Peralta Community College District
Student Services Program Review

Introduction

The primary objective of program review is to assure the quality of the PCCD Student Services programs, one that reflects student needs and encourages student success. It is a systematic process for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data concerning a program and its services. Recommendations for each program will be linked and incorporated into the unit’s planning process, and decisions concerning schedule proposals, services changes, budget development, and hiring practices. Student services program reviews will be completed every three years. Finally, program review is intended to support and complement the completion of annual plans required of each unit.

The VPs of Student Services from the four Peralta colleges will establish the schedule for program reviews.

Program Review Process

Self Study Team and Report
The VP Student Services will collaborate with the Dean of Student Services, if applicable, and the coordinator of the unit to establish the self-study team, which will consist of the coordinator of the unit, at least one classified employee and one faculty member and student if appropriate.

- The self-study report will consist of both a narrative and an action plan based on responses to the questions on the self-study narrative.

Validation Team and Summary of Findings

- The validation team will consist of at least one manager (Dean of Student Services), one faculty member, one classified staff member and one student from the college or another college within the district. The team will determine the chair. At the team’s option the validation team may include an external member.
- The validation team will determine the accuracy of the self-study report and make recommendations. Determine thoroughness.
- The validation team will meet with the self-study team to share/discuss their summary of findings.
- The validation team chair will submit the final report to the VP Student Services who will summarize, analyze, and recommend the action plan to the college President.

Self Study Narrative
The following questions serve as the basis for the self-study narrative. All questions may not be relevant to your program.
I. Background Information

A. Describe:

1. UNIT: Veteran’s Affairs Program

2. HISTORY: The mission of the Veteran Services Program is to enhance the educational opportunities for all new and continuing veteran students. The program was created to help veterans receive the resources and services needed for college success. Merritt College strives to assist veteran students through key support services such as academic advising. The college has provided services for veterans since the college was located at the old Grove Street site in North Oakland. There were two components -- an administrator and an hourly classified certifying official. Services are provided through in-person and on-line advising.

3. PURPOSES AND NEEDS ASSESSED:
   The Veteran Services Office serves approximately anywhere from 60-70 students each semester. The program has an administrative supervisor, a part-time veterans counselor, as well as a classified certifying official. Since Fall 2008 semester, the Counseling Department has allocated a part-time counselor to better serve the growing veteran population.

4. CURRENT COMPONENTS:
   Anthony Powell – Dean of Student Services, Supervisor of Veteran’s Affairs Program
   Merry Labat - Certifying Official
   Jim Sweeney - Veteran’s Affairs Counselor

B. DESCRIBE UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM:

The program assists in the educational training of veterans at the college level. We help veteran students secure financial assistance, books and supplies. The Veteran Services Program also assists veterans in obtaining access to the college’s academic, career and vocational, instructional and support services. Priority registration is given to Veteran students. We provide a welcoming and inviting environment for veterans that will aid in their transition to a four-year college or university.

Entitlement of educational benefits and community needs are based on eligibility and contact with the Veteran’s Rehabilitation Office in Oakland; the Veteran’s Administration Office in San Diego, the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma and the State Approving Agency in Sacramento. Current resources used by the Merritt College Veteran Services Office are: VAONCE User Guide, and the Waves Handbook.
C. CURRENT RESOURCES:

- Currently we have shared access to Counseling Department facilities and through the Dean of Student Services access to some funds for office supplies and a part-time student worker.

D. PROGRAM GOALS:

Program Objective 1

The Department of Veterans Affairs can take 30 days to process a student’s claim to receive educational benefits. In order to ensure veterans receive their payments on time, steps will be taken to increase the number of VA students who file paperwork prior to the first day of the fall 2010 semester.

*Rationale:* Students who receive benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs often rely on the payments to stay enrolled in classes. By applying for the benefits early students can plan on their payments being on time.

*Measures*
Beginning late spring 2010 semester, VA staff will begin a campaign to increase the number of students who apply for their VA benefits prior to the first day of the Fall 2010 semester. The campaign will include increased grassroots effort to notify students of the benefit of turning in paperwork early. Success will be measured by comparing the number of completed VA certifications between Spring 2010 semester and Fall 2010 semester. The data will then be contrasted with the same data from the previous year.
Results
Results will be added in Spring 2011.

Conclusions
Conclusions will be added in Spring 2011.

Program Objective 2
83% of veterans will continue at Merritt College the following fall after the completion of one year of study.

Rationale: Retention sets the tone for how effectively the students are being served. By ensuring a low dropout rate for community college veterans, it helps chart the level of intervention that the veterans are receiving as well as their motivation to remain actively involved with the Veteran Affairs.

Measures
In Fall 2011, The Veterans Affairs will track the persistence rates for veterans who continued at Merritt College or transferred to a college or university during the fall 2010 semester.

Results
Results will be added in fall 2010.

Conclusions
Conclusions will be added in fall 2010.

