

Engaging Student Veterans in the COVID-19 Cyber Environment: Developing an Effective Virtual Service Model for Veterans Resource Centers

Presented by:

Desiree A. Campos Marquez, M.Ed.

Bernard Somers, Ed.D.

Jazmin Vargas, MSLM

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Presentation Outline

- Review of VRC Model Prior to Covid-19 Pandemic
- VRC as an Effective Engagement Resource
- Breakout Discussion – The Pivot
- Case Study – Mt. San Antonio College's Veterans Resource Center
 - Initial Implementation of Online Services
 - Surveying Needs of Military-Connected Students
 - Partnering with Instruction Departments to ensure Title 38 Compliance
 - Assessment of Service and Processing Gaps
 - Implementing Virtual Service Strategies
 - Challenges and Lessons Learned
- Question and Answer

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Learning Outcomes

Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Recognize the need to reform how VRCs provide programs and services in a virtual environment;
- Understand the importance of surveying student Veterans and their families;
- Use case study assessments to identify service and processing gaps on their own campus;
- Learn about successful strategies for implementing virtual services and maintaining compliance with Title 38 during the COVID-19 era.

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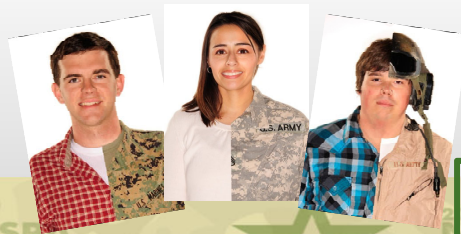


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Student Veterans at a Glance

- Nearly 1,100 student Veterans attend Mt. SAC
- On average, 650 benefit collecting student Veterans yearly
- The majority are from underrepresented groups in higher education
- Of those who have applied for Financial Aid:
 - 55% have \$0 EFC
 - 82% Pell-eligible EFC



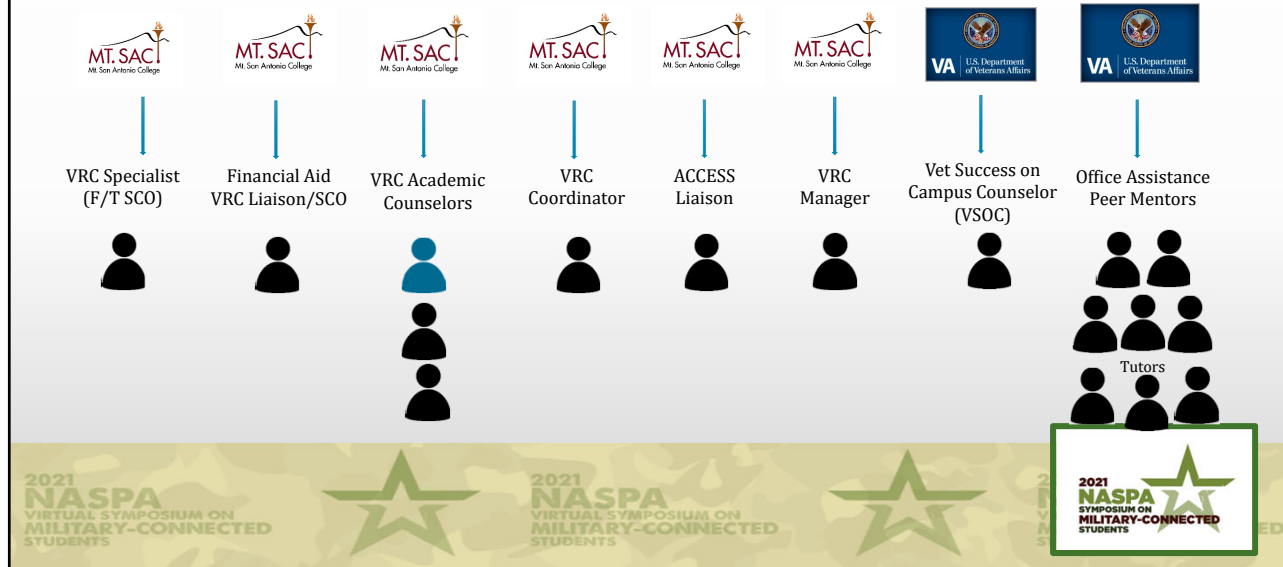
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Staffing



VRC Model Prior to Remote Work



- Specialized support services
- Monthly IN-DOCs/Orientations
- Weekly Workshops
- Emergency Loan Program
- University Tours
- Laptop/Tablet/ATS Rentals
- Campus-wide trainings
- Funding for student Travel
- 1 of 104 VSOC sites



VRC Physical Space

- 3 Private Offices
- Intake Counter (seating 3 staff)
- Kitchen (w/sink, fridge, Industrial Keurig, microwave and dishwasher)
- Peer Mentoring Space
- Lounge w/Reserve Library
- Flat Screen and Movie Library
- Study/Tutor Space
- Outdoor patio and seating area
- Access to 45 seat computer lab



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VRC as an Effective Engagement Resource

- GI Bill Processing is the Draw
- Wrap-Around Services focusing on:
 - Academic Success
 - Wellness
 - Camaraderie
- 26,000+ face-to-face contacts p/semester
- Home base for military-connected students



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Breakout Discussion – The Pivot

In switching modalities from face-to-face service to virtual service, please share in breakout groups the following:

What services did you immediately deem ESSENTIAL to keep your VRC virtually open? Why?

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Virtual Survey

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Remote Workshops/Info Sessions



- 50% Textbook Programs
- 40% Scholarships
- 40% Career Planning
- 40% Community Resources
- 40% Student Clubs
- 40% Veteran-Specific Activities
- 30% Personal Counseling

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Ideal day/times or Events

30% Tuesday daytime
10% Monday Night
0% Tuesday-Sunday Night



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What do you regret is no longer available in-person?

- 70%-VA paperwork submission
- 70%-Studying at the VRC
- 60% Computer use
- 60% Academic Counseling
- 10%-Workshops/Presentations



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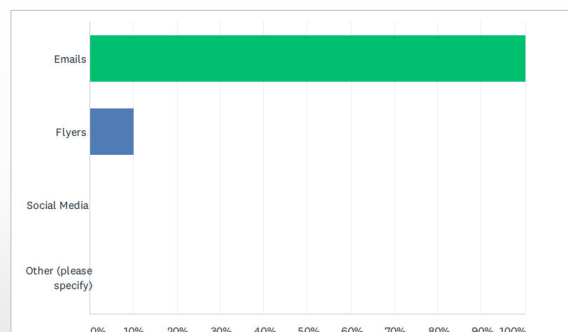


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Best Way to Keep You Informed?

- 100%-Email
- 10%-Flyers
- 0%-Social Media



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Virtual Front Desk

- Team
 - Certifying Official, Coordinator, Financial Aid Specialist, and Supervisor in one place
- Video
 - "Happy to connect with a person!"
- Screen Share
 - Easier to guide students
- Forward to Zoom
 - Calls/Emails

VIRTUAL FRONT DESK HOURS

Monday - Thursday
8:00am to 12:00pm

Friday
8:00am to 4:30pm

A VRC Team member is ready to help you LIVE with any questions you may have.

Zoom Meeting ID
937 6223 1156

Zoom Dial in Number
+1 346 248 7799

For more information, visit:
www.mtsac.edu/veterans

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VRC Weekly Newsletter

- Consolidation of Emails
 - Every Monday
- Staff Introductions
- VRC Events
- Campus Events
- Outside Resources
- Direct Access to Helpful Links
- Digital Bulletin Board
- Helpful Analytics



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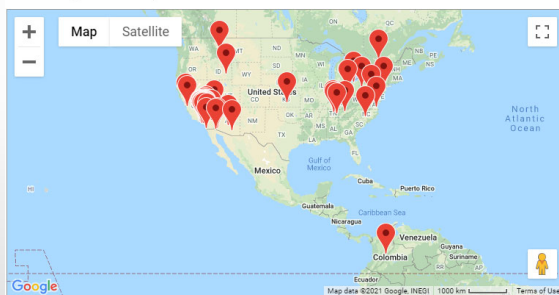
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Newsletter Stats

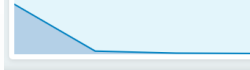
- 21 Newsletters with 14,949 total views

Visitors by location | Where did visits come from?



Analytics for Mt. SAC VRC Weekly Update

1420 visits all time 22 Feb - 25 Feb



Metrics
1420 Visitors

Locations
81 Locations

Email Report

Incoming
By traffic source

Websites 22

Direct 83

Email 1315

Interacting
What people are doing

Time spent

-1 min 1 min 2-5 m 5-10 m 10+ m

Delivered

Opened

Click

✓ Feb 1

✓ Feb 1

✓ Feb 1

✓ Feb 1

✓ Feb 1

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New Student Welcome Packages



- Personalized Welcome Note
- VRC Swag
- VRC Stickers/Magnets
- Campus Planner
- Folder for GI Bill Docs
- College Spiral Notebooks

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Money Mondays



- FASFA Application Assistance
- Outstanding Requirements
- Change of Income Assistance
- Scholarship Application Assistance
- Scholarship Workshops

Money Mondays!

