

# 2016-17 Veterans Enrollment Report

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

November 2017

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



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# Table of Contents

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Background and Purpose.....	1
Student Veterans Data.....	2
Areas of Study.....	3
Policy Changes.....	4
Institutional Efforts.....	6

# Background and Purpose

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

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

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

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

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## **Number of Identified Student Veterans: 5,896**

For academic year 2016-17, 5,896 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 admissions application.

## **Number of Student Veterans receiving payments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: 4,122**

For academic year 2016-17, 4,122 student veterans were certified by an NSHE institution for the purpose of receiving educational 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: 69.6% Male, 30.4% Female**

Of the student veterans identified as enrolled at an NSHE institution in Academic Year 2016-17, 69.6 percent were identified as male and 30.4 percent female. Gender data is not available for all identified student veterans.

## **Average Age of Enrolled Student Veterans: 30 years old**

For the identified student veterans enrolled in the 2016-17 academic year, the average age of those identified students was 30 years old as of September 2016.

## **Fall to Spring Retention: 78.8%**

Of the identified student veterans that were enrolled in Fall 2016, 78.8 percent persisted and enrolled in the Spring 2017 term.

## **Number of Student Veterans Who Graduated: 1,134**

During academic year 2016-17, 1,134 student veterans received a degree or certificate. This number would exclude any veteran who did not receive benefits and/or self-identify as a veteran to the institution.

# Areas of Study

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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 2016-17 academic year. The CIP codes used in this report are based on a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity. The CIP scheme was developed and is maintained by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. The CIP code is the accepted standard for the federal government on instructional program classifications in higher education and is used in a variety of education related surveys and databases within NSHE and across the country.

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

<b>Classification of Instructional Program Category</b>	<b># of Students</b>
52-Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	938
24-Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies, and Humanities	898
51-Health Professions and Related Programs	793
41-Science Technologies/Technicians	444
43-Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services	422
14-Engineering	294
13-Education	280
42-Psychology	243
11-Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	239
26-Biological and Biomedical Sciences	232
45-Social Sciences	219
50-Visual and Performing Arts	183
40-Physical Sciences	140
15-Engineering Technologies and Engineering Related Fields	129
44-Public Administration and Social Service Professions	128

# Policy Changes

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State law requires reporting of any information necessary to determine the impact of policy changes on the number of student veterans who are enrolled in NSHE. Two significant policy changes have taken effect that merit measuring the impact: 1.) the federal Veterans' Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, and 2.) Assembly Bill 260 enacted during the 2013 Session of the Nevada State Legislature. Both establish criteria under which a veteran may be deemed a resident for tuition purposes, therefore avoiding higher non-resident tuition charges under certain circumstances.

## **The Choice Act**

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

To ensure NSHE institutions comply with this new federal law and do not risk the loss of federal veteran educational assistance by its students, the Board of Regents adopted provisions necessary to comply with the Act in March 2015 (*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, the Board chose to extend the requirements of the Choice Act in Nevada to also 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.

## **Assembly Bill 260 (Chapter 505, *Statutes of Nevada 2013*)**

*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. In June 2013, the Board of Regents approved a policy revision under *Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3* to reflect this addition. 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.

*Impact:* In 2016-17, 280 veterans were deemed residents for tuitions purposes, an increase of 409.1 percent over the prior year. It is expected that with the expansion of the NRS 396.540 from two years to five years, the number of veterans seeking residency status under this provision will continue to grow.

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# Institutional Efforts

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

## UNLV

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**Unit Mission:** UNLV established the Office of Veteran Services, now called the Military & Veteran Services Center (MVSC), to better serve our growing student veteran and military family community by developing a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success. UNLV recognizes the many challenges associated with pursuing a degree while serving on active duty, as well as the challenges associated with making the leap from the military to the civilian world. Working with the Student Veterans & Military Family Services Committee and our VetSuccess office on campus to meet these needs, MVSC is staffed with veterans and GI Bill®-experienced staff to assist more than 1,700 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members and reservists with answers to questions concerning admissions, GI Bill® enrollment certification, financial aid resources, campus and community support services, local veteran discounted-housing programs and various networks for veteran employment opportunities.

**A. UNLV Veteran Programs:** UNLV veteran programs are nationally recognized as the model for welcoming, admitting, mentoring and providing resources to student veterans and for helping to increase retention and graduation. The following list highlights the benefits of attending UNLV for veterans and includes UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center programs, accomplishments as well as accolades for UNLV:

- Nevada residency is granted to all honorably discharged veterans within five years of separation, and within three years for military family members using GI Bill®.
- AB 76, signed by Governor Sandoval, will grant in-state tuition to any dependents of KIA service members awarded the FRY Scholarship.
- Priority registration is provided to all veterans to expedite payment of the Chapter 33 GI Bill® housing allowance.
- UNLV is ranked as a Top 15% “Veteran-Friendly” University (GIJOBS.COM 2011-2017).
- *Military Times* magazine ranked UNLV #36 in the nation – “Best for Vets.”
- UNLV offers the VetSuccess program with a VA Benefits Counselor on campus.
- UNLV sponsors a nationally recognized Student Veterans Organization (Rebel Vets) and a Rebel Women Veterans group.
- UNLV hosts “Safe Talk” suicide prevention training each semester.
- UNLV College of Education and Clark County School District are partners for the “Troops to Education” program at UNLV, which provides an accelerated licensing program to any veteran with a bachelor’s degree.
- UNLV participates in the University of Michigan Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE) peer-to-peer mentoring program.

- On January 6, 2017, Ross Bryant was named the Student Veterans of America (SVA) national “Chapter Advisor of the Year” at the 2017 SVA National Conference in Anaheim, California.
- UNLV co-sponsors the semiannual Senator Cortez Masto Veteran Hiring Fair with local employers ready to hire veterans. (Our veteran career fair was held on July 22, 2017, and will again on January 25-26, 2018).
- Since 2012 the Eleanor Kagi Foundation has funded eight Rebel Vet Graduation receptions to honor our 955 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.

