

**Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)
Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program (CFDA 84.116G)**

FY 2010 New Grant Awards by Grantee Name

California State University, Fullerton (CA) P116G100185

Title: Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) is a designated Hispanic Serving Institution, the second largest university in California, with a spring 2010 enrollment of 32,611. Located within a 50-mile radius of the university are two military bases and a Veterans Administration Hospital. Over the past five years the college has enrolled 2,825 veteran students. CSUF proposes establishing a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success to provide veteran students increased transition, academic, financial, emotional, and social support. The project's goals are to increase enrollment of veterans by 10 percent, their persistence by 20 percent and their four-year graduation rate by 3 percent. Activities to accomplish these goals include forming an advisory board to facilitate a single point of contact for veteran students; creating a new transitional University 300 course for veteran students; expanding the veterans' orientation; improving tracking of the academic progress of veteran students by using the Student Track and Early Alert Retentions System (STEARS); increasing faculty and counseling staff awareness of veteran issues; increasing veteran student awareness of academic enrichment programs; adding tutors; creating individual action plans for student veterans; and increasing outreach to veterans.

Total Award (3 years): \$318,000

Contact: Silas Abrego, California State University, Fullerton, 800 N. State College Boulevard, LH-805F, Fullerton, CA 92831, (657) 278-3221, sabrego@fullerton.edu

Central Community College (NE) P116G100184

Title: CENTRAL to VETERAN Student Success

Central Community College (CCC) will implement *CENTRAL to VETERAN Student Success*, a three-year model program to develop a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success. Goal 1 of the project is to create a Center of Excellence for Veteran Students engaging faculty, staff and external partners in addressing the comprehensive needs of veteran students. Goal 2 is to establish a model of best practices and to serve as a resource hub for other community colleges implementing similar programs. A variety of activities are proposed to achieve these goals. Examples include installing video phones in the college's learning centers to reduce geographic barriers; expanding recruitment outreach to debriefing locations; deploying six student veteran ambassadors to serve on outreach teams; all-college training to help personnel understand veterans' challenges; forming a team to enhance data collection methods on the veteran student population; creating a new code for the college's Student Notification Progress System to identify veteran students in academic difficulty; and providing follow-up at critical points in the semester to offer tutoring or other support services. CCC hopes to increase enrollment of veteran students from a baseline of 175 to at least 834 by 2013 and increase the veteran persistence rate from 47 percent to 80 percent. CCC intends to sustain the capacity built through this grant through full support of the College Board of Governors and the College Cabinet, the college's

Student Support Services providing leadership. The project involves all departments of the college, and it is anticipated that a major culture shift will take place with the *CENTRAL to VETERAN Student Success* program becoming an integral part of the institutional strategic plan.

Total Award (3 years): \$393,993

Contact: [Project Director To Be Announced] Authorized Representative – Gregory Smith, Central Community College, (308) 398-7300, gsmith@cccneb.edu

Central Florida, University of (FL) P116G100287

Title: UCF Veterans Academic Resource Center of Excellence

As the third largest university campus in the United States, the University of Central Florida (UCF) has the opportunity to have a significant impact on the returning veteran population and to increase these students' access to a bachelor's degree. With a main campus and 11 sites throughout Central Florida, UCF is leading the way to increase access to and completion of baccalaureate degrees in Florida. In fall 2009, UCF decided to increase the type and number of resources available to its growing veteran student population by centralizing multiple, highly needed services in one location. With strong support from university administration, a Veterans Academic Resource Center concept was created. This new center will provide office space, study space, and lounge space for veteran students. Through this central location, veteran students will have access to many university offices and resources without having to travel across campus. In addition, the new facility will provide greater access to virtual resources, such as a veteran services interactive web site, and allow staff to communicate through the latest technology with veteran students no matter where they are. UCF intends to achieve the following with its new Veterans Academic Resource Center:

- 1) Increase access to and understanding of available campus resources for veteran students.
- 2) Enhance the academic success of veteran students by providing specialized tutoring and study space for veterans.
- 3) Increase UCF faculty and staff awareness and understanding of the issues returning veteran students face.
- 4) Increase first-year retention rates and degree completion rates for veteran students.

