

Veteran’s Resource Center Review

Introduction

The PCC Veterans Resource Center (VRC) offers a comprehensive student success program that involves multi-department and multi-community agency coordination. We work collaboratively between the VRC and the GI Bill processing office, Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Disabled Students Programs and Services, the Health Center, Counseling, and various instructional departments as well as, local city, county and State and Federal Veteran services Agencies.

Our comprehensive services include a variety of Academic, Community and Wellness programs to facilitate and support the veteran’s transition to civilian life and the college campus.

Military Times, a publication that goes out to the 5 branches of the military rated PCC’s Veterans services as number #2 in the Nation.

We strive to create a ‘One Stop Shop’ atmosphere. The center has a computer lab, tutoring/mentor area, assistive technology for disabled veterans, Academic counselors, case manager, volunteer tutors/mentors, weekly lunch and learn workshops on a variety of veteran related topics, Service Benefits Specialists, community volunteer opportunities, monthly free legal consultations, veterans employment and career specialists, free weekly massage, financial literacy information, mental health counseling, health counseling, spiritual wellness, Veterans’ yoga, peer support, a student veteran’s club, women veterans activities and programs, community activities and recreation events. We have a Veterans Learning Collaborative – 12 unit veterans’ only classes and offer a Transition course.

This year we were selected to participate in the VetSuccess on Campus, one of only 30 sites in the Nation. As part of the program a VA Vocational Rehabilitation counselor works in the VRC 2 days a week.

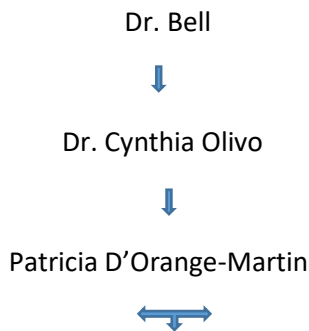
We held a Veterans Suicide Prevention Training- for campus Gatekeepers; Academic Counseling, Career center, A & R, DSPS, Police, Psych services, Financial Aid and Health Center.

We also started a program assisting veterans with traumatic brain injury and learning disabilities by offering them SMARTPENS and providing training on how to use them.

We also provided holistic /alternative medicine workshops for stress reduction management and depression.

We did a presentation regarding service animals to treating and managing PTSD.

Organizational Chart



Carol Calandra - Veteran Work Study students- Adjunct Counselor- VA Voc Rehab Cnslr -Tutors

Mission Statement

The mission of the Veterans Resource Center is to assist military and veteran students in making a successful transition from military to academic life by providing information, tools, and comprehensive programs that increases student academic success and completion of their academic goal. The VRC working collaboratively with on-campus services, as well as, outside veteran’s service providers, and the Veterans Administration, provides services that focuses on academics, community and wellness.

Program Outcomes

1. A student veteran will be able to make informed decisions to achieve his or her goals.
2. A student veteran will be able to identify and utilize resources that will assist in achieving his or her goals.
3. A student veteran will be able to feel personally acknowledged, valued, connected and more aware of his or her potential to achieve personal goals.

Recommendations Update

The Certifying official needs to be in the VRC to certify veterans in a timely fashion. We hope to finish an expansion of our physical space to double the current size by the beginning of Spring 2014.

Category I. Function

Component A: Services Provided

We strive to create a 'One Stop Shop' atmosphere. The center has a computer lab, tutoring/mentor area, assistive technology for disabled veterans, Academic counselors, case manager, volunteer tutors/mentors, weekly lunch and learn workshops on a variety of veteran related topics, Service Benefits Specialists, community volunteer opportunities, monthly free legal consultations, veterans employment and career specialists, free weekly massage, financial literacy information, mental health counseling, health counseling, spiritual wellness, Veterans' yoga, peer support, a student veteran's club, women veterans activities and programs, community activities and recreation events. We have a Veterans Learning Collaborative – 12 unit veterans' only classes and offer a Transition course.

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Category II. Institutional Support

Component A: Budget

The Certifying official needs to be in the VRC.

There is also a need for additional staffing support for mental health services and additional adjunct counseling hours. It is predicated by the anticipated expansion of the VRC and added office space to be able to have the additional staffing. Full-time and part-time staff are actively involved in acquiring relevant and necessary professional development and growth.

Component B: Space Allocation

The VRC needs more space. Veteran enrollment is increasing and is anticipated to continue to increase dramatically with the end of the war in Afghanistan in 2014. There is also a planned move of the Certifying official and the added VA Voc Rehab counselor and anticipated increase in mental health services to the VRC.

Category III. Accountability

Component A: Internal Accountability

Veterans Resource Center

Student Learning/Service Outcomes:

SurveyMonkey, February 2013

SLO #1: A student veteran will be able to make informed educational decisions to achieve his or her goals.

