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Report to the ASI Finance Committee

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Impact on Student Population

For many of our student veterans, there remains obstacles to their college retention and completion. For instance, a nationally recognized report by the Director of the VRC at Cal State LA (Molina & 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. Our department used \$1,700 for services and programs that helped expand our mission of offering a welcoming and inclusive space for our military-connected individuals. As a result, students in general and student veterans visited the VRC to learn about military service and to engage with campus military-connected students to have a better understanding of their experiences post-military service. Without this direct support from ASI, many of our student veterans would find it difficult to receive nutritional support from other locations across campus. In fiscal year 2016-17, the VRC used \$1,698.84 of \$1,700 awarded for Service Support functions. This included offering water, coffee, and breakroom supplies (i.e., cups, plates, filters stirrers, etc.). We had a remaining balance of \$1.16 for the fiscal year.

Item Description	Cost	Provider
31 Cases of Water	\$271.25	Cal State LA
Services Supplies	\$1,427.59	Staples
Total	\$1,698.84	

Successes and Challenges

The Service Support award from ASI of \$1,700 had a direct and positive impact on the retention and graduation of our campus military-connected students. Our ability to create an inviting and supportive space for our student veterans and dependents are illustrated daily. For instance, the VRC Director regularly receives positive comments from veterans stating that if it were not for the free water, coffee, and food from the VRC they would not have achieved their educational goals. This support goes a long way to support the success of campus military-connected students. Concerning the challenges experienced, the VRC initially applied for \$10,000 for student veteran scholarships but was unable to identify scholarship recipients because the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships did not receive the funding in time.

Recommendations

The VRC recommends steady support for our campus student veterans and other military-connected students by awarding the department additional Service Support funds. The VRC will be serving a larger number of military-connected students in academic year 2017-18. As a result, additional resources from ASI will be pivotal to succeed in fostering a welcoming and supportive space for campus student veterans and dependents.

Future Plans

The VRC would like to continue to nurture its partnership with ASI in support of student veterans. Next academic year, we expect an even larger number of military-connected students will enroll. Our department will need external support to continue its mission of enhancing the higher education access and success for our nation's military-connected individuals. Our goal is to develop new initiatives with ASI concerning tutoring support services and leadership workshops, which will help develop the academic and mentorship profile of our campus military-connected students.