

2018-19 Veterans Enrollment Report

Prepared by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs
Pursuant to *Nevada Revised Statutes 396.507*

November 2019

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Nevada, Reno
Nevada State College
College of Southern Nevada
Great Basin College
Truckee Meadows Community College
Western Nevada College
Desert Research Institute



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Background and Purpose

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is dedicated to supporting student veterans and their families in pursuing their educational goals. Student veterans are growing in number not only in Nevada, but across the nation. This particular student population often faces unique challenges in assimilating back into civilian life. It is the goal of NSHE and its institutions to provide the necessary services to support student veterans, in order to ensure their success in achieving their educational goals.

The purpose of this report is to meet requirements of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 396.507. This provision requires the Board of Regents to submit an annual report to the Legislature, or to the Legislative Committee on Education when the Legislature is not in regular session, which includes: (1) the number of students who are veterans or who are receiving payments or benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; (2) information about how policy changes may have affected the number of students who are veterans enrolled in the Nevada System of Higher Education; (3) the number of students who are veterans who graduated during the immediately preceding academic year; and (4) the efforts undertaken by each institution within the System to retain and graduate students who are veterans.

NSHE institutions have undertaken a significant technical implementation to improve the collection of veteran enrollment data to make it possible for veterans to self-identify on their application for admission. Full implementation was completed in time for the veterans to self-identify during the application process for the Fall 2016 semester. Since the application only collects data on new students, the institutions are also using various survey instruments to identify currently enrolled veterans who applied prior to fall 2016.

Due to the implementation schedule as it relates to this report, the data in this report is not comparable to past reports.



Student Veterans Data

Number of Identified Student Veterans: 6,030

For academic year 2018-19, 6,030 student veterans were identified across the seven NSHE teaching institutions. This figure is unduplicated and only captures students whose veterans' benefits were certified by an NSHE institution or who self-identified on an admission application.

Number of Student Veterans Receiving Payments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: 3,821

For academic year 2018-19, 3,821 student veterans were certified by an NSHE institution for the purpose of receiving federal veteran education benefits. This figure is unduplicated and only includes students who have been certified by an NSHE institution to receive benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Percent of Student Veterans by Gender: 71.1% Male, 28.9% Female

Of the student veterans identified as enrolled at an NSHE institution in academic year 2018-19, 71.1 percent were identified as male and 28.9 percent as female. Gender data is not available for all identified student veterans.

Average Age of Enrolled Student Veterans: 31.4 years old

For the identified student veterans enrolled in the 2018-19 academic year, the average age this student population was 31.4 years old as of September 2018.

Fall to Spring Retention: 72.2%

Of the identified student veterans that were enrolled in Fall 2018, 72.2 percent persisted and enrolled in the Spring 2019 term.

Number of Student Veterans Who Graduated: 1,205

During academic year 2018-19, 1,205 student veterans received a degree or certificate. The actual number may be higher as this excludes any veteran who did not receive benefits and/or self-identify as a veteran to the institution.

Areas of Study

State law requires that NSHE report “the most common areas of study among the students who are veterans.”

This data is reported by the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) category for student veterans enrolled during the 2018-19 academic year. The CIP codes used in this report are based on a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity. The CIP scheme was developed and is maintained by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. The CIP code is the accepted standard for the federal government on instructional program classifications in higher education and is used in a variety of education related surveys and databases within NSHE and across the country.

The top 15 CIP categories with the highest number of student veterans enrolled are noted in the following table.

Classification of Instructional Program Category	# of Students
24-Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies, and Humanities	1,048
52-Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	962
51-Health Professions and Related Programs	827
43-Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services	495
41-Science Technologies/Technicians	443
11-Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	267
14-Engineering	243
13-Education	229
45-Social Sciences	221
42-Psychology	215
26-Biological and Biomedical Sciences	184
50-Visual and Performing Arts	184
15-Engineering Technologies and Engineering-Related Fields	146
40-Physical Sciences	143
47-Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	140

Policy Changes

State law requires reporting of any information necessary to determine the impact of policy changes on the number of student veterans who are enrolled in NSHE. Two significant policy changes passed at the federal and state levels in prior years impact the criteria under which a veteran may be deemed a resident for tuition purposes, thus avoiding higher non-resident tuition charges under certain circumstances: 1.) The federal Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, and 2.) Measures passed by the 2013 and 2015 Nevada State Legislature amending NRS 396.540 to prohibit charging tuition to veterans honorably discharged within a certain number of years preceding their enrollment in an NSHE institution. An additional law was passed by congress late in 2018, amending the federal Veterans Choice and Accountability Act of 2014 to broaden the scope of veterans provided to include those utilizing VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment benefits. Lastly, in 2019, the Nevada legislature passed Assembly Bill 427 permitting veteran recipients of the Purple Heart Award to register for credit without registration, laboratory, or other mandatory fees. A summary of these policy changes follows. In addition, a summary of other military and veterans' education benefits under Board policy and state and federal law is available through the [NSHE website](#).

Impact: In academic year 2018-19, 616 new and continuing veterans were deemed residents for tuitions purposes. It is expected that with the expansion of the NRS 396.540 from two years to five years, the number of veterans seeking residency status under this provision will continue to grow.

Nevada Legislation

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 396.540 provides that the Board of Regents may fix the tuition charges for students at NSHE campuses, but must not charge tuition to certain students, including for example, students who are residents of Nevada. Existing Board policy under *Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3* (Tuition) and *Section 4* (Resident Students) of the Handbook recognizes the provisions contained in NRS 396.540.

The 2013 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 260 (Chapter 505, *Statutes of Nevada 2013*), which added "veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who were honorably discharged within the 2 years immediately preceding the date of matriculation of the veteran at a university, state college or community college within the System" to the list of students for whom the Board must not charge tuition under NRS 396.540. Subsequently, the 2015 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 76 (Chapter 13, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*) and amended this section of State law to increase the timeframe from two years to five years. Board policy also includes this exemption as set forth by the Nevada Legislature (*Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3*).

The 2019 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 427 (Chapter 320, *Statutes of Nevada 2019*) requiring the Nevada System of Higher Education' starting July 1, 2019, to waive the payment of registration fees and certain other fees assessed against students within the System who are veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who have been awarded the Purple Heart. This bill also provides for Purple Heart recipients receiving the waiver to be deemed a bona fide Nevada resident under NRS 396.540. The Board of Regents adopted the provision as set forth by the Nevada Legislature (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 4*).

The Choice Act

Under Section 702 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (H.R. 3230, "Choice Act"), public institutions of higher education that do not offer in-state tuition rates to certain veterans will lose federal veteran educational assistance dollars under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*, which includes the Fry Scholarship) and Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (Chapter 30 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*). Specifically, institutions must offer in-state tuition rates to veterans who are living in the state in which the institution is located; served in the active military, naval or air service; are pursuing a course of education with federal education benefits; and enroll in the institution within three years after their discharge from service. In-state tuition must also be offered to certain family members of the veteran or a member of the armed forces who died in the line of duty while on active duty if that family member enrolls

within three years after the veteran’s discharge or the service member’s death and is using veterans education benefits.

To ensure NSHE institutions comply with this new federal law and do not risk the loss of federal veteran educational assistance by its students, the Board of Regents adopted provisions necessary to comply with the original 2014 Act, as well as subsequent revisions at the federal level under *Board of Regents’ Handbook*, Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3.12. The adopted policy complies with Section 702 of the “Choice Act” by providing an exemption from tuition charges for a covered individual who enrolls within the specified three-year timeframe. Covered individuals must start their program within the three years and then they will be covered for terms after the 3-year mark. In addition, Board policy also extends the requirements of the Choice Act in Nevada to include within the non-resident tuition exemption veterans and dependent beneficiaries who qualify under the Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance (DEA) Program (See Chapter 35 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*). The DEA Program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition.

Late in 2018, Congress passed Public Law 115-251, and Section 301 of that legislation further amends 39 U.S.C. 3679(c) “Choice Act” to require that individuals using education assistance under Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Chapter 31 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*) also be charged the in-state tuition rate. Under this federal amendment, effective for courses, semesters, or terms beginning after March 1, 2019, a public institution of higher learning must charge the in-state rate to chapter 31 participants, as well as the other categories of individuals already included. When an institution charges these individuals more than the rate for resident students, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) is required to disapprove programs of education sponsored by the VA. To ensure compliance with the amended federal law, the Board of Regents adopted provisions to cover the chapter 31 students under the *Board of Regents’ Handbook*, Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3.12.

Institutional Efforts

State law requires a summary of efforts of each NSHE institution to retain and graduate student veterans through retention and other related programs. The following summaries, provided by the institutions and compiled here, detail those retention and related student success efforts on each campus.

I. INITIATIVES, EVENTS, RECOGNITIONS

UNLV Veteran Programs: MVSC implemented the following programs in Fall 2019 as an additional service to help increase retention and graduation of student veterans:

- **NEW** – Any veteran/military dependent using 100% VA Education benefits already has a service indicator added to their record to ensure the veteran has no out-of-pocket expenses — no late fees or potential to be purged. This year, these veterans will have any of their federal grants or scholarships released immediately as a refund.
- **NEW** – Working with the Greenspun College, MVSC is developing a veteran transition-bridging class that will provide a foundation for success for all our veterans adjusting to life on campus. The course will be part of the approved UNLV academic catalog and eligible for VA Education benefits.
- **NEW** – Caesar’s Entertainment hosted 2x Rebel Vet “Welcome to UNLV Pool Parties” (Summer 2018)



MVSC Recognition: MVSC has been recognized nationally and throughout Nevada as the leader in providing quality veteran services.

