

2020-21 Veterans Enrollment Report

November 2021



The Nevada System of Higher Education

Board of Regents

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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. 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) The gender, retention rate, average age, and most common areas of study of students who are veterans; (3) information about how policy changes may have affected the number of students who are veterans enrolled in the Nevada System of Higher Education; (4) the number of students who are veterans who graduated during the immediately preceding academic year; and (5) 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: 5,897

For Academic Year 2020-21, 5,897 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: 3,308

For Academic Year 2020-21, 3,308 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: 65.2 % Male, 34.8% Female

Of the student veterans identified as enrolled at an NSHE institution in Academic Year 2020-21 that provided gender data, 65.2 percent were identified as male and 34.8 percent as female.

Average Age of Enrolled Student Veterans: 30.1 years old

For the identified student veterans enrolled in the 2020-21 academic year, the average age of this student population was 30.1 years old as of September 2020.

Fall to Spring Retention: 79.36%

Of the identified student veterans that were enrolled in Fall 2020, 79.36 percent persisted and enrolled in the Spring 2021 term.

Number of Student Veterans Who Graduated: 1,250

During Academic Year 2020-21, 1,250 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 2020-21 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 (NCES). 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	Number of Students
52-Business, Management, Marketing, And Related Support Services	1012
51-Health Professions And Related Programs	906
24-Liberal Arts And Sciences, General Studies And Humanities	775
43-Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting And Related Protective Services	433
41-Science Technologies/Technicians	314
42-Psychology	306
14-Engineering	305
11-Computer And Information Sciences And Support Services	267
13-Education	262
45-Social Sciences	250
26-Biological And Biomedical Sciences	200
50-Visual And Performing Arts	200
44-Public Administration And Social Service Professions	150
40-Physical Sciences	147
31-Parks, Recreation, Leisure, And Fitness Studies	115

Policy Impact

State law (NRS 396.507) requires reporting of any information necessary to determine the impact of policy changes on the number of student veterans who are enrolled in an NSHE institution. Generally, public policies that impact veterans' enrollment nationally provide certain veterans and their families with residency for purposes of in-state tuition. In-state tuition allows for the movement of veterans and their families between states as they separate from the military and determine where to transition into civilian life and start or continue their higher education pursuits. One of the most significant public laws that has increased veteran enrollment through provisions for in-state tuition is the federal Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014. Since the original Choice Act, further residency and in-state provisions have been made at the federal and state level. Summarized below are provisions relating to residency and in-state tuition. Additionally, provisions under federal legislation to expand certain benefits relating to apprenticeships, distance education, and the pandemic are also mentioned.

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 effective 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 that Purple Heart recipients receiving the waiver be deemed bona fide Nevada residents under NRS 396.540. The Board of Regents adopted the provision as set forth by the Nevada Legislature (*Title 4, Chapter 17, Section 4*).

During the 2021 Session of Nevada State Legislature, Assembly Bill 165 (Chapter 397, *Statutes of Nevada 2021*) was approved, further amending NRS 396.540. Assembly Bill 165 removed the required five-year limitation for honorably discharged veterans to be considered residents for tuition purposes. With the passage of A.B. 165, the Board of Regents must not charge tuition to an honorably discharged veteran, irrespective of where the veteran has established residency or date of discharge. At its June 2021 meeting, the Board of Regents revised the provisions governing tuition for honorably discharged veterans to comply with the revised provisions of state law enacted under A.B. 165.

Additionally, during the 2021 Session of the Nevada State Legislature, Senate Bill 193 (Chapter 211, *Statutes of Nevada 2021*) was approved, permitting the Board of Regents to require each nursing program and teacher education program within the Nevada System of Higher Education to give preference in admission to veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who were honorably discharged.

Federal Legislation

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 veteran 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.

In January 2021, Congress passed Public Law 116-315, further amending the Choice Act under 38 U.S.C. 3679(c). Section 1005 of the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 (Public Law 116-315) removes the three-year time period from date of discharge during which a covered individual must enroll in an institution to receive in-state tuition. Consequently, there is no longer a required time period during which a covered individual must enroll to receive in-state tuition. To ensure NSHE institutions complied with this new amendment to the Choice Act and to not risk the loss of federal veteran education assistance funds, Board of Regents’ policy was amended in June 2021 to comply with 38 U.S.C. 3679(c), as amended by Public Law 116-315. In addition, the Board extended the provision of Public Law 116-315 to include individuals who are covered under the Survivors’ and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 35 of Title 38 U.S.C.).

Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeships Act 2019

The Support for Veterans in Effective Apprenticeship Act 2019 (S. 760) enables registered apprenticeship programs to better serve veterans. Enacted March 2020, this bill requires that the Department of Labor revise its registered apprenticeship programs to include additional program requirements for increasing the access of veterans and their survivors or dependents to such programs. The Department of Labor must acquire written assurance that sponsors of apprenticeship programs: 1.) are aware of the availability of educational assistance for veterans and eligible individuals for use in such programs, 2.) will make a good faith effort to obtain approval for such educational assistance for at least each program location that employs or recruits such recipients, and 3.) will not deny a qualified applicant to avoid making a good faith effort to obtain approval for educational assistance. In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor must require program sponsors to provide standards that contain provisions to grant advanced standing or credit and to provide increased wages commensurate to such standing or credit to individuals eligible for educational assistance.

Department of Veteran Affairs Educational Assistance Benefits for Certain Programs of Education Converted to Distance Education

In March 2020, Public Law 16-128 (S. 3503) was enacted to authorize the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to treat certain programs of education converted to distance learning by reasons of emergency and health-related situations in the same manner as programs of education pursued in-person at educational institutions. This includes payment of monthly housing stipends under Chapter 33 as well as subsistence allowances under Chapters 30, 31, 32, and 35 of Title 38 U.S.C.. The same provision covers Chapters 1606 and 1607 of Title 10 U.S.C.

Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act 2020

The Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (H.R. 6322) provides several improvements in the educational assistance benefits under Veteran Administration laws in the case of changes to courses of education by reason of emergency situation. This bill addresses education programs and assistance for veterans during the covered period of March 1 through December 21, 2020. The Act authorizes Veterans Affairs to: 1.) continue paying work study allowances during the emergency periods under certain circumstances in which a student is unable to access work for up to four weeks, 2.) prohibit the charge of entitlement of students unable to pursue a program of education due to an emergency situation including temporary school closure or a termination of a course or program of study, and 3.) provide an extension of time limitation for use of entitlement to Chapter 30, Chapter 33 and transferees, and Chapter 31 who are prevented from pursuing a chosen program of education before the designated expiration period due to the closure of the institution under Executive Order of the President. The Act also amends Title 38 Section 3699 by including Chapter 31 students as covered individuals such that entitlement shall not be charged due to the closure of an institution during the covered period. Lastly, the Act provides for an extension of payment of vocational rehabilitation subsistence allowances for certain individuals during the covered period.

Continuing Appropriations Act 2021 and Other Extensions Act

Enacted October of 2020, the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2021, section 5202 provides for the extension of Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 by extending the covered period from ending December 21, 2020 to December 21, 2021.

Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020

In January 2021, congress enacted Public Law 116-315, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 which included provisions relating to veteran education benefits and institutions of higher learning. The law provides for access to, and timely accurate delivery of education benefits to

veterans, service members and their dependents. Within Public Law 116-315 there are a total of 32 provisions that impact the administration and oversight of VA education benefits. Most notable, the law expands several benefits including: provisions for in-state tuition benefits; Yellow Ribbon benefits to students studying at overseas schools; the period for election to receive benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill®; transfer of entitlement under the Post 9/11 Bill®; and certain qualifying work-study activities. For a comprehensive view of all 32 provisions impacting veterans' education, the VA has available an [Isakson and Roe Fact Sheet](#).

Impact

In Academic Year 2020-21, 698 new and continuing veterans were deemed residents for tuition purposes. It is expected that with the expansion of the NRS 396.540 through the enactment of Assembly Bill 165 (Chapter 397, *Statutes of Nevada 2021*) and the Isakson and Roe Improvement Act of 2020 the number of veterans seeking residency may also grow.