**B. Rebel Vet Transition Orientation:** All newly admitted student veterans and military family members receive a MVSC welcome email, a VA resource email, a Student Veterans Organization (SVO)/Rebel Women Vets welcome email and a list of campus/community resources and orientations to assist them in their transition to campus life. In 2017 the MVSC hosted two Rebel Vet Transition Orientations, which provided our new veterans with a GI Bill® responsibilities class, information on veteran resources and VA benefits, connection to our peer-to-peer network and some helpful classes in their journey for academic success. Peer-to-peer mentors communicated with each student — personally emailing and calling the new student veterans and telling them about UNLV’s peer-to-peer mentoring program and letting each one know they had support and a “Battle Buddy” to call if they needed anything.



**C. Faculty and Staff Veteran Awareness Training:** The Military & Veteran Services Center continues to provide faculty and staff veteran-awareness training known as Serving Every Returning Veteran (SERV). This training is designed to explain the various challenges facing our returning veterans and to inform attendees about campus programs that are available to assist veterans in achieving their academic goals. UNLV offered this training monthly during the academic school year through UNLV HR Training and have conducted more than 53 total training sessions for over 375 employees to date. The Military & Veteran Services Center also conducted SERV training as part of the VA Hospital new staff orientation in July 2016.



**D. Campus Celebrations:** During 2016-2017 UNLV hosted our sixth annual Student Life-funded Veterans Day week “Walk/Run to Remember” with more than 250 participants.

- The “Walk/Run to Remember” 2016 celebration** consisted of the following: (a) a run/walk along a flag-decorated two-mile course, (b) a memorial wreath ceremony with an Army and Air Force ROTC combined color guard, (c) a special community support presentation to fightveteran suicide, (d) a local nonprofit “Forgotten Not Gone” providing various



power-assisted bicycles, (e) VA VetSuccess support services table, and (f) an SVA table for students, faculty and staff to write veteran thank-you cards for veterans at the Nevada Veterans Home.

- b. The 6th and 7th Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions:** On December 16, 2016, and May 12, 2017, the Military & Veteran Services Center and the UNLV Student Veterans Organization, with invaluable volunteer support from the Student Veterans & Military Family Support Committee, hosted two semiannual Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions. During the ceremonies UNLV recognized the service and academic achievement of more than 199 graduating veterans and ROTC graduates. The ceremony included the following: (a) a slide presentation of the graduates, (b) a UNLV welcome by AVP Mike Sauer, (c) a presentation of guests – Army Major and UNLV Rebel Vet graduate, Denise Ramos, and Deputy Director of CAEO/TRIO Keith Rogers, an Army veteran, (d) a celebration cake cut with an Army saber, and (e) the recognition of graduates. Each graduate was presented a Rebel Vet coin and cord, a letter of congratulation from Governor Sandoval, a packet with certificates of recognition by each of the Nevada delegation, and a donated UNLV Alumni packet. A drawing of community prizes that included show tickets, dinner coupons and weekend getaway packages was conducted. In addition, UNLV recognized all graduates by publishing the graduation list of student veterans, military family members, and Army and Air Force ROTC graduates on our office wall of honor and in the UNLV Graduation program.



**E. Peer Advisors for Veteran Education (PAVE):** UNLV is one of the few universities in the country that participates in the University of Michigan PAVE (Peer Advisors for Veteran Education) program. PAVE is a peer support program that connects incoming student veterans with student veterans already on campus in order to help them navigate college life, identify challenges they are facing, refer them to the appropriate resources on or off campus, and provide ongoing support for their academic and personal ventures. University of Michigan PAVE conducted a survey of all our veterans using the Post 9-11 GI Bill®. UNLV had a 46% response rate and found the following key information:

- The average age of enrolled veterans is 30.
- Military branches: Air Force 41%, Army 26%, Navy 19%, Marine Corps 16%, and Coast Guard 2%.
- 70% had at least one deployment.
- 41% of our veterans are in STEM-related courses.



- 83% feel supported at UNLV.
- 71% are enthusiastic about UNLV.
- 62% had a sense of belonging at UNLV.
- 50% felt UNLV was one of the best schools in the nation.

F. **NEW - UNLV Student Veterans Organization:** The Director of MVSC is also the faculty advisor for the UNLV Student Veterans Organization (SVO) — the Rebel Vets. SVO’s stated mission: “One way to promote your success in college and in your future career is to get involved in your community or join like-minded student organizations. The UNLV SVO is a nationally recognized organization dedicated to the principle of veterans helping fellow veterans be successful. Individuals interested in camaraderie, working with the veteran community to address veteran issues, and networking with the community for future employment are encouraged to join the UNLV Student Veterans Organization.” This year’s SVO leadership increased the active membership, and in 2014 the women veterans established the Rebel Women Vets organization. The Rebel Vet leadership attended legislative meetings in Washington, D.C., and in Carson City. The Rebel Vets, working in collaboration with the veteran community, helped pass AB24 (Fry Scholarship) and SB457 (military credit process review).



G. **NEW - The Rebel Vet “Engage” Breakfast:** Since establishing the UNLV Military & Veteran Services Center in 2012, we have grown to more than 1700 veterans attending UNLV, with 955 Rebel Vet Graduates now serving in the community. With great support from the UNLV Alumni, a new UNLV Alumni Veteran Club has been established. Taking a concept from UNR’s “Engage” Breakfast program, UNLV hosted a kickoff event on Friday, October 13, 2017, with more than 130 in attendance. The event included the following: (a) the playing of the military service songs, (b) the presentation of colors by the UNLV Air Force & Army ROTC detachments, (c) the playing of the National Anthem, (d) a UNLV welcome by the Director of UNLV’s Military & Veteran Services Center, (d) a review of veteran success programs, (e) recognition of the Cosmopolitan’s veteran hiring program, and (f) a presentation by LVMPD’s Deputy Chief Rich Suey (Air Force veteran) – speaking on behalf of Sheriff Joe Lombardo.

## **Brief of 2016-2017 Academic Year**

The 2016-2017 academic year was marked with growth in numbers of students using the retention programs at Veteran Services. Engagement of services and usage of the Center increased by approximately seventy-five percent overall. This increase of engagement was an outcome of the three major goals of the department: 1) assess the current services for need or improvement, 2) increase the number of users per service over the spring 2016 numbers, and 3) increase the number of services used per student (student return to engage in more than one service).

The focus of the 2016-2017 year was on expanding services through needs assessment and evaluation for improvement. Two additional full-time positions were funded: 1) Intake Coordinator and Evaluator and 2) Veteran and Military Center Program Coordinator. Strategic planning was revisited as well as the departmental mission, vision, values, and goals. Out of the assessment process three new initiatives were developed: 1) Veteran Graduation Celebration, 2) College on-location degree planning, and 3) Money Mentors training. The task of assessing existing services led to several timely revisions in areas such as the intake process, at-risk advising, and focus of the student groups.