Need Help filling out your FAFSA or applying for SCHOLARSHIPS?
Do you have outstanding FA Requirements that need to be cleared?
Interested in applying for scholarships but don't know how?

Our VRC Liaisons are available ALL semester to help with any Financial Aid or Scholarship questions you may have!

VRC Financial Aid Liaison Naomi Spinella	VRC Scholarship Liaison Teresa Pham
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EVERY Monday from 2pm to 4pm

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Virtual Drop-In Hours w/ACCESS Liaison

- Available Once a Week via Zoom
- Establish ACCESS services
- Accommodations Support
- Quick Questions

Need extra time on a test?

Accessibility Resources for Students

Would having a note taker make class easier?

Meet & Greet
WITH ELOISE REYES

Come in and chat with Eloise the Veterans ACCESS Liaison, learn about all the services & accommodations you may qualify for.



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Virtual Drop-In Hours w/Vet Success on Campus Counselor

- Once a Week via Webex
- Help with any VA Questions
- Referrals to VA Services
- Quick Questions



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Drop-in Virtual Counseling

- Available Monday - Thursday
- Morning & Evening Hours
- 15 Min Drop-In's
- Support Front Desk

Virtual Counseling Sessions

The Mt. SAC VRC is offering online services to military-connected students during this time of temporary remote/online instruction. Online Vet Counseling services provides students the opportunity to interact with a Vet Counselor in an online environment.

VRC students may select one of three ways* to interact with a VRC Counselor by selecting one of the options below (please ensure you are utilizing **Google Chrome** as your web browser before making your selection):

Email VRC Counselor

Drop-in Appointment
(For both Speeches w/VRC Counselor)

Schedule Phone Appt.
w/VRC Counselor

Schedule Video
Appt. w/VRC Counselor

*NOTE: When emailing VRC Counselors, please include your Mt. SAC Student ID number in the body of your correspondence.

First Week of Spring 2021

Monday 2/22	8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Tuesday 2/23	8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Wednesday 2/24	10:30 am to 2:00 pm 2:30 pm to 7:00 pm
Thursday 2/25	10:30 am to 2:00 pm 2:30 pm to 7:00 pm

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Video/Phone Counseling Appointments

- All Services Offered on Campus have Transitioned Virtually
- 45 minute Appointments
- Low NO Show Rate



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Virtual Events



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Finals Survival Kits

Students who completed a request form via Newsletter received:

- Snacks
- Finals Supplies
- Mt. SAC VRC Swag



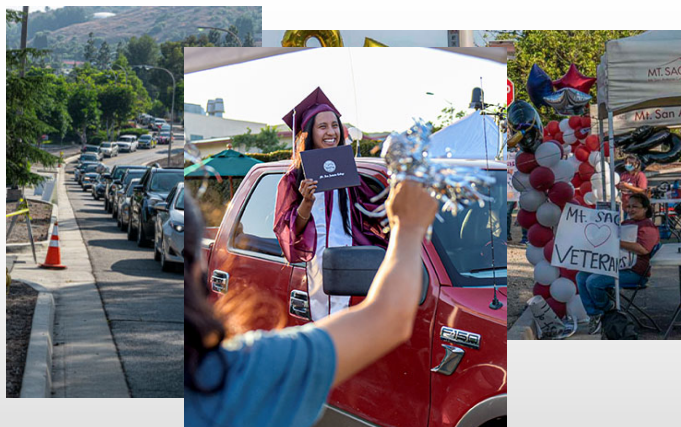
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End of the Year Recognition Drive-Thru



- Recognition Video
- Drive-Thru Scholarship Certificates
- Drive-Thru VRC Grad Medal Pick-Up
- Drive-Thru Graduation Tent

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Social Media



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Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Engagement
- Zoom Fatigue
- Signing Docs
- Staff Morale
- High Touch vs. Quick Responses
- Finding a Work Flow
- Working in Silos

Lessons Learned:

- Engagement
- Go to Them
- Celebrate the small victories
- Engage families
- Partner with technologically advanced offices
- Work in the Gray

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Contact Info:

Mt. SAC Veterans Resource Center

909-274-4250

veterans@mtsac.edu

www.mtsac.edu/veterans

Desiree Marquez – dmarquez@mtsac.edu

Jazmin Vargas – jvargas@mtsac.edu

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Questions

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