

| SAFAB Use Only | |
|----------------|----|
| YES | NO |



Student Affairs Fee
Advisory Board
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

VRSC Funding Request Form FY2026

Department:

Veteran Resource & Support Center

Program, Service or Operation Requested:

New Position (Graduate Assistant – Aggie Shields)

General Description:

The Don & Ellis Knauss Veteran Resource & Support Center (VRSC) is home to the Aggie Shields Library where textbooks may be checked out by Aggie Veterans and military-affiliated students each semester. Prior to the first class day of the semester students electronically submit their class schedule and their books are pulled and packaged for pick up. And the library is open on weekdays throughout the semester for students to access as needed. To date, the lending library has saved military-affiliated students nearly one million dollars in textbook costs. This program is currently managed by the recognized student organization, Aggie Shields. As this program grows and the scope of academic support provided to Aggie Veterans expands, a paid graduate assistant is needed to provide efficiency and consistency in daily management of Aggie Shields.

Request Type:

- Full Increase One-Time Partial/Matching

Type of Funds Requested:

- UAF Other

General Questions

How does this address an important need and/or positively impact students?

Most Aggie Veterans and military-affiliated students are using finite resources earned through personal or parental military service (military educational benefits) to pay for their education, and many of them have limited or no-income aside from the small stipend that is part of their benefits. Aggie Shields Textbook Library supports hundreds of students by decreasing or even eliminated the rising financial burden of purchasing textbooks, ensuring their access to required material for their academic success.

The addition of a GA for Aggie Shields will accomplish three increasingly pressing issues with the program. The main issue is ensuring consistent and effective service to our students. The last two years, the student organization that runs the library has struggled with membership and leadership. As a volunteer-based organization, it has become increasingly difficult to ensure the availability of library liaisons & volunteers to effectively operate the library. This has resulted in numerous delays to students in receiving the necessary materials for their

courses. Next, having a dedicated GA for library operations will provide us with the ability to research best practices of other libraries, database and operation systems, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the library. Lastly, by addressing the first two issues, we will be able to ensure the VRSC can continue to be good stewards of the funding provided by our generous donors. Aggie Shields has received multiple endowments to fund textbook purchases and support the academic success of military-connected students. Having this position would allow us to maximize that funding within the library.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?

The first two pillars of the Aggie Veteran support model are Academics and Financial. Aggie Shields tangibly supports both those pillars. It also supports the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Priority 1 – Inclusive and Caring Communities, Priority 3 – Leveraging Resources, and Priority 4 – Student Learning through engagement.

Please provide data, evidence, and/or input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.

The Aggie Shields Textbook Library began in 2015 as a student operated library of around thirty books. The library has grown to over 6,000 volumes and has saved over 3,500 students nearly one million dollars in textbook costs. This growth has resulted in a library that cannot be adequately managed by a volunteer student organization. In addition to what is already contained within the library, there is an increasing need for items such as calculators, clickers and platforms/applications required by professors that warrant extensive research to see how the library could potentially help offset those rising costs to student education.

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

The VRSC has been utilizing our current VA work study students, removing them from other pressing tasks, to meet the needs of the library. This cannot continue or other operations and programs will suffer. Our full-time staff member who advises Aggie Shields has worked to improve operational efficiency of the organization and the library, however their time dedicated to this effort is extremely limited as advising is only 10% of their current job description and duties.

If funding is granted, what metrics will you use to evaluate success of this program/service/operation?

Historical data already exists for the number of users and textbooks. The implementation of a GA will allow for a more in-depth collection of data for the library, as well as allow for the development of a baseline user satisfaction and impact. From there we will be able to effectively measure positive impact on changes in efficiency to include user experience and number of users and textbooks each semester.

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

Yes. The current endowment and donations for Aggie Shields are dedicated for the purchase of textbooks and supplies for military-connected students. The development officer for

veteran support is looking to expand future donations to include overall support for the library, which could potentially aid in the endowed funding of a GA position. However, to sell this option to donors, the library's efficiencies and capabilities will need to be improved to show sufficient impact to donors.

Total Estimated Cost

| Funding Description | Amount |
|--|-----------------|
| Graduate Assistant – Aggie Shields | \$16,000 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| <i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i> | |
| TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED | \$16,000 |