Total Award (3 years): \$367,607

Contact: Patricia Pates, University of Central Florida, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32816, (407) 823-6957, ppates@mail.ucf.edu

Cerritos College (CA) P116G100083

Title: Veterans Resource Center at Cerritos College

Returning veterans are a growing underserved population at colleges around the nation. Expanded educational benefits in the new GI Bill have increased enrollments, challenging colleges to address the educational and support needs of this traditionally at-risk group. At Cerritos College, veteran students are currently provided a number of programs and services, but the campus lacks a cohesive approach for serving this population. A Veterans Task Force was recently formed to assess veteran students' needs and formulate a strategy for improving service. After polling student veterans and holding discussions with personnel in key service areas, an approach to meeting the identified needs was adopted: (1) to complete development of a campus

one-stop Veterans Resource Center in space already allocated by the District; (2) to undertake and complete a network of new and existing campus educational and support services that are integrated into a single, unified programmatic offering; and (3) collaborate with external partners to further develop program capacity and scope. The overarching program goal is to increase institutional capacity to provide veterans with educational and support services to achieve their academic goals, retain veterans in school, increase success and completion rates, and foster a veteran-friendly culture in the campus community. The college enrolled 421 veterans in the 2009-2010 academic year, an increase of 15 percent over the previous year. It plans to increase both the number of student veterans and the services provided to them.

Total Award (3 years): \$392,423

Contact: Stephanie Murguia, Cerritos College, 11110 Alondra Boulevard, Norwalk, CA 90650, (562) 860-2451, smurguia@cerritos.edu

Citrus College/Citrus Community College District (CA) P116G100016

Title: Operation VETS (Veterans Education and Transitional Services)

Located on the east side of the greater Los Angeles area, Citrus College is a two-year, single district public community college. It will implement a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success program, Operation VETS (Veterans Education and Transitional Services), to improve veteran student persistence rates, enrollment in transfer-level mathematics, mental health service offerings, peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities, and effectiveness of college-wide services related to veteran students. The college will: (1) establish a peer-to-peer mentoring program, "Veterans Mentors Across Campus;" (2) expand math preparation services; (3) strengthen mental health services; (4) provide additional training to staff and faculty related to veteran transitional challenges; (5) expand support and resources for the Veterans Center and Club; and (6) establish a campus-wide Operation VETS support team. Some of the intended outcomes by the end of three years include: (a) decrease in the percent of veteran students on probation / dismissal from a 19 percent baseline rate to 11 percent; (b) increase in veteran student enrollment in transfer-level mathematics from a seven percent baseline to 15 percent; (c) increase in veteran students' persistence rate from a 48 percent baseline to 70 percent; and (d) increase of at least 30 percent in the number of veteran students consulting with a mental health counselor from a one percent baseline.

Total Award (3 years): \$399,999

Contact: Arthur Briones, Citrus College/Citrus Community College District, 1000 W. Foothill Boulevard, Glendora, CA 91741, (626) 914-8516, abriones@citruscollege.edu

Community College of Allegheny County (PA) P116G100272

Title: Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

The Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) is the 16th largest community college in the nation, serving 32,000 credit students and 34,000 non-credit students each year. Over the last decade more than 6,000 veterans have enrolled at CCAC, with 594 enrolled during the 2009-2010 academic year. CCAC plans a model Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success, established as a single point of contact for interested and enrolling veterans. The Center will provide comprehensive, coordinated services to address the academic, financial, physical, and

social needs of regional veterans, using a data-driven evaluation for continuous improvement. Through the Center of Excellence, CCAC will address multiple barriers that veterans face when transitioning to college by providing a comprehensive package of bundled services, including Financial Aid, Registration, Career Services, Student Health, Advisement, Disability Services, Student Life, and Job Placement. A unique Vet Prep Program and Computer Literacy Training will prepare veterans for the rigors of college. Veterans will participate in campus-based learning communities designed around a First-Year Experience course to increase their academic and social integration into college. Veterans' clubs will be created at each campus, and a Virtual Veterans' Club will serve the needs of veterans enrolled in distance learning classes. Academic persistence and graduation rates of veteran students will be monitored. CCAC will also collaborate with local agencies and community organizations to serve the educational needs of homeless veterans and veterans from underrepresented groups in higher education.

