

Annual Report
SJSU Veterans Advisory Committee
Academic Year: 2016-2017
Annabel Prins, PhD
Faculty Fellow: Military and Veteran Student Services (MVSS)

Mission and History of the VAC

The mission of the Veterans Advisory Committee (VAC) is to support military and veteran students (MVS), as well as their dependents and spouses, by facilitating and promoting their academic and psychosocial success on campus. First established as a Presidential Task Force in 2009, the VAC has been a standing committee within the Division of Student Affairs since 2011. The VAC was instrumental in developing the Office of Military and Veteran Student Services, and more recently, the opening of the Veterans Resource Center (VRC). With the hiring of a MVS director and the opening of the VRC, the VAC has changed its organizational structure and expanded its mission to include support of the VRC. The VAC is now co-chaired by a “Faculty Fellow” (Annabel Prins) and the MVSS Director (Maggie Morales), under the supervision of the AVP of Student Services (Romando Nash). The VAC meets on a monthly basis for 60 to 90 minutes, and many members participate in various campus and community events that support MVS at SJSU.

VAC Membership

We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of individuals supporting MVS on campus. Some of us have been around since its inception, others are relatively new to the committee. A few committee members were unable to participate in our monthly meetings, but remain active in serving the SJSU community. Below is a list of our current members, their title and role in the VAC.



Annabel Prins, Professor of Psychology and Director of VA VITAL program (2011-2016); co-chair of VAC (2015-present)/VAC member (2010-present); faculty mentor, scholarship and research subcommittees

Maggie Morales, Director, Veterans Resource Center; co-chair of VAC (2015-present)/VAC Member 2014-present; scholarship and outreach/education subcommittees

Jason Bentley, President, Veteran Student Organization; VAC member (2016-present); VSO subcommittee

Michele Bolton, Emeritus Professor of Business; VAC member (2011 – present); faculty mentor and fundraising subcommittees

Richard Francisco, Psychologist, Counseling and Psychological Services; VAC member (2010-present); outreach/education subcommittee

Patrick Grandsaert, Assistant Professor of Aerospace Operations and Flight Commander, ROTC; VAC member (2015-present); scholarship subcommittee

Oona Hatton, Assistant Professor, Communication Studies; VAC member (2016-present); scholarship subcommittee

Elena Klaw, Professor of Psychology and Director, Veterans Embracing Transition (VET) program; VAC member 2010-present (VAC Chair, 2013-2015); Outreach/education, scholarship and research subcommittees

Emily Lane, Director of Development, Student Success Programs; VAC member (2016-present); fundraising subcommittee

Ariadna Manzo, President, Associated Students; VAC member (2016-present); scholarship subcommittee

Cindy Marota, Director, Accessible Education Center; VAC Member (2013-present)

Romando Nash, Associate Vice President for Student Services; VAC member (2013-present)

Wendy Ng, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies; VAC member (2015-present); policy subcommittee

Casey O'Toole, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Student Health Center; VAC member (2015-present); outreach/education subcommittee

Richard Saroyan, Career Consultant/Employment Specialist, Career Center; VAC member (2014-present); outreach/education and scholarship subcommittee

Marion Yao, University Registrar; VAC member (2012-present); data management and policy subcommittee

Marco Ybarra, Certifying Official, Veterans Resource Center; VAC member (2012-present); data management and VSO subcommittees.

VAC Goals for 2016-2017

1. Support scholarship opportunities for MVS and review submitted applications
2. Support and expand the faculty mentorship program for MVS
3. Support and provide educational outreach to faculty, staff, and non-MVS students
4. Support and participate in VRC and VSO events

VAC accomplishments for 2016-2017

Fundraising Subcommittee

This is a new subcommittee spearheaded by Emily Lane and Michele Bolton. Through their guidance, additional funding and educational opportunities were made available to MVS at SJSU. More specifically, Ms. Lane participated in numerous alumni fundraising events and specifically reached out to alumni veterans. Ms. Lane was instrumental in securing additional scholarships for the VRC through the Koret Foundation. Dr. Bolton continues to support student veterans through her ExecutiveEdge scholarships. She is also supporting the Career Readiness Pilot Program scheduled to begin Fall 2017. Approximately 8-10 military and veteran students will participate in this program for the 2017-2018 year.

Scholarships Subcommittee

Maggie Morales is chair of the scholarship subcommittee. This year, the scholarship subcommittee reviewed close to 60 scholarship applications (n=58). This represents a significant increase from the 2015-2016 school year (n=7). Each application is reviewed by three VAC members who submit their ratings through Academic Works. Both the number and quality of applications have increased with outreach in the VRC. Especially effective has been the use of peer-support to help military and veteran students' complete applications. Current scholarship are set at \$1,000 per student. A description of each scholarship is provided below:

- *Janet and Mark Farabough Scholarship*: 2 scholarships for undergraduate or graduate MV students studying business, education, science, math or engineering.
- *Jose A. Santiago Memorial Scholarship*: 5 scholarships for any MV student at SJSU
- *Koret Foundation Scholarship*: 25 scholarships for any MV student at SJSU
- *Association of Silicon Valley Brokers Veteran Scholarship*: 5 scholarships for any MV student at SJSU
- *ExecutiveEdge of Silicon Valley Scholarship*: 3 scholarships for any MV student at SJSU