### **Vision**

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

### **Mission**

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

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

### **Values**

Integrity, Inclusiveness, Excellence, Respect, Engagement

## New Initiatives 2016-2017

Program Name	Type of Retention/Service	Description
Veteran Graduation Celebration	Career Service	First Graduation Celebration May 2017 highlighted both student veterans and beneficiaries, undergraduate and graduate. Program hosted by Veteran Services and community partners to bring family and personal support systems together. This event also engages current students for exposure to college completion goals. Career Services were advertised and Career Studio was present to answer questions.
College on-location degree planning	On-going	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.
NV Money Mentors collaboration with Financial Aid	On-going retention/financial exploration	Nevada Money Mentors partner with Veteran Services to customize workshops to address life stages student veterans are most financially challenged with. Activities and presentations in conjunction with Career Studio and UNR Human Resource Dept are developed and delivered. Most popular workshop hosted is for salary negotiation.

## Continued Initiatives

Program Name	Type of Retention/Effort	Description
Veterans' Orientation	Initial retention Group	Provided through Veteran Services office. Administered through staff and Vet2Vet Representatives. Initial brief of services offered, staff available, and events to engage in. Concept is success strategies and developing immediate network with our services.
Veteran 1-1 Intake  <b>Revised: 5/2017</b>	Initial retention/ Network building	All incoming students meet one on one with our Intake Coordinator. Benefits are set up, degree plans are confirmed, basic needs assessed, tailored services offered. <b>Financial assessment and advisement added.</b>

Vet2Vet Program	Long-term retention/Peer Support/ Network building	Each incoming student (First year and Transfer) is assigned to a Vet2Vet Representative. The Vet2Vet Rep has been trained through our office to follow the student for the first academic year. Regular communication is established. Ongoing needs assessment for academic and integration success and tailored services offered. Workshops for success given by Vet2Vet Reps. Communication and marketing plans are carried for college specific needs.
V.I.T.A.L. Grant	On-going retention/ Community Involvement 3 <sup>rd</sup> party partnership	Veteran's Integration to Academic Leadership has been a part of this campus for 5 years. It employs one Veteran Outreach Program Specialist and one Social Worker. Both provide services to our students to vest into the VA Health Care System, provide mental health/well-being, and collaborate with the Director on programming efforts with student veterans. They host several events during the year. V.I.T.A.L. has a dedicated office within the Veteran and Military Center.
Two Student Veteran Groups Wolf Pack Veterans Omega Delta Sigma Co-ed fraternity <b>Revised '16-'17</b>	On-going /campus engagement/ Community Involvement	Two veteran student groups' missions align with UNR Veteran Services office to support campus integration and retention efforts. Group Presidents report to the Director of Veteran Services to coordinate programming. Programming include Welcome to Fall Event, <b>weekly meetings, bi-weekly socials, philanthropic efforts</b> , community outreach to VVA, DAV, VFW, American Legion, NNVRC, homeless vets projects, SPCA fund raising.
Progress Reports At-Risk Students  <b>Revised 1/2017</b>	Intense One-on-One	Veterans that have dropped below 2.3 and/or show a pattern of dropping GPA are called into office for one-on-one assessment and customized help or referral. <b>Students dropping below a 2.5 in pre-professional tracks are notified of services available.</b>
Warning Term Students on Probation	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who have dropped to 2.0 or below are advised on benefit and/or financial aid impact. Customized assessment and referral given.
Academic Counseling	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who are not following academic plans are advised and plan confirmed to stay on track. Referral back to college advisor's always first step.
Class/Instructor Mitigation	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who have integration issues with a particular class or instructor are counseled on how to resolve. Veteran Services can assist in that mitigation if necessary.

VetSMART	On-going Campus-wide	Veteran Services and Vet2Vet Reps deliver professional development training and veteran awareness to faculty and staff. This builds a network of identifiable personnel on campus from which a veteran can seek assistance.
CAREER CONCIERGE (formally VetLINC)	On-going Career Preparation One-on-one	Career preparation that involves customized path per student. Intake is done to assess job search tools, preparation needs, plans for internships, interview challenges, networking strengths and challenges, etc. Plan of action is then developed per student with specific set-points that must be accomplished each term for long-term goal. Group workshops are still offered to the general student veteran population for those who do not want personalized services.
Welcome Events	On-going per term Networking Group events	Hosted by VITAL and in collaboration with SVA, welcome events are structured at the beginning of each term for current students to mix and mingle with new/transfer students over free lunch. Vet2Vet Reps market the event to the incoming students. Faculty and staff are also present
GI Bill® Success Workshops	On-going retention GI Bill management Group Events	VA SCO for the institution holds scheduled talks and walk-in time to help navigate both enrollment and GI Bill® use for successful payment and entitlement forecasting. Emphasis is given per benefit chapter to bring awareness of how to best navigate regulations with personal enrollment goals.
Employer Connect	On-going retention Employer Identification Group Events	In collaboration with Nevada Career Studio, simple marketing program to identify current employer partnerships through Career Studio that have veteran/military considerations in the hiring practice. These employers are then identified by a designated logo for veteran/military population to recognize them during career and internship fairs that are held on Campus. This allows students to seek out and self-identify if they choose to employers that are looking specifically to hire veterans or have veteran preference.



