligible for reimbursement by the VA and miss-advisement can be costly to the student. In the past, there was a counselor dedicated to working with veterans. However, this is now a shared responsibility which increases the risk of advisement error. There also needs to be increased coordination between Veterans Services and Counseling regarding counseling appointments for veterans.

<u>Financial Aid</u>

It is important for veterans to be aware of all of the financial aid opportunities available to them: loans, grants, scholarships. To strengthen ties, it would be beneficial to have a point person in Financial Aid to assist the Veterans Services Specialist and veterans.

<u>Job Placement</u>

Many of our veterans need employment assistance while they are attending ECC and need guidance on resume writing, interview techniques, and job referrals when they transition out of ECC. The Job Placement Office can be a great resource for them. Materials from Job Placement can be provided to Veterans Services for dissemination to our veterans.

<u>Veterans Administration</u>

Communication must exist between the VA and ECC's Veterans Services Program. This communication not only keeps program personnel up-to-date, but ensures compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

B. Facilities and Equipment

Instructions: Provide a summary of the current state of the program's facilities and equipment and list recommendations if appropriate.

1) Describe the adequacy/inadequacy of the facilities and equipment available to the program.

Currently Veterans Services has one window dedicated to its functions at the front counter of Admissions and Records. Due to spatial limitations a very small work station is provided for personnel staffing this counter. A telephone is provided. However, space prohibits the inclusion of a computer and/or printer. The Veterans Services Specialist has a desk and work station which is positioned approximately twenty feet from the window. File cabinets for Veterans Services are immediately behind the specialist and in the adjacent room.

2) List recommendations regarding facilities and equipment.

In the new Student Services Center, veterans must continue to have an area dedicated to their needs. There needs to be sufficient space to allow for growth in the program and to display information: brochures, pamphlets, posters, etc.

C. Staffing

Instructions: Describe the adequacy/inadequacy of the program's current staffing level and the training needs of program personnel. List recommendations based upon question responses.

1. Describe the adequacy/inadequacy of the program's current staffing level.

Currently, the Veterans Services Program is staffed by one full-time classified employee, Martha Angel, a Student Services Specialist. She is assisted by three student workers. All of whom are veterans of the United States military.

Personnel Trend

Personnel Type	Current Level		In 3 - 5 years		Retirement	
	# of Staffing	FTE	# of Staffing	FTE	# of Staffing	FTE
Full-time Faculty (Tenure Track)						
Full-time Faculty (Non-Tenure Track)						
Part-time Adjunct Faculty						
Full-time Classified Staff	1	1	1	1		
Part-time Classified Staff (Permanent)						
Part-time Classified (Temporary)						
Casual Employees			1	0.5		
Student Employees	2	1	3	1.5		
Manager						
Supervisor						
Temporary Project Administrator						
Faculty Coordinator						

FTE: Full Time Equivalent (i.e., 2 employees working at 50% would equal 1 FTE)

2. How does this data impact the program or the future of the program?

Our work study students must schedule their work hours around their classes. This can result in very limited or no coverage for the Veterans Services Program.

3. Are program personnel current in their field? If not, describe what is needed to maintain currency and how it will improve the program.

Yes, the Student Services Specialist attends Veterans Administration workshops and conferences. She is in touch with the ELR in San Diego when a problem occurs.

4. List and prioritize all staffing recommendations.

1. Upgrade the Student Services Specialist to Student Services Advisor.
2. Hire one casual employee to assist the Student Services Advisor during peak periods

D. Planning

Instructions: Analyze external (advisory committee input, academic/trade journal articles, or other appropriate sources) and internal information to determine changes or trends that will impact the program within the next five years. Explain how the program's planning process involves program staff, and ties into student learning outcomes.

1. What major changes or trends might impact the program in the next five years? What program plans are in place or will be created to respond to major changes or trends?

Within the next five years, we expect the veterans population in the South Bay to increase as the United States disengages from Iraq and Afghanistan. With this transition of military personnel back into civilian life we expect many veterans to take advantage of the educational opportunities afforded by the Montgomery GI Bill. Included in this bill is a program for reservists and National Guard members.

