

2021-22 Veterans Enrollment Report

November 2022



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 the success of achieving their educational goals.

The purpose of this report is to meet requirements of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 396-5453. 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 identify themselves as veterans and 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.

During Fall 2016 NSHE institutions undertook a significant technical implementation to improve the collection of veteran enrollment data to make it possible for veterans to self-identify on their applications for admission. Since the application only collects data on new students, the institutions also use various survey instruments to identify any 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: 5,696

For Academic Year 2021-22, 5,696 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: 3,282

For Academic Year 2021-22, 3,282 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: 64.7 % Male, 35.3% Female

Of the student veterans identified as enrolled at an NSHE institution in Academic Year 2021-22 that provided gender data, 64.7 percent were identified as male and 35.3 percent as female.

Average Age of Enrolled Student Veterans: 30.3 years old

For the identified student veterans enrolled in the 2021-22 academic year, the average age of this student population was 30.3 years old as of September 2021.

Fall to Spring Retention: 79.36%

Of the identified student veterans that were enrolled in Fall 2021, 71.4 percent persisted and enrolled in the Spring 2022 term.

Number of Student Veterans Who Graduated: 1,260

During Academic Year 2021-22, 1,260 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 2021-22 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 | 953 |
| 51-Health Professions and Related Programs | 847 |
| 24-Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities | 421 |
| 43-Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services | 391 |
| 11-Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services | 304 |
| 14-Engineering | 296 |
| 41-Science Technologies/Technicians | 275 |
| 13-Education | 264 |
| 42-Psychology | 260 |
| 45-Social Sciences | 211 |
| 50-Visual and Performing Arts | 206 |
| 26-Biological and Biomedical Sciences | 179 |
| 44-Public Administration and Social Service Professions | 146 |
| 31-Parks, Recreation, Leisure, Fitness, and Kinesiology | 123 |
| 40-Physical Sciences | 115 |

Policy Impact

State law (NRS 396.5453) 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 the 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 updated policy to include the provision of Public Law 116-315 for 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 to the end date of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 from December 21, 2020, to December 21, 2021.

Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions Act (REMOTE Act)

In December of 2021 the Responsible Education Mitigating Options and Technical Extensions Act (REMOTE Act)(H.R. 5545) was signed into law (Public Law 117-76, 117th Congress). The REMOTE Act extended various COVID-19 protections for GI Bill students from December 21, 2021 to June 1, 2022. Specifically, the REMOTE Act

extended the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 as previously amended by the Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2020.

[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 2021-22, 802 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 continue to 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 2021-2022 Academic Year

- 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* 2021-22.

New Initiatives

- Marketing and Recruiting: The UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center has a limited budget to actually do some recruiting with College Recon in the future. Recently we went to military bases in Hawaii, North Dakota, Alaska, and also to Fort Bliss in Texas to explore recruitment opportunities in these locations.
- Implementation of the new Army Education Portal (Armyignite): In order to implement all of UNLV’s requirements to participate as an approved school for soldiers to attend with Tuition Assistance benefits, the MVSC routinely must organize ESS support from OIT, the registrar’s office, admissions, financial aid, and the cashiering office.

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. The department also provides services for veterans and family members for college readiness and employment opportunities. Our vision is to graduate the best prepared student veterans and family members by incorporating students' prior military and life experiences with university academic achievements to have a purposeful impact on their personal, career, and civic endeavors while recognizing and celebrating the vast diversity of the population.

Brief of the 2021-2022 Academic Year

The number of students using GI BILL® has remained steady with just over 650 students, and the department maintained a 62% retention rate from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022. With campus fully opened after the pandemic, the department witnessed an increase in the number of students utilizing and engaging in the Nevada Military Support Alliance Veterans and Military Center (VMC). In the Fall 2021, the VMC was visited 2,698 times by 201 individuals. In the Spring 2022, the VMC was visited 3,012 times by 163 individuals. The space previously allocated for student staff has been re-allocated as a quiet study space for individuals to meet the evolving needs of our students.