<p>Veteran/Military Center</p>	<p>Dedicated physical space On-going retention Personalized and group engagement</p>	<p>Spring 2016 marked the opening of the first UNR Veteran/Military Center. This is an expansion of services, giving a second location to meet the needs of student veterans' integration both physically and programmatically onto campus. The physical space provides a group engagement context, study context, lab computer usage, workshops, events, and employment for 15 VA Work Study students. The Center also holds a dedicated office for VITAL (Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership) team, a Community Office that provides space for internal and external entities to bring services to the student for ease of access, and dedicated space for Veteran Services staff.</p>
<p>Community Partnerships</p>	<p>Dedicated space within the Center On-going retention through meeting non-educational needs Personalized and group</p>	<p>The Community Partnership program invites external entities to bring veteran-related services to campus. Partnerships are identified through the assessment of basic student needs. Currently partnerships exist with NV DETR/JobConnect for resume development, NDVS Veteran Services Officer for filing disability claims, Nevada legal Services for pro-bono work. These services reserve the Community Office within the Center to be able to meet with students one-on-one.</p>
<p>Campus Partnerships</p>	<p>Dedicated space within the Center On-going retention Personalized and group</p>	<p>The Campus Partnership program invites other campus entities that lend to the retention and persistence of the veteran student population to bring their services to the Center. Currently other programs that provide ongoing services are: Academic advisors for advising in conjunction with GI Bill® regulation, tutoring, and writing center. Dedicated time is set up at the convenience of the partner and then marketed to the students.</p>
<p>Coffee with Non-traditional Women in higher education</p>	<p>On-going retention Group</p>	<p>In an attempt to engage women veterans on campus due to low turnout within the veteran groups, a coffee is set monthly for ANY non-traditional women students to engage in a casual coffee hour. Encouraging non-traditional women students (other than veteran only) expands the group as well as serves as greater integration.</p>
<p>November Veteran Recognition Month</p>	<p>Annual Programming/long-term retention</p>	<p>Several events are offered and include: hosted lunch at campus restaurant for all student veterans and family members, 2500 flags planted in honor of those who have served, flag retirement ceremony, veteran recognition during a home football game, hosted speakers, and free raffle/prizes such as ski passes and gift-cards.</p>

The Dean of Students, Director of the Disability Resource Center, and Veterans Affairs Certification Specialist have continued their initial work in bringing more attention to the needs of our student veterans and fostering a more supportive campus community for veterans through relevant services, events, and resources. This work includes an ongoing examination of data regarding enrollment, popular degree programs for our student veterans, and several initiatives that have facilitated an increased presence on campus and in the community for our student veterans. Throughout the past year, NSC implemented initiatives to help build a stable foundation for our student veterans on campus. In lieu of new staffing and funding, NSC developed initiatives that could be implemented utilizing existing resources to help facilitate a discussion about building more robust services and programs. To the greatest degree possible, NSC is assessing the impact of these different initiatives on the success of student veterans, and plan to make relevant adjustments that maximize the likelihood of positive outcomes for our students.

### **Nevada State College Scorpions Vets' Club**

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

### **Veterans' Lounge**

Based on feedback from members of the NSC Student Veterans' 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.

### **Priority Registration**

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

### **Textbook Loan Program**

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

## **Student Veterans Wall of Fame**

The NSC Arts and Culture Department created a Wall of Fame, which is to be located just outside of the Student Veterans' Lounge. This will feature photos and stories of outstanding NSC Student Veterans.

## **Red, White and Blue Honor Cords**

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

## **Guest Speaker: Paul Grossman**

As part of our Veterans Day programming, NSC welcomed Mr. Paul Grossman to NSC, who is a nationally recognized expert in disability services. Mr. Grossman presented on serving wounded warriors in post-secondary education. Mr. Grossman also led a student panel, which included student veteran representatives from NSC, UNLV, and CSN. This event included faculty and staff attendees from UNLV and CSN.

## **NSC Ruck March**

The NSC Student Veterans' Club held their first annual Ruck March on April 7th. In addition to NSC faculty and staff, UNLV Student Veterans and other veteran organizations in the community participated.

## **Volunteer Efforts with US Vets**

As part of the United Way Day of Caring Event, one of Nevada State College's sponsored sites was US Vets. We had approximately 20 faculty/students/staff participate at US Vets and our Nevada State Student Alliance President served as our Team Lead on this project.

## **City of Henderson – Veterans' Day Programming**

The Student Veterans' Club has been collaborating with the City of Henderson to participate in their upcoming Veterans' Day programming.

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

While these programs are not veteran specific, Nevada State College has additional support programs which also benefit student veterans. The Student CARE Team (formally called Student of Concern Team) utilizes a case management model to serve as a hub of existing resources focused on prevention and early intervention for students experiencing distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors. NSC hired its first full-time case manager last fall, and for the 2016-2017 academic year, there has been a 32% increase in utilization when compared to the previous year.

Nevada State College is now contracting with All About You Counseling services to provide on-campus therapy services for our students 2-3 days per week. NSC contracts with UNLV's Counseling and Psychological Services to offer therapy services.

New Initiatives Since October 2016	Type of Retention & Effort	Description
Faculty Mitigation	Train faculty on identifying at-risk students and provide opportunities for retention related professional development/ individual sessions	CSN VETS (Veterans Education & Transition Services) Center works closely with academic faculty to help veterans transition to academic life and work as a liaison between the student and faculty members to help resolve or mitigate circumstances that may be an impediment to student success.
Community Collaborations	External resource availability/group & individual sessions	CSN VETS Center works closely with community partners to provide on-campus information and resources to VA beneficiaries. Current partnerships include the U.S. Nevada Department of Veterans Services, Goodwill Industries, and Vietnam Veterans of America Post #17. CSN hosted on-campus events with the Office of Congresswoman Dina Titus and participated in veteran's legislative discussion with the Office of Congressman Ruben Kihuen.
Employer Contacts	Career exploration/group & individual sessions	In coordination with CSN's Career Services and Reentry Department and other government, private, and non-profit employers, the CSN VETS Center works to create employment opportunities for currently enrolled VA beneficiaries.
Recruitment	Improve access and opportunity for traditional and non-traditional students/ on going	CSN VETS Center participates in a collaborative set of activities with the Nevada National Guard and select Army Reserve Units designed to encourage guardsmen and reservist to enroll in a particular program of study at the CSN.
Veterans' Orientation & Resource Fair	Retain and graduate a larger and more diverse student body/on going	In coordination with CSN's Advising and Coaching Services Department, the CSN VETS Center will host a bi-annual veterans orientation and resource fair designed to support new students as they begin their educational journey at CSN. VA beneficiaries will be introduced to CSN's campus life, academic support programs, student support services as well as community resources. Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Nevada Department of Veterans Services, Student Veterans of America, and local community veteran resources are invited to provide updates on their respective agencies.