Total Award (3 years): \$423,435

Contact: Mary Jo Guercio, Community College of Allegheny College, 808 Ridge Avenue, Byers Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15212, (412) 237-2723, mguercio@ccac.edu

Maryland, University of (MD) P116G10-0183

Title: Establishing the Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success at the University of Maryland

The university will use its grant to establish a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success designed to increase awareness, communication, coordination, and information dissemination across all campus units (academic and administrative services, physical and mental health services, campus life/student involvement, etc.) serving veterans. The Center will enhance direct service to prospective and current veteran students by serving as a hub for information and resources available to a diverse veteran student population. Its academic, service, social, and advising programs will provide transitional support and leadership opportunities to veteran members of the campus community. Campus activities and research (facilitated by the Center in conjunction with nationally renowned university research faculty) will aim to increase campus and national awareness of the veteran experience, increase enrollment of veteran students, and ensure their academic, personal, and professional success at the University of Maryland and in higher education nationally.

Total Award (3 years): \$395,791

Contact: Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, University of Maryland, 0110 Stamp Student Union, College Park, MD 20742, (301) 314-8505, mguenzler@umd.edu

Missouri State University (MO) P116G100258

Title: Veterans Incentive Program (VIP)

Missouri State University proposes a comprehensive program available on two campus locations to serve its rapidly growing veteran student enrollment, up 46 percent on the Springfield campus and 37 percent on the West Plains campus. Given current increases in *identified* veterans on campus, the university anticipates at least 825 veterans in the 2010-11 academic year. The program will have a full-time project director, paid from university funds, two full-time project specialists from grant funds, and student assistants. The university will recruit and serve all

veterans but with a focus on those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The university's center of excellence will be known as the Veterans Incentive Program (VIP) Center, modeled after best practices in TRIO programs and existing Veteran Centers throughout the nation. Services will include a welcoming Veteran Center with staff to provide personal counseling, needs assessment, written Plans of Action, strategic referrals, interventions, intensive follow-up and tracking, all leading to increased enrollment, persistence and graduation.

Total Award (3 years): \$386,776

Contact: Jennifer Kautzman, Missouri State University, 901. S. National Avenue, Springfield, MO 65897, (417) 836-6199, jkautzman@missouristate.edu

Mount Wachusett Community College (MA) P116G100246

Title: MWCC Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) is located less than 20 miles from a reserves forces training area and Air Force base, including numerous veteran organizations that serve thousands of veterans in the region. It had an enrollment of 2,912 students in 2009 of which 179 were veterans (16 percent of enrollment). It will establish *The Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success* to address the unique academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veterans transitioning from soldier to student. The goal of the center is to increase enrollment (by 100 percent), persistence (by 20 percent), and completion (by 30 percent) of veteran students at MWCC. The center will provide an intensive outreach and recruitment strategy, special admissions and transfer assistance, veterans' benefits and financial aid advising, veteran orientation, a veteran transition course with a hybrid online component for continued connection with veterans, intrusive advising techniques with a veteran advisor, coordinated study groups, mentoring program by veterans and for veterans, a textbook loan program to assist veterans struggling with delayed veteran educational benefits, and an adaptive equipment loan program to assist veterans struggling with traumatic brain injury and hearing loss.