- UNLV was again ranked as a Top 15% or GOLD “Veteran Friendly” university (2011-2019). Source: GIJOBS.COM.
- **NEW** – 2018-2019 – UNLV is ranked in the nation’s Top 33/605 “Best for Vets” colleges for veterans using the GI Bill®. Source: *Military Times* 2018.
- **NEW** – 2019 – Student Veterans of America (SVA) recognized UNLV as a leader in the veteran community at the 2019 SVA National Conference (out of 1500 chapters).
- **NEW** – 2019 – SVA recognized Alexandria Sawin (Rebel Vet President 2018) as the SVA Veteran of the Year (out of veterans from 1500 chapters). **NEW** – 2019 – SVA recognized UNLV Rebel Vets (SVA Chapter) as a top 5 “SVA Chapter of the Year.”



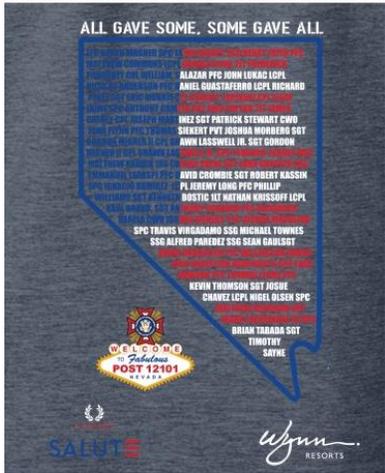
NEW - Rebel Vet Alumni “Engage” Breakfast: The newly formed UNLV Alumni Veterans Club, the MVSC, and the Rebel Vets hosted a Rebel Vet “Engage” breakfast event in 2019. The purpose of hosting the Engage breakfast included the following: (a) bring together veterans in the Las Vegas community that are graduates, community partners and nongraduates of UNLV, (b) highlight the various nationally recognized veteran programs at UNLV, (c) present the Rebel Vets (SVA Chapter) leadership and their programs, (d) recognize the MGM “Supporting Our Veterans” hiring initiative, their Veteran Mentoring program, and the MGM services for veterans visiting MGM, (e) learn of our guest speaker UNLV alumnus and Army veteran Randy Dexter’s Army career and transition to being the director of the K9 for Warriors Florida campus, and finally (f) create a networking environment for our current student veterans to connect with veteran leaders in our community. We hope that the networking will open up new opportunities for veterans on campus and in the community.



NEW – UNLV STUDENT VETERANS SELECTED TO ATTEND THE STUDENT VETERANS OF AMERICA LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUMS – Seven UNLV student veteran leaders will attend the Student Veterans of America (SVA) Leadership Institute in Washington, DC, Seattle or Boston over the summer of 2019. These warrior scholars have distinguished themselves as exemplary advocates for veterans on campus. This honor is extended each year to only 300 student veterans who serve as elected SVA chapter officers at some of the best-performing schools across America. SVA’s Leadership Symposiums are sponsored by Prudential and are the premier foundational leadership experience in the country for student veterans. It brings together the nation’s high-achieving chapter leaders for a multiday, values-based leadership immersion program. The concept behind the Leadership Institute is that long-term leadership success comes from an intimate knowledge of one’s core values and how they inform one’s leadership ethos. Attendees are mentored through this experience by some of the nation’s top leaders, business minds and veteran advocates.

NEW – UNLV Rebel Vets Hosted the 2nd Annual Statewide Ruck March Honoring Our Fallen – Operation Battle Born hosted Nevada veterans and community members who marched 370 miles over eleven days with nearly 7,000 dog tags in honor of fallen service members since 9/11. This event was sponsored by the UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center, CSUN Rebel Vet Support, Wynn Resort, Caesar’s Entertainment and VFW Post 12101. Altogether, about 250 Southern Nevadans participated in the march after relieving the Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) veterans who set out from the Battle Born Memorial in Carson City on May 17.

The Rebel Vet team met the TMCC veterans on May 21 in Tonopah for the final legs of the trek, which ended at the Southern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City on Memorial Day, in time for a special ceremony in the cemetery chapel. The Rebel Vet team covered 40 miles a day for five days, with each participant walking 10-mile increments while carrying one of four 30-pound “rucks” — short for rucksacks — containing a total of 6,950 dog tags in honor of service members who died since 9/11.



Each member of the ruck march walked ten miles in a group of at least four people before handing the rucksacks off to a new group of four ready to walk their ten miles. Many participants obtained blisters on their feet, sore muscles and backs, and even old knee pains that reared their ugly heads from ruck marches past. A few student veterans walked extra miles over the course of the march as fill-ins for those

who couldn’t complete their ten miles for various reasons. Both the northern and southern marchers had logistics teams that not only raised money from their respective communities but also coordinated with each other weekly via Skype and almost daily via student emails. There were some logistics challenges to overcome, such as finding sponsors and developing safety plans, as well as delegating various duties and responsibilities to each logistics team member as they coordinated combined efforts. These events create camaraderie and solidarity among student veterans, which also helps with their transition to university life and the likelihood that they’ll complete their college degree. The 58 service members from Nevada who died were packed in a separate rucksack, carefully bundled together in American flag bandannas.



II. MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES OF MVSC

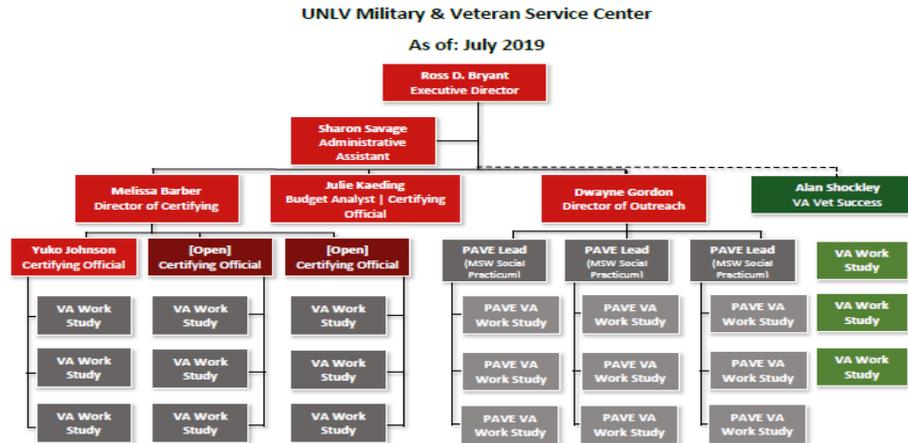
Unit Mission: UNLV established the Military & Veteran Services Center (MVSC) to better serve our growing student veteran and military family community by developing a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success. We understand the many challenges associated with pursuing a degree while serving on active duty, as well as the challenges associated with making the leap from the military to the civilian world. Working with the Las Vegas Veteran Engagement Community Council for veteran resources and our VetSuccess office on campus to meet these needs, MVSC is staffed with veterans and GI Bill®-experienced staff to assist 1,869 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members and reservists with answers to questions concerning admissions, GI Bill® enrollment certification, financial aid resources, campus and community support services, and various networks for veteran employment opportunities.



Unit Goals and Objectives: As the Executive Director of the Military & Veteran Services Center, I along with my staff manage the MVSC operations to ensure the timely VA certification of GI Bill® benefits for our student veterans. Working with my Director of Certifying, Melissa Barber, and my Director of Outreach, Dwayne Gordon, we encourage our staff to look for areas that need to be streamlined, through the use of technology and otherwise, and we problem-solve to create and implement solutions for greater efficiency. To provide high-quality, compassionate service to transitioning veterans, and to increase retention, we regularly seek ways to discover best practices in serving veterans used by other universities, and also offer our learnings to other institutions. Part of this effort includes implementing new programs and events, as well as becoming a member of and regularly participating in committees and organizations that strive to help veterans. We proactively seek to provide expanding resources for student veterans by communicating and cooperating with the departments at UNLV and also organizations in the greater Las Vegas community. We continually update our marketing strategy to recruit veterans to enroll at UNLV, including advertisements in military magazines and regular trips to education fairs at military bases. I can think of no greater honor than to serve our veterans in these ways.

