



Budget Request Form FY2017

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department: Veteran Resource & Support Center

Program, Service, or Operation Requested

Graduate Assistant (9 Month) to fill the following SAAHE GA Position

SAFAB Use Only	
YES	NO

Position Title: Veteran Outreach & Peer Advising (PAVE) Program Facilitator

Experiences that a graduate assistant will have in this position:

- Directly impact student veterans by developing/refining the VRSC student veteran outreach plan in conjunction with the Peer Advising for Veteran Education (PAVE) Program.
- Plan, coordinate and assess VRSC student “VetConnect” events.
- Assist with marketing, public relations and media (traditional and social) outreach efforts to support the VRSC and 15+ additional “military/veteran affiliated” student organizations.
- Assist with (and improve) VRSC/PAVE student data collection methods and interpret data results to improve outreach.
- Assist in the development of the “Aggie Veteran Network” to facilitate outreach efforts.
- Enhance relationships with local community veteran organizations to assist in creating high impact opportunities for student veterans.
- Assist with presentations to TAMU faculty/staff to increase awareness about student veteran issues.
- Lead, supervise and direct VA Student Work Study students to facilitate PAVE outreach efforts.

General Description:

Recurring funding to continue to provide the VRSC with the minimum staff depth that is required to meet significantly increased demand for military-affiliated student programs and outreach.

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?

Why Important? This position is a critical component to the staffing & organization of the VRSC. As of August 2015, the VRSC became “right-sized” with the addition of a new SDS II (Program & Outreach Coordinator) and a SAAHE GA. For Academic Year 2015-16, the SAAHE GA will be fully funded by donor funds. The VRSC DSA budget for this year (and future years) is insufficient to cover the \$13,000 cost. At this time, the VRSC does not anticipate the ability to fully fund future GAs with donor money at this time. Within the first 5 weeks, the SAAHE GA position has already made exceptional and noteworthy improvements to the Peer Mentoring Program (PAVE) and our social media outreach. The VRSC continues to see significantly increased student demand for student services. To keep pace with the increasing demand, this position is a “must have” for future years.

Impact & Motivation:

- This position also advises student leaders in making appropriate choices that will enhance their ability to lead the student body, especially in regards to veteran affairs.
- This position is focused on developing and refining the VRSC student veteran outreach plan
 - Assist in the development of the “Aggie Veteran Network” to facilitate outreach efforts.
 - Regulates the social media efforts for the VRSC.
 - Collects data and interprets data results to improve the outreach.
- Assists in creating a strategic plan for VRSC in conjunction with Peer Advising for Veteran Education (PAVE) Program.
 - Work closely with PAVE Head office and Peer Advising Leaders to create appropriate trainings and agendas to best impact Veteran Peer Advisees. This also brings recognition to A&M amongst universities in Texas.
 - Collect, Interpret, and Assess the PAVE program’s effectiveness towards student veterans.
- Find new ways to improve outreach by working with various offices and programs such as Troops to College and Delta Company.
- Works closely with VRSC and 15+ other “military/veteran associated” student organizations to create new ways to assist veterans.
 - Coordinate and Assess VRSC student “VetConnect” events, which creates job opportunities for Vets.
- ***BOTTOMLINE: In less than 6 weeks, the addition of this position has made substantial and measurable increases to the VRSC outreach programs that have been unachievable in the previous 3 years.***

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

The VRSC strategic plan calls for significant resources to facilitate military-affiliated student transitions. The VRSC has 8 key goals over the next two years; the GA position directly supports aspects of 5 of these goals and is a key leader in 3 of these goals. If this recurring position is unfunded, the VRSC will not meet critical aspects of the strategic plan to the detriment of the students we serve.

Currently, the VRSC leads or supports 37 programs. Our strategic plan has identified another 11 programs that can significantly enhance programming and services. These programs cannot be started until the VRSC matures and refines existing programs. The inability to maintain the GA position in future years will result in the inability to begin many of these new programs and may require reduction/elimination of some current programs.