Institutional Efforts

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Introduction

The UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center (MVSC) supports the vision and academic mission of the university while serving our growing student veteran and military family community by developing a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

Brief of the 2020-2021 Academic Year

- Certifications: During the pandemic, the MVSC team processed 5,264 certifications and \$9,775,018.00 in payments.
- Paperless: Since late 2019, the MVSC has been working closely with a tech team and developed a fully paperless VA benefit certification system. This system and our SCO remote operations has tripled our certification completion rates at a very critical time. The paperless system removes much of the time and “busy work” currently required by our manual processes, simultaneously bolstering our certification efficiency and accuracy. This new process has improved our retention when other schools fell apart.
- Department of Defense MOU: Completed for another 5 years.
- Coordinated the VA VITAL MOU and partnership: UNLV offers the VA VITAL program with a VA health counselor on campus – effective August 2021.
- Debt Payments: Working with financial aid, cashiering, and the comptroller’s office, MVSC was able to develop a new debt repayment process using a PCARD. The MVSC now handles all debts internally and has completed all past due debts to the VA.
- Student Veterans of America (SVA) national headquarters recognized Andrew Ho (Air Force veteran) as the SVA Veteran of the Year for 2021 out of veterans from 1500 chapters.
- Governor Sisolak recognized Rayshawn Williams (PAVE member) as the Nevada Veteran of the Month (July 2021).
- UNLV was again ranked as a TOP TEN “Veteran Friendly” university (2021–2022). Source: GIJOBS.COM.
- UNLV is ranked 27 out of 605 “Best for Vets” colleges in the nation for veterans using the GI Bill®. Source: *Military Times* 2021.

Significant obstacles (other than pandemic response), including those from important collaborations

- Debt Payments: New VA regulations require all schools to process all debts (including student and school debts). Working with financial aid, cashiering, and the comptroller’s office, MVSC was able to develop a new debt repayment process using a PCARD. The MVSC now handles all debts internally and has completed all past due debts to the VA.
- The 2-Step certification requirement: Effective August 2021, we are now required to certify each file twice. This new requirement has added double work to our already understaffed department. We will be required to certify @ 3,000 certifications each semester. This would require 4 new SCO staff.
- Federal Government compliance requirements: The VA continues to add additional requirements for which we are unfunded and understaffed to be able to serve our veterans within these new requirements. We have united with other NSHE schools to highlight unintended challenges from these new VA requirements.
- 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.

New Initiatives

- Coordinated the VA VITAL MOU and partnership: UNLV offers the VA VITAL program with a VA health counselor on campus – effective August 2021
- Marketing and Recruiting: The UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center has a limited budget to actually do some recruiting with College Recon in the future.
- SCO Efficiencies: Our SCO team certified more than 5,000 certifications while working remotely. We increased our efficiencies from 10-15 certifications daily to 30-35 certifications per day. The small MVSC team of SCOs proved their new-found efficiencies for this new volume of certifications without distraction, while maintaining our ability to ensure that UNLV and all our military-affiliated students are paid in a timely manner. We are nationally recognized for our team’s reputation of getting our students certified and paid within 10 days during the pandemic.
- Rebel Vet (SVA Chapter) Support: The Rebel Vets conducted outdoor distanced hikes and community support missions at the local food banks and checked in on veterans of concern during the isolation. President Andrew Ho was recognized for his leadership with the National SVA “Veteran of the Year” Award. MVSC Leadership Initiatives: We provided effective leadership initiatives during our move to remote work, focusing on our customer service to our veterans, morning group chat check-ins at 0800 daily, weekly 1:1 calls with each staff member, mailing of care packages with toilet paper, hand sanitizer, UBER Eats cards and candy, and open communications—resulting in no staff turnover during the emergency.
- MVSC Computers: We upgraded our computers with cameras and new equipment to allow our SCOs to work remotely and our PAVE team to provide Zoom interactions with students.

Continuing Initiatives

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 any veteran or family members using the GI Bill®.
- AB 76 (FRY Scholarship) grants in-state tuition to any dependents of KIA service members.
- Priority registration is provided to all veterans to expedite payment of the Chapter 33 GI Bill®.
- UNLV is ranked as TOP TEN “Veteran-Friendly” University (GIJOBS.COM 2021-2022).
- *Military Times* magazine ranked UNLV #27 (“Best for Vets”) out of 605 4-year schools.
- UNLV offers the VetSuccess program with a VA benefits counselor on campus.
- UNLV offers the VA VITAL program with a VA health counselor on campus.
- UNLV sponsors a nationally recognized Student Veterans Organization chapter, Rebel Vets.
- UNLV hosts “Safe Talk” suicide prevention training each semester.
- 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 next will be on March 5, 2022.)
- Since 2012, the Eleanor Kagi Foundation has funded 12 Rebel Vet Graduation receptions to honor our 2,355 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.