III. SCOPE OF OPERATION

Current Organizational Structure: The UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center is understaffed for our critical mission. We currently have an office of six employees (an Executive Director (responsible for two departments), a Director of Certifying, a Director of Outreach, an Administrative Assistant and two Certifying Officials) responsible for marketing, recruiting, orientations/welcoming veterans, certifying VA paperwork, retention, faculty and staff awareness training, campus celebrations, notifying faculty about the UNLV Student Veterans Organization, community outreach, fundraising for the Yellow Ribbon Fund, and graduation recognition. The VA funds 25 student veteran workers to assist with student veteran customer service and in-processing and up to 12 student workers to assist in the PAVE program. We have requested two additional certifying officials to assist with the current increase in veteran attendance. The current office structure follows:



IV. YEAR IN REVIEW

UNLV Veteran Programs: The following programs are nationally recognized as the model for welcoming, admitting, mentoring and providing resources to student veterans to help increase retention and graduation. The following list also highlights the benefits of attending UNLV for veterans and includes the UNLV Military & Veteran Services programs:

- Nevada residency is granted to all “honorably” discharged veterans within five years of separation and within three years for military family members using GI Bill®.
- AB 76, signed by Governor Sandoval, will grant in-state tuition to any dependents of KIA service members awarded the FRY Scholarship.
- Priority registration is provided to all veterans to expedite payment of the Chapter 33 GI Bill® housing allowance.
- UNLV is ranked as a GOLD-rated “Veteran-Friendly” University (GIJOBS.COM 2011-2019).
- *Military Times* magazine ranked UNLV #33 in the Nation out of 605 4-year schools – “Best for Vets”
- UNLV offers the VetSuccess program with a VA Benefits Counselor on campus.
- UNLV sponsors a nationally recognized Student Veterans Organization chapter, Rebel Vets.
- UNLV hosts “Safe Talk” suicide prevention training each semester.
- **NEW** – The UNLV Library, the Academic Success Center, the Graduate College and the MVSC hosted a veteran research symposium. VFW Post 12101 donated financial scholarship awards to the winners.
- UNLV participates in the University of Michigan Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) peer-to-peer mentoring program.
- UNLV co-sponsors the semiannual Veteran Hiring Fair with local employers ready to hire veterans. (Our last veteran career fair was held in January 2019, and the next will be on January 25, 2020.)
- Since 2012 the Eleanor Kagi Foundation has funded 12 Rebel Vet Graduation receptions to honor our 1668 student veteran graduates. Each Rebel Vet graduate received a Rebel Vet graduation coin; a red, white and blue cord; and certificates of recognition from the Governor and the Nevada Delegation. We also conducted a drawing of prizes from the local community.

Rebel Vet Transition Orientation: Using the PeopleSoft system, we are able to search for all newly admitted student veterans and military family members to send them an MVSC welcome email, a VA

resource email, a Student Veterans Organization (SVO)/Rebel Women Vets welcome email and a list of campus/community resources and orientations to assist them in their transition to campus life. In 2018 the MVSC hosted two Rebel Vet Transition Orientations, which provided our new veterans with a GI Bill® responsibilities class, information, veteran resources, VA benefits, connection to our peer-to-peer network and some helpful classes in their journey for academic success. After providing these resources, our PAVE peer-to-peer mentors communicated with these students. Each of our PAVE mentors personally emailed and called each new student veteran and told them about our peer-to-peer mentoring program, letting each one know they had support and a “Battle Buddy” to call if they needed anything. More than 300 new veterans or military family members attended the veteran transition orientation.



GI Bill® Certification: MVSC has the continual task of processing the required documents of more than 1,200 GI Bill® recipients in order to access their VA Education Benefits and process their payments.. We are very pleased to have three certifying officials to take on this difficult and ever-changing task. We also have eight VA-funded student veteran workers who assist in the process of answering questions concerning admissions, GI Bill® enrollment certification, financial aid resources, campus and community support services, local veteran discounted-housing programs and various networks for veteran employment opportunities. In addition, all our new certifying officials will attend the annual WAVES conference or the NAFA conference to better understand the details of the certifying process.

Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE): UNLV funded the hiring of a full-time Veteran Outreach Coordinator and PAVE team supervisor – Dwayne Gordon (Air Force, retired). UNLV is one of the few universities in the country that participates in the University of Michigan PAVE peer-to-peer support program. This service connects incoming student veterans with student veterans already on campus to help them navigate college life, identify challenges they may be facing, refer them to the appropriate resources on or off campus, and provide ongoing support for their academic and personal ventures. The PAVE team also has partnered with the UNLV College of Social Work to allow its students to work with the MVSC as an approved practicum site. This PAVE team, with the help of the practicum students, connected with more than 408 incoming veterans and another 303 veterans on the probation list who were struggling with their studies.

Diversity Initiatives: The MVSC serves a very diverse population of more than 1,800 veterans, active duty members, reservists and military family members. This population reflects the diversity of our United States military, which in turn reflects the diversity of America. UNLV established the Military & Veteran Services Center and the Student Veterans & Military Family Services Committee to better serve our growing, diverse student veteran and military family community. As the Nation’s most diverse university, UNLV, through the MVSC, has taken the initiative to ensure our returning veterans are encouraged to lead by example, treat everyone with respect and embrace a community that strives for equity in all diverse cultures. In 2018 the Rebel Vet team developed a REBEL VET CREED to guide our veterans moving forward.



I Am a REBEL Vet

DIFFERENT

I am a veteran and a student, using my GI BILL to earn my degree to achieve my life goals while looking out for my fellow veterans.

DARING

I am a veteran of character, grounded in values of RESPECT, EXCELLENCE, BOLDNESS, ENDURANCE and LEADERSHIP (REBEL). I am team oriented, dedicated to everyone’s success.

DIVERSE

I am a veteran, molded by a military that thrives on our Nation’s diversity. I will set an example by treating all with respect, honoring different views and focusing on shaping a strong campus, community and Nation.



Faculty and Staff Veteran Awareness Training: The Military & Veteran Services Center continues to provide faculty and staff veteran-awareness training known as Serving Every Returning Veteran (SERV). This training is designed to explain the various challenges facing our returning veterans and to inform attendees about campus programs that are available to assist veterans in achieving their academic goals. We offered this training monthly during the academic school year through UNLV HR Training and have conducted more than 67 total training sessions for over 455 employees to date.

V. CAMPUS CELEBRATIONS

During 2018-2019 we hosted our Veterans Day week of activities, participated in the UNLV President's Concert for Heroes, and hosted two Rebel Vet "Engage" breakfasts and two Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions.

The UNLV Orchestra's President's Concert for Heroes – The UNLV Wind Orchestra conducted a special concert for American Heroes in honor of our more than 1,800 student veterans, and a special ceremony of the French Government presenting the French Legion of Honor to World War II veterans from Las Vegas. The concert was attended by more than 1,600 guests, who contributed almost \$1,500 to the UNLV Foundation's Yellow Ribbon Program.

Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions:

During December and May, the Military & Veteran Services Center and the UNLV Rebel Vets, with invaluable volunteer support from the Student Veterans & Military Family Support Committee, hosted two semiannual Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions. During the ceremonies we recognized the service and academic achievement of more than 245 graduating veterans and ROTC graduates. The ceremony included the following: (a) a slide presentation of the graduates set to music, (b) a UNLV welcome by Vice Provost Chris Heavy, (c) a presentation of a special guest, Marine Corps veteran Richard Taylor from MGM, (d) a celebration cake cut with an Army saber, and (e) the recognition of graduates. We presented each graduate with a Rebel Vet coin and cord, a letter of congratulation from Governor Sisolak, a packet with certificates of recognition by each of the Nevada delegation, and a donated UNLV Alumni packet. We also conducted a drawing of community prizes that included show tickets, dinner coupons and weekend getaway packages. In addition, we recognized all our graduates by publishing the graduation list of student veterans, military family members, and Army and Air Force ROTC graduates on our office wall of honor and in the UNLV graduation program.



UNLV Student Veterans Organization:

The Executive Director of MVSC is also the faculty advisor for the UNLV Student Veterans Organization (SVO) – the Rebel Vets. SVO's stated mission: "One way to promote your success in college and in your future career is to get involved in your community or join like-minded student organizations. The UNLV Rebel Vets is a nationally recognized organization dedicated to the principle of veterans helping fellow veterans be successful.



Individuals interested in camaraderie, working with the veteran community to address veteran issues, and networking with the community for future employment opportunities. Veterans are encouraged to join the UNLV Student Veterans Organization.” The Rebel Vet leadership attended legislative meetings in Washington, DC, and in Carson City. The Rebel Vets, working in collaboration with the veteran community, helped pass four veteran support bills.

Veteran Career Fair: Working in conjunction with UNLV Office of Government Affairs, UNLV Career Services, Senator Cortez Masto’s office and various nonprofit organizations, the Military & Veteran Services Center cosponsored our annual Veteran Career Fairs and Workshops on January 26, 2019. The event was very successful, with more than 87 employers with jobs available and a total of more than 178 veterans in attendance. This event offered informative workshops and resulted in many veterans being exposed to job opportunities and receiving requests for interviews. This collaborative effort consolidated numerous disjointed community support efforts into one career fair event to serve a larger population of veterans in need and provides a venue for our own 1,800 student veterans to gain full- or part-time employment.

Veteran Suicide Prevention Efforts: After experiencing the suicide of three UNLV student veterans and a military family member in 2013 and 2016, the Executive Director of the Military & Veteran Services Center reached out to the veteran community to access greater suicide prevention support services. To improve awareness for the student veteran community, the Executive Director has accomplished the following preparations to help prevent veteran suicides: (a) at the invitation of the Governor’s office, he joined the Governor’s Veteran Suicide Prevention Council, (b) as a member of this council, he attended a National Veteran Suicide Prevention conference, (c) he completed the Nevada “Safe Talk” suicide prevention training and the more in-depth “Assist” suicide prevention training with the Nevada National Guard, (d) he joined the UNLV Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention (MHASP) Task Force, and (e) he attended the MHASP daylong retreat on July 16, 2013. Since completing this training, the MVSC has hosted Suicide Prevention–sponsored “Safe Talk” trainings on campus each semester. Each training is open to our MVSC staff, PAVE team, student veterans, faculty and staff.



safeTALK Suicide Awareness Training

SafeTALK is a suicide alertness training for everyone. In only a few hours, you will learn how to provide practical help to persons with thoughts of suicide. Expect to leave safeTALK more willing and able to perform an important helping role for persons with thoughts of suicide.