Program Objective 3
Merritt College will see a 10% percent increase in veteran enrollment after implementation of the Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill.
Rationale: Supported by new GI Bill benefits, military veterans are entering post-secondary institutions at a stunning rate that is expected to increase further in the future. At a recent conference of veteran program administrators, a representative from the Veterans Affairs Department estimated that veteran enrollment could increase by 25 percent nationwide over the next several years.

Measures
Beginning the Fall 2010 admissions cycle, VA staff will continue to build upon efforts to attract veterans at Merritt College. The efforts will include outreach, workshops, and implementation of programs directly aimed at increasing veteran enrollment. Success will be measured by comparing the number of veterans that were accepted and enrolled for the Fall 2009 and in contrast to Fall 2010.

Results
Results will be added following the end of Fall 2010 semester.

Conclusions
Conclusions will be added following the end of Fall 2010 semester.

Results
Questions on outcomes can be answered by the Administrative Supervisor.

C. How do you know that the program is meeting its goals?

We continue to have returning students who maintain academic eligibility, earn AA/AS degrees and transfer to four colleges and universities.

D. What are the indicators that measure your present goals?

We can monitor how long a student has been certified at Merritt College for their courses, thus indicating they have remained in good academic standing

E. What are expected results of these indicators?

- When students clearly understand the complexity of receiving federal VA benefits they are more likely to make timely decisions on how to best utilize the benefits in which they are entitled.

- Retention sets the tone for how effectively the students are being served. By ensuring a low dropout rate for community college veterans, it helps chart the level of intervention that the veterans are receiving as well as their motivation to remain actively involved with the Veteran Affairs.
II. Student Demographics of Those Using Your Services (by numbers)

A. Who do you serve?

Veterans, their dependents, and children of Veterans.

B. TABLE 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNKOWN</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Student Performance and Feedback

A. How do students who receive services perform?

Retention for these students is generally better when they have the funds to pay for tuition, books, transportation, housing, etc.

A. How do their counterparts who do not receive services perform? [If data are available.]

Generally students who do not receive benefits will not be able to pay for housing, utility bills, books and tuition and the chances of them dropping classes is more likely.

C. What do students have to say about student services [CCSSE Reports 2007 & 2009 as well as other surveys]? 

Students have been appreciative to have help in navigating the VA guidelines, processing applications, etc.
D. Have you used statewide or national assessment instruments to assess your program?

National accreditation to provide VA Services to students is monitored by the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma and California accreditation is monitored by the State Approving Agency in Sacramento. The Veterans Program at Merritt College has put in place a Student Satisfaction Survey that will be distributed by the Veterans Official by fall 2010. The survey in question is below:

**STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY OF THE VETERANS PROGRAM**

Your input will help us to continually improve the quality of the support we provide you and other students.

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about the Veterans Program:

   - The program is helpful with my concerns.
   - The staff are prompt in responding to my needs.
   - The number of staff is adequate to meet my needs.
   - The staff promote student independence and responsibility.
   - Appointments are available when I need them.
   - Services that I need are provided in a timely fashion.
   - Telephone calls are returned promptly.

2. How satisfied are you with the services Veterans Program Provides?

   - Priority Registration
   - Benefits Support
   - Parent School Letter Facilitation
   - State and Federal Support
   - Counseling Support
   - Referral to other campus services
   - Referral to community agencies
   - Other: ______________________

3. Please rate the effectiveness of the following Veterans Program staff:

   - Counselors
   - Coordinators
   - Front Office Student Services Assistants
   - Front Office Staff

4. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about your Veterans Program Counseling experience –

   - Counseling appointments are available when I need them.

The Veterans Program Counselor...

   - understood my Academic needs.
   - listened well and summarized my issues accurately.
...met my goal for the counseling appointment.
...gave accurate instructional and student services information.
...Is Knowledgeable with regard to my Veterans Benefits.

How much do you agree with the following statements?

The Veterans Program staff...

- ...are friendly and polite.
- ...are respectful.
- ...promptly addressed my need.
- ...responded to my need.
- ...communicated clearly.
- ...provided accurate information.

### Comments

Comments – Please be specific in your comments or suggestions. (Use additional paper, if required.) Your responses and any information you provide will be kept confidential and used only for the improvement of the Veterans Program and the benefit of you and your fellow students.

May we contact you if we have questions about your responses or need more details? If so, print your name/student ID here: _____

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FALL 2007 (#/%)</th>
<th>FALL 2008 (#/%)</th>
<th>FALL 2009 (#/%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERM GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence FA TO SP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. Program Effectiveness

(How do you know that your program/service/ department is effective?)

A. Interdepartmental/ Program/Campus Collaboration
1. Please provide a list of memberships in standing committees and governance groups.

The program assists in the educational training of veterans at the college level. Community needs assessment are based on contact with the Veteran’s Rehabilitation Office in Oakland; the Veteran’s Administration Office in San Diego, the VA Regional Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma and the State Approving Agency in Sacramento. Current resources used by the Merritt College Veteran Services Office are: VAONCE User Guide, and the Waves Handbook.

2. How does the unit (and committees in which unit participates) support other administrative, student services and academic units in the college?