Faculty Mentor Program Subcommittee

Michele Bolton and Annabel Prins co-chair the faculty mentorship program. This year, a total of 14 students requested faculty mentors and 9 were assigned a faculty mentor (the other 5 did not respond to follow-ups emails). In addition to Drs. Bolton and Prins, faculty mentorship was provided by three other faculty members. Mentorship varied from single informational meetings, to regularly scheduled meetings, to enrollment in independent studies or fieldwork experiences. An end of the year evaluation was completed by 6 students, all of whom reported satisfaction with their experience. Some comments from students include:

- *The faculty program has helped in a number of ways, having the support from a faculty member has helped me remain engaged and motivated in school. I feel very comfortable asking my mentor questions (academic, professional, and personal). I believe that having a mentor has helped make me more accountable for my actions both professionally and academically, which I am thankful for because I feel like I have someone in my corner who is genuinely interested in my successes as I am.*
- *I felt the relationship went well. What I enjoyed about it was the immediate feedback from the conversations we were having. The one-on-one conversations were enjoyable where I was asked questions that made me think and it seemed that my mentor was learning from my responses as well.*
- *The quality of information, the guidance, and the efforts of the mentor to communicate as much as possible with me was great, especially because this was my first semester at SJSU. Although time can sometimes be a problem, this was not a problem when setting up meetings with the mentor. She was always available either by email, phone, or in person.*

Faculty, Staff and non-MV Student Training Subcommittee

Following the closure of the VA VITAL program and the departure of Damian Bramlett (VITAL coordinator) in October, 2016, Richard Francisco became the chair of this committee. Annual training for CAPS and health center staff will resume Fall 2017. Mr. Bramlett provided two trainings before his departure. He also narrated an online course on student veterans that is available to the public for free (<https://psycharmor.org/courses/va-campus-toolkit/>).

Elena Klaw continues to provide training on MVS through her Vet Connect program. In Fall 2016, Dr. Klaw offered her Psy190 course entitled, *Warriors at Home: Veterans and the Transition to College and the Civilian World*. This course incorporates peer educators who also provide workshops to the SJSU community. For example, one peer educator provided a workshop on combat-related PTSD; he also participated in a panel on veteran experiences.

Database Development and Tracking Subcommittee

Marco Ybarra is the chair of the Database Development and Tracking committee. Along with Ms. Morales and Ms. Yao, he is working to bring the Veterans Peoplesoft Module to SJSU. The importance of this software is recognized by the VAC. Indeed, the development of a tracking system is one of President Obama's "8 keys to success" on campus. A tracking system is also recommended by the Student Veterans of America (<http://studentveterans.org/media-news/176-sva-responds-to-president-obama>).

SJSU policy/implementation Subcommittee

Wendy Ng is the chair of this subcommittee. This year, Dr. Ng provided updates on "priority registration" for MVS. More specifically, Dr. Ng reported that priority registration is getting

“crowded” because of policies related to the California Promise, honor’s participation, and graduating senior status.

Dr. Ng also reviewed options for how MVS can obtain upper-level course credit for their participation in the Fall 2017 Career Readiness Pilot Program. Because participants will have different majors, one option is to sign-up for an UG180 (Independent Studies) course. If participants go on to do a placement or fieldwork, this could be covered under UG186 (Fieldwork).

VSO Subcommittee

This year the president of the VSO was Jason Bentley. Marco Ybarra and Maggie Morales provided direct support and advising to the VSO. Drs. Klaw and Roth are designated faculty advisors. With the support of the VRC, the VSO provided several social events for MVS (e.g., surfing, paintball, football) as well as career focused opportunities (e.g., meetings with Lockheed Martin, Apple, Google). The VRC also provided work study opportunities for veterans, many of whom were active in the VSO as peer support specialists. As previously noted, one valued peer support service was assistance in preparing scholarship applications. Participation in VSO events varied from 4 to 16 participants.

Research/Grants Subcommittee

Several members of the VAC have received internal or external funding to support research or scholarly activity on MVS. In 2016-2017, Dr. Prins completed a final report on her 4-year VA VITAL program, and presented the results of her Moving Forward research project at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. Dr. Klaw received a course release from the College of Social Sciences to support her research, and Lockheed Martin continued to provide stipends for her peer educators. Although not an active member of the VAC at this time, Dr. Jonathan Roth continues to direct the Burdick Military History Project and to publish the Spartan Salute.

Future Directions

The VAC would like to propose the following goals for the 2017-2018 academic year.

1. Continue to support the “one-stop” VRC by providing on-site weekly services from VAC members in CAPS, the Career Center, and the faculty mentorship program.
2. Continue to review applications for MVS scholarships. Although the composition of the review committee may vary, the faculty fellow will always serve as the final reviewer.
3. Expand the student veteran faculty mentorship program through collaboration with Project Succeed and by promoting the program to MVS.
4. Continue to provide education and outreach through Dr. Klaw’s Vet Connect program and through clinical trainings for CAPS, AEC and health center staff.
5. Explore and provide course credit for participants in the Career Readiness program.
6. Expand faculty involvement with the VAC through outreach to faculty interested in MVS.



Thanks to the generous support of Michele Bolton (front row), Members of the VRC, VAC and VA VITAL program were invited to participate in the Inspiration to Innovation Ball in Spring 2017. Pictured behind Dr. Bolton are, Lucy DeLaMora, Damian Bramlett, Marco Ybarra, Vita Perez, Maggie Morales, Annabel Prins and Jason Bentley.