**November 2nd, 2018
8:30am-12:00pm,
UNLV Student Union, Room 207
4505 S. Maryland Parkway Las Vegas NV 89154**

This class is free to veterans and community members who work with veterans. To register for this class please contact: SSP Program Assistant Frances Robbin at frbobb@health.nv.gov or telephone at (702) 486-5563. If you would like to host a Suicide Prevention class please contact Richard Egan at egan@health.nv.gov or telephone at (702) _____

You can Register online at <https://suicidprevention.org/event/safetalk-las-vegas-nov-2-2018/>

** 3 CME's (Continuing Medical Education) credits are available to Physicians, Nurses, and Medical Professionals.

** This training has 3 CEU credits approved for Social Workers, CAD/Cs, LAD/Cs, Psychological Examiners, Pharmacy, Nurses, State/SHND EMS, HFT, CPC, ADGC's and POST

Space is limited-registration will be on a first come first serve basis.



- **NEW** – 2019 – SVA recognized Alexandria Sawin (Rebel Vet President 2018) as the SVA Veteran of the Year (out of veterans from 1500 chapters).
- **NEW** – 2019 – SVA recognized UNLV Rebel Vets (SVA Chapter) as a top 5 “SVA Chapter of the Year.”

Vision

Veteran Services' vision is to graduate the best prepared student veterans by incorporating students' prior experience with contemporary scholarly achievement to have purposeful impact on their personal, career, and civic endeavors while recognizing and celebrating the vast diversity of the student veteran population.

Mission

Veteran Services' mission is to aid the transition of prior military and their families into successful higher education and career endeavors by deploying best practices in three areas:

- 1) Innovative programs and services that bring awareness to resources and opportunities for transition and integration to successful graduation;
- 2) Focused preparation for next-step career goals;
- 3) Comprehensive services to manage fiscal responsibilities with education benefits.

Values

Integrity, Inclusiveness, Excellence, Respect, Engagement

Brief of 2018-2019 Academic Year

The outcomes from the spring 2018 needs assessment conducted by the Office of Persistence and Research was presented. The results highlighted the critical role the Veterans and Military Center plays in the daily support and contribution towards our veteran retention and persistence at the University Of Nevada, Reno. The students reported that benefit advising, degree completion assistance, academic advising, career planning and registration/ enrollment services were the most valuable programming initiatives provided. This information enabled the office to continue prioritizing the express advising and bringing the academic side of the campus into the VMC for ongoing academic support. Respondents of the survey also indicate they are more likely to connect with other veterans and 88% would recommend University Of Nevada, Reno to other individuals with military experience.

The University veteran cohort retention rate from fall 2018 to fall 2019 was 62%. However, the fall 2018 to fall 2019 cohort which include all students using VA educational benefits (veterans, guard, reservists and dependents/ family members), the retention rate is 83.5%. Clearly this underscores the importance of the veteran friendly environment created within the Veteran Services office.

Continued Initiatives for 2018-2019

Program Name	Type of Retention And Effort	Description
Onboarding to Campus		
Veterans' Orientation <i>New</i>	Initial retention Group	<p>Provided through Veteran Services office. Administered through staff and Vet2Vet Representatives. Initial brief of services offered, staff available, and events to engage in. Concept is success strategies and developing immediate network with our services.</p> <p>During two transfer orientations, lunches were hosted in the Veteran and Military Center the summer to ensure students understood where the VMC is located, encourage students to return to the VMC once the term started, meet the Veteran Services staff and learn about programming and social activities.</p>
Veteran 1-1 Intake	Initial retention/ Network building	All incoming students meet one on one with our Intake Coordinator. Benefits are registered, degree plans are confirmed, basic needs assessed, tailored services offered and financial assessment advisement provided.
Vet2Vet Program	Long-term retention/Peer Support/Network building	Each incoming student (First year and Transfer) are assigned to a Vet2Vet Representative. The Vet2Vet Rep has been trained through our office to follow the student for the first academic year. Regular communication is established. Ongoing needs assessment for academic and integration success and tailored services offered. Workshops for success given by Vet2Vet Reps. Communication and marketing plans are carried for college specific needs.
Welcome Events <i>New</i>	On-going per term Networking Group events	<p>Hosted by VITAL and in collaboration with SVA, welcome events are structured at the beginning of each term for current students to mix and mingle with new/transfer students over free lunch. Vet2Vet Reps market the event to the incoming students.</p> <p>Wolf Pack Vets organizes Summer Bash as family friendly afternoon of lawn games and BBQ to kick off the academic year.</p>

Transition to Higher Education Support		
Veteran/Military Center <i>Updated</i>	Dedicated physical space On-going retention Personalized and group engagement	The Veteran and Military Center continues to evolve and meet the needs of the incoming students. Beyond a study space, this year students can reserve the space for an after-hours study groups, group sessions on mindfulness and home buying seminars, welcome back breakfasts and always free coffee.
V.I.T.A.L. Grant On-going programming efforts	On-going retention/ Community Involvement 3 rd party partnership	Veteran's Integration to Academic Leadership has been a part of this campus for 7 years. It employs one Veteran Outreach Program Specialist and one Social Worker. Both provide services to our students to vest into the VA Health Care System, provide mental health/well-being, and collaborate with the Director on programming efforts with student veterans. They host several events during the year. V.I.T.A.L. has a dedicated office within the Veteran and Military Center.
Two Student Veteran Groups Wolf Pack Veterans Omega Delta Sigma Co- ed fraternity <i>Updated</i>	On-going /campus engagement/Community Involvement	Two veteran student groups' missions align with UNR Veteran Services office to support campus integration and retention efforts. Group Presidents report to Veteran Services office to coordinate programming. Programming include: a welcome to fall event, weekly meetings, socials, philanthropic efforts, community outreach, shared programming opportunities on suicide awareness and annual Ruck to Remember over Memorial Day weekend with VITAL.
Class/Instructor Mitigation	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who have integration issues with a particular class or instructor are counseled on how to resolve. Veteran Services can assist in that mitigation if necessary.
Student Health and Well-being		
Interest and Engagement Groups <i>New</i>	Long-term retention/Peer Support	We are reframing student outreach to go outside the VMC walls and engage with students on similar interests. The work-studies created specialty interest groups to engage with students on a personal shared interest level. Running, yoga, golf and board games interest groups were established
Veteran Graduation Celebration	Career Service	A celebration to highlight both student veterans and beneficiaries, undergraduate and graduate. Program hosted by Veteran Services and community partners to bring family and personal support systems together. This event also engages current students for exposure to college completion goals.

November Veteran Recognition Month <i>Updated</i>	Annual Programming/long-term retention	Several events are offered and include, hosted lunch at campus restaurant for all student veterans and family members, 2500 flags planted in honor of those who have served, flag retirement ceremony, veterans football tailgate, family centered night. The campus community has an opportunity to dedicate flags to individuals.
Academic Support		
GI Bill® Success Workshops	On-going retention GI Bill management Group Events	VA SCO for the institution holds scheduled talks and walk-in time to help navigate both enrollment and GI Bill® use for successful payment and entitlement forecasting. Emphasis is given per benefit chapter to bring awareness of how to best navigate regulations with personal enrollment goals.
Progress Reports At-Risk Students	Intense One-on-One	Veterans that have dropped below 2.3 CUM GPA and/or show a pattern of dropping GPA are requested to participate in a one-on-one assessment and customized help or referral. Students dropping below a 2.5 in pre-professional tracks are notified of services available.
Warning Term Students on Probation <i>Updated</i>	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who have dropped to 2.0 or below are advised on benefit and/or financial aid impact. Customized assessment and referral given. Veteran Services policy changed this year to become proactive and interject academic support earlier in the Satisfactory Academic Progress system. Students have mandatory check in periods with office.
Academic Counseling	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who are not following academic plans are advised and plan confirmed to stay on track. Referral back to college advisor's always first step.
Express advising <i>Updated</i>	Intense One-on-One	Each college on campus is invited to hold office hours in the Veteran & Military Center. Advisors work closely with School Certifying Officials to effectively advise students and navigate through specific college requirements. Services offered are major/degree workshops, information sessions on degree changes, ability to remove academic holds immediately, readiness to complete departmental paperwork for major/degree changes, exceptions, waivers and degree exploration for undecided students. Students receive priority registration

Community and Campus Partnerships		
Scholarship Opportunities <i>New</i>	Retention efforts	Competitive scholarship opportunity from the VFW Post #9211 Competitive scholarship opportunity from Wolf Pack Vets to an existing student and transfer student
Track & Analytics Program <i>New</i>	Retention effort and programming initiatives	Veteran Services partnered with the Information Systems department to develop a data gathering system and platform to enable the office to run more sophisticated reports. Information System seniors are developing the project to complete the senior project requirement. Data will be gathered by scanners and supported by Office of Student Persistence Research. The reports will assist in identifying populations the office needs to outreach and develop better programming opportunities.
Art of Giving <i>New</i>	Community Outreach	UNR student assisting students in writing letters of support to deployed soldiers. Veteran Services workers are assisting students to gain an understanding and perspective of where these letters are going and the environment in which they will be received.
Graduate School Workshop	Career and Academic Support	The Graduate school provided a seminar in the VMC for students interested in a Graduate degree. The dean and faculty of the Graduate school discussed funding options, types of programs and entry paths
VetSMART	On-going Campus-wide	Veteran Services and Vet2Vet Reps deliver professional development training and veteran awareness to faculty and staff. This builds a network of identifiable personnel on campus a veteran can seek assistance from.
Employer Connect	On-going retention Employer Identification Group Events	In collaboration with <i>Nevada Career Studio</i> , simple marketing program to identify current employer partnerships through Career Studio that have veteran/military considerations in the hiring practice. These employers are then identified by a designated logo for veteran/military population to recognize them during career and internship fairs that are held on Campus. This allows students to seek out and self-identify if they choose to employers that are looking specifically to hire veterans or have veteran preference.

