



Annual Report/Budget Cover Sheet

Department: Veteran Resource & Support Center

UAF Account #: 237181

Department Budget History:

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Total Operating Budget	\$232,533	\$284,388	\$289,047	\$289,407
Total Current UAF Allocation	\$232,533	\$284,388	\$289,407	_____
UAF Increases Requested	\$47,500	\$13,000	\$71,000	\$60,000
UAF Increases Funded	\$47,500	\$13,000	\$0	_____
Total End-of-Year Reserve Balance Across All Operating Accounts	\$6,000	\$43,400	\$44,501	\$44,501

Please provide a reserve spending plan if ending FY17 reserves exceed University requirements.

Not Applicable – VRSC Reserves are now underfunded by \$3,673

UAF Increase Request History & FY 2019

Summary:

<i>Program, Service, or Operation Requested</i>	<i>Amount Requested</i>	<i>SAFAB Recommended? (y/n)</i>	<i>VPASA Approved? (y/n)</i>
FY 2017			
Grad Assistant (9 month)	\$13,000	Yes	Yes
FY 2018			
Military Admissions (Wage 50%)	\$13,000	Yes	Yes 1-time only
VRSC Office Equipment/Cost Adjustment	\$8,000	Yes	No
SDS II Full Time Position	\$50,000	Yes	No
FY 2019 Proposal Summary (Prioritized)			
SDS II Full Time Position	\$50,000	_____	_____
VRSC Office Equipment/Cost Adjustment	\$10,000	_____	_____
		_____	_____
		_____	_____

Annual Report (cont.)

Additional Questions: *(to assist the Board when informing the student body about stewardship of the University Advancement Fee)*

Briefly, what recent programs/services have been successful? Which need work? Explain.

Since last year, the VRSC has eliminated 8 programs and now has 26 programs of record: 3 Core Programs (mission essential); 14 Key Programs (VRSC created/led); and 9 Supported Programs (significant/recurring support to programs led by others). All 26 programs are associated with one or more of the six Division of Student Affairs Strategic Goals.

SUCCESES: Military Admissions, Peer Mentoring (PAVE Program), Vet Camp, New Student Conference Programs, the Aggie Shields Text Book Lending Library, and Development (fundraising) have produced the greatest “immediate impact” results. These programs are instrumental in connecting student veterans with resources to enhance their retention, persistence, graduation, and employment success.

In the past four years, the military admissions process was refined and now plays an indispensable role in the success of Aggie student veterans in three ways:

- Increasing veteran admission acceptance and enrollment rates.
- Increasing first semester undergraduate GPAs
- By promoting and connecting new students with essential VRSC transition services and resources before and after their arrival at TAMU (i.e., “engagement” that enhances retention, persistence, graduation, and employment rates).

One year ago, the Military Admissions process was formalized into the Military Admissions Program for Integrative Transitions (MAPIT) and is now the third VRSC “Core Program” (with the Aggie Veteran Network & PAVE). Even though MAPIT is just beginning, it received a 2015-2016 Bronze NASPA Excellence Award and this year a MAPIT staff member also received the John J. Koldus Award in 2017 for exceptional interest in overall student development. This recognition and recent initial (limited) data indicate that there is significant untapped potential to enhance overall student veteran success through future enhancements.

As one of the original 12 Peer Advising for Veteran Education (PAVE) schools, TAMU now mentors some of the other 38 PAVE schools. The TAMU PAVE Program is now setting Program Best Practices as we uniquely integrate PAVE to leverage the power of the other two Core Programs. The funded GA position has made a substantial impact on PAVE organization, outreach, recruiting, strategic planning, and student engagement. The TAMU PAVE Program also achieved a DSA “High Impact Practice” designation this past year.

Approximately 91% of the new undergrad student vets attend a veteran NSC presentation and about half attend VET Camp. Survey feedback indicates a high degree of student satisfaction in terms of increasing awareness of available resources and preparation for classes. Initial Vet Camp data shows a 98% persistence rate (3 or more semesters) for the initial participants!

