

Associated Students, Inc. (ASI)

2019-20 Funding Proposal

Prepared by Dani Molina
Director, Veterans Resource Center
California State University, Los Angeles

February 18, 2019

Area Mission

The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) at Cal State LA is committed to enhancing the higher education access and success for our military-connected students.

The VRC meets its mission by providing programs and services that holistically support the academic, professional, and personal enrichment of prospective and current military-connected students.

The Cal State LA Veterans Resource Center (VRC) opened its doors in the Fall of 2013 because of the historic number of military-connected individuals serving in our Armed Forces. Stemming directly from the drawdown of two of the longest wars in U.S. history, Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), a record number of service members served during the Global War on Terror. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, about five million service members from the post-9/11 era will transition out of the military by the year 2020. Currently, over three million post-9/11 service members have left the military and two million more are projected to voluntarily and involuntarily separate in the coming year.

Because of the drawdown of the wars in the Middle East and the decrease in military operational needs, there is an expectation that military veterans will continue to enter higher education in numbers not seen since the end of World War II. The Cal State LA VRC was created to help those transitioning service members seamlessly enter our growing campus. The VRC has continued to serve ever more military-connected individuals – active duty, National Guard, reservists, veterans, and dependents. In fact, the latest Fall cohort in 2018 numbered well over 650 military-connected students, a historic number of individuals seeking a Cal State LA education.

In order to meet the needs of our military-connected students, the VRC offers a host of workshops, events, programs, and services to advance their success before, during, and after they arrive to our campus.

A short list of services and programs we offer include pre-admission information, education benefits certification, priority course registration, computer workstations with free printing, social space, study space, and campus and community referrals. These services are focused on retaining and graduating student veterans that call Cal State LA home. We understand the many challenges that our nation's military-connected students face when seeking to enter higher education and find meaningful employment after graduation. At the center of what we do, we strive to create a seamless transition to Cal State LA, support their retention with the right resources, and remove any barriers to degree completion. Our Center also understands the importance of finding meaningful careers that help support the current and future labor market needs. Our nation's veterans have the ability to harness their leadership, teamwork, dedication, and integrity into their academic aspirations and the workforce.

For many of our student veterans, there remains obstacles to their college retention and completion. For instance, Molina and Morse (2015¹) found that military-connected individuals, and in particular our nation's veterans, continue to face life circumstances that increase their risk of not completing college. The findings illustrated that the vast majority of military-connected undergraduates, who may otherwise possess the strengths and aspirations to persist until completion, must tend to multiple responsibilities that may pose substantial challenges to their educational pursuits. These responsibilities included delaying college enrollment, having dependents to support, working full-time while in college, and being financially independent, to name a few.

The academic and financial resources that the VRC offer is now even more important than ever. Far too many veterans take on loan debt while in college and must work to support themselves and their dependents or families. For example, the same study found that nearly one-third (31 percent) of veterans incurred loan debt as part of their financial aid packages. Supporting our campus veterans with much-needed financial aid in the form of scholarships would help increase the likelihood that student veterans will succeed and become the next great generation of leaders and innovators.

Project Abstract

Because of their monetary needs, we seek to financially support two student veterans with high financial need and educational potential. These scholarships will help support student veterans who are actively enrolled at Cal State LA and who exemplify high

¹ Molina, Dani, and Andrew Morse. 2015. *Military-Connected Undergraduates: Exploring Differences Between National Guard, Reserve, Active Duty, and Veterans in Higher Education*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

academic promise and financial need. We would like to award two student veterans with a scholarship for the 2019-20 academic year. In addition, we seek economic support resources that will help expand our Mission of offering a welcoming and inclusive space for our military-connected individuals. These resources include food and beverages for workshops held at the VRC and other related goods. Moreover, we are requesting financial support for the following annual programs: Veterans Day Ceremony, Veterans and Dependents Thanksgiving Luncheon, Women Veterans Appreciation Luncheon, Veterans Connection Experience, and Veterans and Dependents Graduation Dinner.

