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Student Affairs Fee
Advisory Board
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

VRSC Funding Request Form (#1) FY2023

Department should complete one form for each individual request

Department:

Veteran Resource & Support Center

Program, Service or Operation Requested:

Reclassification – Student Development Specialist II to Student Development Specialist III
Campus Partnership & Assessment Coordinator (NOTE – This is a repeat submission from last year.)

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. Much of this growth is attributed to graduate and distance ed student veterans. While these students often require less assistance than undergrad student veterans, it is much harder to engage and assess their needs that enhance success. Additionally, for these students, the ability to build synergistic programming that leverages other campus resources is more complex and requires a staff member with additional skills and experience.

As the VRSC continues to mature and refine programs, the value of assessment increases. The ability to efficiently obtain and link data with multiple partners, programs and our student needs is one of the greatest VRSC strategic challenges! As we enter the post-COVID environment, creating new efficiencies, greater impact and cost-savings will be an increasingly important need for all campus departments – Retaining talented staff who understand student veterans, our programs and evidence-based practice is the key to a more efficient future for the department.

To maximize the VRSC's ability to engage student veterans, our marketing, communications, and social media presence must become more robust. This staff member has assumed numerous duties in these areas and these responsibilities are being added to the position description. It should be noted also that the VRSC is one of only five DSA departments that does not have a dedicated full-time marketing staff member.

Additionally, the VRSC has initiated a new Veteran Enrollment Management & Recruiting Program. This staff member is assuming additional marketing/communications duties in this program to support over 9 TAMU departments/colleges that have expressed interest in proactively recruiting more student veterans.

Our intent is to reclassify this position to include the marketing/communications tasks and NOT seek funding for another FTE staff member.

What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?

Retaining the Campus Partnership & Assessment 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 ability of the VRSC to significantly increase donor funding has been the result of numerous factors. Two the key factors have been quality "return on investment" assessment and a more aggressive marketing campaigns. In the last three years (since this position was created), the VRSC raised over \$9.3 million in donations; this is more than (nearly double) all of the combined donations in the first six years the VRSC was open. Retaining this staff member with this type of unique experience is critical to future fundraising success in the COVID-19 environment.

While it is difficult to quantify, the VRSC is more efficient with the increased assessment responsibilities of this position (See next section).

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 several 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 eliminating 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 state funding for additional full time staff in the foreseeable future. The success of this SDS III position will also be measured against the new VRSC Strategic Plan goals and tactics that pertain to program assessment, marketing and communication.

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
Reclassification of SDS II to SDS III (salary/benefits)	\$12,000
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED	\$12,000

THANK YOU for your careful consideration of this request!