The Aggie Shields Text Book Lending Library has been a significant success. In the 2016-17 school year, the library saved military-affiliated student over \$84,000 in text book costs. In the fall semester 2017 alone, this amount increased to over \$61,000.

The VRSC Development Program has exceeded all expectations by a wide margin. In the first year, donations totaled nearly \$40,000. Total receipts have more than doubled in each of the next four years. Since opening in 2012, the VRSC has raised nearly \$4,000,000 with another \$470,000 pledged to support scholarships, books, Aggie Rings, programs, events, academic classes and emergency stipends to prevent “financial failure.” In June 2017, the VRSC published its first formal VRSC Development Plan that provides a strategic roadmap to grow future donations provided that additional resources are provided to support this effort.

Other program successes that are fully funded by external resources include: Veteran specific courses each fall; Dog Tags to Degrees; Faculty/Staff/Advisor Seminars & Webinars; Student, Faculty & Staff Veteran Recognition Programs; Equine Riding Therapy; the Veteran Academic Academy; and the VA Work Study Program. NOTE: ALL VRSC programs and events have been completely funded by donors or external resources for the past 26 months (since August 2015).

IN NEED OF WORK OR CANCELLED: Since 2014, the VRSC cancelled 17 programs to focus on programs that have greater impact for more students. At the bottom of this section is a list of cancelled programs and the reason for termination. Note – 8 of the 17 were cancelled in the last year and 5 of these 8 were eliminated due to insufficient staff/resources. Without additional resources, the VRSC will be forced to cancel additional programs or events in the next year.

The Aggie Veteran Network (AVN) (a VRSC Core Program) is undergoing significant changes and challenges. While the original concept provided a powerful resource to support student veterans, the rapid growth and size created maintenance challenges. When resources become available, “AVN 2.0” will accommodate a wider range of resources, increased communication, and an enhanced networking capability through a web-based application. The inability of DSA DoIT to provide resources has this upgrade on a “hold” status while we look for “volunteer” assistance.

The area with the “greatest need of work,” is not a VRSC program; it is a VRSC process. The ability to obtain data and complete formal, long-term assessment of programs and our student population is the greatest VRSC strategic challenge! In the first few years, VRSC programming grew quickly to fill immediate needs. More recently, we have streamlined and cancelled programs to increase efficiency, stretch limited resources, and provide greater impact. Detailed data to support these decisions was rarely available, however, it wasn’t required; the decisions were intuitively obvious. This “decision by intuition” process will become increasingly ineffective as the VRSC matures. Better data and long-term comparative assessment that focuses on student veteran success metrics will be required to enhance future programming to support retention, persistence and graduation goals.

The VRSC also must meet the following assessment related requirements: The Division of Student Affairs new (data intensive) Annual Report and a Comprehensive Program Review (a 5 year requirement). Ideally, all of these would be tied to the university assessment requirement (WEAVE). The combination of these requirements is beyond the capability of a small VRSC staff. The solution to this challenge will require additional resources to develop and implement a comprehensive and complimentary assessment plan.

VRSC Programs Cancelled:

1. Veteran Education Transfer (VET) Program - Too much overhead to support too few students/Program structure not organized for success.
2. Deployed Aggie Support Program - Too much maintenance/fewer deployed Aggies/Lack of Use.

