Program Review Summary Page
For Academic & Student Support Programs

Support Program(s) under Review: Veterans Program

Term/Year of Review: Spring 2022

Summary of Program Review:

A. Major Findings

1. Strengths:

The Veterans Services staff provides consistent expertise to advise and support student veterans, active-duty, National Guard and reservist service members, and their dependents (veterans et al.). Additionally, Veterans Services works to support faculty, staff, and the community. The staff works together as a team to provide exceptional support and assistance to Veterans and their dependents to help them access necessary Veterans Administration resources to ensure they are fully utilizing their earned benefits to successfully complete their educational goals. The services provided by the Veteran Services Office directly support the College mission statement and the department mission statement.

Veterans Services welcomed a new Veterans Counselor, who will be located in the Counseling Department when NVC returns to in-person services. Both the Veterans Counselor and the Veterans Services Specialist will rotate schedules to provide services in the Veterans Resource Center once it reopens.

Veterans Services provides a $300 Veterans Equity Book Voucher program each semester, which is made possible by funding from the Equity and Inclusivity Department. Graduating Veterans receive a graduation bundle that includes their graduation cap & gown, Veterans military branch stole, Veterans Services medallion and Red, White & Blue cord.

Veterans School Certifying Officials are now mandated to meet specific training requirements each year to maintain eligibility to certify Veterans education benefits. The Veterans Services Specialist (NVCs SCO), and other Veterans Services personnel attend ongoing monthly and other scheduled training with VA (Veterans Affairs), CCCCO Veterans Summit, NAVPA Training Conference, WAVES Training Conference, Regional Veterans Services Meetings, and other trainings as they become available. Veterans Services personnel collaborate with other CCCs Veterans Services Specialists and programs to exchange ideas and information to improve services and provide additional benefits for the Veterans we serve.

A partnership with the Student Veteran Health Program was formed to establish a connection. Through that partnership, the Veteran Services program has been able to assist students with a connection with state sponsored Veterans mental health services. When the campus was open, the Student Veterans Health Program was also provided with space to assist veterans with VA medical cards.

The Veterans Services unit adapts to changes quickly. We implemented COVID and non-COVID related VA policy changes in a timely manner and ensured the information was promptly disseminated to students. The Financial Aid/Veteran Services Department was the first department on campus to transition to Electronic Forms through DocuSign. When the campus was closed to in-person service due to the COVID19 Pandemic, Veteran Services paper forms were converted to DocuSign electronic forms, making it easy for students to complete and submit electronically, while students still had the option to submit documents in the lobby drop-box. Veteran Services was one of the first few departments to utilize Cranium Café through ConexEd to provide virtual services to students and to staff through video and phone appointments. We utilized Zoom to conduct our staff meetings and Cash for College workshops. In addition, we adapted quickly to changes to state and federal regulations as well as Veterans Affairs audit requirements.
With counseling services transitioning into a hybrid modality students had the option to meet in person with the Veteran Services Counselor, via Cranium Café, phone, or email. These various modalities provide students with services that work best for their schedule and preferences. Additionally, the Veteran Services Counselor has later hours once a week to provide more flexibility and options for students and their schedules.

2. Areas for Improvement:

Some areas for improvement are:

- Veterans Resource Center does not meet CCCCO minimum standards. It is too small for regular Veterans Services staff and counselors to be housed there, so Veterans must go to other buildings to receive services. Too small and enclosed, so we cannot open for Veterans' use during the pandemic. No windows, seems closed-in and claustrophobic, ventilation is inadequate, multiple doors lead into the little theatre stairwells and are often left unlocked by facilities staff.
- One-stop-shop for Veterans Services that includes space for the Veteran Services Specialist, the Veterans Counselor and support staff; beneficial for warm hand-offs for new and continuing students.
- More in-reach, presentations and on-campus events to improve Veterans Services awareness for teachers, staff, and students.
- Better outreach is needed for current veterans and dependents to increase involvement and participation.
- Veterans Services webpage needs to be redesigned, easier to maintain, and more intuitive for Veterans seeking information. Need additional training in webpage maintenance.
- Need additional Support staff for administrative needs,

- Increased communication with campus community,
- Increased collaboration with other support programs like MESA/STEM, Testing & Tutoring Center, Math Lab, and Writing Center,
- Improve program services by providing additional workshops and events designed specifically for Veterans.
- Improve data collection with surveys, comment cards, incentives, and meetings.
- Resurrect Veterans Advisory Committee to increase support for Veterans Services.