Community Outreach: The executive director of the Military & Veteran Services Center and our director of outreach are the outreach coordinators for all things veteran in Southern Nevada. Ross continues to be the co-chair of the local VA Southern Nevada Veteran Engagement Community Council. The committee consists of Goodwill, the Red Cross, the Las Vegas Urban League, Las Vegas PBS, the local Heroes2Hired program, UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center, the VA Hospital, and the City of Las Vegas. This local effort is dedicated to sharing resource information and veteran support event schedules and connecting veterans in need with resources. When veterans in need arrive at UNLV, our ability to connect them with critical resources, grants, or programs is crucial to being able to assist them. The various services and partnerships available include, but are not limited to:

- UNLV Student Veteran Resources
- Academic Advising
- Student Services
- Las Vegas Community Veteran Resources

University of Nevada, Reno

Introduction

Veteran Services at the University of Nevada, Reno provides a wide range of support and referral services for all undergraduate and graduate students who are veterans, currently serving either on active duty or in the Reserve or National Guard. We also provide services for veterans in college readiness and employment as well as support for qualified family members. Our vision is to graduate the best prepared student veterans and family members by incorporating students' prior experience with contemporary scholarship to have a purposeful impact on their personal, career, and civic endeavors while recognizing and celebrating the vast diversity of the population. The University of Nevada, Reno achieves this vision via a number of annual academic and social wellness marquee events.

- Express advising
- Priority registration
- Study skills workshops
- Job and resource fairs
- Welcome back and finals events
- Veterans Week flag retirement ceremony and veteran appreciation lunch
- Veteran graduation celebration
- Family friendly fall carnival

Brief of the 2020-2021 Academic Year

Despite the 2020-2021 academic year being fully online due to COVID-19, Veteran Services witnessed an increase of 3.8% in students using the GI Bill® from fall 2020 to fall 2021. Over the past few years, the department has made concentrated efforts to educate undergraduate students regarding applying, using GI BILL®, financing and benefits of graduate school. This campaign resulted in an 11% growth in graduate students from fall 2020 to fall 2021.

With courses being taught remotely, but the campus being open and under strict COVID-19 regulations, Veteran Services took the opportunity to overhaul the website, informational orientations, and internal GI BILL® claims processing systems to enable us to reach students sooner. With great vigor, we moved our communication system to be available online.

The new website was designed to capture the feeling and character of the department. We created self-paced video modules, which are ADA compliant, on each individual benefit chapter, Nevada National Guard, and helpful tips. Additionally, we added a page dedicated to staff and faculty resources and getting involved on campus. With the creation of these modules, students and families obtain the required information sooner. We are currently designing phase 2 of the website, which will include an informational module for parents, financial literacy and community resources.

Following the university online summer student orientations, Veteran Services informational orientation sessions were moved to an online platform, which allowed the department to schedule sessions more often and on weekends. All forms and requests were converted to DocuSign forms, to eliminate the need for students to come to campus.

While 2020-2021 was unique in our limited daily connection with students, we believe this time afforded Veteran Services at UNR a focused opportunity to re-tool how we work and communicate to more efficiently provide support to our Wolf Pack students.