New Initiatives

- Veterans Writing Group – With the support of the Northern Nevada Veterans Writing Project, Veteran Services hosted a monthly writing group for student veterans, family members and the community to take an hour to reflect and express thoughts through writing or art.
- Campus Ukraine Discussion – With the conflict in Ukraine in the Spring 2022, Veteran Services hosted an evening with the campus social workers and community veteran support groups to provide a platform for students to discuss the current event and emotional challenges the global crisis presented.
- Family Member Support Group – A graduate student receiving his Master of School Counseling implemented a monthly family member group. During the monthly meetings, student family members gathered to discuss how their upbringings were different from fellow students, particular challenges they faced, and developed a community space around the unique needs of family members.
- First-Generation and Veterans Week celebration – First-Generation week and Veterans week fall within the same timeframe every year. Thanks to a small grant, Veteran Services and the Student Services' First-Generation Student Center (FGSC) were able to bring 60 students from both departments together in November 2021 to plant succulents and paint flower pots in a celebration of both National First-Generation week and Veterans Day. This well-attended event resulted in FGSC and Veteran Services participants collaborating in a celebration of identities surrounding Veterans Day and First-Generation week.
- ENGAGE Speaker, Nate Boyer – Veteran Services partnered with Nevada Veterans Alumni chapter to host national speaker Nate Boyer to campus to speak about his personal journey as a Green Beret, professional football player and actor.
- Operation Battle Born – In partnerships with Truckee Meadows Community College Veteran Services, NVDS, and Reno Vet Center, UNR participated in the planning, logistics, support and implementation of Operation Battle Born on Memorial Day weekend. Participants hiked from the state capital in Carson City to the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Fernley, NV carrying over 7,000 dog tags to represent the military members lost since 9/11.
- A Ruck to Remember – In partnership with Truckee Meadows Community College Veteran Services and the Mayor's Challenge, UNR supported and participated in a Ruck to Remember on World Suicide Awareness Day. Participants watched a documentary on the 911 Veteran's Crisis Line, had a panel discussion with community mental health practitioners, and had a candlelight ruck around the TMCC campus to remember those lost to suicide.
- Co-host regional Veterans job and resource fair with TMCC

- Nevada Veterans Alumni chapter Partnership – In an effort to mentor and support upcoming graduates, Veteran Services co-hosted a number of events to promote current and graduation engagement.
- Staff Training
 - Professional staff is trained in Mental Health First Aid
 - Professional staff and student staff trained in Suicide Awareness Training 101 and identifying students in needs and self-care
 - Work place violence training

Continuing Initiatives

- Veteran Support Team – Comprised of staff and faculty, the Veteran Support Team continues to strengthen the veteran community for students, staff and faculty by creating a sense of community and a network for veterans and military-affiliated individuals across campus.
- VetSmart training – Veteran Services facilitated 6 VetSmart trainings to the campus, plus a session to the City of Reno. The training reviews elements of the Veteran and military culture and exposes participants to habits or behaviors student veterans may express on campus
- Participated in Women’s History month by highlighting a woman veteran and historical woman veteran in campus exhibit.
- Veterans Week appreciation events:
 - 2500 flag planting
 - Flag retirement ceremony
 - ASUN hosted lunch and Tshirts
- Wolf Pack Veterans:
 - Summer Bash. This year’s annual family-friendly afternoon carnival was hosted the weekend before the first day of the term and yielded over 250 student veterans, family members and UNR students for an afternoon of lawn games, water fights and a dunk tank.
 - Football Tailgate. In partnership with the Nevada Veterans Alumni chapter, Veteran Services hosted our annual tailgate to support camaraderie between current student veterans and the Veterans Alumni chapter.
- Zoom Informational Sessions on GI BILL® for incoming students – Staff scheduled online information sessions and in-person appointments to assist incoming students how to navigate both UNR enrollment and GI Bill® usage.
- At-Risk Student Personalized outreach – Veteran Services office outreached 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 policy.
- Zoom Express Advising – 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.
- Social Wellness and Educational Programs:
 - VA Hiring Fair Navigate Federal Hiring Process Seminar
 - Applying and Funding Graduate School Seminar
 - Bad Military Movie night
 - March Madness Tournament
 - NFL Draft Party
 - Honors College Presentation
 - VA and American Iron Gym power weightlifting program for personal development and growth specifically for Veterans
 - Moon Rocks Rock Climbing for Veterans
- Scholarship Opportunities
 - VVA
 - Wolf Pack Vets

- Ruptured Duck Emergency Funds
- V.I.T.A.L. Grant – UNR maintains a partnership with the VA Sierra Nevada Hospital 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 support UNR students.
- Community Partnerships – Veteran Services continues to provide a private office space for external organizations to bring veteran-related services to campus. Organizations Veteran Services partnered with in 2021-2022 include NV DETR/ Job Connect for resume writing, Nevada Department of Veteran Services, Work for Warriors, Reserve Assistance Advisor Federal Contractor (RCTAA), David J. Drakulich Foundation, Amazon Inc, and Katie Grace Foundation.