3. Projected Growth, Stability, or Viability:

Growth: The population of students supported by Veterans Services has declined as the pandemic has progressed. This is likely due to perceived job instability outside of the military related to COVID. It is likely that, when more facilities begin to reopen, the veterans population will begin climbing to former numbers. Growth requires a VRC that meets at least minimum CCCCO standards and can permanently house a Veterans receptionist, specialist, and counselor at minimum.

B. Program's Support of Institutional Mission and Goals

1. Description of Alignment between Program and Institutional Mission:

College Mission: transfer courses, career-technical education and training, basic skills, and self-supporting contract education and community education classes.

The Veterans Services program and services provided are in alignment with the College Mission and Financial aid mission. The program provides resources and guidance to students to help them navigate the financial aid process, so they can obtain the state, federal, and local funds they are eligible for to help them with their educational expenses to allow them to achieve their educational goals. Services provided:

- Individualized appointments - in person one-on-one appointments scheduled in advance, same day appointments, walk-in (pre COVID), phone, and by email. Due to COVID pandemic, adjustments were made to offer virtual appointments (video or phone) for in-depth, complex questions, and virtual lobby assistance for quick general questions, through Cranium Café.
- Forms were converted to electronic forms using DocuSign, so students can easily complete and submit to Veteran Services.
- Students can view missing documents and access electronic forms.
- Ocelot Chatbot implemented – allows students to ask AI general questions 24/7.
- Collaboration with DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid.
- Information on courses and requirements to achieve certificates, degrees and preparation for transfer.

- Education planning in alignment with students' goals.

2. Assessment of Program's Recent Contributions to Institutional Mission:

3. Recent Program Activities Promoting the Goals of the Institutional Strategic Plan and Other Institutional Plans/Initiatives:

C. New Objectives/Goals:

- Review VRC Standards, research new VRC sites, plan for building new or relocating VRC into a larger space.
- Develop the Colleague VETS screens.
- Research additional online and mobile resources for students (myVRC or similar product).
- Update / modernize the Veterans Webpage.
- Update Veterans Policy & Procedures Manual.
- Re-form the Student Veterans Organization (club).
- Develop/redesign Veterans services, including trips and tours, workshops, community activities, academic support.
- Identify services to improve course completion among Veterans (academic support).
- Improve Veterans academic Counselor student interaction and academic support
- Access to and training on Starfish to perform the following activities:
    - Early Alerts (Starfish)
    - Mid-Term Evaluations (Starfish)

D. Description of Process Used to Ensure "Inclusive Program Review"

Include Veterans services staff in the discussion and preparation of the program review sections. Program Review shared on OneDrive so Veterans Services staff can access and add information

I. PROGRAM DATA

A. Number of Students Served by Program

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	Change over 3-Year Period
Financial Aid Applicants	5,216	5,006	5,187	-0.6%
Promise	92	539	648	604%
EOPS	306	305	274	-10.5%
Work Study	105	102	72	-31.4%
Overall Veterans	578	583	467	-19.2%
Veterans	*289*	*262*	*202*	*-30.1%*
Dependents	*289*	*321*	*265*	*-8.3%*
CalWORKs	23	22	17	-26.1%
CARE	13	18	15	15.4%
Source: Data provided by Programs				

<u>RPIE Analysis</u>: Among the programs listed above, the majority of programs decreased over the last three years.

The following programs experienced a decrease of more than 10%:

- *Work Study (-31.4%)*
- *CalWorks (-26.1%)*
- *Veterans (-19.2%)*
- *EOPS (-10.5%)*

The number of Promise Grant students and CARE students increased by 604% and 15.4%, respectively.