Total Award (3 years): \$400,000

Contact: Glenn Roberts, Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440, (978) 630-9237, g_roberts@mwcc.mass.edu

National University (CA) P116G100289

Title: National University Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

National University will establish the Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success on its Spectrum campus located in San Diego, California, a national hub for both veterans and active military. The Center will provide a single point of contact to coordinate comprehensive support services for veteran students. The Center will build on National University's successful track record of serving veterans, active duty military personnel and their families, Department of Defense employees and selective military reserve members since its founding in 1971. Currently, National University has nearly 3,000 veteran students and a wide range of veteran services that will be bolstered by new programming established through the creation of the Center. The goal of the project is: *To develop and sustain National University's Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success, that supports veterans' postsecondary education through the centralized coordination of a comprehensive set of services that address the*

academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students, thereby easing their transition to campus, increasing their retention and graduation rates and aiding in career placement. Specific objectives of the grant include increasing veteran student services, enrollment, retention, graduation, and job placement.

Total Award (3 years): \$621,299

Contact: Joseph Zavala, National University, 11255 North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla, CA 92037, (858) 642-8024, jzavala@nu.edu

Pierce College Fort Steilacoom (WA) P116G100180

Title: Pierce College Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

Proposed is a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (CEVSS) that will give veteran students a comfortable designated space with a single point of contact to support their navigation of higher education and beyond. The CEVSS project objectives for the first year will be to: (1) increase veteran student enrollment at Pierce College from 1,084 to 1,400; (2) increase veteran student persistence rates from 30 percent to 40 percent; and (3) increase veteran student completion rates from 23 percent to 30 percent. CEVSS will accomplish these objectives and those for subsequent years by: providing a single point of contact to coordinate the support services available to veteran students; increasing awareness among veteran students of the support services available; reinforcing the existing support system in place for Pierce College students and being an advocate for veteran students; expanding needed support services such as tutoring and emergency assistance funds for veteran students; and increasing the faculty and staff's understanding of the effects of war zone stressors and the hidden barriers, unique obstacles, and complex needs of the veteran student population.

Total Award (3 years): \$363,679

Contact: Carol Green, Pierce College Fort Steilacoom, 9401 Farwest Drive SW, Lakewood, WA 98498, (253) 964-6584, cgreen@pierce.ctc.edu

San Jacinto Community College (TX) P116G100242

Title: Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success

Located in the southeast Gulf Coast region in metropolitan Houston, San Jacinto Community College (SJCCD) serves a diverse population of more than 27,000 students, 1,083 of which received Veterans Administration (VA) educational benefits in 2009-2010. The college is a Hispanic-Serving Institution and received the Veteran-Friendly designation for 2009-2011 from Service Members Opportunity Colleges and Military.com. The college has recently responded to its veteran students in four specific ways: (1) Beginning fall 2009, it adopted a new policy to accept up to 17 hours of **transfer credit** from military transcripts; (2) A **Veterans Education Network** was also created at that time as a way to identify and train military-supportive specialized personnel in student services; (3) A **Veteran Mentoring Program** was established to identify faculty and staff with prior military service to serve as mentors to incoming veteran students; and (4) The **Veterans' Services Task Force** was established to review the college's veteran programs and practices to identify areas of strength, areas where improvement was needed, and gaps in services. SJCCD intends to increase its effectiveness in serving veterans by creating **Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Services** on each of its three campuses.

The purpose is to provide a single point of contact to coordinate comprehensive support services for veteran students, with the goal of increasing enrollment of and persistence and completion by veteran students.