Veterans Success on Campus	Establish a shared vision of student success/ group & individual sessions	The VETS Center was recently advised that CSN is in line for consideration for a Veterans Success on Campus (VSOC) counselor to be located at the West Charleston campus. The VSOC program aims to help veterans, service members, and their qualified dependents succeed and thrive through a coordinated delivery of on-campus benefits assistance and counseling, leading to completion of their education and preparing them to enter the labor market in viable careers.
<b>All Other Programs &amp; Initiatives</b>	<b>Type of Retention &amp; Effort</b>	<b>Description</b>
Academic Counseling	Train academic counselors on identifying at-risk students and provide opportunities for retention related academic development/ individual sessions	VA beneficiaries, with a declared program of study, meet periodically with their assigned academic counselor to assist students in the development of an educational plan aligned with their life goals and objectives and provide up-to-date information about institutional policies, procedures, and programs.
Internal Collaboration	Promote campus-wide awareness of retention activities /group & individual sessions	In coordination with the CSN Office of Inclusive Learning & Engagement and the CSN Military & Veterans Alliance (MVA), CSN VETS sponsors service branch birthday celebrations, a fallen comrade table ceremony, participation in the Las Vegas Veterans Day parade, and a veterans graduation reception. VETS has also coordinated efforts with the Associated Students of the College of Southern Nevada (ASCSN) and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society to provide community and campus-based activities designed to commemorate the memory and history of the US Armed Forces.
Veterans Advising	Train academic advisors on identifying at-risk students and provide opportunities for retention related professional development/ individual sessions	New and undeclared VA beneficiaries are required to meet with a CSN VETS advisor, or academic advisor/success coach to assist students in the development of an educational plan aligned with their life goals and objectives and provide up-to-date information about institutional policies, procedures, and programs. An academic advisor from CSN's Advising and Coaching Services Department has been designated to provide services to VA beneficiaries.

<p>Vet2Vet Peer Mentoring Program</p>	<p>Provide assistance and resources to new and transferring student veterans in their scholarly pursuits/ group &amp; individual sessions</p>	<p>The goal of this program is to increase student veteran retention rates by minimizing initial isolation; reducing the number of student veterans on academic probation and/or suspension; increasing student veteran participation and communication; and equipping student veterans with additional encouragement and inspiration to be successful by bridging the gap between CSN services and support systems.</p>
<p>Community Collaborations</p>	<p>External resource availability/group &amp; individual sessions</p>	<p>CSN VETS Center continues to be an active member in the Southern Nevada Community Engagement Board (SNCEB). The SNCEB is a Department of Veterans Affairs sponsored group consisting of higher education institutions, non-Profit organizations, community agencies, Veterans Service Organizations (VSO), and various state agencies whose primary goal is to service as a repository and disseminator of veteran and military-related sources and information.</p>

## GBC

The following table lists the efforts and other related programs/initiatives that GBC is currently conducting to retain and graduate Student Veterans. GBC believes that a complete foundation is needed for student retention.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Retention Effort</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p><b>Great Basin College (GBC)</b></p> <p><b>Veterans Resource Center (VRC)</b></p>	<p>GBC established the Elko main VRC in October of 2014 to better serve our Student Veteran Population.</p> <p>GBC provides <i>Intense Academic/Motivational/Personal Support for Student Veterans &amp; their Families</i>, both during their time here at GBC and after they have graduated.</p>	<p>GBC provides an encouraging environment by acknowledging, honoring, and addressing all of our Veteran's needs, all while helping them attain their educational goals.</p> <p>At the VRC GBC houses the following: Veterans Lounge, Study Room, Coffee &amp; Snack Bar, Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) Elko office (Fulltime Veterans Service Officer &amp; Administrative Assistant who service Elko, Eureka, Lander &amp; White Pine counties).</p>
<i>New as of 2016</i>		
<p><b>Warrior of the Canyon</b></p>	<p><i>Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans &amp; their Families, Coping Skills, Community Service</i></p>	<p>Warrior of the Canyon is a veterans walk, run and cycle event held in the Lamoille Canyon of the Ruby Mountain range. This event is free and is for veterans, their families and all community supporters. It's about getting veterans and their families out to climb that mountain together, all while knowing that their community whole heartily supports them. Veterans have resumes loaded with accomplishments that they have achieved while they served our country. However, their accomplishments don't translate to the civilian world and the veteran can easily get discouraged and settle for less. This event focuses on motivating student veterans/families, as well as outreach to prospective students.</p>

<p><b>Operation Bravo Internship Program</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One Academic, Personal Support/ Career Networking</i></p>	<p>Barrick Gold U.S.A., Great Basin College, and the Nevada Governor’s Office of Economic Development have teamed together to establish Operation Bravo, a student veteran internship program. Operation Bravo assists our transitioning veterans by setting them up for success through education and employment. While attending GBC and receiving their VA Educational Benefits, student veterans will gain valuable paid workexperience within their major fields of study, interning with partner employers. Operation Bravo believes that by investing in our veterans, we are investing in our communities. Veterans shouldn’t waste the benefits that they’ve earned; their futures are waiting. Operation Bravo also provides the student veteran an opportunity to earn funds to help defray the high cost of living while focusing on their higher education.</p> <p>In 2017, GBC was awarded the State of Nevada STEM Challenge Grant Round4 totaling \$43,800 for Operation Bravo. This was possible due to the generous support of Barrick USA’s 2017donation to GBC for Operation Bravo totaling \$74,528. This grant funding has been spent in 2017 to increase the field education of the Operation Bravo Interns and to update GBC STEM classroom tools/equipment to what the current industry is using. This greatly reduces the student’s learning curve from the classroom to the field.</p>
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<p><b>Western Folklife Veterans Writers Workshop</b></p>	<p><i>Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans, Coping Skill, Community Service</i></p>	<p>Great crisis often produces great writing. War is no exception. And, while the historians and politicians write the history, a soldier's version is often found in poems, songs and stories. Soldiers' spouses and loved ones often also have their own stories to share. These stories need to be told. The Veterans Writers Project provides a place to tell and refine these stories with the help of other veterans and writers. Bill Jones, Vess Quinlan, David Richmond, Ken &amp; Betty Rodgers and the Veterans Resource Center at Great Basin College come together each year to host, encourage and support veterans (and their loved ones) as they share their experiences.</p>
<p><b>Pearl Harbor Social</b></p>	<p><i>Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans &amp; their Families, Community Service</i></p>	<p>A semi-formal ham/turkey dinner held at GBC by the VRC that welcomes veterans/family members that would like to sit down with good food, good company and enjoy our freedoms that so many have sacrificed so much for.</p>
<p><b>VRC Challenge Coin</b></p>	<p><i>Motivational, Recognition of student veteran accomplishments</i></p>	<p>A GBC Student Veteran's artwork was used for the GBC VRC challenge coin, which is given to graduating student veterans, those that make generous donations to the VRC, and those that go above and beyond to help veterans in our communities.</p>
<p><b>Painting for Rest &amp; Relaxation (R&amp;R)</b></p>	<p><i>Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans, Coping skill, Community Service</i></p>	<p>By expressing their emotions through the creative power of painting, students will learn how to use art as a healing exercise to reduce life's stresses with the main goal to help increase their quality of life. High quality supplies are provided by the instructor and is the veterans to keep.</p>
<p><b>GBC/UNR 3+1 BSW &amp; UNR MSW Intern Field Placement at the VRC</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One, Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans &amp; their Families</i></p>	<p>Creating a "grow our own" opportunity for future social work professionals in rural Nevada, as well as those professionals becoming more familiar with the veteran population. Interns assist with providing resources and guidance to our student veterans and are supervised by a MSW.</p>

