

2015 Associated Students

AS Veterans Outreach Center

AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee



Introduction

AS Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) presented to the AS Structure and Program Advisory Committee on February 10th, 2016. The currently approved statement of purpose for VOC is:

The Veterans Outreach Center is dedicated to providing a confidential and non-judgmental source of support and community for student veterans and their allies. The VOC does this by providing an informal social support network, events, safe space, resources and referrals. In addition, the VOC is an advocate for veterans on Western's campus and strives to create a united community dedicated to support and understanding.

Program/Services Provided

| Year | Event Name | Attended |
|-----------|---|--------------|
| 2012-2013 | Battlehearts Opening Reception (VU Gallery) | 9 |
| 2012-2013 | Costume Ball | 264 |
| 2012-2013 | Veterans Day | 175 |
| 2012-2013 | Street Vets | 10 |
| 2012-2013 | Patriot Week | 123 |
| | Subtotal | 581 |
| | Average | 116.2 |
| 2013-2014 | Invisible War | 15 |
| 2013-2014 | Veterans Day | 120 |
| 2013-2014 | Challenge Workshop | 2 |
| 2013-2014 | Resume Workshop | 1 |
| 2013-2014 | Stories Deployed | 78 |
| 2013-2014 | Patriot Week | 36 |
| | Subtotal | 252 |
| | Average | 42 |
| 2014-2015 | Kickoff/ Welcome back | 17 |
| 2014-2015 | Potlucks | 40 |
| 2014-2015 | Veterans Day | 120 |
| 2014-2015 | Resume Workshop | 3 |
| 2014-2015 | Homelessness Awareness | 20 |
| 2014-2015 | Patriot Week | 56 |
| 2014-2015 | Stories Deployed | 96 |
| | Subtotal | 352 |
| | Average | 50 |
| 2015-2016 | Student Veteran Mixer | 12 |
| 2015-2016 | Veterans Day | 140 |
| | Subtotal | 152 |
| | Average | 76 |
| | Total | 1337 |
| | Average | 67 |

Clarification

The Costume Ball is no longer put on by the ROP. It did not accomplish any goals set forward by the ROP or the offices involved. That reduction in participation is apparent in the following years.

Patriot Week consists of 3-5 events. These events are not consistent from year to year and are therefore difficult to compare year to year. A successful program that has come from Patriot Week is Stories Deployed. It has had rising attendance in the last two years it was put on, and it has been well received by members of the community.

AS Veterans Outreach Center Office Traffic

*Please see attached Excel document for office traffic numbers.

Interesting trends to note in the data. Phone traffic has dropped off significantly across the years tracked. 7.53 calls on average in 2012 to only 1.35 in 2014. This can be explained by the usage of social media to disseminate information as well as and increased usage of email.

The data concerning email usage is unusable as a measure of traffic as in some year's individuals tracked every email they received regardless of its actual purpose, and in other years emails were not tracked at all.

We do see that the majority foot traffic is for safe space/socializing, which is in line with the mission statement of the office. However, if you look at the other aspects of the office (Referrals and General Office Info) we find that the VOC is severely lacking in those types of foot traffic.

SW/COT Chart

| | | Section 7: SCOT Analysis | |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| | | Helpful | Harmful |
| | | (S) Strengths | (C) Challenges |
| Internal | | High visibility on office events. (Veterans Day, Stories Deployed) | ongoing reoccurring social gatherings to build community |
| | | Increased visibility of Veteran Service Office | lack of space for a socializing and community building |
| | | Campuswide collaboration on events. (President's Office, Humanities Department) | percieved as fulfilling the role actually performed by the VSO. (GI Bill, Administrative support for vet |
| | | Bellingham Community Resources. (VFW, Bellingham Vet Center) | Student veterans have varying levels of engagement with the veteran community. For reasons such as: desire to identify as a veteran on campus, older average age, campus climate. This makes outreach difficult |
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| External | | (O) Opportunities | (T) Threats |
| | | Fostering a student veteran club | Low student veteran turnout to socializing events on campus. |
| | | Becoming more aligned with the Veteran Service Office in the mission of supporting student veterans | Veteran Service Office space utilization. |
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Areas for Improvements/Recommendations ' .

The following are the Structure and Program Advisory committee's recommendations for strategic goals over the next four years:

1. Dissolving the VOC as a center/office while continuing the AS-funded student employee position

Currently, the Veterans Outreach Coordinator is required to perform 10 office hours per week. This time is virtually unused by student-veterans. A much larger portion of students spend their time at the Veterans Services Office throughout the week.

We recommend closing the physical Veterans Outreach Center. This would allow the Veteran Outreach Coordinator to spend the majority of their office hours at the Veteran Service Office where veterans congregate. This would also allow an opportunity to supplement the existing outreach and collaborate more closely with the Veterans Services Office.

2. Changing the position to hourly for 10 hours/week

With the closing of the physical office space and change in job responsibilities, the requirement for having a 15 hour/week is no longer necessary. The Veterans Outreach Coordinator would be able to fulfill their duties as event programmer and facilitating their outreach mission within a 10 hour/week framework.

3. Reducing the events requirement to one per quarter

With the exception of the marquee events (Veterans Day, Stories Deployed, and Patriot Week), veteran events on campus are poorly attended. Reducing the number of events allows the Veteran Outreach Coordinator flexibility in their approach to building community on campus.

4. Interface more closely with a student club

The veteran community on campus has asked for a more robust social event programming schedule. This function could be supported by an active club component. While the Veteran Outreach Coordinator is not currently required to establish and maintain a club, we recommend establishing a portion of the budget specifically for funding club related activities. These funds would be used to support club activities above and beyond what is normally available to an upstart AS club. Specific use of the money will be outlined in a new job description.

5. Change job description to reflect dual reportage, reduced event requirements, and name change.

Wholesale changes to the office and responsibilities would require an entirely new job description to be drafted. This job description would bring the Veterans Services Office into the fold with weekly check-ins and requirements for a remote work station.

The VOC would report to the Student Activities Coordinator and Assistant Director of Veterans Services instead of the Resources and Outreach Program Director. This would remove the VOC from the Resources and Outreach Program framework. The intention would be for the VOC to spend the majority of their time interacting with the VSO, and checking-in regularly with the Student Activities Coordinator.

With an exit from the ROP comes a change in responsibility for the VOC. They will no longer be tasked with peer guidance requirements and requirements to attend ROP staff events (although they would still be required to attend AS staff development).

There will no longer be a physical Veterans Outreach Center and the role of the position has changed in such a way that we believe the name Veteran Outreach Coordinator does not capture the intended role of this position. We propose changing the name of the position to “Veteran Community Coordinator.”