



C U Y A M A C A  
• C O L L E G E •

# Annual Update Report

SIS - Veterans Services

## Increase the total number of students served at the Veterans Center. (Goal 1)

**Program Goal:** Increase the total number of students served at the Veterans Center.

**Goal Status:** Active

### Mapping

2022 - 2028 Strategic Plan: (X)

- **Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success:** Increase the total number of students served at the Veterans Center. (X)
- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Increase the total number of students served at the Veterans Center. (X)
- **Increase Equitable Access:** Increase the total number of students served at the Veterans Center. (X)
- **Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Increase the total number of students served at the Veterans Center. (X)

### Summary of Progress or Results

**Summary Date:** 11/25/2024

**Summary of Progress or Results:** Our student contact data from 2023-2024 demonstrates significant progress in student engagement. In 2022-2023, we had 361 student appointments and 952 students utilizing the Veterans Center. In 2023-2024, these numbers increased to 407 appointments and 2,144 students served. This represents nearly a twofold increase in total student contacts compared to the previous year.

**Reporting Period:** 2023 - 2024

**Action steps for this academic year.:**

Action steps:

1. Host workshops at the Veterans Center.
2. Offer counseling services at the Veterans Center 4 days a week.
3. Host social events that the Veterans Center.
4. Reestablish Student Veterans Organization.
5. Hire permanent Veterans Coordinator.
6. Expand food pantry.
7. Continue to offer free printing.
8. Continue to offer book stipend.

## Increase outreach with local military bases and other military friendly organizations. (Goal 2)

**Program Goal:** Increase outreach with local military bases and other military friendly organizations.

**Goal Status:** Active

### Mapping

2022 - 2028 Strategic Plan: (X)

- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Increase outreach with local military bases and other military friendly organizations. (X)

- **Increase Equitable Access:** Increase outreach with local military bases and other military friendly organizations. (X)

<b>Summary of Progress or Results</b>
<p><b>Summary Date:</b> 11/25/2024</p> <p><b>Summary of Progress or Results:</b> Our Veterans Center coordinator participated in 26 outreach events between January 1st and June 30th, 2024. A detailed list of these events is provided as an attachment under SAO, titled "Outreach Events June 2nd through July 30, 2024." The information in the PDF demonstrates significant progress in our outreach efforts. Our coordinator, who was hired in January 2024, worked diligently to ensure these efforts were robust. We are optimistic that next year, our outreach will be even more extensive, as she will have the opportunity to engage in outreach throughout a full academic year.</p> <p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2023 - 2024</p> <p><b>Status:</b> In Progress - will carry forward into next year</p> <p><b>Action steps for this academic year.:</b></p> <p>The Veterans Center coordinator will continue to schedule outreach events with local military bases and other military friendly agencies. Our outreach efforts would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of VA educational eligibility requirements.</li> <li>2. Inform military affiliated members about the possibility of receiving credit for AA degree or Certificates from Joint Services Military transcripts.</li> <li>3. Inform military affiliated members about Veterans Center services.</li> <li>4. Inform military affiliated members about priority registration for veterans.</li> </ol>

### Program Goal #3

**Program Goal:** Enhance student success rates among African American students by developing and implementing new strategies that better connect our students to essential support services.

**Goal Status:** Active

#### Mapping

2022 - 2028 Strategic Plan: (X)

- **Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success:** Enhance student success rates among African American students by developing and implementing new strategies that better connect our students to essential support services. (X)

- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Enhance student success rates among African American students by developing and implementing new strategies that better connect our students to essential support services. (X)
- **Increase Equitable Access:** Enhance student success rates among African American students by developing and implementing new strategies that better connect our students to essential support services. (X)
- **Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Enhance student success rates among African American students by developing and implementing new strategies that better connect our students to essential support services. (X)

<b>Summary of Progress or Results</b>
<p><b>Summary Date:</b> 12/04/2024</p> <p><b>Summary of Progress or Results:</b> New goal.</p> <p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2024 - 2025</p> <p><b>Action steps for this academic year.:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Organize departmental meetings to review and finalize the action plan.</li><li>2. Launch focused outreach initiatives to raise awareness among students about available support services, both on campus and in the community.</li><li>3. Partner with IESE to develop a student survey.</li><li>4. Analyze the results of the student survey and arrange a departmental meeting to discuss the insights.</li><li>5. Use survey data to design additional support services based on student needs.</li><li>6. Submit an application for the GCCCD Foundation mini-grant</li></ol>

