

We Are Who We Serve: Veterans, Reservists and National Guardsmen



VA Central California & Fresno State –University 8



Jeremy Chapman, Enrollment and Eligibility Assistant at VA Central California
Eluterio Escamilla, Director Student Support Services Veterans at Fresno State
Russell Gross, Veteran Counselor Student Support Services Veterans at Fresno State

"The class has been a very big eye opener for me, to actually see what VA benefits there are out there aside from the hospital" – University 8 Veteran Student

Overview of University 8

- University 8-03 is a 50-min., 1-unit course that meets once a week. The course is designed to give meaningful and useful information to Veteran students about their non-cognitive learning and study strategies to help promote student responsibility for individual performance.

Reason for Action

- Veterans and Civilians may not be aware of the unique challenges that separating from military service and returning to civilian life can present.
- Veterans may find difficulty:
 - Reconnecting with family and re-establishing a role in the family.
 - Joining or creating a community (College, Work, Family)
 - Preparing to enter the college or work force and adjusting to a different pace of life and work.
 - Adjusting to providing basic necessities (e.g., food, clothing, housing).
 - Managing Stress and focusing on the task at hand
 - Establishing services. (VBA, VHA, NCA.)

Current State

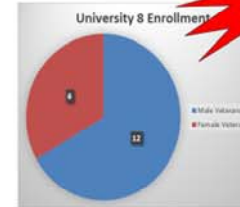
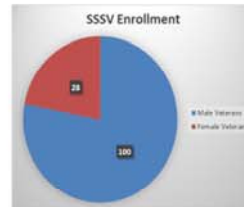
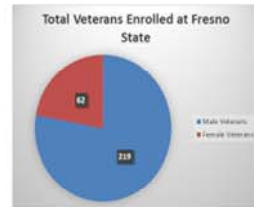
- Fall 2017, there are a total of 281 undergraduate Veterans enrolled at Fresno State receiving VA benefits and services.
- These Veterans traditionally have transferred from a community college and have already been out of the service ~2-3 years.
- Many Veterans are not enrolled in VHA healthcare and/or have not filed a service connected claim.
- The Veterans enrolled in the SSSV University 8 course focus on improving non-cognitive skills to improve their success at University.
- 45% of all Undergrad Veterans enrolled at Fresno State are also enrolled in Student Support Services Veterans (SSSV)
- 15% of Veteran students enrolled in SSSV are also enrolled in University 8.

Target State

- Fiscal years 2017-2018: 100% of Veterans enrolled in the University 8 class will have a full understanding of various stress management techniques, suicide prevention strategies, non-cognitive study skills and Veteran transition and care management support to help Veteran students remain in school and reach the goal of graduation.
- Fiscal years 2018-Beyond: Provide a 3 unit transition course at Fresno State as well as all Central Valley Community Colleges available to any Veteran who would like to enroll.

Gap Analysis

- Not all Veterans enrolled at Fresno State are eligible for the University 8 class. Only those that are currently enrolled in the TRIO SSSV program are eligible. SSSV accounts for 45% of all Veterans enrolled at Fresno State.
- Ideally, all Veteran Students enrolled at Fresno State should have access to Veterans specific transition education that prepares the returning service member with non-cognitive skills training to be successful in school.



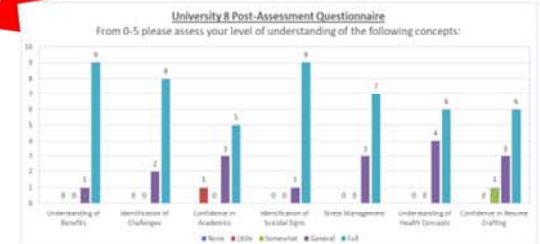
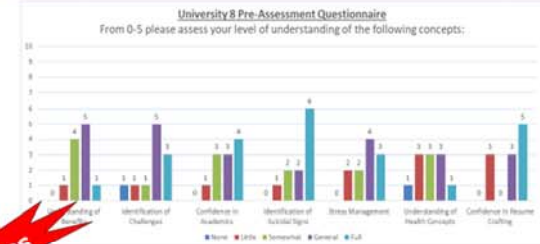
*These graphs represent Fall 2017 data.

University 8 Course Objectives

- Enroll eligible Veterans for healthcare and services and provide education on filing a service connected claim, utilizing healthcare benefits and services, overall benefits and services (GI Bill, Home Loan, etc.) information and National Cemetery Administration information.
- Provide education and resources on Veterans transition and care management. Specifically, transitioning from active duty to college life.
- Provide three sessions on suicide prevention including safety planning; one at the beginning of the semester, the middle and the end.
- Provide instruction from VA subject matter experts to improve the health and well-being of Student Veterans. Including:

Stress Management: Mindfulness, Tai Chi, Yoga
Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
Effective Journaling, Time Management and Study Habits
Veterans Transition classes to family, work and school
Resume Builders Workshop
Service Animal Presentation
Suicide Prevention and Safety Planning

Outcomes



- "At first I felt that I did not need this course, but throughout the semester I have learned so much about myself on how to manage stress and how to manage my time better." – University 8 Student Veteran
- "Absolutely loved the course. I believe it would be a huge help for other vets like myself if University 8 is extended to vets in the community colleges such as FCC and Clovis. This way more vets will be better prepared before they come to University." – University 8 Student Veteran
- "The University 8 class was very informational. I received so much from it. The most thing I enjoyed or like was the Tai Chi. It was very relaxing and my first time participating. I would definitely recommend this class to other veterans." University 8 Student Veteran
- One Student Veteran enrolled in the class was connected with the Administrative Officer for EMS and received a job interview at VA Central California within a week.
- As a result of University 8, VA has been invited to the Veterans Summit in Pomona, CA in April 2018 to discuss the course and best practices.

VA Central California Connected Care Department