

## **Office of Military and Veterans Academic Excellence Assessment Report Academic Year 2015-2016**

The Office of Military and Veterans Academic Excellence (OMVAE) has dedicated a significant amount of resources to improve several key student outcomes of the targeted support services for which we administer. We assessed three functional areas for AY 2015-2016:

- Plan of Work Compliance,
- Early VA Certification,
- Student Veteran Resource Center (SVRC) Usage, and

### **Plan of Work Compliance**

An academic plan of work serves as a roadmap that students use to negotiate the landscape of their chosen academic pursuit. In the case of student-veterans, this plan serves both as an essential tool for success and fulfills a prescribed compliance requirement for the utilization of Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits. Over the past academic year, new online tools have been made available to students to more easily facilitate the creation of and modification to existing plans of work. Additionally, our VA School Certifying Officials (VASCO) have stood firm in processing a certification request only after an approved plan of work has been submitted to the OMVAE VASCO. As a result, we have experienced a sharp increase in the submissions of plans of work all the way to 100%; all 482 students certified during AY 15-16 were found to be in compliance. Major benefits to this level of compliance include an increased understanding of both long term and short term requirements/expectations for students, faster processing time by VASCOS for certification requests, and the avoidance of unnecessary coursework by benefit recipients.

### **Early VA Certification**

OMVAE's stated goal is to receive all VA educational benefit certification requests thirty days prior to the start of any given enrollment period. This artificial deadline gives enough time both for processing on our end and at the VA regional processing office. Typically, this leaves enough time to "guarantee" that students will receive their first monthly stipend on time. The challenge is convincing students to submit their requests early. Of the 422 requests received (prior to the Fall 2016 census date), 226 were received thirty days prior to the start of the term (53.5%), 162 within thirty days prior to the start of the term (38.5%), and 34 after the start of the term (8%).

### **Student Veteran Resource Center (SVRC) Usage**

The Student Veteran Resource Center saw a slight decrease in average daily usage over the past academic year. We saw a small decrease over the Fall and Winter semesters, approximately 3.5%, but saw the sharpest decrease over the Spring/Summer months, approximately 8%. Given that there were ongoing construction projects taking place in the Student Center Building during these months, this comes as no surprise.

**Future Plans and Adjustments:**

Based on our assessment results, we have committed to making adjustments for AY 2016-2017.

**Plan of Work Compliance**

OMVAE will continue to proactively work with benefit recipients to generate and maintain current plans of work. Because OMVAE provides supplemental and not primary academic advising, the challenge will be to effectively monitor benefit recipients progress in their currently declared majors and also to monitor for changes in major which will necessitate new plans of work. To accomplish this, our SCOs will be diligent in comparing new certifications to the most recent prior certification to identify changes before certifying.

**Early VA Certification**

OMVAE saw an increase of 8.5% in early certification compared to AY15-16. Given the strategies employed prior to the start of AY16-17, we anticipate to see this trend continue. Our next goal will be to measure processing time for these requests and to identify any existing barriers that result in a processing time greater than two business days.

**Student Veteran Resource Center (SVRC) Usage**

Adjusting for the construction issues during the Spring/Summer months, the Student Veteran Resource Center saw a daily usage reduction of about 3.5%. There are multiple factors that may have influenced this; but, OMVAE needs to work on strategies in the coming year to promote Resource Center usage. Moving forward, it will our goal to measure not only daily usage, but also the number of individual (or unique) visitors each day, week, and month. This should provide us with a starting point for soliciting feedback from our overall population.

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