Program Reflection:

Along with many other programs, and enrollment in general, the veteran's population has declined since the beginning of COVID-19. However, the Veteran Services workload has increased due to numerous changes in eligibility requirements due to the move to an online environment, the increasingly stringent requirements in multiple Veterans education benefits programs and the constant communications with Veterans using benefits to explain the changes and the impact those changes could have on their funding. The addition of a dedicated Veterans Counselor has increased the capability and services offered for veterans and their dependents at NVC.

B. Demographics of Students Served by Programs, Three-Year Proportions

	Three-Year Proportion of Financial Aid Applicants	Three-Year Proportion of Promise	Three-Year Proportion of EOPS	Three-Year Proportion of Veterans	Three-Year Proportion of Work Study	Three-Year Proportion at the Institutional Level
Number of Students	9,052	1,076	890	513	188	13,827
Gender						
Male	***37.5%***	42.6%	41.0%	81.9%	39.9%	43.0%
Female	62.5%	57.4%	59.0%	***18.1%***	60.1%	57.0%
Race/Ethnicity						
Asian	***2.9%***	***1.8%***	2.7%	3.1%	8.0%	3.4%
African American/ Black	8.1%	***2.6%***	7.9%	6.7%	7.4%	5.3%
Filipino	10.9%	12.3%	8.6%	6.9%	10.6%	8.5%
Latinx/Hispanic	46.1%	53.3%	54.4%	***26.3%***	42.6%	42.0%
Multiple Race	7.5%	7.5%	5.7%	7.5%	8.5%	6.6%
Native American	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	--	0.3%
Other	***1.9%***	3.0%	***1.7%***	3.6%	1.6%	3.1%
Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.6%	0.2%	0.2%	--	0.6%
White	***21.7%***	***18.8%***	***18.6%***	44.9%	***21.3%***	30.2%
Age						
19 or less	***34.1%***	98.2%	37.5%	***4.8%***	***27.5%***	38.8%
20 to 24	***31.1%***	***1.4%***	39.0%	***18.5%***	50.0%	33.8%
25 to 29	16.2%	***0.2%***	10.7%	25.4%	12.3%	12.4%
30 to 34	7.6%	***0.1%***	5.7%	17.6%	3.4%	5.2%
35 to 39	4.8%	***0.1%***	2.5%	8.6%	1.7%	3.2%
40 to 54	5.2%	--	3.1%	15.0%	3.4%	4.2%
55 and older	***1.0%***	--	1.5%	11.1%	.7%	2.4%
First Generation	45.5%	***34.9%***	44.4%	36.6%	41.0%	39.3%
Source: Student data provided by programs						

RPIE Analysis: This section describes the three-year demographics among NVC students that accessed the five programs listed in the table above. Those programs include Financial Aid, Promise, EOPS, Veterans, and Work Study.

The following demographic groups accounted for a majority or plurality of Financial Aid Applicants, Promise, EOPS, and Work Study students during that period:

- *Females*

- *Latinx/Hispanics*
- *Students 24 or less*

Among students who accessed Veterans Services, males, White, and students ages 34 and younger accounted for the majority or plurality of students during that period.

*The following programs claimed a significantly lower proportion of a **gender** group compared to the population of NVC credit students over the past three years:*

- *Financial aid applicants (Males)*
- *Veterans (Females)*

*The following programs claimed a significantly lower proportion of **race/ethnicity** group compared to the population of NVC credit students over the past three years:*

- *Financial aid applicants (Asian, Other, White)*
- *Promise (Asian, African American/Black, White)*
- *EOPS (Other, White)*
- *Veterans (Latinx/Hispanic)*
- *Work Study (White)*

*The following programs claimed a significantly lower proportion of **age** groups compared to the population of NVC credit students over the past three years:*

- *Financial aid applicants (students 24 and less, students 55 and older)*
- *Promise (students ages 20 to 39)*
- *Veterans (students ages 24 and less)*
- *Veterans (Latinx/Hispanic)*
- *Work Study (students 19 and less)*

The Promise Program claimed a significantly lower proportion of first-generation students than the population of NVC credit students over the past three years.