<b>Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) VRC Job Board</b>	<i>Personal Support/ Career Networking/Advising</i>	Twice weekly a DETR representative visits the VRC to talk with students about the current jobs available and answers any questions they may have. They also offer services such as resume classes etc. On Mondays the DETR office sends the current job postings, which are put on the job board located in the VRC.
<b>Holiday Food Drives/Safety Santa</b>	<i>Intense One-on-One, Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans &amp; their Families, Community Service</i>	The VRC joins forces with many organizations/individuals during the holiday seasons to assist student veterans and families with meals, comfort items, rent, utilities, gifts, and other necessities (i.e. washer, dryer).
<b>VRC Volunteer Program</b>	<i>Intense One-on-One, Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans &amp; their Families, Community Service</i>	The VRC is staffed by volunteers who give willing their time and resources to listen to the student veterans and offer many different solutions to a problem. In addition to retirees, we also have a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) that provides services 3 days a week.
<b>Student Veteran Newsletter</b>	<i>-Informational- Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans Intense One-on-One, Academic, Personal Support/ Career Networking</i>	A monthly VRC newsletter containing veteran's information about educational/medical/state benefits, events and other community resources. This is compiled monthly by a student veteran work study.
<i>All Other Ongoing Programs/Initiatives</i>		
<b>VRC Study Room</b>	<i>Academic/Personal Support</i>	GBC provides a non-distracting, comfortable environment that the student veteran can concentrate on their studies. This space has computers & printers, used text books, as well as a reference library. Student veterans utilize this work space all throughout the day.
<b>Regular Hours Tutoring/ Study Hall Period</b>	<i>Academic/Personal Support- Peer/Instructor One on One</i>	GBC offers the student veteran various tutoring options, either with their peers or with our faculty/instructors as needed or requested.

<p><b>Afterhours Tutoring/ Study Hall Period</b></p>	<p><i>Academic/Personal Support-Peer/Instructor One on One</i></p>	<p>GBS offers peer-to-peer, faculty to student tutoring sessions, groups on the weekends and until 11pm on certain days of the week, as requested by student veterans. Some students have difficulty studying at home with their family routines and the after hours resources provides them with other options.</p>
<p><b>Academic Success Center</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One Academic Support/Network</i></p>	<p>GBC's Academic Success Centers (ASC) on the Elko campus and at GBC's rural centers offer the following services to GBC students, all at no cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Live Tutoring - Free to all GBC Students</li> <li>• Free Placement Testing</li> <li>• Proctored Testing</li> <li>• Open Computer Labs</li> <li>• Free Student Success Workshops (<u>also available online</u>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>B(S)<sub>3</sub>N Biological Sciences Student Support Network</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One Academic Support/Network</i></p>	<p>Math and Science tutoring offered free of charge at the B(S)<sub>3</sub>N center. Tutors are comprised of Students and Instructors. Walk ins welcome. This has been made possible by Nevada INBRE and the GBC Science Department.</p>
<p><b>SLC, UT VA VET CENTER Mental Health Services</b></p>	<p><i>Personal Support- Intense One on One/ Comfortable Support Group</i></p>	<p>MSW/LCSW drives from Salt Lake City, Utah to Elko on the first and third Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the month. GBC holds a veteran support group in the VRC at 12 noon on those Tuesdays. In addition there are other groups such as; dog training, pain management and mindfulness meditation.</p> <p>Individual appointments can also be made on those days.</p>
<p><b>Informal Mentoring/ Peer Support</b></p>	<p><i>Academic/Personal Support-Peer/Faculty &amp; Staff Intense One on One</i></p>	<p>Informal Mentoring is conducted by the Veteran Resource Coordinator, Veteran Certifying Official, faculty &amp; staff including student veteran work studies.</p>

<p><b>Nevada Department of Veteran Services (NDVS)</b></p>	<p><i>Personal Support, State &amp; Federal Benefits, Medical Benefits-Intense One on One</i></p>	<p>As of August 2016, the NDVS Veteran Service Officer (VSO) &amp; one administrative assistant is housed in the VRC fulltime. This offers a struggling student veteran more resources and benefit information in one location. This greatly helps with student retention. By adding more services we are also outreaching to other agency's veteran clients and introducing them to their VA Educational Benefits.</p>
<p><b>Job Opportunities In Nevada (JOIN)</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One Personal/Financial Support</i></p>	<p>Elko JOIN provided 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.</p>
<p><b>Advising &amp; Career Center</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One Academic/Personal Support</i></p>	<p>Provides assistance to students, alumni, faculty, staff, and the community in developing, implementing, and evaluating career/life plans. Hosts career fairs several times per years. All advising staff refers Student Veterans to the Certifying Official and to the VRC to complete their academic plans and set them up for success.</p>
<p><b>VA Student Work Study</b></p>	<p><i>Intense One-on-One Academic/Personal Support</i></p>	<p>Allows the student veteran to work a part time job at GBC (less travel between classes). This additional income helps to pay the bills while using VA Educational Benefits. It also helps to build camaraderie amongst student veterans, who frequent the VRC.</p>
<p><b>Battle Born Veterans Club (BBVC)</b></p> <p><b>Student Veterans of America Chapter (SVA)</b></p>	<p><i>Network, Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans, Coping skill, Community Service</i></p>	<p>Sanctioned by the SVA and the GBC Student Government Association, the BBVC is a student run organization that builds comradery amongst the transitioning Veterans. They also provide scholarships, social events, fundraising, food drives, continuous student food pantry and community events such as: Photos with Santa, Turkey Shoot and branch specific birthday functions.</p>

