

SAN DIEGO  
MESA COLLEGE



# Program Review

Summary and Reflections with Unit Goals, Action Plans,  
and Updates

Student Services - Veterans Center

## Executive Summary

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**Describe the successes and challenges your unit has faced since the last comprehensive review.**

Veterans Services and Veterans Counseling have had a full turn over in personnel since the last comprehensive review. During that time, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the way the school could operate. Since coming out of the pandemic and returning to campus, our main goal has been to increase the visibility of the new Veterans Success Center and to drive foot traffic to it, as our greatest challenge has been getting our military-affiliated students to view Mesa College as a full academic experience as opposed to a transient location that they must attend in order to gain access to a university. The other main challenge we have faced, is trying to find new and different ways to spread awareness of our ever-increasing services and partnerships. To do so, we have greatly increased the internal and ongoing services offered in the center, as well as the external services that we coordinate throughout the year. We have been working to solidify partnerships with the Transfer Center, DSPS, and Career Counseling. Successes include our participation representing Veterans Counseling during the Transfer Center workshops during transfer season, securing a mental health provider for the Veterans Success Center, securing laptops that can be checked out to better support veterans' access to technology, driving traffic to the center through events held by our Student Veterans Organization, and our partnerships with San Diego area universities and organizations.

**If applicable, describe any major curricular or service changes your unit has engaged in and the impact of those changes since the last comprehensive review.**

N/A

**If applicable, describe the impact of any new resources (human, fiscal, etc) on the unit and/or action plan implementation.**

At the beginning of the academic year 2022-2023 we began brainstorming actions that we could implement to drive greater traffic into the Veterans Success Center and higher rate of participation in services. Services we have implemented so far that increased foot traffic include:

- Veterans Week: 5 days of events/services with lunch served each day
- Meet and greet the new veterans counselor event
- TAG/TAP workshops with the Transfer Center
- Transfer Day with the Transfer Center
- UC/CSU Workshop with the Transfer Center
- Hotspot veterans counseling in the VSC
- Registration Workshop participation
- VSO events in the VSC
- Ongoing outreach visits by local area state and private, non-profit universities
- Holiday festivities in the VSC

We have also bought a lockable charging tower with 25 laptops to be checked out in the VSC to support our effort to have equitable services for our military-affiliated student population.

While we have had a change in personnel, we have begun to hire permanent employees, since the last comprehensive review, that will be able to support the return to campus effort. We have also hired two NANCE positions and ten VA Work Studies within our department in order to provide coverage for the VSC and Veterans & Records Desk in order to service our military-affiliated student population and answer any questions they may have about utilizing VA Educational Benefits.

**If you assess OUTCOMES, please confirm that the outcomes have been reviewed for accuracy. If you do not assess Outcomes, skip this question.****Related Documents for Charts and Graphs**

## Summary and Reflection

### Executive Summary Complete

Yes

## Data Reflection

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### Trends observed in program/service area's data.

Since the last review, the Veterans & Records Office has engaged with students a total of 15,411 times: 655 times for processing AP Scores.  
1316 times to clear COVID holds on student accounts.  
Recommended 367 students to update their Education Plan.  
Helped/processed transcripts for 390 students.  
Processed 335 Grade Change or Assignment of Incomplete Forms.  
Addressed 1,932 JIRA Help Tickets related to Student Password Issues for their student portal.  
Had 4,340 unique interactions with students, of which 2,704 were for processing VA paperwork.  
Our VA Work Studies had an additional 2,769 interactions with students.

During the same period, our Academic Counselors had a total of 27,841 interactions with our military-affiliated students.

From data collected, we are able to see a recent significant drop in military-affiliated enrollments between the 2020-2021 Academic Year (1,201) and the 2021-2022 Academic Year (780). Unfortunately, we do not have enough data at this time to provide numbers for the 2022-2023 Academic Year to determine our overall numbers. Mesa's military-affiliated students have a slightly higher success rate (74.4%) compared to our Campus Success Rate (73%), as well as a higher retention rate of 88.8% when compared to the campus overall rate of 86.7%.

### Describe any equity gaps in the data. Are there differences and/or patterns observed by demographics (e.g.race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.)

Even though our military-affiliated students have a higher success rate compared to our campus average, when we compare the disaggregated data, we can see equity gaps in the success rate amongst our Black/African American and Latinae military-affiliated students compared to our Campus Success Rate.

We can also see that there is currently an equity gap when it comes to the retention rate at Mesa between the Fall to Spring semesters between our Female (57%) and Male (60%) military-affiliated students compared to our campus average for Female (62%) and Male (63%) students. This could possibly be due to the fact that military-affiliated students can sometimes transfer for spring semester when general population students cannot; however, it still warrants further consideration.

### Related Documents for Charts and Graphs

### Describe the discussion(s) that took place about the unit's learning outcomes assessment data.

As previously mentioned, there has been significant turnover within the Veterans Services Team over the last year, and because of this, we have begun to consider re-evaluating how we implement various processes, as well as what services we offer to our students. The Veterans Services Team is made up of staff for the Veterans & Records Office and Veterans Success Center, as well as several Academic Counselors (including our Veterans Counselor) meet on a regular basis to discuss how we can improve current processes in order to meet our outcome goals. We have also implemented monthly meetings where we discuss such topics as current trends with our population, individual students we may need to check on, services that may need to be incorporated or revised, programming and certifying concerns.

### Data Reflection Complete

Yes

## Summary and Reflection

### Practice Reflection

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**Describe current practices your program/service area has engaged in that you believe impact the above data trends and equity gaps.**

Along with our standard operating practices, Veterans Services and veterans counseling provided six days of back-to-back hour-long counseling appointments designed to get student veterans VA-compliant education plans so that they would not see a disruption in their benefits. Veterans Services identified students who needed plans and emailed them with directions on how to book an appointment. They also enlisted the help of a second counselor to double the amount of appointments offered. During those days, we provided 38 military-affiliated students who were utilizing their VA Educational Benefits.

**What other factors (internal or external) might also impact the above data trends and equity gaps?**

Items that will enable us to continue developing new services, while maintaining the services we provided this year, we will be a full-time Veterans Services Coordinator, as we have had acting coordinators during the 2022-2023 academic year and assisting the newly hired veterans mental health provider to develop a reputation with the student veteran population.

**Related Documents for Charts and Graphs**

**Practice Reflection Complete**

Yes

### Mid-Cycle Updates

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#### **YEAR 2 Updates (2023 - 2024)**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 2.**

We have no edits to the Executive Summary

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 2.**

We have no edits to the Data Reflection

**Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit's outcomes assessment process for 2022 - 2023. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 2.**

We have no edits to the Practice Reflection

#### **YEAR 3 Updates (2024 - 2025)**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 3.**

2024 - 2025 Update

Since our initial submission of our Executive Summary, we have had an update in personnel within Veterans Counseling. Since then, our lead Veterans Counselor has left the district, and we are currently in the hiring process of a new lead Veterans Counselor with a start date goal during the Spring 2025 term. Because of this turn over, the Veterans & Records Department and Counseling Department has increased collaboration by ensuring that the entire Counseling Department is kept up to date on VA requirements for Education Plans. We have also broaden our Academic Counseling Services within the Veterans Success Center by having 3 different counselors available to our students instead of just our lead Veterans Counselor. This shift has cause an increase in confidence in our students to see a variety of academic counselors for help instead of just relying on one official veterans counselor for all of their questions.

Since then we have also been able to have a full-time staff member who is dedicated to oversee the programing within the Veterans Success Center. This shift in responsibilities has allowed us to grow our staff's direct relationships with our students which has allowed us greater insight into their needs. From this new source of feedback, we were able to see an increase in need for help with VA Disability Claims. Since then, we have been able to establish an ongoing partnership with the San Diego Regional Outreach Team who come to our Veterans

## Summary and Reflection

Success Center once every month in order to meet with our students to help them file or clear up any confusion surrounding their initial VA Disability Claim, Award/Denial Letter, or their Supplemental/Appeal Claims. From these workshops, we have received overwhelming positive feedback about how our students feel seen and supported beyond academics, as well as feeling like they've been able to be a part of a broader veteran community and have access to more resources.

From student feedback, we have also continued working with DSPS, Transfer Counseling, and representatives from local universities to be present within our Veterans Success Center. Due to a lack of student interaction, we decided to discontinue having a Career Center representative within the Veterans Success Center. Instead, we have worked to collaborate with the Career Services team to increase awareness of the services they offer by highlighting them in our email and social media outreach efforts.

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 3.**

We have no edits to the Data Reflection

**Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit's outcomes assessment process for 2023 - 2024. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 3.**

We have no edits to the Practice Reflection

### **YEAR 4 Updates (2025 - 2026)**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Executive Summary section for Year 4.**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Data Reflection section for Year 4.**

**Review Outcomes Report. Review the unit's outcomes assessment process for 2024 - 2025. Discuss connections to unit goals/action plans/resource requests.**

**Provide any edits or updates to the prompts originally documented in the Practice Reflection section for Year 4.**

# Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

## Goal 1: Enhance the military-affiliated student college experience.

**Unit Goal:** Goal 1: Utilize the Veterans Success Center to enhance the military-affiliated student college experience.

**Goal Status:** Active

**Beginning Year:** 2022 - 2023

**Projected Completion Year:** 2025 - 2026

### Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- **Completion - Objective 2:** Develop cross - functional teams that support student success and include integrated career and transfer counseling. (X)
- **Completion - Objective 4:** Support students' access to resources to mitigate the impact caused by technological and basic needs insecurity (X)
- **Scholarship - Objective 5:** Reduce costs associated with instructional materials to support the elimination of equity gaps (X)

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p><b>Action Plan Status:</b> Active</p>	<p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025</p> <p><b>Action Plan Update:</b> We have found a low interest in student interest/engagement with Career Services within the Veterans Success Center. Because of this, we have currently discontinued Career reps within the center. However, we have continued to collaborate with the Career Center team to think of new ways to share what they have to offer. We have found some success with highlighting the importance of finding and having the experience of an internship while they are here in order to help boost our students' portfolios for when it comes time to transfer or apply for a career. We are still working on different ways that we can continue to reach more students to take advantage of the resources that their department has to offer.</p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025</p> <p><b>Action Plan Progress:</b> Barriers Encountered</p> <hr/> <p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025</p>

## Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p><b>Action Plan:</b>            SO: Develop cross-functional teams that support student success and include integrated career and transfer counseling.            Veterans Services and Veterans Counseling will add services that support the academic, career, and personal needs of the population. Services will help with academic coursework (such as tutoring), career planning/preparation (career counseling), and transfer planning (with transfer center counselors and with visits from local universities).</p> <p>SO: Support students' access to resources to mitigate the impact caused by technological and basic needs insecurity.            Use funding resources to cultivate an environment in the Veterans Success Center which mitigates the impact caused by some technological and basic needs insecurity. We will supply the Veterans Success Center with water, coffee, and snacks, and hot meals when special events, such as the Christmas party, are held.            Implement requests/suggestions submitted through our military-affiliated student survey in order to make the Veterans Success Center a more personalized and comfortable space. As mentioned above. We have begun offering water, coffee, and snacks within the VSC for our students. We also plan on following suggestions from our students and plan on putting up paintings on the walls to fill in the blank spaces. We also hand out our Veterans Services t-shirts in order to help create a sense of community/belonging.</p> <p><b>Action Plan Cycle:</b> 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025, 2025 - 2026</p>	<p><b>Action Plan Update:</b> On the other hand, we are on track to implement the programs and services required within the Veterans Success Center to help meet the needs of our students when it comes to academic counseling, transfer counseling, as well as access to resources to mitigate technological and basic needs insecurity.</p> <p>We have done this by continuing to work with the Counseling Department, and have developed a schedule where we are able to host 3 academic counselors within the Veterans Success Center every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday to ensure that as many of our students as possible are able to get their questions answered when it comes to making changes to their Education Plan and/or meeting their requirements to transfer/graduate. We have also established a program where we are able to provide our students with water, coffee, snacks, and some frozen meals in order to mitigate the impact food insecurity may have on their college experience. To strengthen this program, we have also partnered with the TierraMesa and the student run garden to have fresh produce delivered to the center on a weekly basis that are students are able to take home. We also closely partner with The Stand and help promote their programs and services, including their Food Market, in order to provide further support/awareness in this area.</p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025  <b>Action Plan Progress:</b> On Track</p>
<p><b>Action Plan Status:</b> Active</p>	<p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025</p>

## Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p><b>Action Plan:</b> SO: Develop cross-functional teams that support student success and include integrated career and transfer counseling. Veterans Services and Veterans Counseling will add services that support the academic, career, and personal needs of the population. Services will help with academic coursework (such as tutoring), career planning/preparation (career counseling), and transfer planning (with transfer center counselors and with visits from local universities). Our Veterans Academic Counselor will hold drop-in appointments within the VSC two times a week and increase the amount of counseling appointments offered by the Veterans Academic Counselor by 5% by the 2024-2025 academic year. This will also be accomplished by having tutoring services offered within the VSC to serve 40 military-affiliated students for the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent to increase services to at least 60 military-affiliated students for the 2024-2025 academic year.</p> <p>Update: Based on our changing student population, we determined that Disproportionately Impacted (DI) groups that fall within the broader military-affiliated student population increased in number for the Fall 2023 semester. We found through veterans counseling and Veterans Services that further personal needs support was necessary. To address the needs of these DI populations, we are developing peer-to-peer support groups. These support groups will be focused on our Black, Latinae, and AAPI military-affiliated students. Representatives from Veterans Counseling, Veterans Services, Umoja, Punte, and Kapwa programs will participate. To accomplish this, we will hold 2 events to support DI military-affiliated student groups within the VSC for the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent of increasing to 4 events for the 2024-2025 academic year.</p> <p><b>Action Plan Cycle:</b> 2023 - 2024</p>	<p><b>Action Plan Update:</b> We attempted to host peer-to-peer support groups in order to better support our DI military-affiliated students. However, even with prior expressed interest in such groups by students, we had little to no turn out at our events. Since then, we have shifted our focus to help promoting already established groups such as Umoja, Punte, and Kapwa by connecting students who have expressed interest. Our Wellness Counselor has also started holding some Kapwa and Men of Color support groups within the Veterans Success Center in order to highlight these support groups to our students, as well as help our military-affiliated students engage with the broader student body.</p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025 <b>Action Plan Progress:</b> Barriers Encountered</p> <hr/> <p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025 <b>Action Plan Update:</b> With our lead Veterans Counselor leaving the district, as well as the shift to 3 new academic counselors within the Veterans Success Center, we are currently working to re-establish a more consistent and trackable way that we accurately gauge the amount of students that engage with the services we offer within the Veterans Success Center. These procedures will also influence the way we track engagement with transfer counseling and tutoring within the center as well.</p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025 <b>Action Plan Progress:</b> Barriers Encountered</p>

# Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

## Goal 2: Major and Career

**Unit Goal:** Goal 2: Justify major and career choices based on self-exploration and support services on campus.

**Goal Status:** Active

**Beginning Year:** 2022 - 2023

**Projected Completion Year:** 2025 - 2026

### Mapping

Mesa College Strategic Plan: Roadmap to Mesa2030: (X - Highlight the X to Align)

- **Community - Objective 1:** Use technology to improve communication and accessibility across campus. (X)
- **Completion - Objective 1:** Develop pathways that provide students with clarity about degree, certificate, and transfer requirements. (X)

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p><b>Action Plan Status:</b> Active</p>	<p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025  <b>Action Plan Update:</b> Due to shifting of staff responsibilities and placement, we have not currently been able to meet the goals we had placed to implement career/internship events within the Veterans Success Center. To help correct this, we have now placed a one of our Student Services Assistants and our Administrative Technician within the Veterans Success Center so that they can dedicate more of their time and energy to plan, organize, and implement these programs throughout the 2024/2025 academic year. Because of this, we are adjusting our goal to host 2 career/internship workshops within the VSC during the Spring25 term. Based off of student engagement/interest for these events, we will re-evaluate as a team to discuss implementation for the 2025/2026 academic year.  <b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025  <b>Action Plan Progress:</b> Barriers Encountered</p> <hr/> <p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025  <b>Action Plan Update:</b> Before our lead Veterans Counselors left the district, they had meet the goals we had in place for participating in transfer workshops for the 2023/2024 academic year and were on scheduled to meet our goals set for the 2024/2025 year. With the hiring process still in place for their replacement, this goal will be re-evaluated once the new lead Veterans Counselor is hired. We have been successful with improving our communication with our broader military-affiliated student population by establishing an Instagram and Constant Contact account in order to help us disseminate information to our students. After discussing the success of other departments, as well as receiving feedback through our VA Work Studies, we have been establishing an SD Mesa Veterans Services CANVAS shell to continue to use new communication services to reach more of our students. Our goal is to have this service launched during the Spring25 term.  <b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025</p>

## Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p><b>Action Plan:</b>            SO: Develop cross-functional teams that support student success and include integrated career and transfer counseling.            Create opportunities for students to learn about career selection, matching majors to careers, selecting schools with appropriate degrees, certificates, career services and supplementary career development opportunities while weaving academic counseling, transfer requirements, and career preparation information into the process. We will accomplish this through career counselor hot spots to the VSC, outreach by the internship coordinator, and visits to the VSC by external training resources. This will be accomplished by hosting 4 career/internship workshops within the VSC for the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent to increase to 6 workshops for the 2024-2025 academic year.</p> <p>SO: Use technology to improve communication and accessibility across campus.            Creating lines of communication with specialty departments within Mesa College and with external services will help us disseminate information to student veterans. We will accomplish this through participation in online workshops with the Transfer Center, training programs through veteran-focused nonprofits, and with offering online mental health services specific to veterans.            We will use the large screen Smart boards in the VSC to offer training. This will be accomplished by our Veterans Academic Counselor participating in 4 Transfer Workshops for the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent of increasing participation by 50% for the 2024-2025 academic year. This will also be accomplished by hosting 4 tabling/workshops by specialty departments within Mesa College and with external services for the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent of increasing to 8 sessions for the 2024-2025 academic year.</p>	<p><b>Action Plan Progress:</b> On Track</p>

## Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<b>Action Plan Cycle:</b> 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025, 2025 - 2026	

### Goal 3: Enhance Outreach and Partnerships

**Unit Goal:** Increase community engagement through developing targeted educational resources and support services.

**Goal Status:** Active

**Beginning Year:** 2023 - 2024

**Projected Completion Year:** 2025 - 2026

Action Plans	Action Plan Update
<p><b>Action Plan Status:</b> Active</p> <p><b>Action Plan:</b> Increase community engagement through developing targeted educational resources and support services.</p> <p>SO: Veterans Services and Veterans Counseling will develop virtual and face-to-face presentations for the broader military-affiliated community. These presentations will target higher education, veterans educational benefits, and supportive services that San Diego Mesa College offers. Our first goal is to have two on-campus and one virtual military-affiliated student orientations for the 2023-2024 Academic year and each academic year moving forward with the intent of serving 20 new military-affiliated students in the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent to increase the amount of students we serve by 50% for the 2024-2025 academic year. Our second goal is to participate in 2 presentations for the broader military-affiliated community in the 2023-2024 academic year with the intent to increase the amount of presentations we participate in by 50% for the 2024-2025 academic year.</p> <p><b>Action Plan Cycle:</b> 2023 - 2024, 2024 - 2025, 2025 - 2026</p>	<p><b>Submission Date:</b> 01/22/2025</p> <p><b>Action Plan Update:</b> We have successfully established relationships with the Education Office on the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and participate in their annual Career and Education Fair in order to showcase the programs and services that we have to offer to prospective students. We also have continued to solidify our relationship with Liberty Military Housing by presenting during their annual virtual meeting that allows us to provide information about Mesa and VA Educational benefits to active duty families. With the hire of our new lead Veterans Counselor, we will look at re-evaluating this goal to see how else we can improve our engagement with the broader San Diego community.</p> <p><b>Update Year:</b> 2024 - 2025</p> <p><b>Action Plan Progress:</b> On Track</p>

# Unit Goals, Action Plans, and Updates