## Service Area Overview and Update

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**Lead Author**

Oswaldo Torres

**Collaborator(s)**

Cinthya Barron

**Initial Collaboration Date with Service Area Team**

04/08/2024

**Dean/Manager(s)**

Agustin Orozco

**Initial Collaboration Date with Dean/Manager**

08/07/2023

**Please summarize the significant changes and achievements that have occurred in your service area since the last program review.**

**Achievement**

Our College Administrators have approved the creation of a permanent full-time Veterans Center Coordinator position. This role has been identified as necessary in the Veterans Services Program Review over the past eleven years. The outlined job duties in the staffing request, along with data on student veterans' success, underscore the importance of this position. The Veterans Center Coordinator plays a key leadership role within the student success team and is central to developing comprehensive support services for student veterans. These students rely on VA educational benefits, which require specific and guided pathways to meet the time constraints associated with those benefits. This position is responsible for managing the Veterans Center, including hiring and staffing personnel, supervising classified staff and student workers, and collaborating with the broader college community. It has been essential to maintaining and expanding the operations of the Veterans Center.

**Significant Changes**

Veterans Services faced staffing challenges during the 2023-2024 academic year when our certifying official unexpectedly took a leave of absence. This disruption had a negative impact on our student population. VA benefits, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill, provide essential educational benefits to those who have served on active duty or in the Select Reserve. The payment amount depends on the length of active duty, and these benefits can cover full tuition and fees, provide a monthly housing allowance, and offer up to \$1,000 per year for books and supplies. These benefits play a significant role in supporting student veterans, making higher education more accessible and achievable by offering crucial financial support.

Due to complications with our certification process, many students did not receive their educational benefits on time. I believe this delay contributed to a decline in our student success rates for the 2023-2024 academic year.

## Student Learning Outcome/Service Area Outcome Assessment and Student Success

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### Student Access, Learning, and Achievement

**Student Services areas collect data in many different ways. This may include the number of students, employees, or community members served, survey results, or other reports prepared by the department and external organizations. Which data was used for your service area?**

Veterans Services gathers data through SARS reports, comparison reports, and student surveys. Our department is supported by Institutional Effectiveness, Success, and Equity (IESE), which assists with assessments, data collection, research, and evaluation. These efforts are designed to identify the needs of student veterans, measure their success, evaluate the services provided, and ultimately enhance outcomes for this population. IESE plays a crucial role by providing key data, such as comparison reports between student veterans and the general student body. These reports highlight metrics like course retention, course success, persistence, and GPA, offering valuable insights into how student veterans perform relative to all students at Cuyamaca College. Additionally, we use SARS reports and student surveys to track the number of veterans served at the Veterans Center. This data helps us identify key partnerships essential for supporting student veterans' success

**Please discuss any equity gaps in access or success the data revealed.**

In last year's comprehensive program review, I presented data from comparison reports spanning 2019/2020 to 2022/2023, which showed that the success rates of our student veteran population are higher than those of the general Latinx student body. This positive trend continued into the 2023-2024 academic year. The data for our Latinx students demonstrates that their success rates remain higher compared to Latinx students in the general population.

- 2019-2020 – Success Rates

Veterans (Hispanic/Latino)

All Other Students (Hispanic/Latino)

Fall

Spring

Fall

Spring

76%

78%

70%

71%

- 2020-2021 – Success Rates

Veterans (Hispanic/Latino)

All Other Students (Hispanic/Latino)

Fall

Spring

Fall

Spring

75%

82%

67%

69%

2021-2022 – Success Rates

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Veterans (Hispanic/Latino)  
All Other Students (Hispanic/Latino)

Fall  
Spring  
Fall  
Spring  
75%  
77%  
66%  
70%

### 2022-2023 – Success Rates

Veterans (Hispanic/Latino)  
All Other Students (Hispanic/Latino)

Fall  
Spring  
Fall  
Spring  
71%  
72%  
68%  
70%

### 2023-2024 – Success Rates

Veterans (Hispanic/Latino)  
All Other Students (Hispanic/Latino)

Fall  
Spring  
Fall  
Spring  
72%  
82%  
71%  
74%

The data presented in the previous program review also highlighted a reduction in equity gaps for our African American student population from 2021 to 2023. The success rates of our African American students were higher than those of African American students in the general population.

### 2021-2022 – Success Rates

Veterans (African American)  
All Other Students (African American)

Fall  
Spring  
Fall

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Spring

73%

66%

63%

67%

2022-2023 – Success Rates

Veterans (African American)

All Other Students (African American)

Fall

Spring

Fall

Spring

76%

70%

64%

63%

However, during the 2023-2024 academic year, our student success rates dropped significantly.

