

UNC Charlotte's Veteran Services Office 2021-2024 Action Plan



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Action Plan

In drafting the post-external review action plan we reviewed the action plan included in the internal review as well as the actions highlighted in the external review. While there were many similarities and overlap, new areas were identified by the external review as well as some internal review items were not stressed. This will plan serves as a blending of the two reports and outlines the steps moving forward. Additionally, this plan will take into account the disruption introduced by the pandemic to the process (introduced soon after the submission of the internal review) and adjust timelines accordingly.

While it is anticipated that the need for a robust action plan will come following the external reviewers report, based upon the internal review, there are three areas that will begin to receive immediate attention. These three areas are:

- Assessment
- Resources (funding and staffing level will both need to be addressed in the near term)
- Programming

Assessment plan

As noted throughout this report, the improvements in the area of assessment within the VSO is exponential. However, when the baseline was zero, that really is not that difficult. Noted assessment deficiencies are:

- Sharing of assessment data
- Event assessment (pre and post)
- Ongoing assessment of processes

In order to address these deficiencies, plans already in motion will be completed during the spring 2021 term.

- (Spring 2021) A new tab will be developed on the VSO website (administrative assistant) that will contain the following:
 - Results of annual surveys
 - Departmental Assessment plan (as developed)
 - Veteran related (and produced) IR data
 - GPA
 - Graduation rates
 - Demographics
 - Enrollment data
- (Spring 2021) In conjunction with the Director and as a capstone piece of their tie as GA's with the VSO, the GA's will develop templates of both pre and post event evaluation
 - Additionally, an SOP as it relates to these assessments will be developed and all of these materials will be housed in the GA continuity folder.
 - GA's will be tasked with and assessed based on implementation of these evaluations
- (Spring 2021) Complete work with SARA on the development of weekly office survey and semesterly certification survey (Director and Administrative Assistant).
 - Finalize questions
 - Train administrative assistant in implementation of surveys/outputting results
 - Create dashboard for sharing results internally

Resources

As mentioned throughout the internal and external report, there is significant growth in the population served by the VSO and this growth has left the office at a disadvantage. In order to address this, the Director will be in consultation with AVC about steps needed to secure the resources necessary to both increase the staff size as well as to increase pay rates at all levels for current staff. These conversations will need to not only involve senior leadership but involve Human Resources and layout the next steps to add the necessary position(s).

Conduct a review of salaries at peer institutions to determine appropriate funding levels:

- (Late spring 2021) conduct a survey of peer institutions looking to determine
 - Salary and staffing levels
- (Summer 2021) Make the business case
- (Summer 2021) Present to senior leadership and secure appropriate funding
 - In parallel, work with HR to secure the appropriate institutional approvals

Begin the process for hiring two new staff positions (an assistant director of programming and a new certifying official).

To that end, the following steps are critical:

- (Summer 2021) In collaboration with the AVC, develop a timeline for the creation and roll-out of the new position
 - Make the business case
 - Present to senior leadership and secure appropriate funding
 - In parallel, work with HR to secure the appropriate institutional approvals
- (Fall 2021) Develop position description and hiring plan
- (Spring 2022) Conduct national search
 - Appointed search committee
 - Open position
 - Conduct review of candidates
 - Review
 - Phone interviews
 - Campus visits
- (Spring/summer 2022) Make/have candidate start

The assistant director is critical for the build-out of the peer-to-peer mentoring program as well as aiding in the recruitment of veterans to attend UNC Charlotte via local NC military bases (focused on transition more than admissions), involvement with local veteran organizations like the VFW and American Legion for UNCC support, and lead student-workers in veteran peer-to-peer outreach efforts.

The additional certifying official will allow for a realignment of duties to account for the additional roles that have fallen onto these positions over the last several years (Maintenance of TA processes, the expansion of partial term courses and the incredible workload increase this has led to; as well as bring the office closer to inline with the VA recommendation of one certifying official for every 250 certifications (whereas currently we have closer to 1:600).

Funding (day-to-day)

While the VSO has been successful in procuring funding for a number of big-ticket items, there is a need for financial flexibility that goes outside of the scope of either the state budget OR the VA funds that are made available annually.

- (Begin process of working with University Advancement Spring 2021-ongoing)
Raising of funds for a VSO fund or scholarship to be able to reimburse honest mistakes or a late payment situation.
 - There are occasions when due to timing or administrative errors veteran students are put in peril of losing their enrollment, housing, childcare, etc. Creation of a fund that could be administered at the discretion of the VSO to help bridge these times is a key effort in improving matriculation of our veteran student population.
- (Summer 2021 forward) UNCC travel funds to allow the SCO team to connect with other schools at professional conferences.
 - In order to continue to develop and provide leadership at both the regional as well as the national level, it is critical that the UNC Charlotte VSO continue the practice it began in 2019-2020 of not only being present at but presenting and providing leadership across various organization (SVA, CCME, NAVPA, SECOME to name a few)

Programming

The Assessment and the Resources components of this action plan are critical to the implementation of the programming growth that is needed.

