

**Veterans Advisory Council**  
**Annual Report**  
Texas State University  
FY 2018 - 2019

**Major Accomplishments/Retention Initiatives**

1. The Veteran Academic Success Center (VASC), a component of the Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC), hired and trained 26 military-connected students (MCS) Guides and Tutors to provide STEM, writing, business, and Spanish tutoring and mentorship to 349 MCS on over 872 occasions to help MCS achieve academic success.
2. VASC sponsored 172 student veterans through the *Bobcat Cadence* Sponsorship Program (supported by VA, VATS, Career Services, SDI, Counseling, ODS, WC).
3. VASC submitted a request and was approved a new permanent staff position, Student Development Specialist II, with the title VASC Coordinator and SLAC Learning Lab Specialist. After approval of the position, a new employee was hired into this position.
4. VASC coordinated with Project Healing Waters (PHW) to provide a weekly *Student Veteran Friday Fly-fishing* opportunity for student veterans. Over 20 VASC team members and 20 community members completed volunteer hours supporting this initiative that allowed more than 200 student veterans to experience fly fishing (supported by VATS).
5. VASC teamed with SDI, VATS, PHW, and the Samaritan Center to host 4 *Military-Connected Student Welcome Events* during the summer for new incoming MCS and their families (over 120 attended).
6. VASC planned, organized and conducted *Operation Veteran Academic Success* to raise funds during the annual Step up for State university fund raising campaign receiving 172 gifts totaling \$10,150.00.
7. VASC developed a new course offering for student veterans titled *EDP 2150 – Strategic Learning* which was approved for inclusion in the 2019-2020 academic year.
8. VASC provided two new sections of *US1100 – Resilience* for MCS during the Spring semester (23 attended).
9. VASC stood up a new military-connected student support cell during the fall semester at the *Round Rock Campus* to facilitate academic support and success.
10. The Samaritan Center teamed with VASC to host *Try Acupuncture*, a lunch and learn activity at the First Methodist church (13 attended).
11. The Department of Health and Human Performance teamed with VASC to host the annual *VETREC on H2O* which provides the opportunity for student veterans to learn about SCUBA certification, fly fishing instruction, or kayak instruction (over 30 attended).
12. Veterans Affairs (VA) teamed with VASC on two occasions to hold *Veteran VA Jumpstart* Spring and Fall Benefits Certification to help student veterans with completing class registration and VA financial assistance paperwork.
13. Department of Health and Human Performance teamed with VASC to support the annual *San Marcos Kids Fish* event at the San Marcos fish hatchery, providing the opportunity for special needs children to catch a fish (over 20 volunteers and 100 children attended).
14. VASC teamed with American Dream U, Air Force ROTC Program and Army ROTC Program to host a Symposium on *Veteran & ROTC Employment* to assist attending individuals with preparing for future employment opportunities. (over 54 student veterans and their family members attended).
15. VASC planned, organized, and conducted weekly outreach activities to increase student veteran awareness of veteran resources, including weekly Quad Days, weekly online social outreach initiatives, and monthly social activities.
16. San Marcos High School football coach teamed with VASC to conduct *weekly mentorship sessions* between football players and student veterans to discuss ethics, values, and leadership (14 volunteered supporting 15 football players).
17. San Marcos High School teamed with VASC to conduct a 2<sup>nd</sup> annual *Military Appreciation Night* at a high school football game that recognized university students and community members for their military service (supported by VATS, ROTC, and PHW).
18. VASC teamed with Restoration Ranch Equine Program to host three *Equine Partnership Workshops* with the Samaritan Center for MCS and their families (over 60 attended).
19. VASC conducted *low GPA outreach* to several hundred MCS during the fall and spring semester.

20. University Advancement initiated a crowdfunding project: “*Bobcat Proud - Supporting Student Veterans*” in honor of Military Appreciation month (May). This new fund-raising project included 8 military-connected student (MCS) focused initiatives that raised over \$3860.

---

## Assessments

**Assessment:** Veteran Academic Success Center **Administered:** Fall 2018/Spring 2019

**Findings:** Data was collected from 63 student veterans who completed the online end-of-semester survey. The following is a summary of the completed survey results.