New Initiatives

- Afghanistan Veteran Support Group. With the sudden withdraw of US military forces, the department addressed the emotional challenges facing many students and provided them with a guided platform to reflect. All students received a personalized message from President Sandoval and the university Counseling Services made available counseling sessions specifically for veterans.
- Starting Fall 2021, expanded operations in the Veterans and Military Center including free printing services
- Integration of NAVIGATE system into daily operations. With this campus-wide online tool, we are able to
 - Track students use and engagement in the Veterans and Military Center
 - Receive targeted information on students to develop more meaningful programs
 - Use tags in the system to send and receive notifications of student issues for more proactive and timely intervention
- Formation of the Veterans Support Team. The Veteran Support Team was created to strengthen the veteran community for students, staff and faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno.
 - Create a support network, along with a sense of community, and provide networking opportunities for veterans and military members on campus
 - Expand the number of students, staff and faculty that are active in the veteran and military community at the University
 - Increase awareness and connect team members to available University or Reno community services and resources
- Virtual VMC daily for 2020-2021 academic year. With classes being online, Veteran Services moved services on-line including a Virtual VMC. Students were able to “hang out” in a zoom daily to stay connected during the pandemic.
- Upgraded website to include self-paced modules on each benefit chapter so prospective and incoming students have information sooner on how to utilize benefits on campus. Additionally, provided resources and information for staff and faculty to assist in supporting students
- Ensuring our student’s health and wellbeing is priority. The staff made multiple call campaigns to students to inform them of the HERF funding opportunities, priority registration, COVID-19 vaccination clinics and COVID-19 vaccination policies. While providing this information is important, the primary objective of the call campaigns was to connect on the students’ health and wellness during the pandemic.
- Developed community partnership with David J Drakulich Foundation to provide healing through art
 - Designed and produced 3,186 origami paper cranes to represent the individual lives lost on 9/11/2001. Located in the Joe Crowley Student Union for 2 weeks, the art display was to educate and engage the larger campus community. Everyone had a story from 9/11/200 and we felt it was important to the campus community to have an opportunity to reflect upon the 20th anniversary of 9/11. More importantly, the student veterans spent the summer handmaking the paper from retired service uniforms. The process provided a means of giving gratitude, honor, and a return of the gift of freedom of expression.
- Participated in Women’s History month on campus by highlighting a woman veteran and historical woman veteran in campus exhibit.

Continuing Initiatives

- Veteran and family member orientation. Incoming students and family members are provided with a number of possible online orientations to meet the staff, learn about how UNR processes the GI BILL, learn about our programs and services. Additionally, the incoming students receive a welcome letter.
- Virtual Veterans Graduation Celebration, we had 24 students participate. All graduates received certificates of appreciation from Senator Cortez Masto, Senator Rosen, The VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System and UNR Veteran Alumni chapter.
- Veterans Week appreciation events
- Zoom sessions on GI BILL® 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.

- At Risk Student Outreach –Personalized outreach to students with low GPA for intervention, support and information on resources. Veteran Services removed the *warning term* policy for using GI BILL® benefits to align with university SAP intervention policy.
- Zoom express advising - Advisors from each college are available for drop in or express advising via zoom. This allows students and navigate through specific college requirements, 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.
- Expanded opportunities for VetSmart Training. Staff facilitated VetSmart trainings to departments, but also presented at the Northern Nevada Diversity Summit and a larger campus training to all faculty and staff in wake of Afghanistan withdraw. The overall purpose of VetSmart is to bring awareness on the military culture and potential challenges of student veterans.
- Ruptured Duck Student Emergency Fund, efforts continue to fundraise.
- Social Wellness and Educational Programs held virtually and in-person.
- Scholarship Opportunities.
- V.I.T.A.L. Grant – UNR maintains a partnership with the VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System to host a VA LCSW and Outreach Specialist on campus. The VA LCSW provides mental health/ well-being care to students. The Outreach Specialist works with students to register and integrate them into the VA system. Both VITAL team members are essential to our supporting students in need and the department mission.
- Community Partnerships – Veteran Services continues to provide a private office space for external organizations to bring veteran-related services to campus. Organizations including NV DETR/ Job Connect for resume writing, NVDS Veteran Services Office for filing disability claims.
- Wolf Pack Veterans Student Club to foster community and student engagement. Due to pandemic restraints, events were difficult to plan, and the annual fall festival was cancelled due to the August smoke. The club did work with the David J, Drakulich Foundation for an evening of personalizing flags with combat paper.

Nevada State College

Introduction

Nevada State College remains strongly committed to providing our student veterans with an exceptional and supportive educational experience. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has inhibited some of our ability to engage with students as we have in the past, we have sought other ways of connecting with and supporting our students. Moreover, as we move out from under the shadow of the pandemic, we are again examining how we can foster increasing levels of support and engagement for our 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 develop and refine initiatives that address the needs and aspirations of this population. Our initiatives address several different facets of the student experience, including the allocation of physical space (a Veterans' Lounge), the provision of financial support (including emergency funding support), and community-building opportunities (the "ScorpionVets" club).

