



California State University, Sacramento
Division of Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence
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Sacramento State - Division of Student Affairs Veteran Success Center Annual Report: 2025-2026

Subdivision Information

- **Subdivision Name:** Student Success & Academic Excellence
- **AVP/Executive Director Name:** Dr. Chao Vang
- **Departments Included in the Report:** Veteran Success Center

Executive Summary

The Veterans Success Center (VSC) supports Sacramento State's veteran and military-connected student population through education benefit administration, outreach, programming, and student support services. **During Spring 2026, Sacramento State enrolled approximately 30,239 students, including 2,107 veteran and military-connected students, consisting of 430 student veterans and 1,677 military dependents.**

Throughout the 2025-2026 academic year, the Veterans Success Center expanded access to federal and state education benefits, strengthened campus and community partnerships, increased opportunities for student engagement and belonging, and continued to provide individualized support to students navigating higher education.

The center processed more than 1,967 federal VA education benefit certifications and at least 1,587 California College Fee Waivers during the academic year.

Combined, the center managed more than 3,554 benefit-related transactions while maintaining 100% compliance with VA regulations and reporting requirements.

The center expanded partnerships with Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Military OneSource, Vet Centers, The WELL, Sac State Athletics, the Career Center, and other campus partners to increase access to benefits, wellness resources, career readiness programming, and community engagement opportunities.

The Veterans Success Center also recognized 116 graduates during the 2025-2026 academic year, representing every branch of military service and celebrating the academic accomplishments of Sacramento State's veteran and military-connected students.

- **Impact on Students & University Goals:**

The Veterans Success Center directly supports Sacramento State's commitment to student success, persistence, degree completion, well-being, and career readiness.



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Through education benefit administration, outreach, programming, and strategic partnerships, the center helps reduce barriers that can impact academic success for veterans and military-connected students. **Services provided through the center support student retention, increase access to resources, strengthen sense of belonging, and help students successfully transition from military service to higher education and future careers.**

Current enrollment data indicate that approximately 7% of Sacramento State's student population identifies as veteran or military-connected. The center's work aligns with institutional priorities focused on enrollment growth, retention, graduation, student wellness, and workforce preparation.

- **Major Challenges & Opportunities for Growth**

As Sacramento State's military-connected student population continues to grow, we have identified opportunities to strategically align staffing, programming, and student support services to meet future demand. **The center is well-positioned to build upon its strong foundation while continuing to address the growing needs of veterans and military-connected students.**

Challenges include:

- Limited staffing capacity to support a population of more than 2,100 veteran and military-connected students.
- Increasing demand for education benefit processing, compliance oversight, and student support services.
- Limited access to veteran-specific retention, graduation, persistence, transfer, and enrollment data needed to fully assess student outcomes and program effectiveness.

Opportunities for growth include:

- Building sustainable processes that support both compliance operations and student-facing programming.
- Expanding enrollment pipelines through outreach to military installations and community colleges.
- Increasing retention and persistence initiatives through proactive student outreach and intervention efforts.
- Strengthening career readiness and workforce development programming.
- Expanding veteran-focused mental health and wellness initiatives.
- Enhancing assessment and reporting capabilities through access to Institutional Research data.
- Increasing faculty and staff awareness of veteran and military-connected student experiences and needs.
- Expanding student engagement opportunities aligned with student needs assessment findings.



Departmental Successes & Accomplishments

- **Mission Alignment: How the department's work supports student success and well-being.**

The Veterans Success Center supports student veterans, service members, and military-connected students by providing a welcoming and inclusive environment focused on academic success, well-being, community connection, and access to resources. Through VA education benefits support, outreach, programming, and campus partnerships, the center works to reduce barriers, strengthen belonging, and support student persistence, retention, and graduation outcomes.

- **Key Achievements:**

Expanded Access to Federal and State Education Benefits

The Veterans Success Center continued to provide comprehensive support for students utilizing federal and state education benefits.

Federal VA Certifications Processed

Term	Certifications
Fall 2025	879
Winter 2025	35
Spring 2026	915
Summer 2026*	138+
Total	1,967+

**Summer certifications continued to be processed at the time of reporting.*

California College Fee Waivers Processed

Term	Waivers
Fall 2025	802
Spring 2026	785
Total	1,587+

Combined, the center processed more than 3,554 federal and state education benefit transactions during the academic year.



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Increased Access to Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E)

The Veterans Success Center expanded outreach and engagement efforts with Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E) through monthly Donuts & Coffee sessions and partnerships with VA representatives and the VA Claims Clinic. These informal opportunities provided students with direct access to resources, benefits information, and individualized support in a welcoming environment. As a result, Chapter 31 participation increased from approximately 102 students to more than 155 students during the reporting period, representing growth of over 50%.

Strengthened Community and Sense of Belonging

The center hosted several student programs and engagement opportunities throughout the academic year, including VA Claims Clinics, academic general education advising workshops, mental health and wellness programs, career readiness events, graduation end-of-year celebration programs, and community-building activities.

Based on available sign-in records and event attendance estimates, the Veterans Success Center engaged approximately 250 students through workshops, outreach activities, academic support services, wellness programming, and community-building events.

Expanded Career Readiness Programming

Through partnerships with the Career Center, CARC partners, and community organizations, students participated in workshops focused on resume development, networking, professional headshots, career preparation, and workforce readiness.

Future planning also began for the VSC Career Readiness Passport initiative through the K-16 Career Ready Veterans Grant (more to come into Fall 2026).

Celebrated Student Success

The Veterans Success Center recognized 116 graduates during the End-of-Year Graduation Celebration.

Graduate representation included:

- Army: 53
- Marine Corps: 23
- Air Force: 22
- Navy: 16
- Coast Guard: 2

Graduates received recognition cords, certificates, and challenge coins honoring their accomplishments and contributions to Sacramento State.



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- **New or Improved Services/Programs**

- Expanded the monthly Donuts & Coffee resource series to increase student engagement and provide informal access to campus and community resources.
- Increased access to on-site VA claims assistance, benefits counseling, and resource navigation through partnerships with VA representatives and community partners.
- Collaborating with The WELL to expand awareness through military-friendly outreach materials, resource promotion, and targeted messaging that helps student veterans recognize and access available campus support services.
- Expanded collaboration with Sacramento State Athletics through Salute to Heroes recognition events and veteran appreciation initiatives.
- Launched student-focused career readiness workshops in partnership with the campus partners, including resume development, networking, professional branding, and workforce preparation.

Career Readiness & Workforce Development Initiatives

- Using the K-16 Career Ready Veterans Grant as a foundation for rebuilding and expanding veteran career pathway initiatives that previously existed but were reduced due to funding limitations.
- Exploring opportunities to host small scale veteran focused career fairs and employer networking events within the Veterans Success Center.
- Developed plans for a VSC Career Readiness Passport Program to provide a structured pathway for students to engage in career development activities and earn recognition for completing career readiness milestones.
- Expanding partnerships with employers, workforce development organizations, and veteran serving agencies to increase internship and employment opportunities.
- Developing targeted career programming that recognizes the unique needs of transfer, adult, parenting, and career-transitioning student veterans, many of whom are balancing academic, family, and employment responsibilities while preparing for their next career opportunity.

- **Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Efforts:**

- **Strategies and outcomes related to DEI initiatives.**

The Veterans Success Center provides dedicated support for veterans, active-duty service members, National Guard members, Reservists, and military-connected dependents. Many military-connected students navigate unique transitions between military, civilian, and academic environments while balancing family, employment, and educational



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responsibilities. The center promotes a culture of belonging by fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment where students feel supported, connected, and valued. Through targeted outreach, resource navigation, community-building opportunities, and campus partnerships, the Veterans Success Center helps ensure military-connected students have equitable access to the resources and support necessary to achieve their academic, personal, and career goals.

Efforts focused on:

- Building a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- Increasing visibility and recognition of military-connected students.
- Strengthening peer connections and community engagement.
- Supporting students navigating the transition from military service to higher education.
- Connecting students with culturally responsive support services and campus resources.

- **Partnerships & Collaborations**

Internal Partnerships

- CARC Centers (top centers students cross-referenced with EAB data)
 - MLK
 - APIDA
 - Woman Resource Center
 - SWANA
 - PRIDE
 - El Centro Serna
- Academic Advising
- Career Center
- Sac State Athletics
- The WELL
- Faculty & Staff Mentorship

External Partnerships

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E)
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Military OneSource
- Sacramento Vet Center
- Community veteran-serving organizations



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- **Assessment & Data Highlights:**

Enrollment Data

Spring 2026 enrollment data indicate:

- Total University Enrollment: 30,239
- Veteran & Military-Connected Students: 2,107
- Student Veterans: 430
- Military Dependents: 1,677

Student Needs Assessment Findings

The Veterans Success Center Needs Assessment identified the following student priorities:

- Mental Health & Wellness: 65.8%
- Career Readiness & Workforce Development: 60.0%
- Sense of Belonging: 58.7%
- Social Engagement Opportunities: 56.4%
- Academic Support: 54.2%
- Community Involvement: 54.2%
- Inclusive Campus Environment: 53.3%
- Mentorship Opportunities: 51.6%
- Leadership Development: 51.6%
- Peer Support: 51.1%

Assessment findings directly informed programming decisions and strategic planning priorities for the upcoming academic year.

Strategic Priorities & Future Goals

- **Short-Term Priorities (Next 1-2 years)**
 - Expand career readiness and workforce development initiatives.
 - Launch the VSC Career Readiness Passport Program.
 - Increase outreach to military installations and community colleges.
 - Strengthen retention and persistence initiatives through proactive student outreach.
 - Expand veteran focused mental health and wellness programming.
 - Increase faculty and staff awareness of veteran and military-connected student experiences.
 - Improve data collection and assessment capabilities.



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- **Long-Term Vision (3-5 years)**

- Establish the Veterans Success Center as a leading military-connected student support model within the CSU system.
- Increase veteran and military-connected student enrollment.
- Improve retention, persistence, and graduation outcomes.
- Expand opportunities for academic credit based on military training and experience.
- Strengthen career readiness pathways and employment outcomes.
- Expand staffing and operational capacity to support long-term growth.

- **Resource Needs & Support Requests**

Current Staffing

The Veterans Success Center has continued to serve a growing veteran and military-connected student population while operating with limited staffing resources. The center's success has been supported by dedicated VA Work Study student assistants, strong campus partnerships, and community collaborations that help extend services, programming, outreach, and student support efforts.

Resource Needs

- Program Coordinator/School Certifying Official position
- Assistant Program Coordinator position/Event and Programming Specialist
- Graduate Intern support
- VA Education Advisors (VA Work Study Positions)
- Expanded outreach funding
- Assessment and reporting tools
- Additional staffing support to meet certification and compliance demands

Assessment & Data-Driven Insights

- **Student Engagement & Success Metrics:**

Signature programs such as Donuts & Coffee, Veterans End-of-Year Graduation Celebration, career readiness workshops, VA Claims Clinics, and community partner outreach events contributed to increased opportunities for student engagement and connection.

Results from the Spring 2026 military-connected student needs assessment identified several priority areas for future programming and services. The highest areas of interest included:



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- Mental Health & Wellness Support (65.8%)
- Career & Workforce Development (60.0%)
- Safe Space & Sense of Belonging (58.7%)
- Social Gatherings & Community Building (56.4%)
- Academic Support Services (54.2%)
- Community Involvement Opportunities (54.2%)

These findings provide important insight into the evolving needs of Sacramento State's veteran and military-connected student population and will help guide future service delivery and resource allocation.

- **Use of Assessment for Improvement**

The three highest areas identified were Mental Health & Wellness Support, Career & Workforce Development, and Sense of Belonging & Community Connection. As a result, future programming and services will be intentionally designed around these priorities.

To address students' need for greater connection and belonging, the center will continue expanding opportunities for engagement through partnerships with campus departments, CARC centers, student organizations, and community partners. These efforts will help increase student involvement, strengthen peer connections, and enhance veterans' visibility and presence across campus.

In response to the need for mental health and wellness support, the Veterans Success Center will continue working closely with The WELL and other campus partners to expand access to military-friendly wellness resources, counseling services, and educational programming designed to support student well-being.

Career readiness will remain a major focus moving forward. Through collaboration with the Career Center and support from the K-16 Career Ready Veterans Grant, the center will continue building a structured career development pathway that helps students prepare for employment before graduation. This is especially important for veteran and military-connected students, many of whom are older, have family responsibilities, and attend college with a clear goal of transitioning into meaningful career opportunities after earning their degree.

- **Data Challenges & Needs**

The Veterans Success Center will focus on improving engagement tracking, collecting more consistent participation data, and using assessment results to guide future programming and resource decisions.



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Additional support from Institutional Research would help provide retention, graduation, and student success data specific to veteran and military-connected students. This information would allow the center to better measure the impact of its programs and services.

Financial Overview

- **Budget Overview**

Support through the K-16 Career Ready Veterans Grant provides opportunities to expand career readiness programming and workforce development initiatives. The VSC was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Sacramento K-16 Collaborative to implement a program that prepares student veterans for a career after graduation.

- **Major Financial Challenges & Sustainability Considerations**

The Veterans Success Center will continue exploring opportunities to leverage grant funding, campus partnerships, and existing resources to enhance services while maintaining a strong focus on student success and support.

Recommendations

The Spring 2026 Needs Assessment provided a strong foundation for future planning and identified three key areas of focus: mental health and wellness, career readiness, and sense of belonging. These findings will help guide future programming, resource allocation, and partnership development.

As the center continues to strengthen its assessment efforts and gather additional student success data, opportunities exist to further align services with institutional priorities related to retention, student engagement, wellness, and career outcomes. Continued collaboration across all campus partners will be critical to supporting these efforts.

The Veteran Success Center is committed to using assessment, student feedback, and data-informed decision-making to continue building upon the strong foundation already established and advancing the center's goals in support of student success.