SLO #2: A student veteran will be able to identify and utilize resources that will assist in achieving his or her goals.

SLO #3: A student veteran will be able to feel personally acknowledged, valued, connected and more aware of his or her potential to achieve personal goals.

Assessment: We conducted a survey of student veterans via email and in the Veterans Resource Center in Spring 2013. PCC currently has 705 veterans attending classes. The evaluation is via Survey Monkey and includes a satisfaction scale, multiple choice and open ended response options.

Results & Analysis: 81 online surveys were completed February 27-28th 2013. Overall, the results of our survey evaluation and analysis were overwhelmingly positive. Students marked their agreement with each statement based on 1- strongly agree, 2 agree, 3- 4- disagree, , and a 5- 'doesn't apply' option.

Approximately, 87% of student veterans were either very satisfied or satisfied with all of the VRC SLO statements, indicating that they had a positive experience and our outcomes are being achieved. Only 6.2% were unsatisfied and another 7.4% that had never used the services.

Each VRC/Veterans Services related survey statement is connected to an SLO. The scores for each statement are indicated at the end of the statement.

SLO #1: A student veteran will be able to make informed educational decisions to achieve his or her goals.

1. **The counselor helped me with an Educational Plan. (86% had met with a Veterans counselor and 86% had made an Educational Plans.)**
2. **The counselor helped me understand what classes I need to meet my goal. (87% student veterans that answered this question were very satisfied or satisfied with their academic counseling and felt that the Veterans counselor helped them to understand what classes they needed to meet their goal.)**

Approximately **89%** stated their academic goal was to transfer to a 4 year University. We also found that **28.8%** are first generation college students.

SLO #2: *A student will be able to identify and utilize resources that will assist in achieving his or her goals.*

1. The Staff and Services at the VRC has helped me navigate the college system. (**77%** strongly agreed or agreed. 7.9% strongly disagreed or disagreed)
2. The Staff and Services at the VRC has helped me become a better student. (**68%** strongly agreed or agreed. 5% strongly disagreed or disagreed and 28% answered not applicable)
3. Experiences and services you received during counseling: Referrals to PCC resources.(**79%** were very satisfied or satisfied, 6% dissatisfied , 16% not applicable)
4. Experiences and services you received during counseling: Referrals to VA information/resources. (**72%** were very satisfied or satisfied, 8% dissatisfied, 18% not applicable)

SLO #3: A student will be able to feel personally acknowledged, valued, connected and more aware of his or her potential to achieve personal goals.

1. The Staff and Services at the VRC has helped me feel more connected to PCC. (78% Strongly agreed or agreed, 7% disagreed and 14% not applicable)
2. My experiences transitioning from the Military to PCC was: (85% stated it was very easy or easy, 17% difficult)

Recurring themes in the comment areas included:

“The VRC Great place, welcoming atmosphere”, “The staff for all veterans have been amazing...”

“VRC staff have been very supportive”, “We have an outstanding program here at PCC”,

Dealing with the counselor(s) and staff of the VRC, I am extremely satisfied. “

“This team of counselors are a great asset to PCC.” “VRC is like home away from home.”

Overall, 100% of the 80 that responded indicated that they would recommend attending PCC to other Veterans. 1 person did not answer the question.

Although data indicated that 68% of student veterans expressed that they were not experiencing difficulties that were affecting their educational goals, there were still 32% of the student veterans indicated that they were experiencing difficulties that was affecting their educational goals.

Related data from this survey found that 29% of the respondents were disabled veterans and 42% had utilized Psychological services which may be a significant reason they are having difficulty.

We offer a transition class, Boots to Books (Coun12) which is a transitioning class to help address those issues because it is not mandatory and not all veterans returning choose to take that class.

We also offer 7 hours a week of psychological counseling by a USVETS counselor. We need to increase the availability of on-campus veterans counseling available.

Recommendations for improvement:

- Our results demonstrate clearly that overall we are meeting our outcome goals
- Increase the amount of psychological services for veterans.
- Increase the advertisement for the Boot to Books class
- Hire a full time case manager to more closely follow student veterans that are experiencing difficulties
- Increase collaboration with Disabled Student Services.
- Move towards making Veterans Orientation mandatory in order to reach more veterans attending PCC
- Increase the size of the VRC to accommodate more student veterans. Currently, we only have 10 computer stations.
- Create a comprehensive website which consolidates information for student veterans including student services, veterans' benefits, student veteran's organization and veterans' services.
- Create a Veterans Referral list that can be posted on-line for better access to referrals.
- Conduct a survey once a semester to increase the response rate and to utilize the responses to guide our services and to use a tool for staff development.