The relevant initiatives had been disaggregated according to new initiatives – added since our last report – and pre-existing programs and initiatives. The proportion of new initiatives has lessened, primarily for two reasons. First, our focus has shifted from the development of new initiatives – which was essential as we built out our programming – to the maintenance and refinement of those efforts. Second, our ability to cultivate new initiatives has been stymied by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has added new obligations and redirected personnel to pertinent tasks, while simultaneously limiting some of the endeavors that would normally be at our disposal (e.g., certain in-person activities during the height of the pandemic). Consequently, our foremost new initiative has been the creation of virtual meetings/consultations that aim to provide quality support to veteran students under the present circumstances, as detailed below. Moving forward, we plan to continue expanding and improving our programs and services that support student veterans at Nevada State College.

New Initiatives

The pandemic has forced the college to invest more time and effort into the maintenance of quality services under the current circumstances, leaving less space for entirely new initiatives, but one emerging development is the creation of monthly Zoom meetings. These meetings have been established for student veterans to connect with the Coordinator of Veteran Services as well as other veterans. The primary purpose of these meetings is to discuss the challenges faced by our veterans during these times while balancing school, work and family responsibilities. Participants will discuss current issues and challenges, the VA Weekly News Letter, and how they can access VA support services. The Veterans Monthly Zoom Meetings address topics that include:

- Welcoming new veterans to NSC
- Best practices for online learning
- Effective email communication in light of the provision of many services and courses in a distance format
- Keeping fit physically and mentally
- Social activities (e.g., playing trivia via Kahoot.it)
- Generalized question and answer sessions

We also are exploring new ways in which the Office of Student Life can support our student veterans (e.g., clubs and organizations, social and academic support), and expect that we will have more to report in the coming year.

Continuing Initiatives

- Peer Mentorship* - This program pairs new student veterans or dependent students with a current veteran or dependent student to mentor them from the first-year of college 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* – Nevada State College has sent student veterans to attend the Student Veterans of America National Conference in Orlando, FL. By participating in the conference, students have

an opportunity to network with other student veterans as well as learn more about available resources. Also, student veterans have 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.
- **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.
- **Nevada State College ScorpionVets** – The Nevada State College ScorpionVets Club focuses 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 helps to ensure that the certification process is expedited, which results in veterans receiving their benefits and funding in time for registration processing.
- **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 holds 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.
- **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 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 just welcomed our first licensed professional counselor in fall 2021, who provides direct and long-term support to students in need.

Nevada State College also partners 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 to meet increasing demand.

*Denotes an item that is on temporary hiatus due to COVID-19 restrictions.

College of Southern Nevada

Introduction

The VETS Center's mission is 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.

The center's vision is to be the preeminent military and veteran service provider among institutions of higher learning in Nevada.

The center's primary goals include efficiently and effectively administering U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs education programs; improving and better tracking of persistence, retention and graduation rates for VA beneficiaries; and creating and implementing transformational programming that increases opportunities for student veteran success.

2020–21 Academic Year Brief

The largest impact on the VETS Center has been the transition from a paper-based method of processing VA files to a digital-based method. This has allowed for greater flexibility, efficiency and the ability to serve students through access to files from any location.

During the pandemic, the staff also accomplished a massive project of indexing, documenting and scanning (through a third party) more than 1,000 paper files so they could be accessed in a fully remote environment. This was a victory in digital processing.

Of note as well, VETS Center Program Manager Geoff Roberts was published for the first time. He partnered with two co-authors for a chapter in a volume of *New Directions for Student Services*. Their work covers special considerations for performing institutional assessments for the military-connected student population.

New Initiatives

- **Veterans Integration into Academic Leadership (VITAL)**
 - The VETS Center welcomed the VA's VITAL program to CSN during summer 2021. CSN provides office space on its North Las Vegas Campus for the VITAL coordinator.
 - VITAL provides a bridge for CSN student veterans to VA health care, mental health and other services offered by the VA. The program provides a social worker (VITAL coordinator) to make these valuable connections to increase overall student veteran well-being, which increases their ever-important holistic success as students.
- **VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC)**
 - Another VA program related to Veteran Readiness and Employment (VRE) is in development. The VETS Center has worked to establish this partnership and returned its portion of the memorandum of understanding. Following the VA's approval, the VetSuccess on Campus program will launch, with a focus on VRE. A majority of the work to implement this program was completed during the 2020–21 academic year.
 - VSOC will provide another layer of holistic success for student veterans through vocational testing, career counseling and access to VA benefits. Also, it will provide an additional level of referral capability to VA health care and disability accommodations. This program is scheduled to be offered on the Charleston Campus. Meaningful relationships are anticipated between VSOC and CSN's Disability Resource Center and Career and Transfer Services, as well as other potential community resources. These supports will help the program to flourish and further enhance student veteran success.