2022-2023 – Success Rates

Veterans (African American)

All Other Students (African American)

Fall

Spring

Fall

Spring

59%

66%

62%

74%

**What action will the department or discipline take to address these equity gaps? If equity gaps have been reduced or eliminated, please share what the program did to achieve this. If equity gaps still exist, consider the specific steps your department will take to address equity gaps.**

Our data shows that we have made progress with our Latinx student population. We believe our improved data is related to our commitment that we have to our comprehensive support services that we offer at the Veterans Center. Veterans Services worked diligently to ensure that the unique needs from student veterans and dependents were met by coordinating with various campus services. For example, Veteran students receive priority registration as mandated by Federal policy, which requires coordination with the Office of Admissions and Records. Additionally, the Veterans Services program provides coordinates services related to academic counseling, disability accommodations, financial aid, veteran benefits information, and referrals to campus, local, state and federal resources and services. Cuyamaca College has created avenues which facilitate college access to veteran students. These support services guide students from the application to the college through completion of their educational goals. These targeted Veteran support services include: a dedicated Veterans Counselor, one-on-one application and registration assistance,



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assessment and advising sessions, veteran only walk-in counseling services, and veteran specific appointment times. Students are made aware of the available support services via email. The students receive detailed information regarding the dates and times of counseling services, appointment availability, workshops and activities provided by the Veterans Student Organization. The Veterans Services program also employs veteran work-study students through the department of veteran affairs. These veterans assist the program in a variety of tasks including: answering phones calls, organizing paperwork for student files, scheduling student appointments and front counter assistance with VA related paperwork. This strategy has been effective as veteran work-study students and veteran students can relate to one another as prior service members and now fellow college students at Cuyamaca. We will continue to ensure equitable access to our services and work toward further enhancing outcomes.

Our data also shows that we need to develop a new program goal that focuses on increasing student success rates with our African American students. While we have made significant strides in closing equity gaps within our Latinx student population, there is still more work to be done, particularly with our African American student population. Our department faced significant challenges with the certification process for VA educational benefits, which greatly impacted both our staff and students. Due to complications with the certification process, I believe this issue negatively affected our student success rates with our African American student population.

### Action Steps

1. Create program goal that focus on improving success rates with our African American students
2. Organize departmental meetings to review and finalize the action plan.
3. Launch focused outreach initiatives to raise awareness among students about available support services, both on campus and in the community.
4. Partner with IESE to develop a student survey.
5. Analyze the results of the student survey and arrange a departmental meeting to discuss the insights.
6. Use survey data to design additional support services based on student needs.
7. Submit an application for the GCCCD Foundation mini-grant.

### What has this data revealed about the progress of the program review goals you set?

We have made considerable progress toward achieving our two program goals. We successfully expanded both student contacts and outreach efforts. Data related to these goals can be found in the program goals section of the program review. As mentioned earlier, our data highlights the need for a new goal focused on enhancing student success, especially among African American students. Consequently, we developed and included this new program goal in this year's program review.

### Service Area Assessment

**Did your program complete and submit SLO/SAO assessment in the last year?**

Yes

**If you responded no above, please describe the department's plan to update SLOs/SAOs.**

N/A

**If you did not assess in the last year, please share why, including whether your program is experiencing barriers to assessment or data submission, and/or if your program would benefit from outcomes and assessment support.**

Veterans Services was unable to assess our SLO during the 2023-2024 academic year. Due to complications with our certification process, our department made the decision to prioritize resolving these issues. As a result, our entire staff had to suspend any ongoing

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special projects and significantly reduce program coordination efforts. This shift in focus was necessary to ensure that the certification process was addressed and that our student veterans received the support they needed.

**Please share any outcomes assessment projects your service area has completed in the last year and how the service area used the results for improvement.**

The Veterans Center is dedicated to fostering a campus environment that prioritizes and supports our student veterans, providing comprehensive services and connecting them with essential resources at Cuyamaca. Our SAO goal was to increase the number of students utilizing key services such as Counseling Services, Book Vouchers, and VA certification to further their educational and life objectives. By analyzing data from the 2022-2023 academic year, we identified strategies to enhance student engagement and strengthen the sense of community among our veterans. To support this, our department held monthly meetings to discuss programming initiatives aimed at building camaraderie.

Our student contact data from 2023-2024 demonstrates significant progress in student engagement. In 2022-2023, we had 361 student appointments and 952 students utilizing the Veterans Center. In 2023-2024, these numbers increased to 407 appointments and 2,144 students served. This represents nearly a twofold increase in total student contacts compared to the previous year.

## Program Goals

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### Program Goals Status

Updated progress on my previous goals & added new.

### Program Goals Mapping

Mapping for all active Program Goals complete.

## Submission

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**Program Review response is complete and ready for review.**

Yes - Response is complete and ready for review