<p>Community Partnerships</p> <p><i>NEW</i></p> <p><i>NEW</i></p>	<p>Dedicated space within the Center</p> <p>On-going retention through meeting non-educational needs, Personalized and group</p>	<p>The Community Partnership program invites external entities to bring veteran-related services to campus. Partnerships are identified through the assessment of basic student needs. Currently partnerships exist with NV DETR/JobConnect for resume development, NDVS Veteran Services Officer for filing disability claims. These services reserve the Community Office within the Center to be able to meet with students one-on-one.</p> <p>Partnership with Northern Nevada Veterans Resource Center and Pack Provisions to assist housing and food insecurities.</p> <p>Develop programs with Work for Warriors to assist with student's job placement</p>
<p>Campus Partnerships</p>	<p>Dedicated space within the Center</p> <p>On-going retention</p> <p>Personalized and group</p>	<p>Campus partnerships invites other campus entities that lend to the retention and persistence of the veteran student population to bring their services to the Center. Currently other programs that provide ongoing services are: Academic advisors for advising in conjunction with GI Bill® regulation, tutoring, and writing center. Dedicated time is set up at the convenience of the partner and then marketed to the students.</p>
<p>NV Money Mentors collaboration with Financial Aid</p> <p><i>New</i></p>	<p>On-going retention/financial exploration</p>	<p>Nevada Money Mentors partner with Veteran Services to customize workshops to address life stages student veterans are most financially challenged with. Activities and presentations in conjunction with Career Studio and UNR Human Resource Dept are developed and delivered. Most popular workshop hosted is for salary negotiation.</p> <p>Established relationship with Wells Fargo Bank to present on financial responsibilities and resources.</p>

Summary submitted by: Chai Glenn-Cook, Assistant Director Veteran Services chaicook@unr.edu. 775-682-5935.



Overview

Nevada State College continues to foster increasing levels of support and engagement for our student veterans. Led by our Veterans Affairs Certification Specialist and our Coordinator of Academic Advising (a former member of the Air Force), Nevada State's over-arching goal is to promote better outcomes for student veterans, including improved retention and graduation rates. To this end, NSC continues to implement new initiatives that address the needs and aspirations of this population, while also updating past successful initiatives. A few of our initiatives have included the provision of physical space (a Veterans' Lounge), financial support (including emergency funding support), and community-building opportunities (the "ScorpionVets" club).

As requested, the relevant initiatives had been disaggregated according to new initiatives – added since our last report – and pre-existing programs and initiatives. As our support efforts have matured, the ratio of new initiatives to existing initiatives has grown smaller, but we continue to expand and improve our programs and services that support student veterans at Nevada State College.

New Initiatives

Several new initiatives have emerged since our previous report, as detailed below. These initiatives provide ongoing support for our student veterans through mentorship and accessibility to information. These initiatives nicely complement the existing support which has included emergency funding, professional development opportunities, campus recognition, and community service.

Peer Mentorship

This program pair new student veteran or dependent student with a current veteran or dependent student to mentor them first-year to graduation and beyond. The mentorship provides guidance to students to help them successfully navigate the college experience at Nevada State, including assistance with registration, advising, support services, student life, NSSA, and NSC software applications. The mentor is expected to organize monthly activities for mentees.

Professional Development 2019

Nevada State College supported four student veterans to attend the Student Veterans of America National Conference in Orlando, FL. Through participating in the conference, students had an opportunity to network with other student veterans as well as learn more about available resources. Also, two student veterans attended the NASPA Symposium on Military-Connected Students which focuses on effective strategies to serve and support the success of veterans and other military-connected students.

Vet Website

The NSC website now has a [specific page](#) for student veterans regarding their benefits. The page also lists important external support contact information.

Pre-existing Programs, Initiatives & Accolades

Emergency Funds

Nevada State College received funds to help support veterans in need of emergency financial assistance. Applicants were reviewed by the ScorpionVet officers and advisors and selected for support based on degree of need. Though the amount of funding was modest, this effort addresses a critical area of need for our student population.

Community Service

ScorpionVets hosted a formal Flag Ceremony that was attended by NSC administrators and City of Henderson dignitaries, including Mayor of Henderson Debra March. ScorpionVets were invited by the City of Henderson to be an active participant in the Henderson Veterans Day event. At this event, the flag from the ceremony was presented to the City of Henderson by ScorpionVet officers, where it will be housed within the City of Henderson Mayor's Office. ScorpionVets also have worked with a number of other student veterans to provide information and support, and several members volunteered at the Boulder City Veterans Home Center for the 17th Annual Olympic Games hosted by the Center.

Professional Development

Each year, Nevada State College aims to send representatives from ScorpionVets to the national conference of the Student Veterans of America. Through participation in the conference, the officers are able to create a network of resources and colleagues and obtain professional development in strategies for leadership, the recruitment of additional club members, and national Best Practices for serving student veterans. To date, participation has provided guidance on the development of leadership abilities and has broadened our understanding of strategies that increase the retention, success, and graduation rates of student veterans.

Nevada State College ScorpionVets

The Nevada State College ScorpionVets Club was officially recognized in fall 2016. The club is focusing on promoting awareness of veteran issues, supporting an institutional culture of inclusion, facilitating the integration of veterans into the NSC community, and providing camaraderie for veterans among their peers. NSC viewed the development of the student organization as the most important step in facilitating more robust services at NSC, as we want to ensure that all initiatives and programs are student-driven. The student veterans are increasing their activity level on campus and are actively fund raising to develop a foundation for increased programming. In addition, their organization has been officially recognized by the Student Veterans of America.

Veterans' Lounge

Based on feedback from members of the NSC ScorpionVets Club, we adapted the veterans' lounge to be more attractive and accessible for veterans. This has resulted in an increased utilization of the designated space, and the student veterans are now working to expand their space on our campus (however, available space remains incredibly limited at present, both for veterans and across the campus as a whole).

Priority Registration

Student veterans now receive priority course registration. This helped to ensure that the certification process is expedited, which results in veterans receiving their benefits and funding in time for registration processing.

Textbook Loan Program

The student veterans have developed a pilot textbook loan program for students. They have collaborated with the Nevada State Student Alliance on this project and look to more fully develop this program after the pilot phase is assessed.

Student Veterans Wall of Fame

The NSC Arts and Culture Department created a Wall of Fame located just outside of the Student Veterans' Lounge. The wall features photos and stories of outstanding NSC Student Veterans.

Red, White and Blue Honor Cords

Student veteran graduates are honored by obtaining NSC's first Red, White, and Blue Honor Cords for veterans.

NSC Ruck March

The NSC Student Veterans' Club continues to hold an annual Ruck March each spring semester. In addition to NSC faculty and staff, UNLV Student Veterans and other veteran organizations in the community participate.

Volunteer Efforts with US Vets

Nevada State College ScorpionVets continue to be active within the veterans' community in the Valley. ScorpionVets have volunteered at the Boulder City Veterans' Home Olympics, providing support and camaraderie for the veterans living in the home, and have hosted Formal Flag Ceremonies that involve NSC administrators, students, faculty and staff, as well as community organizations and dignitaries from the City of Henderson.

City of Henderson – Veterans' Day Programming

The ScorpionVets Club continues to collaborate with the City of Henderson to participate in Veterans' Day programming.

Mental Health Resources/Student CARE Team (Concern, Assessment, Referral and Education)

While these programs are not veteran specific, Nevada State College has additional support programs that benefit student veterans. The Student CARE Team (formally called Student of Concern Team) utilizes a case management model to serve as a hub of existing resources focused on prevention and early intervention for students experiencing distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors. NSC hired its first full-time case manager in fall 2016, and we continue to see annual double-digit increases in utilization.

Nevada State College also has established a contract with All About You Counseling services to provide on-campus therapy services for our students four days per week, up from two days a week when the contract was initiated two years ago. NSC also contracts with UNLV's Counseling and Psychological Services to offer therapy services.

Veterans Education & Transition Services (VETS)

Mission: To provide exceptional services, programs, and learning experiences for current and former service members and their dependents that shape and support a seamless transition to civilian life.

Vision: The College of Southern Nevada VETS Center is the preeminent military and veteran service provider among institutions of higher learning in Nevada.

Goals: To efficiently and effectively administer Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Education Programs; To improve and better track persistence, retention, and graduation rates for VA beneficiaries; To create and implement transformational programming that increase student opportunity for success.

Initiatives Since October 2018

The VETS Center has focused on several key initiatives to support the healthful transition to the college as well as long-term success in graduation, career, and transfer by our VA beneficiary population.