- **VETS Center Virtual Open Houses**
 - The VETS Center hosted two open houses that were conducted virtually during the COVID-19 shutdown. This was a targeted effort, primarily seeking to provide live questions and answers to prospective students using VA benefits, with an aim of increasing enrollment.

Continuing Initiatives

- **Veteran Academic Advising**
 - CSN provides a team of dedicated academic advisors who meet only with student veterans and their dependents. During the pandemic, academic advisors in the VETS Center were able to create a process and infrastructure to advise student veterans virtually through online teleconferencing, which enabled a better service experience for those individuals uncomfortable with receiving in-person services. As of July 1, 2021, student veterans now have the option for in-person or virtual advising going forward.
- **Assessment Measures and Protocol**
 - In alignment with CSN's Student Affairs assessment protocols, the VETS Center continues to establish, review and refine its operational strategies and goals. CSN has introduced Taskstream software to aid with this ongoing objective.
- **Connection to National Association of Veterans Program Administrators (NAVPA) Board of Directors**
 - The VETS Center's assistant director continues to serve on the NAVPA board and its scholarship committee. In addition, the center is included on the organization's listserv for important updates regarding VA benefits. Board members often discuss matters that help the center anticipate and conduct some advance planning for challenges that will affect student veteran recruitment, retention and graduation.
- **USAA Grant**
 - The VETS Center administers a grant awarded by USAA to provide retention services to VA beneficiaries. The 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 student 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 student veterans.
- **Veteran and Dependent Orientation**
 - The Veteran and Dependent Orientation program was suspended during the pandemic; however, the VETS Center offers an orientation each fall and spring to VA beneficiaries. Since October 2018, the center has expanded its orientation to include returning student veterans in an effort to further connect with this population. Additional content includes GI Bill updates and the returning student veteran claim submission process. Also, the center will continue its collaborative efforts with other service providers in an effort to connect VA beneficiaries with campus and community resources via the resource fair portion of the orientation. This event is incentivized for student veterans by providing expedited processing to receive their VA benefits in a timely manner, which, in turn, encourages them to attend the resource fair and gain the knowledge needed to be successful at CSN.

Great Basin College

Introduction

The Veterans Resource Center at Great Basin College strives to provide our military affiliated students with the best resources and opportunities to succeed in higher education. We offer:

- Wide Range of Degree Objectives to Foster Success in the Civilian World
- New Student Orientation Briefings
- VA GI Bill® Assistance/Guidance for all Chapters
- Course Certification for Monthly Benefits
- Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Guidance
- Staff by Certified Nevada Veterans Advocates
- In House Joint Service Transcript, processing chain
- In House Student Advisement
- Private Study Area for Students
- One Stop Shop for all Student Veterans and Military Affiliated Student

Brief of the 2020-2021 Academic Year

Two grants awarded to the Veterans Resource Center allowed us to completely renovate our space providing a welcoming environment for our students, while maintaining a professional work climate. The initiative was based on student feedback the VRC was outdated and not conducive to student needs. Positive recognition of the changes to the space have been expressed by our students and staff at Great Basin College.

New Initiatives

- **In House Advisement** - Advisement is conducted in house to ensure VA compliance with course selection to limit negative impacts to students not familiar with the requirements of VA education benefits.
- **Continuous Advisement** - We monitor our VA students throughout the semester to ensure support. If the student needs assistance, we provide them with resources to improve.
- **Veterans Advisory Group**- Creation of a Great Basin College Advisory Group to promote and provide a military friendly environment to the military connected-students attending GBC.
- **NSHE Veteran & Military Council**- Participation in quarterly meetings to better the environment and processes at all NSHE Institutions with a collective voice for our military connected-students.
- **Joint Service Transcript (JST) Articulation** - JSTs are processed in house to assist within the articulation process in awarding students potential military credit.
- **Nevada Veteran Advocate**- All staff including Veterans Affairs (VA) Student Work Study(s) completed training by the Nevada Department of Veterans Services and are Certified Nevada Veteran Advocates.