Program Reflection:

The Veterans population is a unique demographic specifically because the demographic does not pattern the institutional populations, but the military population. Between 2018 and 2020, approximately 83% of active-duty personnel were male, 31% were racial minorities and 14-17.2% were Latinx/Hispanic, and 40% were age 25 or younger. Note that the population of Veterans includes veterans' dependents, so the data is skewed Veterans only statistics. However, most first-term enlistments require 4 years of active duty with 2 years inactive. Veterans who entered military service at age 18 would leave active duty at approximately 22-24 years of age, and older if they re-enlisted at least once. The percent of males to females is representative of military service, while the rate for Latinx/Hispanic is higher than military demographics report. To truly reflect on a purely Veterans population, we would need to separate out Veterans from the dependents.

C. Retention/Successful Course Completion of Students within Programs

	Number of Course Enrollments	Number Retained Course Enrollments	Retention Rate	Number of Successful Course Completions among Enrollments	Successful Course Completion Rate
Promise Students	12,864	11,955	***92.9%***	10,050	***78.1%***
EOPS	7,294	6,604	90.5%	5,668	***77.7%***
Work Study	3,053	2,953	***96.7%***	2,798	***91.6%***
Veterans	2,168	1,984	91.5%	1,637	75.5%
CalWORKs	434	398	91.7%	330	76.0%
CARE	321	287	89.4%	242	75.4%
Institutional Level	--	--	90.3%		75.6%

Source: SQL Enrollment Files, Data provided by programs
Bold italics denote a statistically significant difference between rates at the program and institutional levels.

RPIE Analysis: This analysis examines three-year retention and successful course completion rates among students participating in the above programs. Retention and successful course completion rates at the institutional level are reported to facilitate comparison.

The retention rates of Promise students and students within the Work Study program were significantly higher than the institutional rate (by 2.3% and 6.4%, respectively). The retention rates among Veterans and CalWORKs students were higher than the retention rate at the institutional level. (The differences were not statistically significant.) The retention rate among CARE students was lower than the rate at the institutional level. (The difference was not statistically significant.) The retention rate among EOPS students reflected the retention rate at the institutional level.

The successful course completion rates of Promise students and students within the EOPS and Work Study programs were significantly higher than the institutional rate (by 2.5%, 2.1%, and 16.0%, respectively). The successful course completion rates among Veteran, CalWORKs, and CARE students mirrored the successful course completion rate at the institutional level.

Program Reflection:

The retention rates for Veterans and Dependents are higher than the institutional level rate but mirrors the institutional level rate for successful course completion. If NVC had a fully functional Veterans Resource Center where Veterans could go for academic and financial support, to feel a sense of community and camaraderie, and to attend workshops or receive one-stop services, I believe the retention rates and the successful completion rates would rise. As the campus re-opens and with the new Veterans Counselor who is experienced in providing Veterans specific workshops and counseling sessions, we hope to increase enrollments and completion rates in our Veterans population.

D. Retention/Successful Course Completion of EOPS Students, Pre-Pandemic Terms and During the Pandemic

	Three-Year Retention and Successful Course Completion Rates	
	Retention Rate	**Successful Course Completion Rate**
Pre-Pandemic	90.9%	79.6%
During the Pandemic	91.8%	***77.5%***
Source: SQL Enrollment Files ***Bold italics*** denote a statistically significant lower difference between rates of the two period groups.		

RPIE Analysis: This analysis examines the retention and successful course completion among EOPS students pre-pandemic (fall 2018 through fall 2019) and during the pandemic (spring 2020 through spring 2021).

Among EOPS students, the retention rates before the pandemic mirrored the retention rate during the pandemic (compare 90.9% and 91.8%).

Among EOPS students, the successful course completion rate during the pandemic was significantly lower than the successful course completion rate before the pandemic (compare 77.5% and 79.6%).