Initiative	Type of Retention and Effort	Description
USAA Grant (Continued from 2017)	CSN VETS administers a grant awarded by USAA to provide retention services to VA beneficiaries.	The CSN VETS center works closely with internal and external stakeholders to provide relevant services and programming designed to: 1) Increase VA beneficiary retention, persistence, and graduation rates; 2) Make CSN faculty, staff, and students aware of the challenges that veterans face making the transition from military to civilian life; and 3) Improve access to the college by engaging in outreach and targeted recruitment activities for prospective students.
Advising (Continued from 2017)	The VETS Center houses one full-time academic advisor dedicated to the VA beneficiary population.	In a typical week, the Veteran Advisor conducts eight appointments per day each week, serving new and returning students. The advising staff is planned to expand to three advisors prior to the Spring 2020 session. VETS Advising staff also coordinates the orientation program for veteran students each fall and spring semester.
Coyote Team Six	VETS Center staff created and conducts a training program for faculty and staff on how to best serve the military population at CSN. This program is supported by the USAA grant.	The training program, offered through the Center for Academic and Professional Excellence (CAPE), affords faculty and staff an opportunity to learn about military culture, the VETS Center, VA education benefits, and ongoing developments related to military students at CSN. VETS Center staff lead this presentation on a monthly basis, allowing

		maximum opportunity for participation among faculty and staff across campus
Collaborative and Expanded Orientation (Continued from 2017)	VETS Center offers an orientation program each fall and spring to VA beneficiaries.	<p>Since October 2018, the VETS Center expanded its orientation to include returning students in an effort to further connect with this population. Additional content included GI Bill updates and returning student claim submission process.</p> <p>The VETS Center continued its collaborative efforts (cont.) with other departments in an effort to connect VA beneficiaries with campus and community resources via the resource fair portion of the orientation.</p>
Assessment Protocol	VETS Center created a protocol for assessing services and processes for all office efforts	<p>Along with the Division of Student Affairs, VETS Center staff engaged in a process of exploring its mission, goals, and objectives in order to create ways in which we assess our successes and failures to create greater VA beneficiary success.</p> <p>This process allowed us to identify which of our services and objectives were most important and create a long-lasting standing plan to determine our performance level in these areas. Primarily, we want to measure our VA benefit processing time, advising availability, complaint resolution, persistence, retention, and graduation. We determined key personnel for measuring each of these Key Performance Indicators (KPI), when to measure, how to measure, and how these results will be recorded and analyzed.</p>
Employer Contacts	Career exploration/group	In coordination with Career and Transfer Services, CSN VETS Center, along with government, private, and non-profit employers, is working to create a panel of employers, with time for veterans to meet briefly with employers for discussion. Speakers from selected job industries based on job interest, such as MGM to share insight with veterans and military spouses.
Specialized Application for Admission	To identify this population from the point entry	CSN launched a new application software called radius. A Veteran beneficiary's application was created to allow these student self-identify. They receive specialized communications and clear expectations to create a seamless process to receive their education benefits.

<p>Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership</p>	<p>Provide a more accessible avenue for Vocational Rehabilitation students to meet with a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor</p>	<p>The CSN VETS Center entered a partnership with the Vocational Rehabilitation office out of the VA hospital in Las Vegas. The Voc. Rehab. Counselor assigned to CSN students utilized office space in order to meet these students where they spend a majority of their time and to lessen the burden of travel to the VA hospital for appointments.</p>
<p>Textbook Assistance (USAA) (Continued from 2017)</p>	<p>Creation of a textbook assistance program for certain VA beneficiaries to ease access to learning materials.</p>	<p>The textbook assistance program was created with USAA grant funds in order to allow beneficiaries who do not receive books and supplies funding as part of their education benefit chapter allows students in these benefit programs to have easier access to learning materials necessary for student success</p>

Veterans Resource Center (VRC) at Great Basin College provides an encouraging environment that acknowledges and honors all our U.S. Military, Veterans and their dependents. VRC and Great Basin College are committed to our military personnel and assists those attaining educational goals, finding support and resources for the journey. Helping our military connected students succeed is a priority for Great Basin College. Through continued support for growth of the Veterans Resource Center, Great Basin campus, campus branches throughout the State, and community wide support. Translates to “It takes a village approach” to our veteran/military personnel at the college and within the community. Together we can do more.

“GBC embraces Veterans, their goals and accomplishment.”

-Jordan Ranson, Student Veteran, A.A.S Diesel Technology

I. New Veteran Centered Incentives, Programs and Events:

Military Support Team

New Position: Assistant & Outreach Coordinator

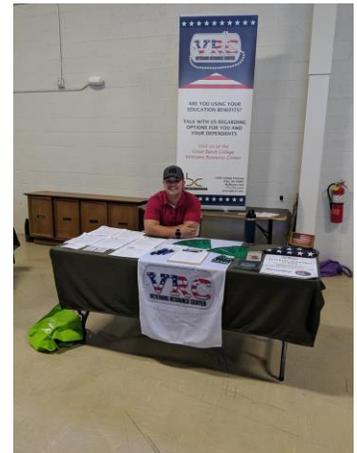
A grant funded role (Nevada Military Support Alliance, Renown, Barrick) with the designed intent to travel to branch campus within the State to be able to provide direct support to student veterans far and wide. The role allows for GBC and VRC to have a presence at Vet Fairs, Career Fairs or any other community events reaching military connected personnel. Our Assistant & Outreach Coordinator participates in weekly Professional Development Mentor training which allows key takeaways to be complied. Applying lessons learned to assisting veterans in achieving their academic success since the transition to higher education is different for each veteran. John Green holds the position and brings his experiences from the Marine Corps, where he served in the Presidential Support Program, White House Communications Agency under President Obama Administration. John is an asset to the team, creating a Financial Health Course to further support military connected personnel.

New Duties & Coordinator

Hiring of a new VRC Coordinator created the opportunity to have the Veteran Affairs School Certifying Official housed within the Veteran Resource Center. Jennifer Koopman, United States Coast Guard Veteran completed the certification process with Veteran Affairs to certify students. As the VA School Certifying Official the Coordinator will provide informal mentoring with future learning in areas of advisement to create the best experience for military connected students.

New Organizational Structure

The Veteran Resource Center staff, are now under the direct leadership of the Vice-President of Student and Academic Affairs, Jake Rivera.



A poster titled "FINANCIAL HEALTH for Veterans, spouses and dependents Budgeting & Saving". The poster includes the text: "Learn how to save and budget from local Wells Fargo Representatives. An overview of how to be financially responsible and understanding key aspects of finance." It also states "Free and Open to the Public" and "Suggested donation of nonperishable food item(s) for the GBC Battle Born Veterans Club". The event is scheduled for "9 a.m. Saturday, June 1" at "Great Basin College Greenhaw Technical Arts Building room 130". It notes "Coffee and donuts provided". At the bottom, there are logos for GBC, VRC, and Wells Fargo.

Incentives & Programs

New Webpage & VRC logo

While veterans have life experience, there may not be experience in applying and enrolling for college. Ease in applying and navigating the Veterans Resource tab on Great Basin College website is a simple yet important tool.

In review of directory and memorable recognition, it was decided to have one sole VRC logo, instead of the varying logo designs.



New Suicide Prevention Efforts

All staff is SafeTALK certified, and one member additionally ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) trained. Valuable training that can be applicable to our daily role. Having recently experienced two veterans who expressed suicidal ideations to our staff members while in the VRC, a reminder of the importance of suicide prevention training.

New Revamp VRC layout

The veteran's lounge, study rooms, tutoring room, coffee & snack room recently underwent a review for best use of space utilization for social mentoring and academic needs. The VRC is also home to numerous military memorabilia entrusted to VRC to preserve and showcase, which were incorporated to highlight the importance. VRC additionally collaborated with veteran owned company, Black Rifle Coffee to proudly serve Black Rifle Coffee within the VRC.



New Recognition

Graduating veterans will receive stoles in recognition of service within the United States Military, in addition to the VRC Challenge Coins given prior to graduating veteran students.

New CARE Program

CARE program is the use of a simple expressional cards to show our commitment to caring about our veterans/military dependents. For birthdays, new baby, graduation, etc. cards will be mailed to the student veteran/dependent. In the technological age, simple forms of communication can have a great impact in the day of an individual.

II. Continued Veteran Centered Incentives, Programs and Events:

Campus Support Services

Enrollment Management & Support

Service indicators are used to prevent late fees or potential purges to the veteran/military dependent using 100% VA Education benefits.

Great Basin College offers up to 15 credits of Boot Camp Credit, in combination with military experience and training, may be awarded to qualifying applicants who are current active duty or were honorably discharged and completed more than one year of active duty.

Financial Aid

GBC Financial Aid assists veterans with all aspects of applying for FAFSA and veteran scholarships. Financial Aid also identifies students who need assistance with food and other assistance programs.

Accessibility Services

It is the policy and practice of GBC/VRC to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. Under these laws, no qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in services, programs and activities of Great Basin College. All services are at no cost to students and potential students of Great Basin College. VRC is able to connect student veterans or dependents in need of these services discreetly.



Advising & Career Center

Provides assistance in developing, implementing, and evaluating career/life plans. Hosts career fairs several times per year. All advising staff refer student veterans to the VA certifying official to complete their academic plans and set them up for success.

Regular Hours Tutoring/ Study Hall Period

GBC offers the student veteran various tutoring options, either with their peers or with our faculty/instructors as needed or requested.

After Hours Tutoring/ Study Hall Period

GBC offers peer-to-peer, faculty to student tutoring sessions, groups on the weekends and until 11pm on certain days of the week, as requested by student veterans, to accommodate varying schedules.

B(S)3N Biological Sciences Student Support Network

Math and Science tutoring offered free of charge at the B(S)3N center. Tutors are comprised of students and instructors.

Academic Success Center

GBC's Academic Success Center on the Elko campus and at GBC's rural centers offer the following services to GBC students, all at no cost: live tutoring, placement testing, proctored testing, open computer labs, student success workshops (available online option.)

