



Part I: Follow-up Assessment Report Template

Date of Follow-up Report Submission: November 2, 2020

Name of Department / Unit: Adult, Veteran, and Commuter Student Affairs

Name of Contact Person: James Stewart

Name of Person(s) Completing Follow-up Report: James Stewart

I. Follow-Up on Last Year's Assessment Report Recommendations

The assessment project from 2018-2019 for AVCSA was a benchmarking project on coaching programs, specifically those targeting special or select populations. The goal was to gain information to aid refinement of the veteran coaching program launched in 2018 and to share for other peer advising and coaching programs within the Division.

The wide variety of information, types of programs, execution, and measurement made tangible recommendations to act on difficult. However, the information did result in changes in AVCSA's program. A list of changes building on recommendations from that assessment project follows:

- The program was renamed Veteran Peer Advisors to better reflect the blend of coaching and mentoring techniques used.
- The assessment project recommended refining the purpose of the program. Benchmarked programs with very specific purpose and not attempting to be everything had better reported success metrics. The AVCSA Veteran Peer Advisor program explicitly states assisting in transition for new students and retention of students as the two goals.
- Marketing, specifically how one shares the purpose with potential students, was redesigned and evaluated. Greater emphasis is placed on direct outreach to students to participate in the program.
- Improve data tracking for better assessment and continuous improvement was a final recommendation. This has occurred and been valuable. The role in BlueStar has been refined with appointments with common appointment types being able to easily be accessed. In addition, IRMA constructed a dashboard for all types of Peer Support programs which includes the Veteran Peer Advisors. This allows easy access to numbers but also the ability to see times/dates of appointment for patterns, type of issue, and more.

The program instituted those changes throughout 2019-2020 and continues to see growth, especially as operations have moved entirely remote.

As of November 2, 2020, the program has seen 91 unique students for Fall Quarter 2020 and 59 students for the academic year 2019-2020. This is likely a combination resulting from the improvements listed above and the attractiveness of a connection to a peer in a virtual environment.

Finally, the report and benchmarking data from the assessment project was also shared with NSFE for information with their coaching program.



Part II: Annual Assessment Report Template: Alternative Reflection

Academic Year: 2019-2020

Date of Report Submission: November 2, 2020

Name of Department / Unit: Adult ,Veteran and Commuter Student Affairs

Name of Contact Person: James Stewart

Name of Person(s) completing report or contributing to the project: Megan Giedraitis

I. Reflection on Student-facing Program-areas

Program Area: Reducing Barriers for At-Risk Students

The programming, services, and activities that reduce barriers to retain students consist of intentional, targeted interventions that attempt to provide specific resources, coaching, and tracking to students in need of assistance. These programs and interventions can cover areas beyond academics to holistic needs of students. This program area relates to student support core function within the division.

With a transition to online/remote learning, the importance of reducing barriers became even more paramount. Luckily, the division and campus partners had been working on the Academic Continuity and Engagement ACE initiative which was ready to implement several strategies to mitigate barriers, and new covid barriers, for students.

The efforts to reduce barriers involved using data from predictive analytics and D2L usage to communicate to students resources and assistance. This involved several distinct communications such as tips for online learning for students who had never had an online class, D2L tips and resources, and a midterm emoji snap poll. The midterm emoji poll solicited comments from students which allowed staff to follow-up with advice and resources.

The strengths which came into evidence quickly involved already having a plan in place. Because of ACE, staff had already met in a roadshow with all college advising offices and most student support offices. In addition, the software and systems were available to have the data to act on for student interventions. Finally, the necessary collaborations had already existing groundwork done to quickly execute.

The challenges involved measurement and the speed of the effort. Measurement is especially tough in times of covid, but the administration rightfully wants to know the impact of such efforts. Comparison is difficult in times of an unprecedented pandemic with all students remote. Another challenge is capacity.

The efforts started in Spring have only continued in summer and fall quarters. The Fall efforts involve the overall proactive and reactive communications which additional direct outreach for interventions coordinated through the ACE efforts.

Program Area: Executing Military Benefits

As DePaul's School Certifying Officials, AVCSA has mandated responsibilities which include reporting of classes, zip codes and locations, withdrawals, grades, and billing. This directly impacts student support areas as this is financial and important transactional items for each military connected student.

We have learned a lot about the execution of military education benefits during this unprecedented time as it relates to student support. For example, with the proper software systems set up and in place, we learned that most of the military education benefits can be managed and certified remotely, without needing to be physically on campus. This has proven to help our student support efforts by spending less time worrying about the barriers of not being able to work remotely on certifications. We can now focus sufficient time on supporting our students during this unprecedented time by knowing that we are still maintaining certification guidelines and regulations from home.

Because military benefits are complicated, an important aspect was quickly going online with multiple options for students and incoming students to contact our office. The office launched the very first week of being remote a virtual office, but in addition, got online with Jabber for phone support and added a live chat function.

We were able to improve communication with our students about specifically different ways that COVID-19 has impacted their veterans education benefits, which has helped them focus more on engagement for the quarter in not just their classes, but virtually with other areas. Military connected students were very concerned about the impact of moving to remote work because traditionally they receive less housing allowance when enrolled entirely online. Congress passed legislation in March which rectified this until December; however, this required communication to students and new ways of processing information internally for reporting purposes. For instance, we worked to keep information on the legislation updated on the Covid-19 FAQ Student page in addition to emails and updates directly to military connected students.

The largest challenge in this program area is the manual nature of many DePaul processes and VA processes, which exist regardless of being remote during covid or not. The work conducted on military benefits involves data from a number of queries from the Registrar, Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and more. Unfortunately, many of these processes and queries do not sync and dynamically speak to one another. This requires manual processing and increases the chance for error. Continued work with Information Services on methods to automate the DePaul gathering of data to report is essential.