### Demographics

- Time at Texas State University:
  - 53 – first 4 semesters
  - 10 – 3 years or longer
- Credit load:
  - 5 – less than 12 credits
  - 50 – 12-15 credits
  - 8 – more than 15 credits
- Time in the military:
  - 16 – less than 4
  - 31 – 4-8 years
  - 5 – between 9-15 years
  - 9 – more than 15 years

\*note a few clients did not answer this question
- Received tutoring primarily in the following topic:
  - 21 – Mathematics
  - 15 – Science
  - 2 – Business
  - 2 – Technology
  - 10 – Writing
  - 6 – Spanish
  - 4 – Engineering
  - 10 – other – study

\*note-a few clients indicated help in multiple topics
- Number of times visited during the semester:
  - 29 - more than 7 times
  - 5 - 5-7 times
  - 15 - 2-4 times
  - 11 - 1<sup>st</sup> visit
  - 3 - no answer

### 1. Student response to the statement, “I am performing better on my homework, papers, and/or exams.”

- 48 (81%)– True
- 11 (19%)– Neither True or False
- 0 (0%) – False
- 4 (6%) – No Comment

### 2. Student response to the statement, “I am understanding the material better in my classes.”

- 48 (81%) – True
- 10 (17%) – Neither True or False
- 1 (1%) – False
- 4 (6%) – No Comment

### 3. Student response to the statement, “in general, the person was helpful.”

- 40 (67%) – Strongly agree
- 10 (17%) - Agree
- 8 (913%) – Neither agree nor disagree
- 1 (1%) – Disagree
- 1 (1%) - Strongly disagree
- 3 (5%) – No Comment

### 4. Student rating of overall experience while in VASC:

- 46 (78%) – Excellent
- 11 (19%) – Good
- 1 (1%) – Neither Good nor Dissatisfied
- 1 (1%) – Extremely Dissatisfied
- 4 (6%) – No Comment

#### 5. Written comments about student's experience while in VASC:

- Superb service and people-I could not have made it without these special people
- it is awesome that you have added coffee. Keep everything going
- Ya'll are doing good.
- The vets and family members that you have hired are awesome!!
- This is the best resource on campus for veterans!!!
- Wow is this a great place to come and spend time and get a cup of coffee.
- It was unbelievable to me that this resource was available and while I was skeptical, once I came it was the most important place for me on campus. I would not have been successful this semester without this resource.
- I was struggling and attended US1100 and learned about this resource and now I am passing all my classes. Thank you for this program.
- I think this is an outstanding program. I am grateful that you have a place for Veterans like myself.
- Outstanding experience and I keep coming back. It is great to have a place like this on campus.

#### Evidence of Improvement:

The most significant improvement noted was in the increase in military-connected student (MCS) visits moving from 240 MCS visiting the center 789 times in FY 18 to 349 MCS visiting the center 872 times in FY 19. Quantitative responses about overall experience increased with 86% in FY 18 compared with 97% in FY 19 rating their overall experience extremely or moderately satisfactory. A new area that was added to the survey was the MCS perspective on the impact on their learning after receiving support from VASC, with 48 (81%) of the respondents reporting that as a result of using the VASC services he/she was performing better in class. Qualitative comments remained consistent from FY 18 to FY 19 with numerous MCS commenting extremely positively on both the necessity and impact of this service.

---

#### **Presentation presented by Department Staff**

1. VASC provided an information briefing titled "*Veteran Academic Success*" to the Department of Communication Studies (20 attended).
2. VASC provided an information briefing titled "*Veteran Academic Success*" to 5 US1100 sections (over 100 attended).
3. VASC provided an information briefing titled "*Veteran Academic Success*" to US History Course (over 200 attended).
4. VASC and SDI provided a workshop titled "*Military-Connected Students*" (Catharina Reyes, Dr. Carl Van Aacken, Bianca Quinones) for the US1100 faculty development workshop series.

#### **Special Recognition for Departments and/or Staff**

1. Michael Flores – VASC Outstanding Service to Veterans Award