**Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review**

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| Program Name: | Veterans Center - Programming |
| Program Manager: | Ruben Cardenas |
| Fiscal Year: | FY2024 |

1. In what way(s) does your program support CWU students? Please be specific and concise.

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| We serve student veterans, service members, and their families. Our programs and events are intended to support this population and to create veteran awareness across campus. Traditionally, this has happened passively, directly, and in collaboration with other departments. In addition, we also have programs that include the greater campus community, like our Veterans Book Club, Veterans Day Flag Display, or guest speakers. |

1. What are your specific program goals or learning/operational objectives? How are you assessing the effectiveness of your program in achieving those targets?

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| In the fall quarter, we were able to host our annual Veterans Center Welcome event in the SURC Ballroom. We were able to invite many of our campus stakeholders to share information about their departments for our new and continuing students. We are continuing our Veterans Center Book Club and our student veterans voted on a curated list of five books. This year the book selection is Battle Born: Lapis Lazuli, by Maximilian Uriarte, an infantry Marine and Iraq veteran and creator of the hit comic strip Terminal Lance.  We have also rebranded our previously titled RED Week to Veterans Week for our week of traditional programming leading up to Veterans Day. We are attempting to have more events take place in our Veterans Center student lounge and an example of this is the creation of our Time Trials event. Our Vet Corps Navigator is leading a program that incorporates a race car video game that utilizes a simulator set-up. Our strategy is to build community with our students and staff through an immersive experience. This program ran every other week through the fall quarter, and we plan to continue offering this programming to our students.  Looking forward to the year, we plan to host a Translating Military Experience resume workshop in partnership with Career Services. We are also planning to offer professional photos for students who attend the event by partnering with University Relations. This assists our student veterans in translating their military experience so they can maximize their military job experience and marketability as they transition to the non-military workforce. Our book club discussions will take place in the winter quarter which provides the opportunity for our community of registered participants to have a facilitated conversation about the book and some of the overarching themes. We intend to bridge the veteran and non-veteran gap to help our overall community grow with respectful learning and dialogue.  Heading into the spring quarter, we will continue to host our Annual Graduation/SALUTE Induction Ceremony scheduled for May 22, 2024. This program consists of inducting students into the SALUTE Veterans Honor Society along with recognizing our graduating student veterans by honoring them at a dinner just for them and one guest. We also presented them with a CWU Veteran Alumni Coin. We will also attend any potential Westside Graduation Awards Ceremony presenting graduating student veterans with the Veteran Alumni Coin. These events have been held over zoom in the past few years and we typically send awards in advance to university center locations.  Our continued goal is to support our students directly and indirectly with the highlighted programming/events by creating veteran awareness on campus. This results in a welcoming/supportive environment for our students. With our larger programming, we send out a Qualtrics survey to students who attended to gather feedback and assess if the feedback aligns with our goals. We use the information to adjust for the following year. We also send out an annual survey to gather information on student experience. |

1. What is the overall purpose of your program and what service(s) does your program provide?
   1. Are there overlaps or intersections with other university programs that have similar purposes or services?

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| The Veterans Center is dedicated to supporting student veterans, service members, and their families through their educational journey at CWU. We provide outreach to prospective students, assistance in navigating funding options, and programming that builds support and awareness for our community. We do not believe there are overlaps of our services as we are the dedicated department to support our military connected students; and sole school certifying officials for VA Education Benefits.  We are intentional about partnering with our colleagues across campus when leading events or programs. For example, our Veterans Center Welcome had representation from the Library, Financial Wellness Center, Learning Commons, SLICE, Transfer Center, ASCWU, Recreation Center, Office of Health Promotion, Career Services, Disability Services, and Student Counseling. All our programs have a veteran or military connected student focus. If there is another group or department on campus leading a veteran related event, we are usually involved to help plan or coordinate the event. |

1. How does your program align with the purpose of S&A funding? “*Supporting cocurricular and extracurricular activities and programs participated in by students in the furtherance of their education*.”

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| We offer many extracurricular programs throughout the year. Examples of these would be our Veterans Welcome Event, Annual Graduation/SALUTE Induction Ceremony, and Veterans Week programming.  Some events or programs would be considered co-curricular. Examples of these would be our Veterans Book Club, guest speakers that have a veteran focus, and our Translating Military Experience Workshop. These programs can easily relate to a student’s coursework in some way. In addition, capstone courses cover best practices for resumes and applying to industry positions, so the Translating Military Experience Workshop relates to this type of course. |

1. Please provide specifics on how your program supports and aligns with CWU’s strategic plan (<https://www.cwu.edu/about/mission-vision/_documents/cwu-vision-mission-values-strat-plan-bot-approved.pdf>)?