- (Spring 2021-forward) Growth of the UNCC SVA Chapter
 - The community need for a strong SVA chapter as well as the opportunity that a strong chapter presents (funding, leadership, recognition, media) were emphasized.
 - A number of recommendations were provided via the external review that, in conjunction with the SVA, will attempt to be implemented
 - the power of branch-specific lapel pins and T-shirts to honor each veteran's service and to encourage professional values on campus.
 - SVA programs of service, veteran support (peer-to-peer), legislative initiatives at both the Federal and state level, and developing sustainable SVA veteran leadership.
 - importance of constantly cultivating new SVA leadership by encouraging veterans to participate in SVA National's leadership symposiums, the SVA Leadership Summit and the various SVA programs.
 - importance of UNCC veterans attending the SVA NATCON conference. It is critical that the UNCC VSO have a budget to send at least two UNCC SVA leaders (UNCC SVA president and vice-president) to NATCON.
 - getting SVA leaders to connect with the community, including veteran organizations (VFW, American Legion and Vietnam Veterans of America), which could be potential funding sources for emergency support or event support.
 - developing meaningful events that all generations of veterans can participate in (examples: UNLV Rebel Vets' "Operation Battle Born"

Ruck March to Remember event). UNCC's new memorial park will be a great future site for bringing the veteran community together.

- (Fall 2021) Veteran graduation reception
 - This opportunity to highlight both our students as well as the institutional history of serving veterans was on our team radar pre-external review but was stressed as another opportunity to build the veteran community's connection, affinity and loyalty to UNC Charlotte.
- (Fall 2022) Priority Registration
 - This is critical given the limitations on funded courses when using the GI Bill. Students using this to pay for their school do not have the option to take courses not within their degree program and thus may be required to make the choice between taking a term off, not receiving the full amount of their benefits, or having to pay for courses out of pocket)
- (Fall 2022-forward) Veteran peer-to-peer program
 - The development of this program is inline with the local and national efforts (including the campus SAMHSA campus suicide prevention grant which the director serves on the grant team) around suicide prevention. On a day-to-day basis, this will also serve to enhance the quality of life of the campus veteran student population

Work Form B – Good Practices

INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form should be completed following a review of the individual ratings of the team members. Examine the ratings of each criterion measure by the team members, and record the following in the form below:

- **Good Practices:** Item number(s) for which all participants have given a rating of 2, indicating agreement that the criterion *meets* the standard.

Part	Standards of Good Practice
1. Mission	1.1 Program and Services Mission 1.2 Mission Statement
2. Program and Services	2.1 Program and Services Goals 2.2 Program Information and Services 2.3 Program Structure and Framework 2.4 Program Design
3. Student Learning, Development, and Success	3.1 Program Contribution to Student Learning, Development, and Success 3.2 Student Learning and Development Domains and Dimensions 3.3 Assessment of Student Learning and Development
4. Assessment	4.1 Establishing a Culture of Assessment 4.2 Program Goals, Outcomes, and Objectives 4.5 Review and Interpret Findings
5. Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	5.1 Inclusive and Equitable Educational and Work Environments 5.2 Organizational Aspects of Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 5.3 Advocating for Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 5.4 Implementing Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
6. Leadership, Management, and Supervision	6.1 Leadership 6.2 Management 6.3 Supervision 6.4 Strategic Planning
7. Human Resources	7.1 Staffing and Support 7.2 Employment Practices 7.3 Personnel Training and Development 7.4 Paraprofessional Personnel
8. Collaboration and Communication	8.1 Collaboration 8.2 Communication 8.3 Procedures and Guidelines
9. Ethics, Law, and Policy	9.1 Ethical Statements 9.2 Ethical Practice 9.3 Legal Obligations and Responsibilities 9.4 Policies and Procedures

	9.5 Communication of Ethical and Legal Obligations 9.6 Addressing Harassment and Hostile Environment
10. Financial Resources	10.2 Financial Planning 10.3 Financial Management
11. Technology	11.1 Systems Management 11.2 User Engagement 11.3 Compliance and Information Security 11.4 Communication
12. Facilities and Infrastructure	12.1 Design of Facilities 12.2 Work Space 12.3 Equipment Acquisition 12.4 Facilities and Equipment Use

Work Form C –Areas for Improvement and Recommended Action

INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form should be completed following a review of the individual ratings of the team members. Examine the ratings of each criterion measure by the team members, and record the following in the form below:

- **Areas for Improvement:** Item number(s) for which all participants have given a rating of 0 or 1, indicating agreement that the criterion *does not meet or partly meets* the standard. Items rated IE for *insufficient evidence/unable to rate* should be listed here as well.
- **Recommendations:** List the items needing follow-up action for improvement and indicate what requires attention. The team or coordinator should consider including any criterion measure rated as being not met by the reviewers, as well as those with significant discrepancies that are not resolved by team discussion.