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 posed tremendous challenges to the college and our students, but it also compelled us to adapt in ways that ultimately may be beneficial to student success. One of those persisting adaptations is the creation of monthly Zoom meetings that allow our 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 needs, interests, and challenges of our veterans, and to do so in a way that improves access to students who may not be able to establish an in-person appointment. Participants discuss current issues and challenges, the VA Weekly Newsletter, 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
- Partners with the Department of Veteran's Affairs – Community Engagement Suicide Prevention

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 – Starting 2023 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). Submitting Grant proposal upgrade computer and other equipment.
- Work Student Program – Using enrolled veteran and military connected students to provide administrative support to the Veterans Affairs Coordinator. This program is funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- 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. We are now looking to hire our second licensed counselor to help us address the rising demand for these services.

College of Southern Nevada

Introduction

The VETS Center supports the College of Southern Nevada's mission to empower our students and communities to achieve, succeed, and prosper by providing 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.

CSN provides office space on its North Las Vegas Campus to support the VITAL program. 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.

2021–22 Academic Year Brief

VETS Center team members were selected as presenters at the 2022 Region Nine National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). The VETS team members presented on the VETS advising model created to provide service to a specialized population.

CSN hosted Congresswoman Susie Lee's Veteran Roundtable on March 21, 2021, inviting student veterans and military connected students to participate in a discussion. The VETS Center team shared crucial changes in VA legislation which impacted CSN VA beneficiaries and caused substantial delays in their benefits.

New Initiatives

- Information Sessions – The VETS Center offers information sessions to keep the VA beneficiary population educated on updated legislation to include expiring COVID-19 laws, attendance verification, and new processing requirements that can impact their pay. These information sessions also offered one-stop services to complete institutional and VA requirements to submit a claim for benefits.
- The VETS Center adjusted to the new normal (post-pandemic) in providing more access options in the form of online services. We accommodated the need to provide full services in advising, educating students, and claim submission without having to visit the campus.

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.
- 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 VETS Center offers a Student Veteran and Dependent Orientation to incoming VA beneficiaries at CSN. 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.
- The Veteran and Dependent Orientation program was suspended effective March 18, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To continuing supporting incoming VA beneficiaries, the VETS Center hosted smaller information sessions in January and June of 2022 to provide similar information due to pandemic restrictions limiting large events. We plan to resume the Veteran and Dependents Orientation program for the Fall 2023.

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.

- Wide Range of Degree Objectives to foster success in the civilian world
- New Student Orientation Briefings
- Veterans Education Program Assistance/Guidance for all Chapters
- Course Certification for Monthly Benefits
- Department of Defense Tuition Assistance Guidance
- Private Study Area for Students
- One Stop Shop for all Student Veterans and Military Affiliated Students

Brief of the 2021-2022 Academic Year

Combined office spaces with the Nevada Department of Veteran Services to provide veterans with optimal resources for education and health care benefits.

Renovated our coffee area to provide a cleaner, more functional area for students and community members. Dedicated to an instructor who was a veteran that fought cancer for many years.

New Initiatives

- New tracking system utilizing Google Sheets to keep track of Military Affiliated Students and note geographical and educational data.
- New collaboration with the advising department and advisors to ensure students are taking applicable courses and working with advisors who are experts in the fields that they advise.
- Collaboration with Admissions and Records to analyze Joint Service Transcripts to ensure completion of articulation in a timely manner and to try to better serve students by bringing in applicable courses.

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 seat in the course. This helps with retaining students who would otherwise procrastinate and not be able to enroll in needed courses.

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.

New Initiatives

- VetSmart – TMCC Veteran Services partners were VITAL and Reno Vet Center to bring Military and Veteran Culture Training providing real-world insights into the history, training, and lasting culture of our service branches and those that volunteer to fill their ranks. Some key areas covered are distinctions between service branches, training and its long-term impacts, deployments, and others that will assist attendees with understanding those students who have taken on a unique way of life. Most importantly, we provide information on local, state, and federal resources, and how to access them most effectively. Our goal is to ensure that our veterans continue to be an extremely valuable part of our community and the more we know about each other the more likely we are to achieve that mission.

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 educational 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. They 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 a whole and help 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 the high quality of service that is currently provided to our student veteran population.
- Early Enrollment – TMCC began offering priority registration to student veterans and eligible dependents back in the spring of 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 the 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 credits 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 on 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), the University of Nevada, Reno Veteran Services, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Rebel Veterans have executed a 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 a turn 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 also continues to bring the student veteran community across the state together with an event between UNLV and TMCC.
- 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 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 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.

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 2021-2022 Academic Year

WNC's focus during the 2021-2022 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 stalled the implementation of any new Veteran focused initiatives.

Continuing Initiatives

- 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.