Total Award (3 years): \$398,635

Contact: Kevin McKisson, San Jacinto Community College, 8060 Spencer Highway, Pasadena, TX, 77504, (281) 998-6150, kevin.mckisson@sjcd.edu

Santa Monica College (CA) P116G100278

Title: Santa Monica College's Veteran Resource Center

Until recently, the college enrolled an average of 300 veterans each year. However, in the past two years, that number has nearly doubled. For fall 2010, the college expects more than 525 student veterans will enroll. The dramatic increase in veteran student enrollment means the college cannot continue to serve veterans as it has done in the past. Therefore, Santa Monica College (SMC) recently took steps to develop a model Veterans Resource Center that integrates nationally-recognized best practices, addresses the unique needs of SMC's students, and serves as a resource for faculty and staff as they work to create a teaching and learning environment that is conducive to the academic success of student veterans. The college will now establish a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success with a two-pronged approach to address the teaching and learning needs of student veterans and improve their academic student success rates. The first component of this project will formalize the emerging Veterans' Resource Center and expand the direct service offerings available, coordinating their delivery with other campus entities, including disabled students. New services will include faculty and peer tutoring and mentoring, a computer-mediated study center, on-site transfer advising facilitated by regional four-year institutions, and on-site financial aid and career planning workshops. The second component of this project will raise awareness among the campus community of the needs and concerns of student veterans through professional development activities targeting students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This will address a campus climate that veterans report is at best uncomfortable and at worst hostile. By the end of the three-year project, the college expects to serve 80 percent of the student veterans enrolled each year, provide professional development activities to a minimum of 150 faculty and staff, and increase veteran student success by 12 percent (including retention, persistence, and completion).

Total Award (3 years): \$399,613

Contact: Linda Sinclair, Santa Monica College, 1900 Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90405, (310) 434-8202, sinclair_linda@smc.edu

Shoreline Community College (WA) P116G100045

Title: Combat to Campus to Community: Creating Bridges for Student Veteran Success

A Center of Excellence for Veterans Student Success will be established to serve the growing number of veteran students moving from combat to campus and then into communities they served and protected. Shoreline will use its grant to achieve the project objectives of increasing veteran student enrollment, persistence, completion, and engagement in the community. Planned is a multi-faceted approach to expand veteran student success focused on critical transitions for veterans, thus the project design of *C³: From Combat to Campus to Community*.

Special attention will be given to mitigating barriers veterans face in transitioning from: (1) combat to campus; and from (2) campus to community. In addition to this focus on transitional bridges, current programs and services will be enhanced by increasing information and support prior to entry, strengthening existing services, augmenting resources, and facilitating campus communication and accountability around veterans' issues. College commitment will remain firm upon completion of the grant to sustain efforts for veteran students.

Total Award (3 years): \$370,356

Contact: Kim Thompson, Shoreline Community College, 16101 Greenwood Avenue N., Room 5226, Shoreline, WA 98133, (206) 546-4544, kthompson@shoreline.edu

St. Petersburg College (FL) P116G100078

Title: Serving Veterans through a Full-Service Center of Excellence

St. Petersburg College (SPC) will develop a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success to provide full-service centers on its four major campuses. Proposed is a holistic approach for meeting veterans' needs designed to increase the enrollment, persistence and graduation of veteran students. A wide range of activities is proposed, for example:

- Establishing a veteran student support team that will serve in an advisory capacity for the project. This team will be comprised of representatives from Counseling and Advising, the College's MAP (My Answer Place) Centers, career development staff, college and Veterans' Administration staff whose primary functions are to serve veterans, and disabilities services.
- Providing a full-time coordinator for the project.
- Providing opportunities for faculty and staff to receive training in understanding issues faced by veterans, as well as volunteer opportunities for faculty and staff that are veterans to become involved in project activities.
- Conducting an annual symposium that will provide an opportunity for veterans to receive updated information from the Veterans Administration and for faculty and staff to receive information and training on veterans' issues.
- Working closely with SPC's Institutional Effectiveness unit on the design, development and implementation of an evaluation model that will monitor the rates of veteran student enrollment, persistence, and completion as well as additional outcomes such as Point-of-Service satisfaction surveys and evaluations of specific activities such as the annual symposium.
- Designing the project from the beginning to insure sustainability after the grant period.

Total Award (3 years): \$314,128

Contact: Jeff Cavanagh, St. Petersburg College, P.O. Box 13489, St. Petersburg, FL 33733, (727) 341-3241, cavanagh.jeff@spcollege.edu