Part	Areas for Improvement: Items that do not meet or partly meet the standard (consensus ratings = 0, 1)	Recommendations for Functional Area Action:
1. Mission		
2. Program and Services	2.2 Program Information and Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMCPs assists military-connected students with transitions from military service into and through higher education. • VMCPs assists military-connected students with integration into institutional, campus, and community life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of the UNCC SVA Chapter • Veteran graduation reception • Priority Registration • veteran peer-to-peer program
3. Student Learning, Development, and Success		
4. Assessment	4.3 Assessment Plan and Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VMCPs reviews and interprets findings of assessment initiatives. • VMCPs develops a plan for data use, continuous improvement, and reassessment. • VMCPs implements an improvement. • VMCPs reviews and monitors changes that have been made based on assessment results. 4.4 Gathering Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update website to facilitate sharing of data • Develop templates of both pre and post event evaluation • Development of weekly office survey and semesterly certification survey

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VMCPS identifies priorities for assessment, including both formative and summative approaches. VMCPS employs multiple methods and measures of data collection. <p>4.6 Reporting Results and Implementing Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VMCPS uses assessment results to demonstrate learning, development, and success. VMCPS informs constituents of assessment results and how data have been used for continuous improvement. 	
5. Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion		
6. Leadership, Management, and Supervision		
7. Human Resources	<p>7.1 Staffing and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veterans and Military-Connected Programs and Services (VMCPS) identifies the level of staffing necessary to achieve its mission and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salary adjustments Hiring of a veteran outreach coordinator Hiring of another entry level SCO
8. Collaboration and Communication		
9. Ethics, Law, and Policy		
10. Financial Resources	<p>10.1 Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veterans and Military-Connected Programs and Services (VMCPS) has the funding that is necessary to accomplish its mission and goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising of funds for a VSO fund or scholarship to be able to reimburse honest mistakes or a late payment situation UNCC travel funds to allow the SCO team to connect with other schools at professional conferences. This modest cost is helpful to prevent SCO “burnout” and a chance to connect with other school SCOs
11. Technology		

12. Facilities and Infrastructure		
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Work Form D – Beginning the Action Plan

INSTRUCTIONS:

This work form is for use by the staff of the functional area being reviewed and is the first step in identifying the actions to be taken as a consequence of study results. Using the Items Requiring Attention listed in Work Form C, write a brief action plan that identifies the focus and intended outcomes of the next steps in to be taken in each area.

Part 1. Mission

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Part 2. Program and Services

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth of the UNCC SVA Chapter• Veteran graduation reception• Priority Registration• veteran peer-to-peer program |
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Part 3. Student Learning, Development, and Success

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Part 4. Assessment

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update website to facilitate sharing of data• Develop templates of both pre and post event evaluation• Development of weekly office survey and semesterly certification survey |
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Part 5. Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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Part 6. Leadership, Management, and Supervision

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Part 7. Human Resources

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salary adjustments• Hiring of a veteran outreach coordinator• Hiring of another entry level SCO |
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Part 8. Collaboration and Communication

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Part 9. Ethics, Law, and Policy

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Part 10. Financial Resources

- Raising of funds for a VSO fund or scholarship to be able to reimburse honest mistakes or a late payment situation
- UNCC travel funds to allow the SCO team to connect with other schools at professional conferences. This modest cost is helpful to prevent SCO “burnout” and a chance to connect with other school SCOs

Part 11. Technology

Part 12. Facilities and Infrastructure

Work Form E – Action Plan

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using this work form, the functional area staff will turn the summary of areas to be addressed identified by the review team (Work Form D) into a specific plan of action. After reviewing the information provided in Work Form C, functional area staff teams should describe practices in need of improvement, the actions to be taken, the individual responsible, and the timeline for achieving compliance with the standard.

Current Practice Description	Corrective Action Needed	Task Assigned To	Timeline/ Due Dates
	Invest in salary adjustments, the hiring of a veteran outreach coordinator and another entry level SCO.	Director and DSO Leadership	2021-20222 Fiscal year
	Hiring of a veteran outreach coordinator.	Director and DSO Leadership	2021-20222 Fiscal year
	Growth and establishment of a robust of the UNCC SVA Chapter.	Director	Fall 2021 (and forward)
	Veteran graduation reception	Lead Certifying Official, and Graduate assistants	Fall 2021
	Priority Registration veteran peer-to-peer program	Director	Fall 2022
	Raising of funds for a VSO fund or scholarship to be able to reimburse honest mistakes or a late payment situation.	Director in partnership with University Advancement	Spring 2021 (and forward)
	UNCC travel funds to allow the SCO team to connect with other schools at professional conferences.	Director and DSO Leadership	2021-20222 Fiscal year

	Update website to facilitate sharing of data.	Administrative Assistant	Spring 2021
	Develop templates of both pre and post event evaluation.	Graduate Assistants	
	Development of weekly office survey and semesterly certification survey.	Graduate Assistants in partnership with SARA	