Collaborative Support Programs

Nevada Department of Veteran Services (NDVS)

Located on the Great Basin Campus, adjacent to the VRC. Providing State, Federal and medical benefits information and support to all military connected personnel.

Veteran Volunteer Program

The VRC is additionally staffed by veteran volunteers who give willingly of their time and resources to listen to the student veterans. Offering many different solutions to a problem, life advice or comradery.

VRC Outreach Vehicle

Mobile, weekly throughout the community, the outreach vehicle is additionally used at Vet Fairs, parades, community events. Digital display board used by VRC, sponsors and veteran friendly companies to promote veteran positive opportunities.

VA Student Work Study

Employment opportunities for student veterans with flexible hours. Builds relations, while supporting the veteran and the operational needs of VRC.

Weekly Veterans Support Group

Hosted at VRC weekly, combining all ages and service branches in camaraderie and support. Lead by a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) who additionally provides individual counselling sessions as deemed necessary.

Battle Born Veterans Club (BBVC) - Student Veterans of America Chapter (SVA)

Sanctioned by the SVA and the GBC Student Government Association, the BBVC is a student run organization that builds camaraderie amongst the transitioning Veterans. They also provide scholarships, social events, fundraising, food drives, student food pantry and community events such as: Photos with Santa, Turkey Shoot and branch specific birthday functions.

Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) Nevada JobConnect, VRC Job Board

A DETR representative visits the VRC weekly to talk with students and staff about the current jobs available and answers any questions they may have. They also offer services such as resume classes, interviewing practicum skills. DETR office sends the current job postings every Monday, which are placed on the job board located in the VRC.

Job Opportunities In Nevada (JOIN)

Elko JOIN provides financial assistance for many student veterans. JOIN provides help with tuition, books, and tools. They work well with DETR and GBC to provide financial assistance for veterans training and employment.

Events

Warrior of the Canyon

Warrior of the Canyon is a veteran/community walk, run and cycle event held in the Lamoille Canyon of the Ruby Mountain range. This event is for veterans, their families and all community supporters. Veterans and their families can participate together, while having the community participate and show support for all service members. Races range from 3 miles to 12.8 miles up the steep grade of Lamoille Canyon road.

Pearl Harbor Social

A business casual dinner hosted by VRC for veterans and family members that would like to sit down with good food and good company in celebration and remembrance of the freedoms that so many have sacrificed, so much for.

Veterans Writers Workshop, Western Folklife (Conjunction with National Cowboy Poetry Gathering)

The Veterans Writers Project provides a place to tell and refine the stories of military life, with the help of other veterans and writers. Bill Jones, Vess Quinlan, David Richmond, Ken & Betty Rodgers and the Veterans Resource Center at Great Basin College come together each year to host, encourage and support veterans (and their loved ones) as they share their experiences. To further memorialize the writings, Karen Lloyd of the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project collaborates during this workshop.

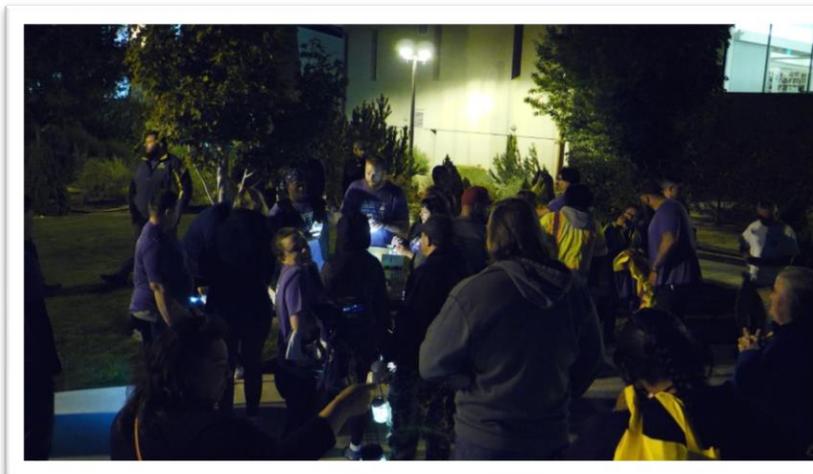
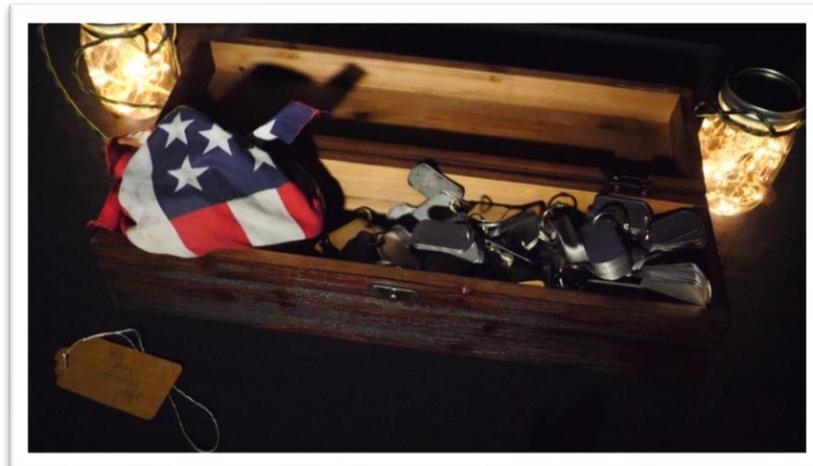


Truckee Meadows Community College

The mission of Truckee Meadows Community College's (TMCC) Veteran Services is to assist our student veteran population in their transition from the military into the academic environment. We are focused and determined on retaining our veteran students and guiding them towards their graduation and professional goals. Our staff works diligently to identify areas of need for our student veteran population as well as areas in which we need to expand and improve.

New Initiatives

- **Operation Battle Born: Ruck for Life** – TMCC Veteran Services and Nevada's Veterans community are committed to building strong community bonds between all members of our society. We welcomed everyone affected by suicide and those dedicated to the prevention and education to join us for a hike from the TMCC Plaza along the campus par course path and into the Dandini Garden on September 10. Participants were asked to carry 20 dog tags in the representation of the 20 veterans who lose their life by suicide each day. This event helped us honor those lost and remain committed to supporting each other, especially those who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. The event affords the TMCC student veterans another opportunity to connect with their peers and community.



Continuing Initiatives

- **Veteran Resource Center** – TMCC's Veteran Resource Center (VRC) in RDMT 241 at the main Dandini Campus. This space provides a number of new services to our veterans. This location is equipped with a large computer lab that provides internet access and free printing for our students, a study/conference room for student use, a veteran's lounge, as well as a separate office for offsite personnel to utilize for veteran specific purposes. This space provides the Veteran Services staff at TMCC a greater opportunity to assist student veterans in their transition from the military to the academic environment by creating a one stop shop on campus.
- **Student Veteran Mentor Program** – The Student Veteran Mentor Program was designed to assist up to 60 student veterans each semester who are in their first or second term at TMCC. The purpose of the program is to connect new student veterans with established faculty members in order to ease the transition into the academic environment. Every student in the program is assigned a faculty mentor based on the particular campus where the majority of the student's classes are located. Each mentor will provide guidance and academic assistance to the student throughout the year.

Every student that participates in the program will be required to attend a minimum of three veteran specific workshops or events each semester that are designed to enhance their academic and professional success. For their efforts, each student will receive a book stipend of \$125.00 each semester in order to help ease the financial burden of attending school.

- **Veteran Leadership Academy** – The TMCC Veteran Leadership Academy (VLA) provides the opportunity for a select group of 10 exemplary student veterans to enhance their leadership skills while applying the lessons they learned from their military service to serve the broader community. Each veteran that participates in the program will be required to work in a collaborative team environment with fellow veterans in the program to identify and solve a particular issue in the community.

In order to qualify for this program, each interested veteran fills out a detailed application in order to determine academic eligibility, community service experience, and previous leadership experience. Each student that is selected and participates in the program will be given a \$1,000 grant for the academic year with a maximum of 10 students participating. The grant will be split up between the fall and spring semesters and will be paid \$500 at the end of each semester while in the program.

Currently the VLA will begin its 5th year and the members of the VLA have accomplished great things. Last year the VLA held a winter clothing drive for homeless veterans. Every VLA cohort has put their own stamp on not only TMCC but the greater community as a whole.

- **Professional Development Initiative** – Every semester TMCC Veteran Services partners with the TMCC Career Center to produce a series of veteran specific professional development workshops and job preparation classes that are open to all student veterans and dependents at TMCC. These workshops include resume writing, LinkedIn profile creation, effective networking, and mock interviews. Each one of these workshops is designed to assist veterans in their transition to the professional environment once they graduate.
- **Veteran Job and Resource Fair** – Another collaboration between TMCC Veteran Services and the TMCC Career Center is the Veteran Resource and Job Fair. Created specifically for veterans and their families, the fairs are held every fall and spring semester and typically have 50-60 employers and community resources on hand to fulfill the needs of our veterans. These fairs play a very important role for both the students and the veteran community as whole and helps highlight TMCC's never-ending dedication to our nation's veterans.