<b>Financial Aid</b>	<i><b>Intense One-on-One Financial Support</b></i>	<p>GBC Financial Aid assists veterans with all aspects of their VA Educational Benefits. They also encourage all student veterans to apply for FAFSA and veteran scholarships. GBC is continuing to receive more veteran scholarships from our community than any time before. Financial Aid also identifies students who need assistance for our food drives and other assistance programs.</p>
<b>Accessibility Services</b>	<i><b>Intense One-on-One Academic/Personal Support</b></i>	<p>It is the policy and practice of GBC to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and state and local requirements regarding students with disabilities. Under these laws, no qualified individual with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in services, programs and activities of Great Basin College. All services are at no cost to students and potential students of Great Basin College.</p>
<b>VRC Coffee &amp; Snack Room</b>	<i><b>Motivational &amp; Personal Support for Student Veterans</b></i>	<p>The VRC coffee and snack room enhances the student's capabilities, while at GBC. It supplies the student with the ease of their nourishment needs, while in the academic environment.</p>
<b>The PRACTICE Counseling Service</b>	<i><b>Intense One-on-One Personal Support</b></i>	<p>GBC and Communities in Schools partner to provide PRACTICE, free of charge to our students. The Partnership for Research, Assessment, Counseling, Therapy and Innovative Clinical Education — The PRACTICE — is a UNLV community mental health training clinic.</p>

# TMCC

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The mission of Truckee Meadows Community College's (TMCC) Veteran Services is to assist our student veteran population in their transition from the military into the academic environment. TMCC is focused and determined on retaining veteran students and guiding them towards their graduation and professional goals. TMCC 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

- **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 is 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<sup>st</sup>, 2017, TMCC is in full compliance with SB 457. The TMCC webpage includes a detailed list of all accepted military credit along with their corresponding ACE exhibit number for reference. Our Veterans Pre-Admissions Associate closely monitors all excess credit fees for our entire student veteran population on a daily basis to ensure that military credit is not being counted against their completion rates.

## Continuing Initiatives

- **Veteran Resource Center** – TMCC's new and updated Veteran Resource Center (VRC) in RDMT 241 at the main Dandini campus opened on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The new VRC is roughly 4 times the size of the previous location and provides a number of new services for our veterans. The new location is equipped with a computer lab, study/conference room, veterans lounge, as well as a separate office for offsite personnel to utilize for veteran specific purposes. This larger space will provide the Veteran Services staff at TMCC a greater opportunity to assist student veterans in their transition from the military to the academic environment.
- **Professional Development Initiative** – The VRC 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 at TMCC. These workshops include resumes, LinkedIn, networking, mock interviews, and business cards. Each one of these workshops is designed to assist veterans in their transition to the professional environment.
- **Veteran Job and Resource Fair** – Another collaboration between the VRC and Career Center is the Veteran Resource and Job Fair held every fall and spring semester that averages 60-70 vendors and is open to all veterans in the community. TMCC held its first event in fall 2015 and it was such a success that one will be held every semester for the foreseeable future.
- **Veteran Academic Advisor** – TMCC currently has a veteran specific academic advisor who assists veterans in selecting their degree plans as well as ensuring that they are taking the correct courses.

- **Veterans Pre-Admission Associate** – Serves as an intake coordinator, assists with the Gateway Initiative for student veterans, as well as updates military transcripts and excess credit fees in accordance with SB 457. This position is funded by the TAACCCT 4 grant and is due to expire March 2018. Losing this position will have a detrimental impact on the quality of service provided to our student veteran population.
- **Veteran On-Track Workshops** – These are detailed academic advisement workshops that assist students by ensuring that they are following their educational plan in order to graduate on time.
- **Veteran specific Orientation** – A minimum of 4 veteran orientations are held per semester that cover everything from their VA educational benefits to local resources and events going on in the area.
- **Early Enrollment** – TMCC offers priority registration to all student veterans to help ensure that our veterans are able to get into the classes that they need.
- **Veterans Upward Bound** – Located at Meadowood campus, VUB is a pre-college preparation program that offers academic skills development, testing, financial literacy, advisement, career planning, and transitional assistance.
- **TMVC (Truckee Meadows Veterans Club)** – Our nationally recognized Student Veterans of America chapter’s presence in the VRC builds comradery with our veterans and gives student veterans a unified voice on campus. The club also holds student veteran events both on and off campus.
- **Early Alert** – TMCC implemented direct access to our student veterans who are identified in TMCC’s early alert system. This early alert system gives us the opportunity to identify student veterans struggling in their classes and then refer them to campus resources on an individual basis.
- **Student Veteran Mentor Program** – The student veteran mentor program was designed to assist up to 60 student veterans who are in their first or second semester at TMCC with their transition to the academic environment. The program will link each veteran with an assigned faculty mentor that will personally assist them with any issues that they may be experiencing throughout the academic year. Each student who participates in the program will receive a \$250 book grant to use at the TMCC bookstore.
- **Veteran Leadership Academy** – The VLA is a program that awards 10 exemplary student veterans with a \$1,000 grant. These students will be taking part in numerous community service events throughout the semester as well as well as take part in a number of workshops that are designed to help grow professionally.
- **V.I.T.A.L. Initiative** – TMCC has a VA social worker who serves an extremely important role by providing our veteran mental health services in our VRC on campus two days a week. TMCC also has a veterans 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 TMCC is able to

hold large veteran events such as BBQs where 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. TMCC partners with community resources to offer workshops for faculty and staff in order to better educate them on the military/veteran culture.



The following summarizes the approach taken by WNC in support student veterans:

## 1. Holistic approach to the individual

- a. Veterans check in who were homeless, without transportation or money for food.
- b. Contacts in the community have been developed to assist these veterans.

## 2. Tutoring

- a. Many veterans were not scholastic overachievers in high school.
- b. Further, they have not been in the school environment in many years.
- c. WNC assists the transition with remedial classes, individual and group tutoring and the Veterans Upward Bound program and constant monitoring of academic status.