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| We believe recruiting military-connected students helps work towards being a model learning community of equity and belonging. Veterans are underrepresented/marginalized in our country and within higher education. Research on this student population has shown the need for unique support and programming to increase their academic satisfaction and success. Our efforts are to bring these students to CWU and retain them as they progress through their education. We see this specific work arise within the Unifying Value of Student Success in our effort to recruit our student population to CWU.  We also see the work within our department align with Core Value 2 of Belonging, specifically *goal 3 initiative 3.2*. Our department is very intentional with embracing diversity to foster a sense of belonging for our students. Our Veterans Center student lounge is one example of our department's effort to provide a safe and supportive environment for our students to connect and share their experiences with their peers and our staff. |

1. Please provide detailed information regarding who utilizes your program? (*Students, faculty, staff, community? Specific demographic information? Class standing, gender, ethnicity, transfer, campus location, etc*.)

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| Our program utilization consists of students who are student veterans, service members, and their family members. Student demographics fluctuate quarterly with a mix of first-year, transfer, traditional, non-traditional, online, ages, and class standing. Faculty, staff, and community members also attend many of our events/programs. We also serve a similar demographic of students at all CWU University Centers. |

1. How many unique CWU students utilize your program or services?
   1. How do you gather these metrics?
   2. If you do not, what is preventing you from getting that data and how are you determining usage by CWU students?

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| Overall, we are tracking **479** unique students for winter 24 who are enrolled. We anticipate this number rising as we get closer to the start of the quarter.  Our CWU Student Information System (PeopleSoft) is our tool for managing this data. We utilize student groups and can identify various attributes about our students (i.e., veterans, spouses of veterans, children of veterans, active duty, and a specific breakdown of each).  We also track individual students at events by having them check in before entering the event. Some of our events require an RSVP or registration so that gives us an exact count of who attended the event, with the ability of reaching out directly to them to solicit feedback. |

1. Are there any current vacant positions in your program?

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| No |

1. Given the budget reductions taking place, and continuing for the remainder of the funding cycle, please tell us what specific impacts those reductions have had on your program compared to what was originally planned and included in your initial base funding request.

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| We believe that we have been fiscally conservative and good stewards of our funds throughout our funding cycles. We have monthly staff meetings to ensure that we track and reconcile our expenses. This allows us to adapt throughout the year so that we can ensure that we do not overspend our budget given the budget cuts. |

1. Are there any circumstances or challenges that are currently impacting your ability to use your base funding allocation this year?

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| We are attempting to invite the author of Battle Born: Lapis Lazuli, Maximilian Uriarte, for a speaking engagement. We have not been successful in having a conversation with him or his publicist to move this forward. Planning for a speaker is challenging since the expense is on the higher side and so if this does not materialize, we hope to invite a different veteran speaker to campus. |

1. What other funding does your program receive? What percentage of your program’s total funding is coming from S&A Fees?

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| The Veterans Center operates on four different budgets 145 – 2231640001, 149 – 4611400002, 522 – 4611400003, 149 - 4611400004.  We have 149 State Allocation that essentially funds our professional staff salaries and benefits. This budget is not enough to completely fund our staff as our Outreach Coordinator is funded partially through S&A. There is also state-allocated funding within our budgets that is tied to [RCW 28B.15.621](https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.15.621) for our Veteran Dependent Tuition Waiver students. This funding provides our waiver students with an annual book stipend based on the RCW.  The VA pays a reporting fee to the university for each student that we certify annually. Per [federal policy](http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:38%20section:3684%20edition:prelim)%20OR%20(granuleid:USC-prelim-title38-section3684)&f=treesort&edition=prelim&num=0&jumpTo=true), the reporting fee funds must be used to support programs for veterans. These funds are housed in our 145 budget placing CWU in good standing for future compliance visits by the VA, WSAC, or Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.  Our S&A budget is **10.3%** of our total department budget. |

1. What growth or expense increases do you anticipate seeing in the future?

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| Much like our colleagues across campus, we hope to have a high engagement at all our events. We expect to increase our student population by actively recruiting students throughout the state by sending our Outreach Coordinator to attend college fair-related events. Since 2012, we have grown our population with these efforts’ year-to-year with only one year of decline pre-pandemic. We are optimistic that we can return to our recruitment success and continue to grow the population we serve.  We also have aspirational goals as a forward-facing office, of moving into a more ideal space for our students and staff. Currently, we are located in the center part of the building and, we would like to be in a space that has windows with a better office layout for our professional staff. We would want to have a space that has our staff centrally located within the space regarding offices. This type of goal has financial implications as we would need to move and potentially purchase additional office space furniture or equipment.  In addition, the inflation of service costs on campus and externally are naturally raising our expenses with our traditional events. This rate increase will cause our expenses to grow year-to-year. |