

## Services & Activities Fee Annual Program Review

Program Name: Veterans Center

Program Manager: Ruben Cardenas

Fiscal Year: FY2023

1. In what ways does your program support CWU students? Please be specific, yet concise.

The students we serve are student veterans, service members, and their families. Our programs and events are intended to support this population 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.

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

This past year, we were able to transition back to our traditional in-person programming. We were able to host our Annual Graduation/SALUTE Induction Ceremony which took place on May 24, 2022. This program consists of inducting students into the SALUTE Veterans Honor Society along with recognizing our graduating student veterans by presenting them with a CWU Veteran Alumni Coin.

We also attended via zoom the Westside Graduation Awards Ceremony presenting graduating student veterans with the Veteran Alumni Coin on various occasions. Other CWU University Center(s) events we supported include New Student Orientations (NSO's) on a quarterly basis. Other events included annually in the fall timeframe is the Veterans Welcome Event and Remember Everyone Deployed (RED) Week, which is programming that takes place through the week of Veterans Day.

We partner with Career Services to offer a Translating Military Experience Workshop. This assists our student veterans translate their military experience so they can maximize their military job experience and marketability as they transition to the non-military workforce. 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. We send out a Qualtrics survey to students who attend our events 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.

3. What is the overall purpose of your program and what service(s) does your program provide?
  - a. Are there overlaps or intersections with other university programs who have a similar purpose or service?

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 do our best to partner with our colleagues across campus when leading events or programs. For example, our Veterans Book Club has representation from the Library, Advising, ROTC, and a faculty member. All our programs have a veteran or military 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.

4. 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.”*

We offer many extracurricular programs throughout the year. Examples of these would be our Veterans Welcome Event, Annual Graduation/SALUTE Induction Ceremony, and RED 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 students' 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.

5. How does your program support CWU's mission and goals? (<https://www.cwu.edu/mission/>)

***Vision:*** *Central Washington University will be a model learning community of equity and belonging.*

***Mission:*** *In order to build a community of equity and belonging, Central Washington University nurtures culturally sustaining practices that expand access and success to all students. We are committed to fostering high impact practices, sustainability, and authentic community partnerships that are grounded in meaningful relationships.*

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 in 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. Our staff has been actively involved in the Vision and Mission events held by President Wohlpart; to advocate for greater inclusion of the students we serve. We will continue to participate in the strategic planning events so that our work may be highlighted or operationalized within the new strategic plan.

We make connections to the vision and mission with our day-to-day work as we strive to provide access, specifically by removing barriers in relation to our students' VA Education Benefits. We are also committed to utilizing high-impact practices, sustainability, and authentic relationships with our community partners.

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

Most of 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.

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

Overall, we are tracking **536** unique students for winter 23. Our CWU Student Information System is our tool for managing this data. We utilize student groups and can identify various attributes in relation to 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 swipe their ID card as they check in. Some of our events require an RSVP so that would give us an exact count of who attended the event.

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

Yes, our Outreach Recruiter will be transitioning out of his role as of January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Our department will be understaffed in the professional staff category until the position is filled.

Through our participation in the Vet Corps program, we were able to employ a student throughout the year (September-June) saving costs in the student employee allocation.

9. 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 including in your initial base funding request.

We believe that we have been fiscally conservative and good stewards of our funds throughout our funding cycles. With our recent vacancy in the Outreach Recruiter position, this will allow us to navigate any additional budget constraints through the 22-23 academic year. With a vacant position, it will also be a challenge to maximize our funding until the position is filled.

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

Our Outreach Recruiter vacancy will present a challenge to our team as we will be conducting a search while trying to provide some of the traditional programming that we have provided in the past. The vacancy will also create a salary surplus as this position is partially funded through our S&A base funding budget.

11. What growth or increases would you like to see in your program in the future?

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 one of our professional staff members 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.