Updated 8/21/17

3. ATM Vet Mentor Program - Lack of use/too time intensive; AVN and PAVE replaced this function.
4. AggieE-Vets - Grant expired.
5. College of Engineering & STEM Veteran Track/Support Program - Grant not pursued due to timing and academic concerns in the College of Engineering.
6. Delta Company Short-Term Book Loan Program - Lack of use/high administrative cost; the Aggie Shields Textbook Loan Library now fills this need.
7. Aggie Gold Star Network -Lack of student volunteers and lack of use (even though TAMU has approximately 50 survivors enroll each year, these students typically do not want to be identified and other existing TAMU resources can be obtained through the VRSC on an “as needed” basis).
8. Aggie Adaptive Sports Programs - Lack of student interest/volunteers to maintain the organization.
9. Veteran Writing Program - Lack of interest/use and the grad student who initiated the program graduated.
10. Coalition of Local Mental Health Resources - Lack of Staff/Not feasible as a “stand-alone” program; will be included in the new Aggie Veteran Network as a separate category of resources.
11. Up-Armoring Relationships - Lack of participation and insufficient staff. The VRSC will maintain the relationship with Dr. Snyder to conduct future events (vice a full program) as needed.
12. Department of Defense Vietnam Commemorative Partner Program - Insufficient staff to maintain as a full program/No direct academic benefit. The VRSC will support individual events as limited resources permit.
13. Gratitude Initiative - Lack of contact and programming with the non-profit and student organizations – no tangible benefit to VRSC mission. And poor use of limited VRSC resources.
14. VetConnect Program - Lack of staff hours to adequately support “high overhead” coordination. These events will continue at a reduced level under the leadership of the TAMU Student Veteran Association and the PAVE Peer Mentor Program.
15. Coalition of Military/Veteran Related Student Organizations - Lack of participation and follow-up with many of these student organizations. The new VRSC Strategic Plan places a future focus on achieving excellence with a limited number of “Key Military-Affiliated Student Organizations” to specifically only include Delta Company, Student Veteran Association, Aggie Shields and Aggies Support USO.
16. Military Order of the Purple Heart & Wounded Warrior Awareness Program - While TAMU will retain the “Purple Heart” University designation, the staff resources previously required to maintain this relationship are no longer cost effective (i.e., too many staff hours to support too few students). Limited functions to support these future efforts will be delegated/transferred to either a Delta Company or Student Veteran Association leader.
17. Veteran Legal Initiative Program - Insufficient staff resources to provide detailed/time consuming coordination between the Houston Bar Association and local veteran organizations to support an effort that few TAMU student utilize.

What do you see as your department’s financial priorities in the next 3 – 5 years (FY19-FY23)?

In the past 5 years, the number of enrolled student veterans and dependents has more than doubled; there are now over 4,000 military-affiliated students. By comparison, if the overall TAMU enrollment had the same growth rate, the campus would be home to over 106,000 students today. While veteran enrollment increases are slowing, student veteran growth will still outpace university growth by a wide margin in the foreseeable future. As such, the VRSC financial priorities must include funding to support the following:

- Additional staff (SDS II Position) to manage and assess partnerships and related programming to ensure that future resources are efficiently focused on student veteran retention, persistence, graduation, and employment success.
- Larger space and new workstations to accommodate staff and student workers to support programs.
- Management of development program to proactively align donor funds with resource needs.
 - o Increase veteran/spouse scholarships
 - o Continue to fund 100% of program and event costs with donor funds – the VRSC expended ~\$14,600 more than it received this year for programs and administrative overhead.
 - o Reinforce “Best Practice” successes (i.e., MAPIT, PAVE, AVN and others)
- Maintenance of minimum adequate reserves - the VRSC will begin this year with \$3,673 deficit and no means to fund current year or future year increases.

The immediate financial priority must get the VRSC out of the “cyclic Catch-22” that includes requirements for “evidence-based success” (data), resources, and staff. The VRSC is faced with the following dilemma:

1. Without evidence-based success (Data) we can’t justify Resources
2. Without Resources we can’t support Staff
3. Without Staff we can’t produce evidence-based success (Data)...(See line #1 again)

To break this cycle, the VRSC must fill the SDS II position and receive an increase to fund administrative overhead (i.e., things that donors tend not to support!)

How many reclassifications did you have approved in FY17?	Total financial impact:
1	\$8000
How many equity adjustments did you have approved in FY17?	Total financial impact:
0	
How many one-time merit increases did you have approved in FY17?	Total financial impact:
1	\$2400
How many hiring adjustments did you have approved in FY17?	Total financial impact:
0	

Additional comments, special considerations, etc.

The previous SAFAB requests that were approved for the VRSC were a critical component to previous national rankings (excellence) and are critical to reverse our recent decline in the rankings in terms of student veteran support. The previous requests were also instrumental in our ability to raise the nearly \$4 million in support of our students.

I am well aware of the significant amount of time, energy and effort that our SAFAB Student Board members out into this process...THANK YOU for your hard work and consideration of this important request.

SAFAB Comments/Notes:

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