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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 (Student Development Specialist II – Veteran Academic Success)

General Description:

I am asking for this position because the Veteran Resource & Support Center (VRSC) needs an academic professional dedicated full time to supporting Aggie Veterans.

Aggie Veterans have unique course scheduling and sequencing challenges. They are eligible for course credit earned in the military, most are transfer students coming to A&M with credits from multiple institutions, and most have families and are attending school utilizing limited education benefits. The Student Development Specialist II – Veteran Academic Success (SDS II) will be a strategic partner for Aggie Veterans focusing on each student’s unique situation and providing consistent and familiar support throughout the student’s academic journey from acceptance through graduation.

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?

Aggie Veterans are much older and have more complex life experiences than traditional students. They come to Texas A&M from a strategy-based lifestyle where they had consistent and familiar resources that enabled them to accomplish their military mission. As college students, their mission now is earning their degree, and they need similar types of consistent and familiar resources they experienced in the military to help guide them through the complex and unfamiliar world of higher education. The SDS II, under the supervision of the Assistant Director – Veteran Academic Success, will build relationships with students strategically aligning their unique academic background and current life obligations to their chosen degree plan.

Aggie Veterans are using finite funds earned through military service to pay for school, and many are supporting a family. They do not have the resources or the time for second or third attempts at being academically successful. They need strategic and personalized academic support that caters to their unique needs and life constraints so they can get it right the first time. Student veterans have access to many academic support resources at Texas A&M to help them be successful, but it is challenging for them to communicate their unique situation to someone who does not understand their background and experiences. Oftentimes Aggie Veterans just need to talk through potential academic/life scenarios with an experienced problem solver and be able to reconnect with the same person to finalize their plan. The SDS II is that experienced specialist able to strategically guide each Student Veteran to the resources available and help the student adjust and realign as their academic and life situations mature.

Housing internal to the VRSC an academic support team fluent in the needs of Aggie Veterans and providing tailored service is vital to student academic success. The SDS II will serve students and assist the Assistant Director in fostering close relationships with colleges and building a program that caters to the needs of Aggie Veterans. This academic support initiative ties directly to President Welsh's vision for Texas A&M to be the #1 Veteran Serving Institution in the country in two ways. First, by enabling Aggie veterans to achieve higher GPAs, graduate on time, and be more competitive in the job or advanced education market than their counterparts from other universities. Second, as recruitment of veterans to attend Texas A&M expands, providing this specialized academic success resource presents an attractive incentive. Direct access to consistent academic support will greatly enhance the learning experience of every Aggie Veteran and serve as another example of how Texas A&M is the #1 Veteran Serving Institution in the country.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?

The VRSC Aggie Veteran support model has four pillars, the first being academics. A dedicated academic support program internal to the VRSC supports that pillar. 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. In addition, the 2024 Student Experience Study Report listed eight highest priority recommendations. One of those dealt with academic success stating: “Academic advisors are ESSENTIAL to the student experience. Students desire to meet with an academic advisor who understands the curriculum, the relationship between course options and career paths/goals and how to balance the rigors of course schedules with competing workloads. And they want to keep the same advisor over all four years so that they have a relationship of trust and understanding of the student's goals. Therefore, the university should adapt academic advising to meet these needs through training and professional development, stabilize the movement of advisors within the university and invest in academic advisors for a target of 275:1 as a lynchpin for student success and the student experience.” The VRSC has a responsibility to recognize the unique needs of our Aggie Veteran population and proactively remove barriers to their success, especially in academics. The creation of a direct access and enduring academic support program for Aggie Veterans executed by the SDS II affirms the VRSC's commitment to supporting Aggie Veterans in their quest for academic success.

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

For over 10 years the Corps of Cadets has employed a model very similar to what I am requesting. Dedicated academic support specialists guide cadets down their academic pathway from New Student Conference through graduation. These specialists have strong relationships with colleges and understand the unique responsibilities and time commitments of cadets who are members of organizations that form the face of our university, have recurring military training obligations, and are on a graduation schedule dictated by a military service scholarship. The effectiveness of this dedicated academic success model has proven successful every year as the Corps GPA, graduation rates, and job placement rates outpace the university average.

Aggie Veterans face several unique challenges that support a replication of the existing Corps model in the VRSC. The majority of Aggie Veterans are transfer students, are utilizing finite education benefits to earn their degree, and those still serving on active duty, in the national guard, or in the reserves have military training and sometimes deployment obligations in addition to their coursework. A dedicated academic success program in the VRSC, like that in the Corps, will produce quality results for Aggie Veterans that includes increased confidence in their academic path to graduation and into a career, and an overall more enjoyable experience as a student at Texas A&M.

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

None.

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

Grade point average, graduation rates, job placement after graduation, VRSC belonging-related program participation rates.

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

Yes, other sources have been considered, but are not sustainable long term.

Total Estimated Cost

Funding Description	Amount
Student Development Specialist II – Veteran Academic Success	\$85,000
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$85,000