- **Veteran Academic Advisor** – TMCC employs a veteran specific academic advisor who assists veterans in degree and course selection, transfer workshops, financial aid applications, and scholarship information. Having a dedicated advisor helps ensure that our students have a detailed education plan in order to graduate on time.
- **Veterans Pre-Admission Associate** – Our Veterans Pre-Admission Associate serves as an intake coordinator, assists with the Gateway Initiative for student veterans, as well as updates military transcripts, and excess credit fees in accordance with SB 457. This position was funded by the TAACCCT 4 grant but was made permanent in March 2018. This position is vital to the overall mission of TMCC Veteran Services and helps ensure that the department maintains its high quality of service that is currently provided our student veteran population.
- **Veteran Specific Orientation** – We hold a minimum of 4 student veteran and dependent orientations per semester that cover everything from VA educational benefits to local veteran resources in the area. These orientations provide a one-stop shop for incoming student veterans and give the TMCC Veteran Services staff the opportunity to explain all of the veteran specific services that we provide at TMCC as well give information provided by our many community partners.
- **Early Enrollment** – TMCC began offering priority registration to student veterans and eligible dependents back in spring 2013. Priority registration is essential to ensure that our students are able to enroll in the necessary classes in order to avoid delays in their GI Bill payments.
- **Veterans Upward Bound** – TMCC houses the only Veterans Upward Bound program in the state of Nevada. Located at the TMCC Meadowood Campus, Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) is a pre-college preparation program that offers academic skills development, testing, financial literacy, advisement, career planning, and transitional assistance to eligible student veterans.
- **Truckee Meadows Veterans Club (TMVC)** – TMCC has a nationally recognized Student Veterans of America chapter (SVA) on campus, Truckee Meadows Veterans Club (TMVC). TMVC's presence in the VRC helps build comradery and gives the student veterans a unified voice on campus. The club is very active in the community and holds many student veteran centered events both on and off campus.
- **Early Alert** – TMCC has implemented an early alert system that grants TMCC Veteran Services direct access to the portion of the student veteran population at TMCC that is struggling academically. This early alert system gives the staff the opportunity to reach out to students in order to identify issues that may be causing them to fall behind in their classes and refer them to campus resources that can assist them.
- **Application Fee Waiver** – TMCC values the extraordinary talents, experiences, and diversity that United States Military Veterans bring to our campus. In recognition of their service, TMCC has committed to waiving the admissions application fee for all honorably discharged U.S. Military Veterans beginning the Fall 2017 semester.
- **SB 457 Compliance** – As of August 1, 2017, TMCC is in full compliance with SB 457. We have updated our webpage to reflect the bill as well as added a detailed list of all accepted military credit along with their corresponding ACE exhibit number for reference. Our Veterans Pre-Admissions Associate closely monitors all excess credit fees for our entire student veteran population on a daily basis to ensure that military credit is not being counted against their completion rates.
- **V.I.T.A.L. Initiative** – TMCC Veteran Services has continued a tremendous partnership with the VA Sierra Nevada Healthcare System. Aside from their presence at our many resource fairs, TMCC has a VA social worker on campus a minimum of two days per week who serves an extremely important role by providing mental health services to our student veterans in the VRC. The V.I.T.A.L. Initiative also have a veteran specialist who assists our students in enrolling in VA healthcare and works with them to understand their benefits.

- **Veteran Outreach Events** – Veteran Services conducts numerous veteran outreach events at various dates throughout each semester. Thanks to an enormous amount of community support we are able to hold large veteran events such as BBQs where our veterans can interact with each other both on and off campus. The ability to do this helps the veterans revisit the comradery they once had while they were in the service. We also partner with community resources to offer workshops for faculty and staff in order better educate them on the military/veteran culture.
- **Purple Heart School** – On May 2, 2018 Truckee Meadows Community College officially became the first Purple Heart College in the State of Nevada. With this designation, TMCC issued a proclamation highlighting the college's commitment to our combat wounded students and dedicated a parking spot specifically for Purple Heart recipients.
- **Operation Battle Born: Ruck to Remember** – Counting our partnership between TMCC's Veteran Leadership Academy (VLA), members of the Truckee Meadows Veterans Club (TMVC) and University of Nevada, Las Vegas Rebel Veterans we executed the second statewide Operation Battle Born ruck march in honor of the fallen heroes from the Global War on Terrorism.

Over the course of 10 days, veterans and volunteers from across the state took turns carrying nearly 7,000 service member dog tags, including the 57 fallen Nevadans who made the ultimate sacrifice since September 11, 2001.

In their honor, the group marched from Carson City to Boulder City Memorial Cemetery, for over 400 miles. Participants were asked to challenge themselves physically and mentally, facing the weather and the weight of the fallen heroes on their backs.

This event not only brings awareness to the sacrifices that were made during the War on Terrorism but it also continues to bring the student veteran community across the state together with an event between UNLV and TMCC.



Western Nevada College

Western Nevada College is committed to serving veterans in our community. This commitment is personified by our Veterans Resource Center. At Western Nevada College, our mission is to aid the student veteran in the transition from military service to higher education by providing support and guidance during the application, admissions, and academic processes. The Veterans Resource Center allows Western Nevada College to uphold our mission. Each member of the Western Nevada College team has a role to play in the success of our student veterans and the family members of veterans. Western Nevada College has two certifying officials and an academic counselor explicitly assigned to veterans and a Veterans Resource Center Coordinator.

Each veteran student receives services and assistance, including:

- Individual welcome and counseling by the Veterans Resources Coordinator, which includes: A thorough walkthrough of VA Educational Benefits, explanation of resources on campus, and a tour and orientation session to the Veterans Resource Center.
- WNC new student orientation.
- Completion of placement examinations.
- Assistance in the admission application and registration.
- Financial aid literacy assistance.
- Advisement including selections of classes to ensure classes are eligible for veteran educational benefits
- Assistance with time management and stress management skills.
- Access to tutoring and academic coaches.
- Continual monitoring of academic status by VCR staff
- Early Alert system to identify and offer remedies to academic issues. Along with monitoring of graduation requirements
- Career exploration
- All students who receive veteran educational benefits have a hold placed on their student account, preventing the student from withdrawing without first receiving counseling on how the withdrawal may affect their benefits and academic plan.
- All student veterans not meeting satisfactory academic progress have a meeting with both the Veterans Resource Coordinator and the Veteran Academic Counselor.

Brief of 2018-2019 Academic Year and New Initiatives

In August 2019, Western Nevada College hired its new Veterans Resource Center Coordinator. The new coordinator served in both the United States Marine Corps. and the United States Air Force has worked both as a work-study in a university veteran services office as well as full-time faculty at a university veterans services office. The new coordinator has made their mission for the 2019 -2020 academic year to asses the current state of the Veterans Resource Center; and to implement any further structural or program changes needed, if any, to improve the Veterans Resource Center's ability to serve student veterans and family members of veterans in the future.

The student veteran club formally known as WNC Vets have changed their club name to The Northern Nevada Wildcat Vets (NNWCV) and has applied to the Student Veterans of America national headquarters for re-recognition as an official chapter of the SVA.

EVENTS:

Suicides among veterans are occurring at an alarming rate in this country.

To bring about awareness of this appalling trend Western Nevada College's Veterans Resource Center held their annual Veterans Suicide Awareness March. Community members walked from the corner of U.S. Highway 395 (Bully's parking lot) and West College Parkway to the WNC, and back, approximately 2.3 miles round trip. The event brought awareness to the ongoing reality of veteran suicide, which occurs in this country once every 80 minutes and 8,030 times per year.

After arriving on campus, participants will place a small American flag on the college's front lawn to show solidarity with those who serve. Along with promoting suicide awareness, event organizers wanted to help people learn the signs of someone considering suicide and the resources available to help them by offering sign ups for a seminar on suicide awareness.



Figure 1 Suicide Awareness March

In Sept of 2019 the Veterans Resource Center in conjunction with the NNWCV held their first "Sept. 11th Memorial Stair Climb". The student workers of the Veterans Resource Center transformed a stairwell located at the college into a mini memorial for the Sept 11th tragedy. Those who viewed the memorial had each flight of stairs traversed tracked. A goal was set to have 110 flights taken by 9:11 am.. The event had 55 participants, with 340 flights taken by the set time goal. After each participant viewed the memorial, they were welcomed to a light breakfast and beverages in the Veterans Resource Center.

Figure 2 Guests Signing the What I am Grateful for Poster



Figure 3 Guests Viewing the Memorial



Figure 4 Reception at the VRC

Program Name	Type of Retention and Effort	Description
Student Intake	Initial Retention	Administered by the Veterans Resource coordinator in conjunction with the certifying Official.
WNC Vet Monthly Student Newsletter	Informational/Motivational Support	A monthly newsletter containing information about benefits for student veterans, news on national issues facing student veterans, and club networking events.
Student Club Western Nevada Wildcat Veterans	Campus Engagement	The student club allows our student veterans and the supporters of student veterans to rally around a common cause and interest, increase community awareness, and create vital social connections.
Progress Reports for at Risk Students	Community Involvement	Progress reporting is a critical tool to reach students who may be in academic or personal difficulty at a point where positive intervention may be provided. This intervention allows the student to be reminded of support services available, and ensures the effects negative grades may have on veteran benefits.
Veteran Resource Center.	Physical Space/Campus Resources/Community Involvement	Provides a central location for student veterans to reach academic resources, social resources and outreach resources geared towards veterans. The Veterans Resource Center helps guide student veterans and family members through the adjustment of military life and higher education.
Turn-V Teachers Understanding and Recognizing New Veterans	Faculty/Staff Development	Professional development training for Academic Faculty and College Staff on student veteran Culture and awareness.