Program Reflection:

E. Retention/Successful Course Completion of Veterans/Dependents Receiving Benefits and Without Benefits

	Three-Year Retention and Successful Course Completion Rates	
	Retention Rate	**Successful Course Completion Rate**
Veterans Receiving Benefits (n=2,120)	91.3%	***75.1%***
Veterans Without Benefits (n=738)	90.7%	79.4%
Dependents Receiving Benefits (n=776)	91.0%	***72.4%***
Dependents Without Benefits (n=3,177)	91.1%	78.9%
Source: SQL Enrollment Files ***Bold italics*** denote a statistically significant lower difference between rates of the two types of veteran groups.		

RPIE Analysis: This analysis examines the retention and successful course completion rates of veterans and dependents – comparing those receiving benefits and those without benefits.

The retention rate among veterans receiving benefits mirrored the retention rate among veterans without benefits. The successful course completion rate among veterans receiving benefits was significantly lower than the successful course completion rate among veterans without benefits (compare 75.1% and 79.4%).

The retention rate among dependents receiving benefits mirrored the retention rate among dependents without benefits. The successful course completion rate among dependents receiving benefits was significantly lower than the successful course completion rate among dependents without benefits (compare 72.4% and 78.9%).

Program Reflection:

II. CURRICULUM

This section does not apply to Financial Aid.

III. LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

A. Status of Learning Outcomes Assessment

Learning Outcomes Assessment at the Course Level

	Number of Courses with Outcomes Assessed		Proportion of Courses with Outcomes Assessed	
Number of Courses	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years

Learning Outcomes Assessment at the Program Level

	Number of Outcomes Assessed		Proportion of Outcomes Assessed	
Number of Outcomes*	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years	Over Last 4 Years	Over Last 6 Years

*Include all areas of study, degrees, and certificates associated with the program in the table.

Program Reflection:

B. Summary of Learning Outcomes Assessment Findings and Actions

Program Reflection:

IV. PROGRAM PLAN

Based on the information included in this document, the program is described as being in a state of:

- O Viability
- O Stability
- O Growth

*Please select ONE of the above.

This evaluation of the state of the program is supported by the following parts of this report:

Growth: The number of Veterans students dropped by 30% over the three year period, with the most significant drop occurring at the height of the pandemic. This drop could be related to job insecurity, high cost of living forcing relocation, family obligations, and COVID-19 illnesses, but a large contributor is the Veterans educational benefit payout for on-campus vs. Online courses. The difference in the basic housing allowance for a veteran taking all online courses vs. On-campus courses could be as high as $2,000 per month depending on location. Veterans are attending College in surrounding areas who offer on-campus or hybrid courses to receive the increased benefit. In addition, the cost of housing and gas prices may be a conributing factor to the reduction. Now, with the campus reopening for on-campus hybrid and in-person classes, along with additional outreach efforts, we expect our Veterans population to return to pre-pandemic levels within the next three years. Not having a fully functional Veterans Resource Center is a consideration for Veterans.

Complete the table below to outline a three-year plan for the program, within the context of the current state of the program.

Program: _____
Plan Years: _____

Strategic Initiatives Emerging from Program Review	Relevant Section(s) of Report	Implementation Timeline: Activity/Activities & Date(s)	Measure(s) of Progress or Effectiveness

Describe the current state of program resources relative to the plan outlined above. (Resources include: personnel, technology, equipment, facilities, operating budget, training, and library/learning materials.) Identify any anticipated resource needs (beyond the current levels) necessary to implement the plan outlined above.

Note: Resources to support program plans are allocated through the annual planning and budget process (not the program review process). The information included in this report will be used as a starting point, to inform the development of plans and resource requests submitted by the program over the next three years.

Description of Current Program Resources Relative to Plan:

V. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

A. Recent Improvements

B. Effective Practices

Feedback and Follow-up Form

Completed by Supervising Administrator:

Date:

Strengths and successes of the program, as evidenced by analysis of data, outcomes assessment, and curriculum:

Areas of concern, if any:

Recommendations for improvement:

Anticipated Resource Needs:

Resource Type	Description of Need (Initial, Including Justification and Direct Linkage to State of the Program)
Personnel: Faculty	
Personnel: Classified	
Personnel: Admin/Confidential	
Instructional Equipment	
Instructional Technology	
Facilities	
Operating Budget	
Professional Development/ Training	
Library & Learning Materials	