



Budget Request Form FY2015

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: Veteran Resource & Support Center

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Overall VRSC Vet Connect Program & Event Funding

SAFAB Use Only	
YES	NO

General Description:

Funding increase to support growing military-affiliated student growth and increased program participation.

Request Type: Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested UAF Other

General Questions:

Why is this important to your department? How does this increase impact students, and what motivated this request?

The ability to get student veterans and military dependents “connected” with each other and TAMU resources is the critical component to their transition and academic success. In the first year, the VRSC initiated and/or supported 25 programs and conducted and/or supported 41 events (see Attachment A for the full list). Three of these programs and nine of the events required VRSC funding and are recurring programs that will be conducted in the future due to their initial success. These programs are part of the VRSC’s “Aggie Vet Connect” initiative (see Attachment B for Program Description, Goals & Components).

This request is motivated by the anticipated student veteran enrollment and participation in future events. Although the currently available data is inconclusive, we believe that our military-affiliated student population is increasing at a rate of 20 – 30 % every year. We also expect increased program participation by existing student veterans as the VRSC becomes more established. This increased student demand for VRSC programs will require additional funding in the future.

Is it part of your strategic plan? What will be the impact if it is not funded?

As a new office, the VRSC is still attempting to develop a strategic plan. The Aggie Vet Connect events will become a foundational aspect of the strategic plan as it is developed. The Student Life Studies assessment and focus groups (conducted in spring 2013) highlighted a significant need to facilitate the student veteran transition to campus. If unfunded, the VRSC will be required to limit student services to this critical function.

How do other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered? Please explain.

In the first year, the VRSC successfully obtained other sources of funding to augment our initial budget allocation. Out of the total \$57,000 in donations (or pledges for future financial support) received in the first year, approximately \$19,000 of this was (or will be) directed to Vet Connect events. The majority of these funds were directed for specific, one-time events. Future donations will not be sufficient to cover the anticipated increase costs of recurring Vet Connect events.

What sort of input did you receive (student, faculty, staff, other) to determine this need?

The VRSC relied on current student formal survey input and other key sources to identify programming requirements. These include: Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education pertaining to “the Role of Veterans and Military Programs and Services;” Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Standards; and the Texas A&M University System “Best Practices for Military and Veterans Support Services.”

The concept of the Aggie Vet Connect Program was modeled after several other university programs that have a reputation as leaders in student veteran services and support. Most notably, Dr. Selber at Texas State University provided significant advice on how to create programs that best meet student veteran needs.

What actions have you implemented internally to address the identified need?

The VRSC Director currently leads the TAMU Troops to College Data Subcommittee. This committee, in partnership with the TAMU Veteran Services Office (in Scholarships & Financial Aid), is working to more accurately determine military-affiliated student growth rates. Unless we understand, anticipate, and prepare for future growth, we will not be able to adequately serve this non-traditional student population. Our two veteran offices frequently collaborate to leverage each other’s strengths and resources to ensure maximum efficiency of available resources.

As we developed these new Vet Connect programs during the first year, the VRSC found ways to “provide more for less.” While the VRSC has been able to stretch initial budget allocations, we do not believe that future additional cost saving measures will keep pace with anticipated growth.

Generally, what assessment tools will you use to evaluate this program/service?

Direct student input will be the primary method of assessment. The VRSC is working with Student Life Studies to develop future efforts that focus on specific event/program effectiveness. The VRSC must begin to assess programs and events with short, simple surveys on a routine basis. Of the 25 programs and 41 events initiated or supported by the VRSC last year, only 2-3 were directly assessed. We recognize our assessment shortfall and are working to improve this effort in the second year.

Funding Description:

The current VRSC annual operating budget is \$22,900. Assuming a 30% growth in student participation over the next several years, the VRSC will need an additional \$6,800. We believe that approximately one-third of these increased costs will be covered by donor funding. This will create a \$4,500 shortfall for critical programs and events.

Dollar Amount	
Total Estimated Cost	\$4,500.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i>	
TOTAL UAF INCREASE REQUEST	\$4,500.00

SAFAB Comments/Notes: