

Veteran Resource and Support Center Student Veteran Needs Assessment Spring 2019

Purpose of Assessment

The Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC) at Texas A&M University developed a needs assessment to better understand the student veteran population, the resources they are currently using and identify short-fall of resources that student veterans' need. This is the third time Student Life Studies has worked with Veteran Resource and Support Center in conducting this survey, sent to slightly more than 1000 Texas A&M University student veterans.

Key Findings with Recommendations

Student Life Studies identified several key findings and developed actionable recommendations the Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC) may take based on the results. However, VRSC staff may identify other findings using their knowledge and understanding of the community. Staff members are strongly encouraged to read all the results and qualitative comments to gain a fuller understanding of students' experiences.

- The Veteran Resource and Support Center has connected well with the student veteran population in six and a half years as a department. Compared to its first year of operation, when 21% of student veterans indicated reaching out to VRSC first when they had questions regarding veterans' services, in 2019, 55% of student veterans said VRSC was their first point of contact when they have those same questions.
- Overall, student veterans' expressed that VRSC is accomplishing much of their mission, especially in referring helpful resources on campus, help in navigating the campus and answering any questions. More than two-thirds of the students were aware of study skills, tutoring and time management resources, but fewer than half reported using these resources. As students' report being time limited, and some are located outside of the College Station campus, continued pursuit of providing these students with connection to on-line resources and common off-site locations may be worthwhile efforts for VRSC.
- As in previous year's, student veterans indicated wanting to improve connections to other student veterans, but recognized their biggest obstacles continue to be lack of available time, location and connecting through common interests or field of study. Their responses support continued VRSC efforts to provide virtual online connection. However, staff may want to look at programming through specific colleges, especially those with higher concentration of veterans, such as engineering.
- Over half of the respondents said they were not part of the Aggie Veteran Network (56%). Some who were not members were not aware of the AVN until receiving the survey and planned to join. Current members would like more social and networking interactions and would like the AVN curated or facilitated to ensure responses to inquiries. Marketing efforts to increase awareness among the student veterans about AVN, and how to use its platform is recommended.
- There are several areas that may benefit VRSC to review broken out by demographics, identifying areas of concern and need of improvement not evident in the overall results. Some of the comments from the students' themselves suggest that looking at responses by classification and location may be helpful in targeting resource development. Student Life Studies can run analysis for any section that the VRSC staff wants to look at from a deeper level.

Method and Sample

The survey was developed using Qualtrics®, survey design software used for creating web-based forms and databases. The 72-question survey contained 55 quantitative questions, eight qualitative questions, and nine demographic questions. Due to branching technology, not all respondents saw all the questions. The data was analyzed using SPSS®, a statistical software package, and Microsoft Excel®.

The survey link was sent to email addresses of student veterans who had been identified by Veteran Resource and Support Center. The invitation to take the survey was sent on January 24, 2019, with non-respondents receiving up to three reminders before the survey closed on February 7, 2019. Of the 1,025 veterans contacted, 255 completed some part of the survey, yielding a 25% response rate. Note that 978 of the 1025 were enrolled in spring 2019.

Results

Results are reported as means, standard deviations (sd), and frequency percentages for the number of people (n) who responded to the question. For ease of reading, frequency percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole percent, so totals may not add up to exactly 100%. Tables are in descending mean or frequency order for the 2019 survey unless otherwise stated. Summary themes from the qualitative questions are contained in this report; the entire list can be found in a separate document. Comparisons to the surveys conducted in 2013 and 2016 will be made where appropriate.

Student veterans were asked a series of questions related to academics. Table 1, on the following page, illustrates respondents felt that they had the time management skills to succeed academically, a slight increase compared to 2016 and 2013. Students were least likely to have sought out resources for tutoring or to improve their time management skills. Please note that statements that asked about student veterans' awareness and use of resources to improve their time management and study skills changed from the 2016 and 2013 surveys, so comparisons of results from those surveys are not included in Table 1 on the next page.

Please rate the following statements:	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2016 Mean (sd) [n]	2013 Mean (sd) [n]
I have the time management skills to balance my course work and personal commitments.	43%	44%	8%	5%	1%	4.24 (.84) [245]	4.20 (.82) [275]	4.10 (.91) [143]
‡ I am aware of Texas A&M resources to improve study skills.	34%	41%	15%	10%	1%	3.98 (.98) [243]	‡	‡
‡ I am aware of Texas A&M resources to improve time management skills.	28%	37%	16%	16%	2%	3.73 (1.10) [240]	‡	‡
I wish I knew more about resources on campus to help with academics.	15%	25%	36%	18%	5%	3.28 (1.09) [228]	3.24 (1.02) [257]	3.25 (1.31) [135]
‡ I have sought out resources to improve my study skills.	15%	31%	21%	24%	8%	3.21 (1.20) [226]	‡	‡
I have sought out on-campus tutoring and/or Supplemental Instruction (SI).	19%	27%	15%	27%	13%	3.12 (1.34) [213]	2.94 (1.33) [234]	3.12 (1.38) [129]
‡ I have sought out resources to improve my time management skills.	9%	20%	25%	37%	10%	2.82 (1.13) [221]	‡	‡

Table 1: Academic Resources

‡ In 2013 and 2016 statements differed, so no comparisons shown

When responses to “I have the time management skills to balance my course work and personal commitments” were cross-tabulated with the responses “I have sought out resources to improve my time management” 27% of those who indicated having the time management skills to balance course work and personal commitments also said they had sought out resources to improve those skills. However, 42% of those indicating to have the time management skills did not seek out resources to improve those skills, and 10% thought those time management skill resources were not applicable for them.

Table 2, on the following page, shows the responses when student veterans were asked if they had experienced difficulties with different situations. Veterans reported most frequently feeling extreme stress while taking tests or completing other important class requirements, although less often than reported in 2016. Alternatively, they reported least frequently feeling that staff do not care about their struggles as a veteran.

Have you experienced difficulty with any of the following?	Frequently (4)	Often (3)	Occasionally (2)	Not at all (1)	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2016 Mean (sd) [n]
Extreme stress during test taking or other important class requirements.	12%	15%	42%	31%	2.08 (.97) [236]	2.40 (1.02) [274]
Difficulty in class because of being physically uncomfortable in the provided chairs/desks/tables.	12%	17%	31%	40%	2.03 (1.03) [235]	2.00 (1.11) [274]
Scheduling outside appointments (VA, doctor, etc.) around classes.	10%	17%	28%	46%	1.91 (1.01) [235]	1.98 (1.08) [275]
Difficulty hearing professors.	5%	17%	37%	41%	1.86 (.87) [235]	1.88 (.95) [275]
Managing frustrations or stress at home.	3%	14%	43%	39%	1.82 (.80) [236]	‡
Managing frustrations or stress in class.	3%	14%	38%	45%	1.76 (.82) [236]	‡
Feeling as if faculty do not understand about my struggles as a student veteran.	5%	9%	28%	58%	1.61 (.84) [236]	‡
Feeling as if staff do not understand about my struggles as a student veteran.	4%	6%	27%	63%	1.51 (.78) [236]	‡
Feeling as if faculty do not care about my struggles as a student veteran.	2%	7%	20%	71%	1.40 (.70) [236]	‡
Feeling as if staff do not care about my struggles as a student veteran.	4%	4%	19%	73%	1.39 (.75) [235]	‡

Table 2: Difficulties with Classes, Faculty & Staff
‡ Question not asked in 2016

When asked if they felt their academic advisor had a good understanding of the challenges veterans face in relation to academic success 69% of 242 respondents said true and 31% said false. The student veterans were also asked if they felt their advisor had a good understanding of the skills student veterans bring in relation to academic success. Of the 243 who responded, 73% said true and 27% said false.

Using a check-all-that-apply format, student veterans were asked about campus resources they had used. Table 3, on the following page, indicates most of the student veterans used Campus Libraries, but very few used the Veteran Learning Community.

Which of the following services have you used? (Select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage
Campus Libraries	85%
Academic Success Center services	39%
On/off campus tutoring	27%
On campus study skills workshops or classes	16%
Veteran Academic Academy	11%
Veteran Learning Community (through College of Agriculture)	5%

Table 3: Campus Resources Usage (n=183)

Student veterans were asked to indicate of which student organizations they were currently a member, from a select all that apply list. Two-hundred thirty students responded, and 48% indicated none at this time and 34% selected the "Other non-military affiliated student organizations" choice. Twenty-four (24%) selected Texas A&M Student Veterans Association, which is the same percentage of respondents who indicated they were members in 2016. Both Delta Co. and V1 within the Corps of Cadets were selected by 4% of the respondents. The students were also asked if they had participated in the Peer Advising for Veteran Education (PAVE) program; 84% of the 232 respondents reported no and 16% reported yes.

Student veterans were asked about their connection to other students and student veterans on campus. Table 4, on the following page, demonstrates veterans feel the campus is veteran-friendly; however, they were less positive in feeling that non-veteran students understand their challenges or issues and in feeling that they are connected to other student veterans/service members on campus, although both statements increased compared to 2016 and 2013.

Please rate the following statement:	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	2019 Mean (sd) [n]	2016 Mean (sd) [n]	2013 Mean (sd) [n]
I feel Texas A&M is a veteran-friendly campus.	62%	32%	4%	1%	-	4.56 (.62) [229]	4.50 (.71) [252]	4.05 (1.05) [131]
I feel non-veteran students at Texas A&M are supportive of veteran students/service members.	29%	46%	21%	4%	1%	3.97 (.86) [224]	3.95 (.86) [248]	3.71 (.96) [130]
I want to be more connected with fellow student veterans/service members on campus.	21%	45%	26%	6%	3%	3.75 (.92) [220]	3.80 (.92) [243]	3.60 (.93) [127]
Being connected to student veterans/service members who understand my experience helps me succeed at Texas A&M.	19%	39%	33%	5%	4%	3.65 (.97) [194]	3.66 (.99) [218]	3.33 (1.03) [119]
I would like to meet more married student veterans/service members to help my spouse/partner feel connected/supported.	17%	22%	43%	14%	4%	3.35 (1.04) [159]	3.44 (1.11) [194]	3.21 (1.06) [94]
I feel non-veteran students understand the contributions I bring to campus as a veteran/service member.	9%	34%	35%	18%	5%	3.23 (1.00) [223]	‡	‡
I feel connected to other student veterans/service members on campus.	13%	35%	24%	16%	13%	3.20 (1.22) [208]	3.15 (1.12) [239]	2.83 (1.13) [127]
I feel non-veteran students understand my challenges/issues as a veteran/service member.	8%	25%	37%	22%	9%	3.01 (1.07) [219]	2.75 (1.17) [243]	2.53 (1.12) [128]

Table 4: Student Veteran Connection

Note: In 2016 statements were changed from student veterans to student veterans/service members.

‡ Not asked

In a check-all-that-apply format, veterans were asked about the ways they would like to connect to other student veterans/service members on campus. Table 5 on the next page reveals that student veterans are most interested in social/happy hours and the veteran student lounge as ways to connect with other student veterans/service members. Those who selected the “other” option were given the opportunity to write in a response. Some mentioned physical work-outs, online, WebEx meetings, study groups and more active female veteran events.

In what ways would you like to connect to other student veterans/service members on campus? (check all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=211]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=222]	2013 Frequency Percentage [n=113]
Social/Happy hours	64%	56%	63%
Veteran student lounge	50%	49%	52%
Student organizations	43%	40%	44%
Veteran only class	33%	35%	37%
Family/Spouse-friendly events	28%	36%	‡
Peer mentoring program	28%	18%	20%
Other	7%	7%	11%

Table 5: Methods to Connect with Others

‡ Response option not provided

Veterans provided a wide range of responses when asked about their biggest obstacles to connect to other student veterans on campus. Similar to responses shared in the 2013 and 2016, being unable to find the time (due to academics, family, and work) and unable to identify other veterans were the main themes. Quite a few of the responders identified themselves as graduate students who are also long-distance commuters or online only students and find that a barrier as well. A few indicated they felt their age was a barrier and their field of study as not many veterans were in their field or it was very encompassing of their time.

Student veterans were asked for suggestions on activities and ways to connect to other veterans. Some themes included activities for families that are free, BBQ, tailgates, pub crawl, social events held on Saturdays that are well advertised. Those who indicated they were online, distance learners recommended networking events in the virtual space and events that are directed toward graduate students. A few suggested college specific events so veterans can get to socialize and network with others in the same or similar field of study.

Using a check-all-that-apply response option, respondents were asked about their plans after graduating from Texas A&M. Table 6, on the next page, shows that most plan to work full-time outside of the military, similar to 2016 and 2013 responses. Overall, responses were similar to previous years, but percentages of those stating that they planned returning to active-duty military and return/join a reserve or National Guard Unit continued to decrease from 2016 and 2013. Those who selected the “other” option were able to write a response and made comments such as continue working, start their own business, remain in the military, work in or create non-profit organization, or work in governmental positions (DOD).

What do you plan to do after graduating from Texas A&M? (Check all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=222]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=249]	2013 Frequency Percentage [n=129]
Seek full-time employment outside of the military	66%	62%	70%
Continue my education with a graduate or professional degree	33%	33%	41%
Travel	23%	16%	20%
Return to/join active-duty military	14%	17%	17%
Participate in community service organization	14%	12%	19%
Other	13%	9%	12%
Seek part-time employment outside of the military	5%	4%	5%
Return/join a reserve or National Guard Unit	5%	9%	13%
Continue my education with additional undergraduate or vocational training	3%	4%	‡
No current plans/unknown at this time	3%	3%	3%
Participate in an organization like the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps/VISTA, or Teach for American	2%	2%	5%

Table 6: After Graduation Plans
(‡ Question was asked as two separate questions)

Again, in a select-all-that-apply response option, respondents were asked to indicate what steps they had taken to prepare for post-graduation goals. Shown in Table 7, updating their résumé was the most popular selection, followed by having their résumé reviewed. Least selected were the choices of off campus mock interviews and attending Vet-Connect events.

Please indicate what steps have you taken to prepare for post-graduation goals. (Select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage
Updated résumé	93%
Résumé review (by Career Center, professor, mentor or other professional)	47%
On campus job fairs	41%
Internship/Externship	32%
On campus mock interviews	13%
Off campus job fairs	10%
Off campus mock interviews	6%
Vet-Connect events programmed by the VRSC	6%

Table 7: Preparation for Post-Graduation (n=187)

When asked how prepared they felt to complete a successful job search and employment process, 48% of the 222 respondents said they were prepared, 35% said they were somewhat prepared, 12% said they were a little prepared, and 5% said they were not prepared (Mean=3.26/4.00, sd=.86). Additionally, student veterans were asked about Career Center programs they had taken part in through a select-all-that-apply format. Noted in Table 8, on the following page, as in 2016, the most selected response was that they had not attended any Career Center programs, although a smaller percentage than in 2016. Those who selected the “other” response option could write a response; four wrote in a response and said none, job fairs and résumé review.

Please indicate what Career Center programs you have taken part in. (Select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage (n=215)	2016 Frequency Percentage (n=233)
I have not attended any Career Center programs	53%	67%
Advising Appointment/walk-in appointment	30%	28%
Employer Information Session	11%	6%
I am unaware of the Career Center's services	10%	‡
Panel program or workshop	7%	5%
Other	3%	3%

Table 8: Career Center Programs

Veterans were asked what skills they would like to enhance or about concerns they had related to their post-Texas A&M plans. Finding employment and skills needed to find employment were the most common themes from the response. Some were specific in terms of finding employment in their field and the skills needed, like data management, writing skills and field specific skills. Some talked about getting accepted into graduate school or continuing into a doctoral program. Quite a few others spoke about acquiring skills needed for a successful job search, like résumé writing skills, networking and interviewing skills, more specifically being able to translate their military experience to the civilian world of work.

Using a check-all-that-apply option, student veterans were asked which branch of service they did or still do serve. Additionally, student veterans were asked about their current military service status. As seen in Table 9, most student veterans were in the Army and are former active duty.

Which branch of service do/did you serve? (check all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=259]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=247]	Which of the following best describes your current military service status?	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=258]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=240]
Army	40%	43%	Former active duty	70%	72%
Marines	30%	23%	Former Reservist/ National Guard	9%	4%
Navy	15%	20%	Current Reservist	9%	7%
Air Force	15%	14%	Current National Guard	8%	6%
Coast Guard	2%	2%	Current Active Duty	5%	10%
Prefer not to answer	‡	1%	Prefer not to answer	‡	‡

Table 9: Military Service
(‡ Response option not provided)

Student veterans were asked about the total months they spent in a combat zone. Table 10, on the next page, illustrates that more than half of the 2019 respondents reported spending zero or 6 or fewer months in a combat zone.

What is your total months spent in a combat zone?	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=256]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=240]	2013 Frequency Percentage [n=128]
None	43%	32%	42% †
6 or Fewer Months	12%	8%	
7-12 Months	18%	29%	24%
13-18 Months	12%	12%	15%
19-24 Months	4%	8%	6%
More than 24 Months	11%	11%	13%

Table 10: Time in Combat
(† Response option was 6 months or fewer)

Veterans were asked to indicate their current educational benefits eligibility and usage. Shown in Table 11, a majority indicated currently using federal VA Educational Benefits.

Please indicate your current Educational Benefits eligibility and usage information:	2019 Frequency Percentage
Currently using federal VA Education Benefits	64%
Ineligible for/exhausted both benefits	13%
Currently using a combination of both VA and Hazelwood.	12%
Currently using state Hazelwood Exemption	12%

Table 11: Educational Benefits Usage (n=214)

Veterans were asked if they would exhaust federal VA benefits prior to graduation. Of the 215 respondents, 46% said no, 38% said yes and 17% responded "I don't know." In 2016, 43% said no, 26% said yes and 25% were not sure when asked a similar question about exhausting federal education benefits before graduating. Those who would exhaust their benefits (n=81) were asked if they were eligible for the Hazlewood Exemption and 64% said yes, 32% said no and 4% responded "I don't know," similar to 2016 responses, when 63% said yes and 37% said no. Those who indicated they were eligible for the Hazlewood (n=52) were asked if they will exhaust Hazlewood prior to graduation and 73% said no, 19% said they didn't know and 8% said yes. In 2016, 81% of respondents said no, 13% were not sure and 5% said yes when asked if they would exhaust their Hazlewood benefits before graduating.

Student veterans were also asked if they had completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). Of the 218 respondents, 73% selected "Yes, I have completed the FAFSA® for the 2018-2019 academic year" and 27% selected "No I have not completed the FAFSA® for the 2018-2019 academic year." In 2016 77% indicated they had filled out a FAFSA® application. Those who selected no were asked why they had not completed the FAFSA for the 2018-2019 academic year. Forty-nine students wrote in a variety of responses, including that the student was graduating, all expenses were covered by GI Bill or Hazlewood, and that they earn too much to qualify for financial aid.

When asked about their marital and family status, 50% said they were single, 28% were married with children, 20% were married and 2% were single with children (n=256). The marital/family status selections were different in the 2016 survey. In 2016, 51% of student veterans indicated they were married, 36% were single,

6% indicated being single living with a partner, and 6% said they were divorced, separated, or widowed. Furthermore, 1% selected the “other” option and wrote in the response of being engaged and married living apart. Additionally, <1% preferred not to answer. However, the percentages of students indicating their status as married or single were similar in 2019 and 2016.

The 123 student veterans who reported being married or married with children were asked about whether their spouse was in college and their spouse’s employment status. A majority (75%) of 109 respondents reported that their spouse was employed, and of those whose spouses were employed, 77% reported their spouse worked 36 hours or more per week during the academic semester, 15% worked 21 -35 hours per week, 6% reported their spouses working 0-15 hours and 4% work 16-20 hours per week (n=82). Over 84% of 121 respondents said their spouse was not attending college at this time; 11% indicated their spouse was attending college full-time and 5% attended part-time. Of the spouses attending college (n=18), 44% are attending Texas A&M.

Student veterans were asked about the dependents that were in their household (excluding spouse/partner). As seen in Table 12, about two-thirds of student veterans had no dependents; which is a 9% increase from 2016, although still fewer than in 2013.

How many dependents are in your household (excluding spouse/partner)?	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=256]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=249]	2013 Frequency Percentage [n=128]
None	66%	57%	70%
One	13%	17%	16%
Two	13%	17%	7%
Three	6%	4%	4%
Four or more	2%	6%	4%

Table 12: Dependents

Table 13 displays the veterans’ responses when asked to indicate their household income. As the income range choices were changed in 2019, no comparisons to 2016 or 2013 are provided. The majority of student veterans indicated their household income less than \$40,000 per year.

What is your household income?	2019 Frequency
Below \$20,000	41%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	18%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	9%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	9%
\$80,000 and above	21%
Unknown	3%

Table 13: Household Income (n=218)

Veterans were asked indicate their current employment status. Of the 219 who responded, half (50%) were employed and half indicated not being employed at this time, similar to the 2016 response. Student veterans who were employed (n=109) were asked to indicate the average number of hours per week that they work during the academic semester. Forty-nine percent (49%) indicated they worked 36 hours or more, 23% indicated 0-15, 18% 16-20 and 10% chose 21-35 hours per week. In 2016, student veterans claimed working fewer hours overall, as 22% worked up to 15 hours per week, 20% worked 16-20 hours, 14% worked 21-35 hours, and 44% worked 36 or more hours per week.

Next veterans who indicated they had children were asked if they had enough income, financial aid or benefits to adequately cover childcare expenses need for the veteran to attend class. Of the 51 respondents, 73% said yes and 28% said no. Not applicable was also a selection and those responses (16) were removed from analysis.

Student veterans were provided a list of expenses and were asked to rate their level of financial stress caused by each expense. Shown in Table 14, about three-quarters of the respondents felt no more than moderate stress from the listed expenses, although housing was rated as the greatest financial stressor. Childcare expenses were listed as the least contributor to financial stress; however, there was not a “not applicable” response option, and only 30% of the student veteran respondents earlier indicated having children. When selecting “other” respondents could write in comments; 22 wrote in responses including graduate school, providing for children and their higher education expenses, parking, software expenses, and VA expenses.

Please indicate the level of financial stress you experience for each of the following expenses:	Very Severe Stress (5)	Severe Stress (4)	Moderate Stress (3)	Mild Stress (2)	No Stress (1)	2019 Mean (sd) [n]
Housing and living expenses	6%	13%	31%	23%	27%	2.49 (1.19) [218]
Cost of text books	1%	4%	18%	38%	39%	1.91 (.91) [219]
Transportation and related expenses	1%	5%	17%	30%	46%	1.86 (.97) [218]
Other	5%	9%	11%	9%	67%	1.77 (1.24) [81]
Tuition and Fees	4%	6%	13%	16%	62%	1.73 (1.11) [218]
Childcare expenses	2%	4%	7%	7%	81%	1.39 (.91) [216]

Table 14: Expenses and Financial Stress

On the survey the student veterans were asked if they had used the Aggie Shields textbook lending library. Of the 214 respondents, 53% said no and 47% said yes. Those who said yes were then asked to select from a list of dollar ranges the approximate total value they had received in lent textbooks. Slightly more than one-third (36%) of the 99 respondents chose the \$251-\$500 range, 25% chose the \$0-\$250 range, 23% chose \$501-\$1000, 10% chose \$1001-\$2500 and 5% selected the \$2501 or greater range.

Student veterans were asked about where they receive health care in the last 12 months and with whom they have health insurance using two check-all-that-apply options. Table 15, on the following page, demonstrates that VA facility and private physician’s office was most used. When asked if they were currently registered with Veterans Administration Healthcare Services, 64% of the 217 respondents said yes and 36% said no. Furthermore, Table 16, also shows that VA and TRICARE were selected the most of the options listed for the type of health insurance used similar to 2016.

In the past 12 months where have you received health care services? (Select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=195]
Veterans Administration (VA) facility	51%
Private physician's office	47%
TAMU Student Health Services (ie., A.P. Beutel Health Center)	23%
Community Urgent Care (i.e. Caprock, Brazos Valley Urgent Care, etc.)	9%
Community Emergency Rooms	8%
Community Hospital (Inpatient services)	2%
County Health Clinic	2%

Table 15: Health Care Visits Last 12 Months

What kind of health insurance do you currently have? (Select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage [n=218]	2016 Frequency Percentage [n=246]
Veterans Administration Healthcare	42%	35%
TRICARE	27%	30%
Other commercial healthcare plan	24%	20%
I do not have health insurance	14%	11%
Student Health Plan (BCBS-TX)	6%	7%

Table 16: Health Insurance

Student Veterans were asked if they were currently aware of Texas A&M's no-cost parking pass provision for veterans with a qualifying vehicle plate. Of the 218 respondents, 55% said no they were not aware of the provision and 45% were aware of the provision.

Using a check-all-that-apply question, student veterans were asked about their preferred method to connect with campus resources. As noted in Table 17, three-quarters said Email/chat and almost two-thirds selected in-person. An additional 3% selected the "other" response option and said phone, WebEX, or text.

Please indicate you preferred method(s) to connect with campus resources. (Select all that apply)	2019 Frequency Percentage (n=215)	2016 Frequency Percentage (n=243)	2013 Frequency Percentage (n=128)
Email/Chat	75%	60%	68%
In person	64%	58%	72%
Single website with resource listings/contacts	31%	17%	35%
Small in-person group sessions	17%	6%	9%
‡ Online group/forum/social media	17%	‡	‡
Other	3%	3%	2%

Table 17: Preferred Method to Connect

‡ Response option was not provided in 2016 and 2013

When asked if they struggle with knowing who to contact on campus regarding various needs they may have, 62% of the 218 respondents selected sometimes, 25% said never and 13% said often. Respondents were also asked who they contact first when they had a question regarding student veteran services. Noted in Table 18, more than half (55%) said VRSC and 28% said Veteran Services Office (Financial Aid). Additionally, 2% selected the “other” response option and indicated the Karen’s, PAVE mentor, SVA president, internet and the VA. Compared to 2016 and 2013, as a resource for the first to contact to answer questions for student veterans, the VRSC has increased and the Veterans Services Office has decreased as a resource.

When you have questions regarding student veteran services, who do you contact first?	2019 Frequency Percentage (n=218)	2016 Frequency Percentage (n=241)	2013 Frequency Percentages (n=127)
Veterans Resource & Support Center (Student Affairs)	55%	46%	21%
Veterans Services Office (Financial Aid)	28%	40%	69%
Academic Advisor	6%	5%	1%
Friends	5%	6%	6%
Other	5%	2%	2%
Faculty/ other staff	1%	2%	1%

Table 18: Who do Student Veterans Contact?

Student veterans were requested to indicate if they were a member of the Aggie Veteran Network. Of 218 respondents, 56% said no and 44% said yes. Those who said no were asked what had prevented them from joining the Aggie Veteran Network, and 92 responded. Majority responded they did know about it, some are not located in College Station and were also not aware of its existence. Some indicated they will be joining as a result of learning about AVN through this survey. Two indicated they had tried to reach out through the website or social media and received no response. It is worthy to note the majority of responses came from graduate students and seniors; only nine responses were from sophomores or unidentified classifications.

Those who answered yes to being a member of the Aggie Veteran Network were asked what kind of interactions through the AVN would most benefit them. Thirty-eight students responded. Suggestions for the kind of interactions that would be of benefit included socializing, professional networking, career searching and career and business collaborations. A few indicated that just connecting with others would be helpful. Other comments that did not address the question, specifically, included that the respondent did not use AVN that much, or they had no interactions. Others indicated they had trouble with the platform or that there was so much correspondence and similar networks that keeping up with all of them was difficult.

Veterans were also asked what they felt was the single most important thing that needs to be accomplished to improve overall veteran services and/or transitions to Texas A&M. Several suggestions were shared. Some talked about academic related improvements such as priority registration and educating faculty and staff, especially academic advisors, about veterans’ needs and services available to veterans. Some shared that they would like all veterans’ resources and services centralized and have veterans’ resources available on one website. A few indicated they would like more effective service in helping with their financial aid and VA benefits. Others requested more planned social opportunities for veteran students to connect with other veterans in the same field, some specifically for graduate students and for those not located at the College Station campus. Finally a few suggested a Vet Camp-like event after the first semester or year on campus to reacquaint the student veterans with services and a social event to get to know one another may be helpful.

There was a question specifically for female veterans/service members asking about additional resources or services that were needed to support their success at Texas A&M. Some suggestions included creating opportunities to connect with other female veterans, host an all women veterans’ day event and a

mentorship program for women veterans to be mentored by women veterans. Support and assistance for single parents and financial assistance with childcare was also recommended. Many of the comments were either N/A or expressed satisfaction for services already provided.

Demographic information, obtained from the University's student database, for the survey respondents and sample is included in Table 17, on the following page. A list of ages of veterans within the survey sample and respondents as well as site identification for the Texas A&M University student veterans can be found on the attached documents. The age range for the sample was between 19 and 74. For most areas, the sample and respondents were similar. In Table 18, on page 17, demographic data for the survey samples of 2019, 2016 and 2013 student veterans are provided for a quick comparison.

Demographic Category	Sample [n=978]	Respondents [n=258]
Gender		
Male	85%	88%
Female	15%	12%
Ethnicity		
White	66%	67%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	20%	19%
Black or multi-racial with Black	4%	4%
Asian	4%	5%
Multiracial excluding Black	2%	2%
American Indian	<1%	--
Native Hawaii or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
International	<1%	--
Unknown or Not Reported	3%	3%
Classification		
Freshman	2%	2%
Sophomore	8%	8%
Junior	16%	16%
Senior	28%	28%
Masters Students	34%	36%
Doctoral Students	5%	5%
Veterinary Students	1%	--
Medical School	2%	1%
Other (non-degree, post bac)	5%	5%
College		
Agriculture and Life Sciences	14%	13%
Architecture	7%	7%
Engineering	20%	23%
Education and Human Development	9%	8%
General Studies	1%	1%
George Bush School of Government	9%	11%
Geosciences	4%	5%
Law School	4%	3%
Liberal Arts	13%	15%
Mays Business School	8%	7%
Medicine	2%	2%
Nursing	2%	1%
Public Health	1%	2%
Science	5%	3%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Science	1%	1%
Dentistry	<1%	--
First Generation		
First Generation	42%	46%
Not First Generation	46%	44%
Unknown	12%	10%

Table 17: 2019 Student Demographics Sample and Respondents

Demographic Category	2019 Sample [n=978]	2016 Sample [n=1016]	2013 Sample [n=551]
Gender			
Male	85%	84%	90%
Female	15%	16%	11%
Ethnicity			
White	66%	66%	74%
Hispanic or Latino of any Race	20%	20%	16%
Black or multi-racial with Black	4%	6%	3%
Asian	4%	3%	2%
Multiracial excluding Black	2%	3%	3%
American Indian	<1%	1%	<1%
Native Hawaii or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	<1%
International	<1%	--	--
Unknown or Not Reported	3%	1%	3%
Classification			
Freshman	2%	3%	5%
Sophomore	8%	10%	11%
Junior	16%	15%	16%
Senior	28%	28%	25%
Masters Students	34%	28%	‡ 33%
Doctoral Students	5%	5%	
Veterinary Students	1%	<1%	<1%
Medical School	2%	--	--
Law School	--	5%	--
Pharmacy	--	1%	--
Other (non-degree, post bac, dental)	5%	5%	1%
College			
Agriculture and Life Sciences	14%	16%	19%
Architecture	7%	6%	6%
Engineering	20%	21%	20%
Education and Human Development	9%	11%	8%
General Studies	1%	1%	3%
George Bush School of Government	9%	7%	10%
Geosciences	4%	3%	2%
Law School	4%	5%	--
Liberal Arts	13%	16%	18%
Mays Business School	8%	5%	9%
Medicine	2%	--	1%
Nursing	2%	1%	--
Public Health	1%	1%	--
Science	5%	5%	5%
Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Science	1%	1%	1%
Dentistry	<1%	<1%	--
Pharmacy	--	1%	--
First Generation			
First Generation	42%	40%	--
Not First Generation	46%	47%	--
Unknown	12%	13%	--

Table 18: 2013, 2016, 2019 Sample Student Demographics

‡Masters and Doctoral Students were combined

Background

The Veteran Resource and Support Center (VRSC) was formally dedicated as a department in the Division of Student Affairs in October 2012. According to its website (<http://aggiemilitary.tamu.edu/>), the mission for Veteran Resource and Support Center “is to provide:

- Referrals to helpful resources on campus and in the community
- Help in navigating the campus and answering any questions
- Workshops and social events throughout the year
- Opportunities to connect with other student veterans on campus
- Assistance with the transition from military to student life at Texas A&M”

Project Details

The Department of Student Life Studies provides quality assessment services, resources and assessment training for departments in the Texas A&M University Division of Student Affairs and student organizations. Services by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by the Texas A&M University Advancement Fee. Results of this project and other assessment projects done through Student Life Studies can be found at <https://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/results/>. Additionally, division staff can follow Student Life Studies on Facebook.

To work with Student Life Studies for future assessment projects, please fill out the Assessment Questionnaire at <https://slsform.dsaapps.tamu.edu/>.

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Report prepared on April 25, 2019

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***Services provided by Student Life Studies are funded, in part, by Texas A&M University Advancement Fees.
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