Program/Service Description	Amount
<p>Veterans Day Ceremony</p> <p>Our Veterans Day Ceremony was established to reflect on the service and sacrifices our military veterans have made for our communities and nation. This request will cover the cost to hold a reception after the Veterans Day Ceremony annually held in the University-Student Union Plaza. This is the Veterans Resource Center’s keynote event of the year and has been recognized in the community as one of the best celebrations recognizing military veterans in the region. Additionally, the VRC works with the U.S. Department of Defense to host a military flyover and to bring greater awareness of this misunderstood population.</p>	<p>\$1,500</p>
<p>Veterans and Dependents Thanksgiving Social</p> <p>To give recognition and appreciation to military-connected students and their families for their service and sacrifices.</p>	<p>\$800</p>
<p>Women Veterans Appreciation Luncheon</p> <p>This program is designed to recognize women who have served our nation. There are more than two million women veterans in the U.S., yet their sacrifices are often overlooked. The Veterans Resource Center (VRC) and Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) would like to honor our sisters in arms by hosting our annual appreciation luncheon during national women's month.</p>	<p>\$1,500</p>
<p>Veterans Connection Experience</p> <p>The VRC hosts an annual Veterans Connection Experience, which will provide prospective and admitted military-connected students (veterans, dependents, National Guard, reservist, and active duty) with information about key services and support so that they meet their educational goals. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet with Cal State LA academic representatives from all of our colleges to gain insight on their majors and resources. The ultimate goal of this foundational initiative is to expose students to a host of resources and transitional information that will be available at Cal State LA. The VRC will have admission and outreach representatives provide a brief presentation and will provide a campus tour for students that are interested in learning more about Cal State LA’s history and resources.</p>	<p>\$1,200</p>
<p>Veterans and Dependents Graduation Dinner</p> <p>This event is dedicated to celebrating the graduation of all campus military-connected students. The program is designed to commend these students for their hard work and dedication that went into earning their education at Cal State LA.</p>	<p>\$5,000</p>

Scholarship Program Two actively enrolled student veterans with high academic promise and financial need. There remains significant financial needs among this population. This initiative is designed to reduce the financial stress of those military-connected students with remaining financial need and excellence in their academics.	\$2,000
VRC Direct Support To help expand our mission of offering a welcoming and inclusive space for our military-connected individuals and for other services needed to ensure their college retention and ultimate graduation.	\$2,000
Total	\$14,000

Objectives and/or Learning Outcomes

We hope ASI will join us with the financial support of \$14,000, which will aid the Mission of the Veterans Resource Center and will, most importantly, ensure that our military-connected students have an opportunity to focus on their academic pursuits and make immediate contributions to our communities in the Los Angeles area and across the globe. The objective of providing these scholarship monies is to ensure that we retain and ultimately graduate the student veterans who receive these funds.

Marketing and Outreach Plan

Our marketing and outreach plan is closely tied to the AcademicWorks common application cycle for those receiving scholarships. We plan to promote this scholarship opportunity in the Spring 2020 semester over email and social media to encourage student veterans to apply. In addition, the VRC holds the list of current military-connected students to promote all events supported by ASI.

Financial Plan and Expense Detail

ASI and the Financial Aid Office are notified of selected candidates over email through the Financial Aid Office Scholarship Awarding Form. Included in the form is the students' full name, CIN, award amount and period, and total amount of award (\$1,000/student). All room reservations, BEOs, Hospitality Requests, and other expense details will be archived and provided to ASI at the end of each reporting cycle. Unused funds will be returned to ASI.

Program Evaluation and Quality Control Mechanism

Each awardee is emailed a congratulatory letter from the VRC Director noting their award and encouraging them to thank ASI for the funding. During the Summer of 2020, we plan to review the academic standing and enrollment profile of awardees to ensure that they continue to maintain high academic standards and that they are on track to graduate. Student veterans who are not on track to graduate or who do not persist at Cal

State LA will be advised on resources and support available to ensure that they meet their educational goals. Furthermore, the VRC will collect sign-in sheets to measure attendance at each supported event. Evaluation response will also be shared with ASI at the end of the reporting cycle.

Abbreviated Spring 2019 ASI Funds Expenditure Report

The VRC is on track to identify student veterans who will receive scholarships. We have received the Scholarship Approach for Fall 2019, which includes Key Guidelines, Scholarship Liaisons, and Timeline. Once scholarship recipients are selected, the authorization form will be submitted to the Scholarship Coordinator before June 3, 2019 identifying student veterans who will receive a scholarship.