Continuing Initiatives

- **Early Enrollment Notification** - We notify our students when enrollment for the fall and spring semester opens. We encourage them to enroll early to beat the rush and guarantee a spot in the class. This helps to ensure our military connected students can enroll in needed courses.
- **Boot Camp Credit** - 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.
- **Graduation Recognition** – Graduating veterans continue to receive stoles and VRC Challenge Coins in recognition of the graduating, however due to in person restriction the items are shipped to the students.
- **Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) Nevada JobConnect**- Maintained communication with DETR representative, in restricted in-person environments to provide students with employment support.

- **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.
- **Veterans Affairs Student Work Study** -Employment opportunities for student veterans with flexible and remote hours during challenges of the pandemic. Builds relations, while supporting the veteran and the operational needs of VRC.

Truckee Meadows Community College

Introduction

The mission of Truckee Meadows Community College's (TMCC) Veteran Services is to assist our student veteran population and military connected students 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.

Brief of the 2020-2021 Academic Year

The 2020-2021 Academic Year was challenging to TMCC Veteran Services as we engaged students both in person and online. Like everyone we continued to see the effects of COVID. The number of students utilizing benefits decreased but we are encouraged as we return to normalcy we can increase that those back to pre-pandemic figures. We limited the number of in person events and offered virtual options when possible to interact in a safe manner. For the 20th anniversary of September 11th TMCC Veteran Services partnered with City of Sparks and VFW Post 3396 host Operation Battle Born: Never Forget. Over 75 participants ruck marched from South Reno to the Sparks Marina in remembrance of the attacks on September 11th. This marked one of the first major in person events for our community. We look forward to the next academic year and the challenges it will bring.

New Initiatives

- **“Always Lost” Revived: Art Displays Exhibit That Personalizes Iraq, Afghanistan Wars-** Thanks to collaboration between the Veterans Resource Center at Truckee Meadows Community College, Western Nevada College and VFW Post 2313 in Hawthorne, “Always Lost: A Meditation on War” is once again on public display, for the first time since 2016. The exhibition is dedicated to U.S. military service members in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars who gave their lives, as well as to those who made it home. This art display will be on loan till to TMCC till 2025.

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 50 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. 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.

- **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 as well as updates military transcripts, 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.
- **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.

- **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 has 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** – Continuing 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 have executed two statewide Operation Battle Born ruck marches in honor of the fallen heroes from the Global War on Terrorism.
 - Veterans and volunteers from across the state take turns carrying nearly 7,000 service member dog tags, including the 57 fallen Nevadans who made the ultimate sacrifice since September 11, 2001. 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

Introduction

Western Nevada College is committed to serving veterans in our community. This commitment is personified by our Veterans Service Team. The Veteran Service Team is a collaborative effort from Financial Assistance, Counseling Services, Admissions and Records and a volunteer Academic Faculty member. 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. 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's Certifying Official and dedicated Veteran Academic Counselor provide wrap around services from initial intake to graduation. Each veteran student receives services and assistance, including:

- 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, academic coaches, and 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 required meeting with the Veteran Academic Counselor

Brief of the 2020-2021 Academic Year

WNC's focus during the 2020-2021 academic year was on continuing to support our student veterans in online and remote learning environments, working to ensure that every student had the technological support to complete their coursework. In-person support services remained intact and available for students in Financial Assistance, Counseling Services, Library resources, and the Academic Skills Center.

New Initiatives

- The ongoing pandemic and loss of dedicated Veteran Resource Center Coordinator restricted the development and implementation of new Veteran focused initiatives.

Continuing Initiatives

- **Fall 2020 Virtual Veteran Resource Center**
 - Provided a Virtual location for student veterans to reach academic, social and outreach resources. The Virtual center helped connect students during the COVID-19 transition to online services.
- **Fall 2020 Veteran Resource Center Computer Lab**
 - Provided a central location for student veterans to reach academic resources, social resources and outreach resources geared towards veterans. The Veterans Resource Center helped guide student veterans and family members through the adjustment of military life and higher education while allowing for social distancing and safety of the students.
- **Academic Counseling Intervention Meetings with at risk students**
 - Counseling Services has a primary counselor dedicated to supporting student veterans for academic and/or personal difficulty. The counselor remains current on mental health issues common to veterans to appropriately address high risk vets and connect them to relevant resources.