## 3. Mentorship

- a. Everyone who works in the VRC is a veteran.
- b. The coordinator is a retired Marine Corps officer.
- c. The pre-admissions advisor was an eight year veteran of the Marine Corps who graduated from WNC and is now finishing up his bachelor's degree.
- d. All six of the student veteran workers have multiple semesters at WNC under their belts. Most are on the Dean's List.
- e. Each incoming veteran is individually welcomed and counseled by the pre- admissions advisor and VRC Coordinator including review of a sixteen point checklist that includes common student veteran pitfalls and services provided by the Veterans Resource Center.

## 4. Advising

- a. After an initial orientation to the Veterans Resource Center and Programs, WNC explores ways to be a successful student.
- b. WNC assists students with scheduling of classes, types of semester classes and load breakdown.
- c. Student veterans are assisted with classes on how to plan a week from class time to merging work, family, and study time.
- d. The VRC Coordinator is the student veteran's faculty advisor for their time at WNC.
- e. Students not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) meet with the Coordinator weekly to review previous week's work, current week requirements and upcoming semester projects for each class.

## 5. Career exploration/definition & Accelerated Technical Programs

For those students who do not have an academic direction or chosen career field, WNC works with SIGI 3 software to assist that process. SIGI 3 basically does an inventory of an individual's likes, dislikes, merges that with work experience /military occupational specialty, and gives possible career paths to explore based upon those answers and shows schools with those programs.

## **New Initiatives**

1. The WNC Veterans Resource Center (VRC) expanded services into the Nevada Department of Corrections. WNC started teaching classes at the Warm Springs Correctional Center in Carson City with the VRC Coordinator acting as the program coordinator. Working with the Warden and Associate Warden, WNC helped to develop a stronger presence in the veteran community. The facility now has a veterans only cell block. The VRC Coordinator and student veterans perform an outreach/fundraiser cook-out every semester. Funds for scholarships for college classes are raised by orders taken from the inmates in the facility. The VRC and WSCC staff procure the needed items in the local community, and the VRC personnel cook the food for the inmates. This has been done for the last three semesters, and WNC is averaging raising approximately \$5,000 per semester for scholarships. Those funds are divided into one-class scholarships and awarded to inmates, who submit essays to the Coordinator on why they should be awarded a scholarship. A publicity photo was taken and placed in the local media of the Warden giving the VRC coordinator a check for \$5,000. An anonymous donor in the local area saw the photo and contacted the VRC coordinator and Associate Warden. After being given a tour of the facilities and description of the program, the donor donated a bequest of \$10,000 per year to be designated for veteran inmate scholarships. This provided fifteen one class scholarships for each semester for veterans. Upon review of the first year of the program, the donor recently doubled the donation to \$20,000 per year. This has allowed nearly 50% of the veterans incarcerated to attend college. In addition to the three classes offered by WNC instructors each semester, the VRC Coordinator, who is the faculty advisor for all inmates, holds a weekly study hall on Friday afternoon to assist all inmates with their academic endeavors.
2. The VRC Coordinator is now a safeTALK certified trainer, a four hour suicide awareness seminar to combat the growing epidemic in the veteran community. The Coordinator conducted his first safeTALK seminar for campus personnel.
3. The VRC expanded tutoring in the VRC by adding tutors with scheduled hours in the VRC in Math and English. Additional tutors in Psychology and Political Science are added on an as needed basis.
4. Tweaked and updated the initial Veterans only orientation to include new academic and suicide awareness information.
5. Although all academic counselors in Counseling Services are qualified to assist student veterans, one primary counselor coordinates veteran related counseling services and meets with the majority of student veterans. The primary counselor participates in Quarterly Veteran Service meetings and regularly communicates with student veterans. Additionally, the primary counselor visits the VRC on a weekly basis to advise student veterans. Student veterans and dependents using GI Bill benefits are required to meet with the counselor every semester to complete a Veterans Benefit Data E-Form to ensure that students are staying on track with their educational goals and following guidelines pertaining to the use of education benefits. The E-form ends with the Certifying Official in the Financial Aid office to prompt the process for receiving education benefits. The Coordinator of the VRC monitors the flow to be watchful for anomalies or student veterans not completing a portion of the process and is able to intervene when necessary.

## Continuing Initiatives

1. Western Nevada College instituted a major effort at retaining and graduating veterans by opening a new Veterans Resource Center. While the first Center accomplished a major goal of establishment of a Veterans Resource Center, it was cramped, and the small space limited the number of student veterans who could actually utilize the center from a mentoring/tutoring standpoint. The new space is over four times larger, enabling the space to be divided into a general meeting room with distinct, separate areas for mentoring, tutoring, and study areas and a separate room equipped with computers and a white board for group tutoring/access to online classes. In the first two months since opening, VRC usage increased three fold over the old space, enabling more veterans on campus to be served.
2. Student Veteran Workers, who are on duty the entire time VRC is open, are now all required to complete the Nevada Veteran Advocacy Program, administered through the Nevada Dept. of Veteran Services (NDVS). The Program consists of completing twenty modules on the State of Nevada website. The modules were developed to increase the knowledge of any individual on U.S. Veterans Administration benefits, ranging from VA home loans to burial benefits. The ability of student veteran workers to answer questions that student veterans have about their VA benefits assists student veterans get maximum utilization of benefits, which results in less lost time from classes while a student pursues a question on his or her own by traveling to the Reno VA, which is only open during normal working hours.
3. A Veteran Service Officer from the Disabled American Veterans visits the VRC every Tuesday to meet with and assist student veterans who need to submit disability claims or follow up on claims already pending. Again, having this service on campus negates student veterans from having to leave campus during normal class hours to get serious disability claims taken care of.
4. The Coordinator of the VRC is also the faculty advisor for all student veterans and has been given access to OnBase and Peoplesoft, which greatly assists in advising students, identifying potential problems and developing solutions before the problems become critical. The Coordinator gets a report at the end of the semester with all student veteran's grades and reviews them, calling in and meeting with all who do not attain a 2.0 GPA or who have shown a significant drop off in their GPA.
5. The Coordinator of the VRC is now an ASIST trainer who conducts two day training seminars on Suicide Intervention. The Pre-Admissions advisor is also ASIST trained. All Student Veterans workers are all required to attend safeTALK, a four hour suicide awareness seminar to combat the growing epidemic in the veteran community.