

## **Executive Summary and Action Plan**

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

### The Self-Assessment Process

#### SUMMARY OF PROCESS

The first step in the process was to review the criteria for the Veterans and Military Programs and Services (VMPS). Once the director had a working knowledge of the information being requested in the criteria, the next step was to select a committee.

Once the committee was selected, the director set up a timeline that was used to keep the process moving in a streamlined manner. The committee was asked to review the criteria over the course of several months. Typically, the committee would have 3-5 criterion measures to review at a time. Ample time was provided to allow for a thorough review and feedback.

Upon completion of all criterion measures being reviewed, the director began the process of compiling the ratings of all committee members. The compiling of this data involved highlighting any discrepancies, strengths, or “needed improvement” suggestions that resulted in the overall ratings.

Once the final results of the ratings were compiled, the director reported back to the committee on the overall findings as well the suggested items to be addressed within the department.

#### WHO WAS FACILITATOR AND ON REVIEW COMMITTEE (NO MORE THAN 1 PAGE)

- Nahum Kisner-Facilitator  
*Director of College Opportunity and Student Outreach*
- Leslie Rodriguez-Reviewer  
*Veteran Services Coordinator*
- Timothy Huggins-Reviewer  
*CHAMP Navigator*
- Gustavo Rivas-Reviewer  
*Call Center Manager*
- Christine Smith Olsey-Reviewer  
*Educational Case Manager*

## **Executive Summary and Action Plan**

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

### Component Areas Overview

#### Part 1: Mission

“The mission of Veteran Services at CCD is to provide a welcoming environment to the men and women who served our country in the US Armed Forces. CCD Veteran Services office is committed to serving all veterans and their dependants assisting them in their transition from the military to college. The Veteran Services Office assists in the following areas:

- Admissions Process
- Understanding their educational benefits
- Assisting with applying for VA Educational Benefits
- Providing internal and external referral resources which include, but not limited to:  
Academic/tutorial, housing, emergency funding, opportunities for student engagement

CCD Veteran Services supports the CCD Mission by providing access to education via, assisting Veterans in the enrollment process. CCD Veteran Services provides a single point of contact for incoming student Veterans. This allows the enrollment process to be streamlined for the student Veterans.

#### Part 2: Program

The Veterans and Military Program and Service (VMPS) assists student veterans, military service members, and their families by working on their behalf with all major departments within the institution include; Admissions, Orientation, Financial Aid, advising and tutoring centers. Veteran Services staff provides an intake and follow up with each student.

The VMPS program at CCD follows in accordance with the Department of Veteran Affairs Principles of Excellence. The Principles of Excellence (POE) is a demonstration of compliance and Executive order by the President of the United States (Established April 27, 2012).

The Community College of Denver signed this document as a demonstration and commitment to compliance to our Student Veterans. The VMPS program at CCD uses the POE as a guiding tool and reference in building a strong VMPS program.

#### Part 3: Organization and Leadership

The Veterans and Military Program and Service (VMPS) leaders are knowledgeable about and responsive to the needs and experiences of student veterans, military service members, and their family members. In order to determine the needs of CCD Veterans, the VMPS staff at CCD sent a Student Veteran Needs assessment back in 2013 via Survey Monkey. The intent behind

## Executive Summary and Action Plan

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

the survey was to evaluate how student Veterans felt on our campus as well get a baseline of their needs. Some highlights of the results are indicated below:

- 77% of participants "strongly agreed" they feel welcome on the Auraria Campus
- 77% of participants "strongly agreed" they feel welcome on the CCD Campus
- 55% of participants "strongly agreed" they feel comfortable in the classroom
- 77% of participants "strongly agreed" that the overall attitude of staff towards Veterans is positive
- 64% of participants "strongly agreed" they feel comfortable identifying themselves as a Veteran while, 22% only "agreed." Less than 5% of participants indicated they disagreed.

CCD VMPS continually looks at creating programs or events that are sustainable. One of the practices the VMPS program intends to create more sustainability around is the follow up phone calls/mentoring of new students. Currently the VMPS program calls new students 2-3 weeks into the beginning of each semester as a follow up call/courtesy call. The VMPS staff identifies him or herself and notifies the student the reason for their call, which is a courtesy call/ "check in" and to see if the student has any additional needs. The VMPS office is still looking at additional ways to ensure students feel connected and welcome to the college. Some additional ways the VMPS office is looking at connecting with all students is via emails with specific messages throughout the year. These messages can range from academic tutoring, job openings or other resources specifically targeted to Veterans. CCD VMPS office needs to create a timeline of when these types of messages should be sent out throughout the year.

### Part 4: Human Resources

Each position with CCD has a minimum qualification requirement and a preferred educational requirement. When an employee is being considered for a position he or she is typically given a higher rating on the interview matrix if he or she has the preferred educational requirement. Educational requirements for each position within CCD are determined by the scope of the required duties.

