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Student Affairs Fee
Advisory Board
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

VRSC Funding Request Form (#2) FY2023

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department:

Veteran Resource & Support Center

Program, Service or Operation Requested:

Reclassification - (Admin Coordinator II to Admin Coordinator III)

General Description:

The VRSC uses career ladders to maintain a high-quality team of student affairs professionals. Taking care of our staff is vital to long-term success of the department and our students. This request is for a staff member who has qualified and earned a career ladder advancement through excellence, leadership, and selflessly volunteering to assume additional responsibilities.

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?

In the past 9 years, student veteran enrollment has more than doubled and due to COVID-19 we expect another enrollment surge over the next 1-2 years. As a result, the VRSC has significantly increased programming and outreach with a much larger and dynamic staff.

The VRSC now houses staff from 9 separate campus and external entities to provide a full range of “application to vocation” support that maximizes the leadership potential of over 1,200 student veterans for future service to our state, nation, and world. The VRSC Administrative Coordinator is a critical position in providing support for a very unique student support model.

Retaining talented staff who understand student veterans, our programs, and evidence-based practices is the key to creating even more efficiencies that ensures Texas A&M remains the “Destination of Choice” for student veteran success.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?

Retaining the Administrative Coordinator is instrumental in the accomplishment of all six of the VRSC Strategic Goals. Each of these goals has specific strategies, tactics, and timelines that rely on increased/improved campus partnerships, assessment and communication; experience in this position is critical to enhancing the VRSC “resource & support” mission!

As a reclassified position with greater responsibility and experience, this position will also significantly contribute to all six of the DSA Strategic Goals, the university mission, Vision 2020, and the TAMU Foundation’s “Lead by Example” development campaign.

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

The chart below highlights the growth of the VRSC in terms of:

- Campus and external entities that are housed in the VRSC.
- Full time staff, Grad Assistants and Student Workers housed or employed in the VRSC.

	Admin Assistant	Admin Coord II	Admin Coord III?
	2014	2019	2021
# Entities Supported/Housed in the VRSC	3	5	9
Full Time Staff Housed in the VRSC	5	9	13
GA's Working in the VRSC	0	2	4
Student Workers Employed by the VRSC	9	15	24
Total Staff	14	26	41

When the VRSC opened in 2012, we were assigned a basic Admin Assistant. By 2019, the VRSC nearly doubled in size as programs and events grew exponentially. It was decided in the hiring process that the position should be increased to an Admin Coordinator II. With the move into the newly renovated space, the VRSC has nearly doubled in size (again) as the post-COVID programming continues to expand services to our student veterans and their families.

While many of the student workers (and Grad Assistants) are supervised by someone other than the Admin Coordinator, this position is responsible for 100% of the administration for all of the VA Work Study students (to include the application process, hiring, timekeeping and pay, on/off-boarding, training, and scheduling, etc.).

In the past two years, the staff member in this position has voluntarily assumed additional duties to include serving on the following committees: IT Liaison, DSA Awards Committee, DSA Admin Professionals Planning Committee, and SECC.

With the move to the new VRSC, this staff member is responsible for the coordination of a vastly increased number of events to include room set-up, food/drinks, and audio-visual support. In the month of September 2021, there are at least 11 separate events requiring support to enhance application to vocation services for our student veterans.

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

The VRSC continually mitigates increased demands caused by student growth to maximize efficiencies; this position is critical in creating these efficiencies. In the past two years, the VRSC has:

- Realigned and streamlined existing programs to decrease full-time staff task load.
- Discontinued the partnership with the University of Michigan for the Peer Advising Program (PAVE); replaced it with a partnership with the Academic Success Center to create the Veteran Aggie Leaders for Outreach and Resources (VALOR) Program to reduce reporting requirements and eliminate funding requirements.
- Discontinued the Veteran Legal Initiative Program – Reason: 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 utilized.
- Discontinued the Dog Tags to degrees Program - Reason: Lack of staff hours to adequately support “high overhead” coordination for a major event.
- Discontinued/Realigned the Military Order of the Purple Heart & Wounded Warrior Awareness Program - Reason: 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).
- Discontinued/Realigned the VetConnect Program – Reason: Lack of staff hours to adequately support “high overhead” coordination.
- Hired additional VA Work Study (funded by the VA) student workers and increased their responsibilities.
- Transitioned the Aggie Veteran Network from version 2.0 to 3.0 using a LinkedIn platform to significantly reduce staff task load and eliminate the requirement for an additional full-time staff member.
- Assumed the TAMU System veteran services mission. Hired additional staff using TAMUS funds and leveraged this staff member to assist with external campus engagement.
- Created a new formal partnership with Service 2 School to assist with the student veteran recruiting and Military Admissions.
- Increased collaboration with campus/community partners to create new efficiencies.

As a result of these changes, the VRSC is limiting the need for additional full time staff. However, in a small department that is no longer growing and with little staff turnover, advancement opportunities are limited. Reclassifications are the only opportunity for advancement, and they must be available when they are earned.

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

The most direct measure of success for this reclassification will be that the VRSC will continue to maximize efficiencies through experienced assessment and WILL NOT request any additional full time staff in the foreseeable future. The success of this Admin Coordinator III position will also be measured against the new VRSC Strategic Plan Goal #3 – “Refine, Document, and recognize collaborative processes that accomplish departmental goals, ensure completion of individual tasks, and maximize professional development of all staff housed in the VRSC.”

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

YES! The long-term goal is to support several VRSC positions (possibly this reclassified position) and future programming growth through future endowment funding. While recent development efforts have been very successful, endowment funding for staff positions will take longer as we bridge the near-term funding gaps.

VRSC reserves are not an option. Given current funding and growth, the VRSC reserves cannot keep up with the minimum balance requirements in the post-COVID environment.

Total Estimated Cost

Funding Description	Amount
Reclassify Administrative Coordinator II to Administrative Coordinator III (salary/benefits)	\$13,000
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$13,000

THANK YOU for your careful consideration of this request!