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

The VRSC has fully maximized other sources of funding, resources, and support to meet increasing student requirements. The office opened with only two staff; the Director and an assistant. A SDS II was recently added. These three positions remain as the only Division of Student Affairs funded positions. The following (externally funded/sponsored positions) have been incorporated into the VRSC staffing structure to meet student demands:

- **Two Military Admissions Advisors:** Funded by the Office of Admissions but co-located in the VRSC (in Jan '13) to enhance/streamline student veteran support. A second Military Admissions Advisor was added in Nov '13 to support the 200+ new prospective student veteran contacts per month.
- **Vet Success on Campus (VSOC) Counselor:** Funded by the VA and works in the VRSC but also supports the Scholarships & Financial Aid Veteran Services Office to connect student veterans and dependents with VA resources.
- **Student Internships:** Two unfunded interns supported VRSC programs during the spring '13 semester. A Texas State University Master's in Social Work intern focused on program development, student support, and event coordination. The second Master's intern from the TAMU Agrilife Communications Department focused on social media and web page development.
- **VA Student Work Study Program:** The VRSC initially hired two VA funded Work Study positions (maximum of 20 hours per week each) in June 2013 to replace the interns. The VRSC now has 14 Work Study positions in an attempt to manage the work load.
- **Graduate Assistants:** The Performing Arts Department has sponsored a Graduate Assistant for 10 hours per week for two semesters (through May '14) to assist the VRSC with a significant event called "Telling Aggieland." The VRSC has funded the SAAHE Ga for the current year using donor money.

In the first three years, the VRSC was successful in obtaining over \$306,800 in donations to support programs, scholarships and student organizations. We expect to have another \$50,000 pledged for this year in the near future to support scholarships for combat student veterans. To date, the nature of "donor wishes" typically directed these funds to direct support of student veterans (i.e., scholarships, text book loans, Aggie Rings, recognition, etc.); very little of this money can be used at the discretion of the VRSC. Our goal is to ultimately endow a minimum level of financial support for the VRSC and reduce the amount of funding required from the Division of Student Affairs budget.

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

Student Government has been instrumental in identifying needs of student veterans. In May 2012, the TAMU Student Government Veterans' Affairs Task Force Report was published. This report made numerous recommendations regarding Academic Services, Student Services, Strategic Planning and Long Term Programs. In March 2013, the Student Senate passed S.B. 65-56, "The Veteran Resource and Support Center Bill." This bill stated that "...an allotment of \$58,000, through the University Advancement Fee, should be apportioned to the Veteran Resource and Support Center to add immediate support in the form of student workers, additional permanent or part time staffing, additional supplies and programming and recruiting funds..."

Other sources that have been used to identify programming (and ultimately VRSC staffing) requirements include: Council for the Advancement of Standards 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 VRSC has tracked the growth of the TAMU student veteran population in the past 3 years. Between 2013 and 2014, student veteran growth was 37%. The numbers for the current year are not finalized yet, but we expect to see about a 6 – 8% this year. While this growth rate is much lower, it reflects a higher percentage of undergraduates (the population we serve most) and this population continues to grow faster than the general student population.

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

The VRSC continues to resourcefully cultivate opportunities by finding additional support from other sources. The accomplishments of the VRSC in the first three years were only possible through these additional externally provided positions and the actions of generous donors. In 36 months, the VRSC has grown from 2 staff members to 21 total staff (including student workers). The VRSC has maximized these opportunities as we seek continual improvements.

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

The VRSC Director chairs the Troops to College Data & Assessment Subcommittee. This committee is responsible for conducting, developing and analyzing on-going assessment of military-affiliated student needs. In the first three years, the VRSC partnered with Student Life Studies to conduct student veteran needs assessments. These assessments (and follow-on focus groups) provided baseline data that will be used as a benchmark for future assessments. Future efforts will expand to include assessment of faculty/staff student veteran issues awareness and more specific needs assessment of military dependents and veteran spouses/families.

While these large survey type assessments provide useful data to increase overall effectiveness, the VRSC also began to assess programs and events with short, simple surveys on a routine basis. Of the numerous programs and events initiated or supported by the VRSC last year, only a few were directly assessed. Our most notable assessment results include the following from Vet Camp and the Veteran History course:

Student Veteran Program Participation Data (as of June 2015)

- o Overall Undergraduate (on benefits) GPA – 2.90
- o Veteran Only History Course Participants: GPA – 3.07 with 96% persistence
- o Veteran Only History Course Participants w/ Vet Camp: GPA – 3.29

Delta Company Scholarship Fund

- o Of the 54 Cadets who have benefitted 12 have graduated, 6 Commissioned as Officers, 16 are currently in Corps of Cadets, 23 are currently enrolled, not in Corps; 2 have left the university resulting in a 96% success rate.

In August 2014, the VRSC partnered with the University of Michigan Peer Advising for Veteran Education (P.A.V.E.) Program. This program is fully funded by U-M and will include significant assessment support.

Funding Description:

	Dollar Amount
Total Estimated Cost	\$13,000.00
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if applicable)</i>	
TOTAL UAF INCREASE REQUEST	\$13,000.00

SAFAB Comments/Notes: