Veteran Services

Division of Student Affairs

SFAC FY25

STUDENT FEES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SFAC)

FY2025 PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms, your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of student benefits.**

Executive Summary

MISSION

The University of Houston recognizes that our military and veteran population is a diverse group that brings vast experiences and knowledge to our campus. The Mission of UH Veteran Services is to acknowledge these experiences and accomplishments by supporting the interests of our Nation's current and former military service members and their families. We recognize the importance of providing unwavering support and advocacy to our Student Veterans to help foster success in their academic, personal, and career goals. UH Veteran Services will accomplish this mission through education, collaboration, and outreach utilizing all available resources within and outside the University of Houston.

VISION

UH Veteran Services (VS) will provide student veterans with the highest support and dedication, fostering personal growth and academic success through graduation and rewarding careers. In doing so, we will strive to be a benchmark institute and a veteran support and advocacy leader.

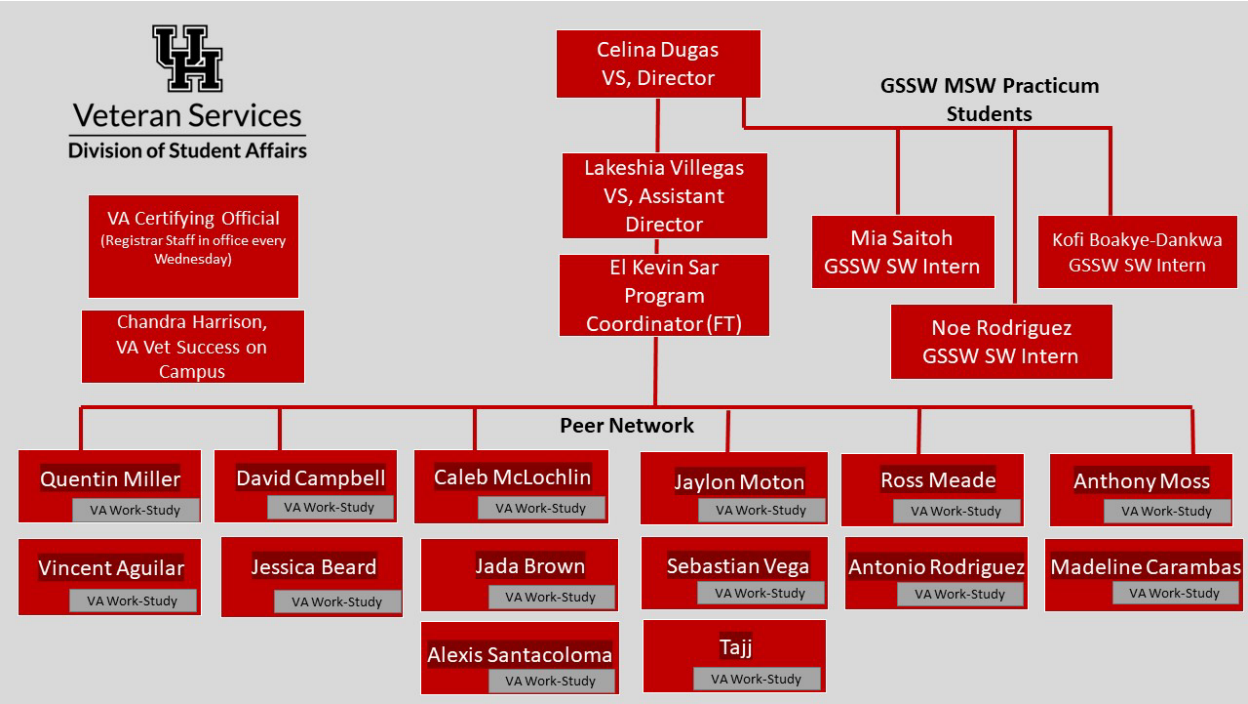
Veteran Services serves prospective and current veterans, military personnel, and their dependents by providing services that include:

- Professional and student staff with a wealth of knowledge and experience in using military benefits and transitioning from service to higher education.
- Supportive services for academic, psychological, financial, vocational, and academic challenges
- information on university policies and procedures, federal and state education benefits, and changes in legislative regulations that affect veterans.
- Camaraderie and peer-to-peer mentoring.

- Student engagement through a safe, casual, and familiar space for students to study, relax, and network, including a computer lab, within the UH campus.
- Referrals to the Veterans Administration, other University departments, and community agencies.
- Educate the campus community on Veteran Issues.

VS fosters a "military-friendly" campus community by engaging in strategic partnerships with University departments and community agencies to increase awareness of student veterans' issues. These partnerships encourage a sense of belonging, community, and well-being for all student veterans on campus. With 2965 veterans and their dependents enrolled for fall 2020, VS provides resources to meet their unique needs.

2. **Provide an organizational chart of your unit. Large units may need an overview and more specific charts for each program. Note this on your chart where you have multiple staff in the same position (e.g., counselor, advisor, etc.). Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.**



3. If your unit falls under the Division of Student Affairs, list your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2022 – 2023 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs (DSA) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they can relate (links below). If your unit does not fall under the division of student affairs, explain, in detail, the strategic plan your unit operated under. Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives2.es/action steps. If a strategic initiative/ action step changes during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.

   DSA: uh.edu/dsa/about/strategic-planning/2019-2023/
   UH Goals: uh.edu/about/mission

   Goal 1: Support Military Dependents on Campus
   Description: Provide inclusive services to all military-connected students and implement programming targeting military dependents.

   Action Steps: plan and implement 2-3 dependent activities to support military-connected dependents.

   1. Provide monthly programming
   2. Create direct contact with dependents
   3. Expand the Graduation Cording Ceremony to include Dependents

   Goal Status: Success

   Status Update: With the support of SFAC, Veteran Services has successfully expanded its programming to include a broader group of Military Dependent Students. Initially, Veteran Services collaborated with Susan Moreno to develop a customized query within the Navigate Application, enabling us to identify dependents, spouses, and active-duty personnel. Before this enhancement, our Navigate App access was exclusively limited to veterans.

   This application modification empowers Veteran Services to strategically target our marketing messages to our Military-Dependent students, ensuring they receive timely communications from our office regarding available programming and events. Consequently, our outreach has grown from approximately 1500 veterans to 3600 "Military Affiliated students," encompassing Veterans, Children, Spouses, and active-duty service members.

   Moreover, Veteran Services implemented a tailored approach, introducing a Challenge Coin, an honor cord, and extending invitations to our Military Dependents to be recognized at our Graduation Cording Ceremony. This initiative served a dual purpose: first, it created a designated space for our dependents during this event, and second, it enhanced the overall ceremony for veterans by introducing a Veterans Honor Stole for presentation to our veterans and active-duty personnel who have served. As a result of these changes, we

observed a remarkable 54% increase in attendance at this event compared to the previous year.

Goal 2: Target Veteran Recruitment Description:
Collaborate with Community College to assist with successful transition to UH

Action Steps: Plan and implement recruitment efforts by collaborating with Community Colleges to ease the transition from CC to UH

1. Make connections at each feeder college.
2. Document needs assessment from students who desire to transfer to UH
3. Develop programming surrounding those needs.

Goal Status: In Progress
Status Update: Due to low staffing, Veteran Services was not able to fully implement this goal. However, Veteran Services remains in contact with our colleagues at our feeder schools. With the addition of our new staff in the Fall of 2023, Veteran Services remains committed to increasing our reach into our feeder schools and implement much needed assessment to ensure a smooth transition from our feeder schools to UH main campus. Veteran Service Staff field many calls from transferring students and take a proactive approach to assisting each prospective student by providing individual assistance in the Application process. Additionally, our 2023/2024 goals focus on providing an inclusive, robust new student integration program based on Student development theory that encompasses student integration into campus.

Goal 3: Diversity & Inclusion Description: VS strives to provide equitable services to all military-connected students on campus.

Action Step: Create Equitable Materials for all Military-Connected Students.

1. Review all written materials/web pages/ social media and update to include more inclusive language.
2. Create a Glossary of words to ensure that military/ Veteran terminology is understandable to all.

Goal Status: Complete
Status Update: Veteran Services completed an assessment of all our printed materials, webpage, briefings to ensure that we are providing equitable services and using inclusive terminology. We will continue to monitor VS to ensure that we continue on this path to ensure we are creating a sense of belonging for all students that walk through our doors.

4. **Please list your 2024-2025 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order, and if operating under the DSA, cite the specific Division of Student Affairs Values and University of Houston Strategies Goals to which they relate. If your**

unit does not operate under the DSA, reference the strategic plan your unit operates under. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprograms. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.

i. **Articulate how KPIs are tracked and how/when your unit utilizes them to measure progress toward your goals. Are there any deficiencies in your ability to measure your KPIs? If so, explain why.**
ii. **Identify the milestones laid out on the path to achieving the long-term goals you have laid out. How do these milestones contribute to your unit's ability to hold itself accountable for long-term goals?**
iii. **In your response, identify who (besides the department director) is responsible for each milestone in the plan and for measuring each KPI you have identified.**

Veteran Services 2024-2025 Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Veteran Services will continue to develop, implement, and sustain a student success program aimed at providing support to our most vulnerable students.
Goal Alignment to UH Strategic Plan: Goal 1 Student Success/ DSA Strategic Priorities: Increase Retention. **Metric (KPI):** Sense of Belonging, retention rates, average GPA, average completed student credit hours.

Action Step 1: Develop and Implement the Student Success program AIMS: Academic Integration for Military Affiliated Scholars.

Action Step 2: Identify Staff and resources needed to implement the first cohort of AIM Scholars

Action Step 3: Recruit Students to participate in the AIMS program.

Assessment Activities: To ensure the program effectiveness, VS has developed the AIMS program using Student Development Theory. This Program will Utilize TINTO's integration theory to successfully integrate students into the University of Houston.

Rational for Program: Tinto's Student Integration Model, developed by Vincent Tinto, is a widely known and influential theory in higher education. The model focuses on understanding the factors contributing to student persistence and success, particularly during the transition from high school to college and throughout the college experience. According to Tinto's model, student integration is crucial to student retention and academic achievement. Integration refers to the extent to which students feel connected to and involved in their educational environment, including college life's academic, social, and cultural aspects. Tinto's Integration Model is an excellent framework for the AIMS programming VS strives to implement.

The model identifies three types of integration:

1. Social Integration: This refers to the extent to which students feel connected to their peers, faculty, and other college community members. Social integration encompasses extracurricular activities, participation in campus organizations, and forming meaningful relationships with peers and mentors. VS understands its essential role in the success of Military-Affiliated students on campus. We will strive to ensure that all programming is built upon the Student Succes Theory using Tinto's Integration Model as its framework by implementing the following interventions:
    a. Referring students to the Student Veterans of America (SVA) educational forum, educate
    students on student involvement, plan 1-2 student VS and SVA meet and greets, and partner with other Division agencies (Commuter Services, Center for Student Involvement) to encourage social integration.
    b. Develop a targeted communication plan to ensure that these students are current on VS and campus events to support these students' social integration.

2. Academic Integration: Academic integration focuses on students' engagement with their academic pursuits. It involves active involvement in coursework, interactions with faculty members, utilization of academic support services, and developing practical study skills and strategies. Many of these skills and strategies need to be taught, and VS can assist in increasing overall knowledge of the services available to students on campus by:
    a. Connecting students with a VS academic peer mentor (within their Major) will allow students to connect with seasoned students in their major to help them develop success strategies while at UH.
    b. Ensuring each student is educated and connected to Academic Affairs resources within their college and access to VA and campus Tutor resources.

3. Institutional Integration: Institutional integration refers to students' connection to the larger institution. It involves familiarity with and utilization of campus resources, such as libraries, advising services, and student support centers. Institutional integration also encompasses students' understanding of the college's values, mission, and academic requirements. Veteran Services can be an integral part of a student's successful integration by ensuring that students are entirely oriented to the resources available to them by:
        a. It offers a targeted orientation to this VS success programming, including meet and greet or resource tabling with campus organizations vital to their success.
        b. Offering one face-to-face VS advisor appointment to each student to build rapport with VS staff and ensure the student is familiar with all services and resources available to each student.

Tinto's model suggests that the level of integration influences a student's sense of belonging, satisfaction, and commitment to the college, affecting their likelihood of persisting and graduating. When students feel socially and academically integrated, they are more likely to develop a strong attachment to their college community and are better positioned to navigate the challenges they may encounter during their educational journey. The VS center assists military-affiliated students in fostering a sense of belonging. In the same way, they feel connected to their military community, VS strives to assist the successful transition and integration into the greater college community. By using the cohort model for the AIMS program, VS will be able to track the level of integration and the student takes advantage of the integration strategies set forth by the program. VS will be able to track, GPA, Hours enrolled, hours dropped, etc. to ensure that the students remain on a path of success.

Tinto's model has been instrumental in informing institutional practices and policies to promote student retention and success. It highlights the importance of creating supportive and inclusive learning environments that foster student integration, engagement, and academic achievement. Because of this, it makes an excellent framework for the student success programming (AIMS) that Veteran Services is attempting to implement and assess for the 2023-2024 School Year.

With SFAC Support, we will be able to hire a Graduate Assistant, that will be able to support the program, dedicating 100 percent of their time to implementation and assessment of the program.

Resource

Tinto. (2014). Selected publications of Vincent Tinto. Journal of Student Affairs in Africa, 2(2). https://doi.org/10.14426/jsaa.v2i2.83

Goal 2: Develop Student Leaders: Veteran Services will strategically work to develop our student employees' leadership skills while they work in the Veteran Services office by providing opportunities to develop skills necessary to their success.
Goal Alignment to UH Strategic Plan: Student Success **Metric (KPI):** Number of hours of career related experiences by student employees, External ratings of student employees' competencies

Action Step 1: Recruit Qualified Student Leaders to work in the VS office using VA work Study Program.

Action Step 2: Assess Student's need for skill development.

Action Step 3: Create Robust opportunities for students to develop these critical skills while in their work student position.

5. **Please discuss the means you are utilizing to evaluate your success in achieving the strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance compared to others you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and learning outcomes used to evaluate program success. Please provide the method for collecting this data. If your unit holds events, please provide a revenue sources breakdown of each revenue stream, including but not limited to the number of:**
    i. **Tickets sold/number of attendees recorded**
    ii. **Merchandise**
    ii. **Concessions sold/distributed**
    iii. **Revenue generated from these sales**

Veteran Services currently assesses its services' effectiveness by considering student engagement and participation. To track student usage, Veteran Services uses a MyUH ID check-in system. However, data related to prospects and applicants is collected manually. Besides our physical office in the Campus Student Center, Veteran Services aids students through a virtual office on Microsoft Teams. This adjustment was implemented to ensure that students at our Sugarland Campus can still receive support. Additionally, each department will be responsible for monitoring ID numbers of students participating in important programs and services, and they will subsequently submit this information to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. These ID numbers will serve as a basis for assessing the academic progress of students engaged in various programs, encompassing metrics such as average completed credit hours, GPA averages, retention rates, and overall engagement levels. Additionally, we gather feedback on student satisfaction through the annual spring semester student satisfaction survey, which is distributed to all students.

Fall 2022 Events	**Participation/ Attendance**
Welcome Back Breakfast	63
Weeks of Welcome Events	120
Explore the Power House	327
Remembering 9/11 Student Leader Luncheon	53
Photo exhibit Sign In book	48
Family Weekend Photo Booth	100
Fresh Check Day Mental Health Awareness	150
First Gen Student Event	77
Veterans Day: Bowling event	50
International Education Awareness Collab	75
ISSSO Collab: Military Culture Brief	32
Individual Advocacy: Dr. Glass	870
Individual Advocacy; Celina Dugas	1250
Individual Advocacy; R. Selvera	100
Veterans & Military Graduation Celebration	176
Transfer Orientation	90
Total Fall 2022 Participation	**3581**
Total Targeted Emails/ Marketing Emails sent	**7996**
Virtual Office Utilization	**60**
Total Physical Office Utilization	**7145**

Spring 2023 Events	**Participation/Attendance**
Welcome Back Breakfast	86
SVA Lunch and Learn	11
Spring Block Party Collab w/W&G, ISSSO, LGBTQ	150
Lunch and Learn Federal Hiring Process	15
Lunch and Learn VA research opportunities	20
Lunch and Learn VA Hospital	20
Photobooth Events	150
DOS Social Work Meet and Greets	10
Sexual Assault Awareness Resource Fair	150
Spring Orientations	276
Military Affiliated Graduation Celebration	175
Individual Advocacy: Dr. Glass	991
Individual Advocacy: Celina Dugas	1256
Individual Advocacy: SW Interns	60
Student Worker Week	75
Student Worker Inservice	15
Total Spring 2023 Participation	**3557**
Total Targeted Emails/ Marketing Emails sent	**17,788**
Virtual Office Utilization	**126**
Total Physical Office Utilization	**6476**

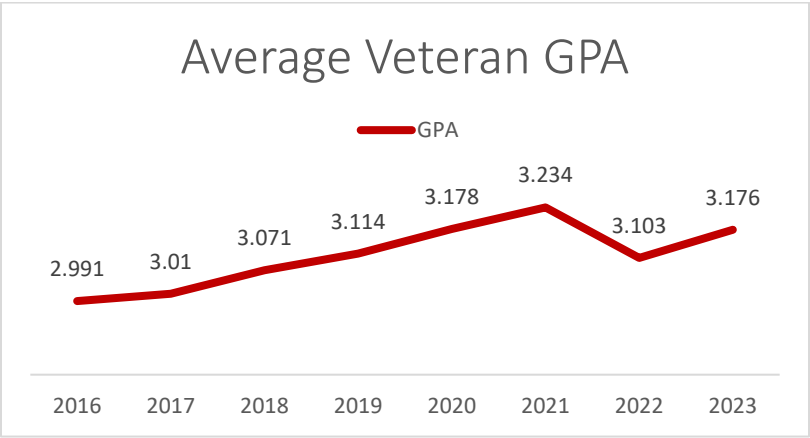
Summer 2023 Events	**Participation/ Attendance**
Summer Orientations	406
Glass Student Advocacy	146
Dugas Student Advocacy	462
Villegas Student Advocacy	100
Four Block Outreach/ Pizza Lunch	40
VA Outreach/ Lunch n Learn	20
Total Summer 2023 Participation	1174
Total Targeted Emails/ Marketing Emails sent	**7761**
Virtual Office Utilization	**156**
Total Physical Office Utilization	**2568**

Veteran Services	Total Engagement Numbers for 2022-2023
Total Annual Face to Face Engagement	**Includes Event attendance and individual advocacy 8323**
Office Utilization	**Includes the number of times students checked in the office 16189**
Virtual Office Utilization	**Includes the number of times a student entered the virtual office for virtual assistance 282**
Targeted Communications	**Includes the number of emails or texts sent from VS to Military Affiliated Students on Campus 33,500**

Fundamental changes to note: When compared to last year
2022 Grad Ceremony total 202
2023 Grad Ceremony total 351
54% Increase by including dependents' Cord and upgrading Veteran Stole.

2022 total event attendance: 5947 (minus 3974 for 9/11 photo exhibit attendance)
2023 Total event attendance: 8323 (does not include 9/11 photo exhibit attendance; due to staff retirement, we were not able to collect this data short of those who signed out page)
33.3 % Increase with an FTE deficit for eight months

Lastly, Veteran Services has tracked the GPA of its Veterans who are enrolled in classes each Semester,



6. **If your unit concluded FY2023 with a Fund 3 addition to Fund Equity of more than $5,000, please describe the conditions that caused the addition and provide a line-item identification of the budgetary sources(s) of the addition (I.e., lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.).**

SFAC Only - FY2023 Recap

	FY 2023	FY 2023	FY 2023	FY 2023	FY 2023
	Base Budget	Final Budget	Actual Expenses + Commitments	Approved Equity Carryforward	Funds to be Returned to Reserve
Salary/Wage/Fringe	245,525	245,525	183,662		61,863
Maintenance&Operations/Travel	10,031	47,031	46,810		221
Administrative Charges	15,333	17,553	13,715		3,838
Utilities	-	-	-		0
Fund Transfers for Maintenance				4,901	(4,901)
SFAC Totals	**270,889**	**310,109**	**244,187**	**4,901**	**61,021**
		Funds to be Returned to Reserve			61,021

Veteran Services did have fund equity in excess of $61,021, which included lapsed salaries for vacant positions. Additionally, Veteran Services requested a one-time request to supplement the VA work-study payment, from $7.25 to $8.00 an hour. SFAC approved the request; however, at this point, we have not found a way to pay each student within the constraints of the law to compensate our student workers, as they are not university employees. Because of this delay, VS requested and was approved a fund equity carryforward. We are working with Business Services to ensure each student worker receives a stipend to provide an equitable wage. Because VA work-study pays each student their wage as a "benefit" and not earned income, Veteran Services has no control over the amount paid per hour. See Figure Above.

7. **Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2025 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated the new base budget and one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY2025 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

Base Budget 24-25 $260,606	5% Cut of $13,030
Awards	$1200
Business Meals	$1500
Office Supplies	$2000
Travel	$5000
Professional Development	$2000
Uniforms	$2000
Total	$13,700

Considering a 5% budget reduction, Veteran Services faces a $13,030 decrease in its

base budget. We contemplated eliminating all travel and Professional Development opportunities for our Veteran Services staff to achieve this reduction. However, it is essential to note that while there are alternative methods for professional growth aside from traveling, attending national conferences allows us to maintain our competitiveness on a national scale. Over the past three years, Veteran Services has submitted numerous proposals on veteran-related topics for national and regional conferences and has been selected multiple times. Additionally, whenever we have presented at national conferences, we have allowed our student leaders to participate in proposal submissions and co-presenting alongside our staff. These opportunities are valuable learning experiences for our student staff.

Given the relatively low pay for our work-study positions, offering incentives to our student staff is crucial for attracting top-tier student leaders. In 2020, Veteran Services presented at the Student Veterans of America Conference in Los Angeles, addressing the topic of toxic masculinity to an audience of over 150 attendees. These opportunities allow UH Veteran Services to establish itself as a leader in serving military-connected students and provide crucial non-classroom learning opportunities for our student staff.

Furthermore, the budget reduction would also necessitate cutting funds allocated for business meals. During crucial and mandatory staff training sessions, these meals are held 2-3 times yearly. As our student staff changes and we strive to maintain high customer service standards, we must keep our staff well-trained. We have also made it a goal to incorporate more training on diversity and inclusion, among other topics. While our student staff is compensated during training, we have found value in providing them with a meal during the 4–6-hour training sessions.

Finally, reducing expenses for uniforms, awards, and office supplies directly impacts the numerous students who rely on our office as a central resource for their education at UH. This cost-cutting measure, like other changes affecting our student staff, would hinder their ability to receive incentives for their work in our office and their ability to provide outstanding services and support to the students we cater to.

8. **Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last year (FY2024) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds they requested, that additional expenses impacted some programs after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.**

   In October 2022, VS encountered an unexpected challenge when one of its program coordinators resigned suddenly. This departure, combined with the other coordinator being on FMLA leave, left VS understaffed for Fall 2022-2023. Despite these unforeseen changes, VS was fortunate to welcome three new interns from the GCSW program, which helped fill the staffing gaps.

Recognizing that the program coordinator position had a high turnover rate due to its relatively low salary of approximately $42,000 per year, VS took proactive steps. To attract high-quality candidates and offer a more competitive salary, VS merged the open office coordinator position with the program coordinator role to create a new Assistant Director position. By combining the salaries of these two positions, VS successfully recruited a qualified candidate, Lakeshia Villegas, who joined the team in June 2023.

In July 2023, Dr. Sandra Glass retired after nearly 15 years of dedicated service. VS acted promptly and hired Mr. El Kevin Sar, a 27-year Army veteran, to fill the program coordinator position previously held by Dr. Glass. In the Fall of 2023, the office welcomed three new interns from the GCSW program and recruited 15 exceptional student leaders. The VS staff represents a combined 120 years of military service, along with many years of education and dedication to serving our military-affiliated students on campus.

Regrettably, due to budget cuts affecting the entire division, VS experienced a reduction in exempt salaries, amounting to $6,736, making the current salaries insufficient for the 2023-2024 budget year. The entire Maintenance and Operations (M&O) budget was also slashed.

As the director of VS, I believe it is my responsibility to be a responsible steward of our funds. Often, we take on various tasks ourselves to reduce costs and make the most of our budget. For instance, during an event, VS was charged approximately $900 for a vendor to place tablecloths on 30 tables for a few hours. Moving forward, VS sourced tablecloths from a vendor at $3.00 each and bought them so that we could set up and provide an elegant setting for our events at a one-time cost of $90. This also involved the labor of washing, folding, and storing the tablecloths for future events. While this approach may add some extra work, ensuring our funds last the entire fiscal year is essential.

9. **What other possible funding sources are available to your unit, and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g., grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the proper rows/columns on the SFAC spreadsheet.**
    i. **What can be done to increase donations, sponsorship sales, and other revenue streams, if applicable? Please answer each separately.**

VS does receive donor funds, as detailed in question number eleven. These are unsolicited funds from various corporate donors who donate to various organizations at UH. VS is just thankful to receive even a tiny portion of those donations so that we may fill any financial gaps. Additionally, VS received an Endowed Scholarship that would last three years and offer two yearly scholarships

for those three years. We are in the process of awarding the second year of scholarships from the Enbridge Endowment.

We do not have any other revenue streams.

10. **Does your unit generate revenue? (Please do not address donations in this question.) If your unit does not generate revenue, respond "not applicable. If so:**
    - i. **Provide your unit's P&L statement for the current fiscal year and trailing five years showing all revenue streams for your unit.**
    - ii. **Provide line-item data for each revenue stream.**
    - iii. **For each revenue stream, explain the revenue's nature and briefly articulate the successes and failures for each line item.**

Not Applicable

11. **Does your unit raise money from donors and sponsors? If your unit does not receive donations or sponsorships, respond "not applicable." If so:**
    - i. **Identify key staff members responsible for development and seeking sponsorships.**
    - ii. **Provide financials for the current fiscal year, as well as the trailing five fiscal years, including:**
        1. **An analysis of your development activities. Include a breakdown of the nominal quantity of donors donating $20m+, $10m+, $5m+ $1m+, $500k+, $100k+, $50k+, $25k+, $10k+, $5k+, $1k+, $100+. Provide this both in terms of lifetime contributions and annual contributions.**
        2. **An analysis of your sponsorship activities. Include a breakdown of total sponsorship dollars and identify your top twenty-five (25) sponsorship deals.**
    - iii. **If applicable, provide a breakdown of each capital project or campaign in your unit. Explain how each capital project or campaign aligns with the goals and milestones in your department's strategic plan.**

H0218	**Veteran Services**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**Total:**
Annual Donations		$1765.73	$6060	$5000	$14500	$5796.19		$33121.92

At VS, we have consistently received support from various corporations, even though each donation is voluntarily given. We make it a point to express our gratitude to these donors through letters, visits, and recognition. In the fiscal year 2019-2020, Chevron Phillips Chemical donated, enabling us to upgrade our Computer Lab Computers. It is

important to note that these computers are not provided to us by DSA IT; hence, it falls on us at VS to ensure their maintenance and replacement, often through donations.

These donations were actively sought by our Director, Celina Dugas. Shell, Chevron, and Chevron Philips Chemical are among the top three corporate donors to VS. While we typically cannot predict the exact amount of funding we will receive from year to year, these contributions have been invaluable in helping us bridge any financial gaps that arise. They enable us to focus intensely on our students, aligning with our mission and objective of providing student-centered programming.

Most recently, we have used the funding to provide and maintain our efforts in keeping our food shelf stocked with healthy snacks and food. This effort was started in FY 21/22 to support our students and combat food insecurities, which can be an issue for many students. Paired with the economic impact of the pandemic, VS strives to keep its snack shelf full and available to students as needed. The cost of snacks and food for the snack shelf runs approximately $1500 a semester or as available. When funds are short, we may limit the items we purchase or set limits on the times we purchase; for example, this summer, the shelf had limited snacks, and we restocked our shelf/pantry before the Fall Semester.

12. Please describe any similar services, any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students, and the rationale for the overlap.

Similar Services

The Veterans Certification unit, part of the Office of the University Registrar, is crucial in processing student VA benefits. This unit manages the certification process and ensures that veteran students meet the legal requirements for degree progress. It functions similarly to the financial aid department and is responsible for accurately and promptly processing and disbursing federal funds.

The Veterans Services Office (VSO) closely collaborates with the Certification unit and usually serves as the initial point of contact for veteran students seeking guidance on their next steps at the university.

VS is dedicated to fostering a culture of care right from the beginning of each student's journey. The process of certifying benefits can be overwhelming for students. However, Veteran Services provides meticulous guidance and a warm welcome to ensure that students feel embraced and begin to develop a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is crucial for their persistence and success on campus.

Facilitating effective referrals and creating a supportive pathway to the University Registrar is fundamental to the VSO's mission. Veterans often begin their journey at the VSO because they feel comfortable discussing their concerns and identifying their needs

with fellow veterans. Guiding veterans to make the most of the services available at the university and in the community is crucial to the success of the office.

13. **What percentage of department M&O is allocated to marketing?**
    i. **Please detail your comprehensive marketing strategy toward the student body, including metrics used to measure the effectiveness of the marketing strategy.**
    ii. **How much revenue is allocated towards the marketing strategy?**

    Veteran Services did not have any M&O funds and, as a result, did not have a comprehensive marketing strategy.

14. **If any of your funding from the student service fee goes to your general operating fund, please detail where any student service fees you received went, what they were spent on, and future intentions if granted. Otherwise, please respond with "not applicable."**

    Not Applicable

15. **How does your unit contribute to campus culture and improve the student experience? How is the effectiveness of these contributions measured by your unit, if at all? What else can your unit do to improve your contribution to the student experience going forward?**
    i. **Does your unit contribute to turning students into coogs for life?**

Military personnel and veterans on university campuses across the United States have become increasingly significant in recent years. These individuals bring unique experiences, skills, and perspectives that enrich the campus culture and enhance the student experience.

The Contributions of Military-Affiliated Students and Veterans on Campus:

1. Diversity of Experiences:
Military and veteran students have often served in various capacities worldwide, bringing diverse experiences to campus. These experiences contribute to a rich tapestry of perspectives, fostering a more inclusive environment for all students.

2. Leadership and Discipline:
Military training instills discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills, which can significantly benefit student organizations and clubs. Veterans often take on leadership roles, helping these groups thrive and achieve their goals.

3. Mentoring and Support:
Veterans can serve as mentors and provide a support system for their fellow students. Their guidance can be particularly valuable to first-year students, helping them navigate the challenges of university life.

4. Civic Engagement:
Many veterans are passionate about community service and civic engagement. They often lead by example, inspiring other students to volunteer and positively impact their communities.

How do we, as a unit, measure our effectiveness:

The Veteran Services Department at the University of Houston plays a crucial role in assessing and improving the contributions of military and veterans to campus culture and the student experience. To measure effectiveness, they can employ several strategies:

1. Surveys and Feedback:
Regularly surveying students to gather feedback on their experiences with military-affiliated and veteran programs and services can provide valuable insights. This feedback can be used to make improvements and adjustments as needed.

2. Academic Performance:
Tracking military-affiliated and veteran students' academic performance can help assess support services' effectiveness. Higher graduation rates and improved GPAs may indicate that these services positively impact student success.

3. Participation in Campus Activities:
Monitoring the involvement of military-affiliated and veteran students in campus activities and organizations can gauge their level of integration and engagement within the university community.

4. Graduation and Retention Rates:
Comparing the graduation and retention rates of military-affiliated and veteran students with those of the general student population can help identify disparities and ensure appropriate support is provided.

Enhancing Contributions and Services
To continue improving the contributions of military and veterans to the student experience at the University of Houston, the Veteran Services Department can consider the following strategies:

1. Tailored Transition Programs:
Develop comprehensive transition programs that help military and veteran students adapt to campus life. These programs should address the transition's academic, social, and emotional aspects.

2. Mentorship Initiatives:
Expand mentorship programs by pairing military and veteran students with mentors who can provide guidance and support throughout their university journey.

3. Enhanced Outreach:
Increase outreach efforts to recruit military and veteran students, ensuring they are aware of available resources and support services from the moment they express interest in the university.

4. Alumni Engagement:
Encourage military and veteran alums to stay connected with the university and share their success stories. This can inspire and motivate current students.

5. Academic Support:
Continuously evaluate and enhance academic support services, such as tutoring and counseling, to meet military and veteran students' unique needs.

Military-affiliated and veteran students contribute significantly to campus culture and the student experience at the University of Houston. Their diverse experiences, leadership qualities, and commitment to service enrich the university community. By fostering an inclusive and supportive environment, the University of Houston can ensure that military and veteran students thrive and continue to impact the campus community and leave UH Forever Coogs positively.

NOTE:
Please use the following naming conventions when submitting your pdf files to the Dean of Students.

FY25Q_DepartmentName	Questionnaire
FY25OT24a_DepartmentName	Add'l One-time request – change "a" to "b," "c", etc. for additional one-time requests.
FY25WS_DepartmentName	Excel worksheet
FY25BA_DepartmentName	Base Augmentation request
FY25OTa_DepartmentName	One-time request – change "a" to "b", "c", etc for multiple one-time requests

FY25PRES_DepartmentName	Presentation

The totality of your responses to these questions should give the committee member a comprehensive understanding of the role and function of your unit(s). If your responses do not accomplish this, please revise them accordingly.

Please send electronic responses (PDF format) to: Chair, SFAC
% Dean of Students Office
dlyoung4@central.uh.edu