The CCD Department of Human Resources has clear procedures in place for full-time staff selection, training, and evaluation. The main requirements are that positions have written job descriptions, be posted, have a committee reviewed and scored matrix, interviews, and selection. Final hires are contingent upon successful background checks. State Board Policies and System President's Policies can also be found at the Colorado Community College System website <https://www.cccs.edu/>

In regard to evaluation, CCD Human Resources has a Performance Management process. The main concept is that employees and supervisors work together to set up percentages and goals related to the employee's job description.

## Executive Summary and Action Plan

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

### Part 5: Ethics

CCD VMPS Office is guided by The Department of Veteran Affairs Principles of Excellence, FERPA, Board/System Policies, CCCS and State Ethics. Furthermore, staff member confidentiality and privacy issues are managed via ad hearing to FERPA. The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require constant updates to training by and referrals of any questions to the Registrar. In 3.1.18, I discussed how all CCD employees go through an extensive training in relevant Federal, State, and local laws including Federal laws regarding Family/Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA). Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of records and communications is not just a legal requirement but an ethical one.

The Department of Veteran Affairs, Principles of Excellence, as well as the above state and federal agencies help guide decision making when confronted with ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interests. In addition to the VA Principles of Excellence, CCD VMPS staff members must subscribe to CCCS and State Ethics practices. CCD Human Resources ELMO trainings also play a large role in training and updating staff on ethical conduct and policies.

### Part 6: Law, Policy and Governance

Legal advice is available to CCD VMPS staff members from the Colorado Community College System Office Legal Council as mediated through the CCD Director of Human Services.

Staff members are informed about internal and external governance through various internal and external departments either via meetings, or email communication some internal and external offices include but not limited to the following:

- CCD Human Resources
- Office of Veteran Affairs-Regional Office, *Lakewood, Colorado*
- CCD internal departments (Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Bursars Office, Office of Academic Advising)

### Part 7: Diversity, Equity and Access

The CCD VMPS office CCD VMPS works with Veteran Leader Corp on the Auraria Campus, in effort to communicate to our student's opportunities for them to become involved in volunteer activities that focus on helping others with respect to social justice.

In 2012 CCD VMPS office added an online format to where Student Veterans could submit their required enrollment certification paperwork (VA Enrollment Form and Notice of Student Responsibility). By having these forms available online, it allows for an additional convenience factor for the student so he

## Executive Summary and Action Plan

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

or she does not have to physically come to our office to submit paperwork. All required documents can be sent via email, fax, or an online format.

The VMPS does not discriminate on the basis of ability; age; cultural identity; ethnicity; family educational history; gender identity and expression; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws

### Part 8: Institutional and External Relations

The CCD VMPS reaches out to internal and external populations to establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services.

CCD VMPS reaches out with several various offices throughout the year including but not limited to

- Academic Advising
- Educational Opportunity Center
- Accessibility Center
- Admissions, Records and Registration
- Financial Aid
- Student Support Services

An example of our office maintaining our relationships with our internal departments at CCD are via various trainings we offer here on campus. In the Fall of 2014 CCD VMPS offered a webinar from the company "Diverse Webinar." The webinar was entitled "*Student Veteran College and Retention and Success: The University of Texas an Austin Collaborative Model.*" Our office invited the above departments to come learn about a retention model that has worked for student Veterans. The above offices were invited and attended. It is through these types of workshops that dialogue commences over what our office and our college as a whole do to retain our student Veterans.

CCD VMPS office regularly connects with several local external agencies in effort to gain a working knowledge of the external resources that are available to student Veterans. An example of this is our relationship with Veterans Upward Bound. <https://www.msudenver.edu/vub/>

Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) is "derived from the US Department of Education Federal TRIO Programs, which were created through the Higher Education Act of 1965." The purpose of the Metro Veteran Upward Bound program:

*"The primary mission of the VUB Program is to provide eligible military veterans with academic skills refresher training through a core curriculum of subjects that prepares them to succeed at the postsecondary educational level. VUB also provides participants a unique pre-collegiate experience that is designed to remove apprehensions that many veterans, as non-traditional students, may have about entering postsecondary education. As a supplement to the core curriculum, participants are also informed of various support services that are available to all students on nearly every college campus.*

## **Executive Summary and Action Plan**

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

*Upon their successful completion of the VUB Program, veteran participants are not only familiar with the services and resources that would be available to them as students, but more importantly they possess a renewed confidence in their academic abilities. A vital asset that is necessary for success in postsecondary education."*

CCD utilizes this organization for those Veteran students that need more preparatory work prior to taking the required Accuplacer assessment test. A student is referred to the VUB usually once a student has taken the Accuplacer assessment. Students will discuss with the CCD Veteran staff about their scores and it is at that point our staff informs the student of this service. Our office provides a courtesy call to the VUB staff informing them of any interested student Veteran.