We work to help students understand what resources are available to them including Counseling, Financial Aid, DSPS, EOPS, and Admissions/Records.

3. If your program does have an impact on other programs/dept/service, please describe the nature of the relationship with the program/dept/service and the effectiveness of the relationship.

The Cashier’s office receives VA checks which are distributed to students, making student educational plans in the Counseling Department, receiving accommodations through DSPS, the Monthly enrollment verification given to instructors to fill out and return to VA Counselor.

B. Quantity of program/dept/service delivered (student utilization of services and student engagement)

1. How many students do you serve (unduplicated)?

   Fall 2005-Spring 2006: 71 students
   Fall 2006-Spring 2007: 43 students
   Fall 2007-Spring 2008: 36 students
   Fall 2008-Spring 2009: 53 students
   Fall 2009-Spring 2010: 74 students

2. How many appointments do you have on any given day?
   6-10 scheduled appointments, 4-5 drop-in appointments

3. How many contacts do you make with students?
   Approximately 15 student contacts per day in person, 5 contacts through phone appointments, and 3 through email conversations.
V. Student Learning Outcomes
   A. List the student learning outcomes that are presently being assessed. Describe the activities that will be or have been implemented to achieve the SLOs.

   **Student Learning Outcome 1**

   A veteran student will learn which documents to submit to the Veteran Services Certifying Official.

   1. DD-214
   2. Student Education Plan (drafted with Veteran Counselor)
   3. Letter of Eligibility
   4. Prior College or University Transcripts (official)
   5. Copy of Marriage License
   6. Birth Certificate

   **Student Learning Outcome 2**

   Students will learn how to correctly fill out the VA Application and Change of Program/Place of Training Form.

   **Student Learning Outcome 3**

   Students will have a clear understanding of their benefits chapter.

   1. Chapter 30
   2. Chapter 33
   3. Chapter 31
   4. Chapter 35
   5. Chapter 1606
   6. Chapter 1607
   7. Chapter 901
   8. Chapter 903

   *Rationale for SLO 1-3: When students clearly understand the complexity of receiving federal VA benefits they are more likely to make timely decisions on how to best utilize the benefits in which they are entitled.*

   **Student Learning Outcome 4**

   Students will have knowledge of majors that are approved by the State Approving Agency. Students will also learn that the Veteran’s Administration will only pay for classes related to his/her major.

   *Rationale: Student will Become knowledgeable regarding multiple majors. For example, a student can have only one major. They can receive an A.A.*
degree or Certificate or they may choose to transfer, but they can only choose one.

B. What additional student learning outcomes should be considered to demonstrate what your student should know and/or be able to do as a consequence of the service provided by your unit?

None.

VI. ACTION PLAN: Using the results of the data collected and discussed in the self-study, identify:

A. The future needs of the program.

- Schedule orientation every semester for new veteran students.
- Organize a veteran’s student club in order that the students can become involved in campus activities;
  interact with peers and discuss their needs and give suggestions on how they can be better served in order to enhance their college experience.

B. The future goals and methods of assessment of the program, including student learning outcomes.

- Create an annual Veteran’s Student Survey to identify and assess veteran student needs.
- Greater need for increased staffing support and stronger collaboration between instructional and student services to strengthen veteran services for program success.

C. The strategies and actions to be taken by the unit over the next six years to strengthen the program and meet the strategic goals of the program and the college.

- Current program delivery system provides an opportunity to increase the number of veteran students on campus. Continually adapt to the needs of veteran students and refine practices as needed to improve services they need.

D. The support needed by the unit in order to address issues resulting from the self-study.

- See summary below.
Validation Team Report

Unit reviewed: Veteran’s Affairs
Date: 02/23/2010
Self-Study Team:
- Anthony Powell
- Merry LaBat
- Jim Sweeney

Validation Team:

_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________
_______________________

Summary of Findings

Part A. Accuracy and Thoroughness of Self-Study/Action Plan (program strengths, areas for improvement, data collection, projection of future trends/support).

Strengths: Assists veteran students in securing financial assistance, books and supplies. The Veteran Services Program also assists veterans in obtaining access to the college’s academic, career and vocational, instructional and support services. Priority registration is given to Veteran students. We provide a welcoming and inviting environment for veterans that will aid in their transition to a four-year college or university.

Weakness: Greater need for increased staffing support and stronger collaboration between instructional and student services to strengthen veteran services for program success.

Opportunities: Current program delivery system provides an opportunity to increase the number of veteran students on campus. Continually adapt to the needs of veteran students and refine practices as needed to improve services they need.

Limitations: Most limitations on veteran services are defined by budget limitations, federal regulations and compliance office reviews.

Part B. Validation Team Recommendations

The team finds the Veterans Program at Merritt to be on point and an effective service for students, we suggest that more work to bring the learning outcomes up to speed by fall 2010, and a system must be put in place to ensure effective notification for Veterans with regard to priority registration dates. More counseling hours are also a vital need, many veterans are returning home and their benefits have expanded, the program must be
prepared to serve an influx of students and presently, though a strong program it is not ready to serve the potential numbers expected.