2. What data, not currently provided, would be needed to improve program development planning? Explain the type of data desired, why it will be useful, and list the possible sources if known.

To project the staffing needs and work flows of the Veterans Services Program it would be helpful to know how many veterans will be returning to the South Bay area from Iraq and Afghanistan over the next five years. In addition, it would assist us to know how many dependents of deceased or disabled veterans are in the area.

3. Describe how program personnel are made aware of what is happening in the program, future program plans, external/internal changes affecting the program, and changes that need to be made to enable the program to adapt and continue to be successful.

Program personnel are made aware of changes in regulations or programs offered by the U.S. Veterans Administration through bulletins issued by the VA. In addition, there are periodic workshops and conferences to review changes and provide an interchange of ideas with colleagues in the field and VA personnel.

4. Explain how program personnel are involved in the creation and implementation of program plans?

Communications, program reviews, and responses to audits are collaborated between the Veterans Services Specialist and the Director of Admissions and Records.

5. Describe how the program's plans tie into student learning outcomes.

The Student Learning Objective (SLO) for A&R is as follows:

By interacting with the Admissions & Records Office students will be able to utilize web technology to accurately and successfully participate in on-line student service processes. This SLO will be monitored through usage rates and a survey that collects students' self-perception of competence.

E. Program Requirement Recommendations

Instructions: List all recommendations made in the program requirement section.

Make Veterans Administration forms available on the ECC web page for students to download and submit by mail, rather than in person.

IV. Recommendations

Instructions: Provide a prioritized list of all recommendations made throughout this program review and list, where appropriate, the cost associated with each recommendation. List the strategies program personnel will pursue to aid in the achievement of each recommendation.

1) Consider providing all continuing veterans priority registration. Cost: negligible.

2) Services email address similar to the *AdmissionsHelp@elcamino.edu* email address. Cost negligible.

3) Make forms available on the ECC web page. Cost negligible.

4) Upgrade the Student Services Specialist to Student Services Advisor. Cost: $2,412.

5) Improve the VA work area with new equipment, color printer, new chairs, and new desks and appropriate space to accommodate the staff and future growth of the veteran's population. Cost: $3,000.

6) Hire one casual employee to assist the Student Services Advisor during peak periods. Cost: $9,500.

Show the linkage to the institution's goals by stating each program review recommendation as an objective statement with corresponding success indicators in the form of an action plan. Enter all action plans into the campus planning software.

The following strategic goals are cited below.

Strategic Goal One: "Support and constantly improve the quality of our educational offerings."
Strategic Goal Three: "Support innovative practices that enhance the educational experience."
Strategic Goal Five: "Support and develop effective and motivated employees."
Strategic Goal Six: "Improve and enhance internal and external communication."
Strategic Goal Seven: "Incorporate flexibility into institutional structure and process."

In the 2006/2007 Year
1) Make forms available on the ECC web page
By the end of the 2006-2007 academic year forms related to education needed by veterans and their dependents will be available on the ECC web page. This recommendation is linked to Strategic Goal 6 – Improve and enhance internal and external communication.

2) Create a Veterans Services email address similar to the *AdmissionsHelp@elcamino.edu* email address.

By the end of the 2006-2007 academic year establish an email address for use by veterans and their dependents. The address would be *Veterans@ElCamino.edu*. This recommendation is linked to Goal 6 – Improve and enhance internal and external communication.

3) Consider providing all continuing veterans priority registration.

By the end of the 2006-2007 academic year a decision will be made whether to provide veterans with priority registration, official or unofficial. This recommendation is linked to Strategic Goal 7 – Incorporate flexibility into institutional structure and process.

In the 2007/2008 Year

1) Upgrade the Student Services Specialist to Student Services Advisor. This is linked to strategic goal seven.

2) Hire one casual employee to assist the Student Services Advisor during peak periods.

In the 2009/2010 Year

1) Improve the VA work area with new equipment, color printer, new chairs, and new desks. This is linked to strategic goal five.