### Part 9: Financial Resources

The Veterans and Military Program and Service (VMPS) have adequate funding to accomplish its mission and goals. CCD VMPS receives its budget or funding primarily through Annual Reporting Fees. The annual reporting fee is in lieu of any other compensation or reimbursement for reports or certifications that a school is required to submit to the VA by law or regulation. The annual reporting fee varies every year. The variability in funding is due to the number of students we have each year. CCD VMPS office receives \$7.00 per student that is using benefits during the calendar year. Therefore, our budget may go up or down depending on the increase or decrease of student Veterans attending CCD. For the most part CCD VMPS office has been able to provide support for student

The majority of the operating budget goes to funding professional development training for the CCD VMPS staff (See Criterion 9.2.1). The remaining funds may go to Tri-Institutional events that support Veterans

### Part 10: Technology

The VMPS uses current technology to provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and designated clients.

Yes, CCD VMPS office is able to function efficiently with its current technology. Our office, requests the support of the CCD Student Information Specialist to provide reports of various aspects of our students, most specifically the number of Veterans each semester using VA Benefits. We also work with CCD Institutional research to more in depth statistics and information about our student Veterans. This may include percentages, or numbers that revolve around graduation, retention, GPA.

The CCD VMPS Office uses the Confluence Building "Cyber Center" in the event a student needs to complete paperwork which is required for enrollment to the college or for enrollment certification purposes for the VA. The Cyber Center does comply with ADA regulations. The Cyber Center is staffed by the Admissions, Records and Registration Office, not by CCD VMPS office. In the event a student Veteran needs our assistance we are always happy to help.

## **Executive Summary and Action Plan**

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

### **Part 11: Facilities and Equipment**

CCD Fiscal/Facilities team is responsible for the facilities. CCD IT inventories technological hardware used by CCD hardware. As for equipment, this is done on an as needed basis.

In the event a student veteran needs to discuss information that is deemed as a “delicate matter” and require a less public space to explain his or her situation. As of right now, the Veteran’s Coordinator must meet with students in the Cyber Center as this employee does not have their own office. This can be very difficult as the information shared can be many times for personal.

Another downside or inadequacy of our current set up is the lack of signage identifying where our office is located. We have asked CCD Facilities about having some additional signage that allows student Veterans to be referred to us more quickly however; we have not had very much success with getting more signage.

### **Part 12: Assessment and Evaluation**

CCD Veteran Services is in the process of developing its assessment protocols for learning/development outcomes. One method may be to work with CCD Institutional Research to develop a Survey via Survey Monkey to determine what resources students are using as well as obtaining information from students of how well our staff helped the Veterans understand applying for VA benefits.

In regard to employee assessment and evaluation, the director meets formally with employees for a mid-year and end-of-the year performance evaluations.

### Judgment of Performance

#### **IDENTIFY AREAS OF STRENGTH:**

- Program
- Law, Policy and Governance
- Human Resources

#### **IDENTIFY AREAS OF MEETS STANDARDS:**

- Mission
- Ethics
- Diversity, Equity, and Access
- Institutional and External Relations
- Financial Resources

## Executive Summary and Action Plan

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment  
Veterans Services at Community College of Denver  
May 2015

- Technology
- Facilities and Equipment
- Assessment and Evaluation

### IDENTIFY AREAS OF WEAKNESS NEED IMPROVEMENT

- Development of Student Learning Outcomes with appropriate assessment measures
- Employing direct and indirect evaluation and qualitative and quantitative

FILL IN NUMBER CORRELATING TO JUDGEMENT AND FILL IN RATING (STRENGTH, MEETS, ETC).

CAS Component Area	Judgment	Rating
Part 1: Mission	3.7	meets
Part 2: Program	4.3	Strength
Part 3: Organization and Leadership	3.6	Meets
Part 4: Human Resources	4.8	Strength
Part 5: Ethics	3.7	Meets
Part 6: Law, Policy and Governance	4.1	Strength
Part 7: Diversity, Equity and Access	3.7	Meets
Part 8: Institutional and External Relations	3.7	Meets
Part 9: Financial Resources	3.75	Meets
Part 10: Technology	3.8	Meets
Part 11: Facilities and Equipment	3.6	Meets
Part 12: Assessment and Evaluation	3.3	Meets

### Prioritized Action Plan

1. FIRST ACTION ITEM-DESCRIBE ACTION PLAN, BULLET MAIN POINTS, WHO WILL COMPLETE, AND DEADLINE/DATE.
  - Student Learning and Development Outcomes-The Director of COSO will complete research on Student Learning Outcomes and develop research tools to measure them by June 2016
2. SECOND ACTION ITEM
  - Development of qualitative and quantitative measures to track collaborations and link specific collaborations to student learning outcomes by June 2016 (Director of COSO will complete)
3. ETC. IF YOU HAVE MORE ACTION ITEMS