Section 1: The Year in Review

1. Departmental accomplishments and challenges.

In the summer of 2018, the Veteran Services Office (VSO) finally returned to full-staff with the addition of newly minted 49er and Marine Corps veteran, Talacia Cain. With the addition of Ms. Cain as well as the return to Barnard Hall, the VSO began down the road to becoming the office that we have always wanted to be.

As a start to that process, the work study program is fully-staffed for the first time (nine students) and a formalized training program has been implemented. This includes a half day workshop before the start of classes, inclusion in a monthly staff meetings and professional development within those staff meetings.

In August the VSO hosted their first welcome dinner for our militarily affiliated students and families. This first-time event was attended by nearly 100 people and served as an outstanding opportunity to integrate our new students with our returning students and to help build on the concept that going to school is a family endeavor and that we understand, welcome and respect that.

As we moved into the later part of the fall, we were able to move our students into the newly renovated Veterans Lounge in Barnard. The completion of this project coincided with the VSO hosting a member of the University of North Carolina’s Board of Governors on campus in conjunction with the Office of the Chancellor; providing an opportunity to showcase not only our new veterans space, but a broader picture of what the UNC Charlotte campus is doing in its work with our militarily affiliated students and with the military as a whole.

The one significant challenge we faced in the fall term was the failure of the Veterans Administration (VA) to begin timely payment to our student veterans of their Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). This was not a UNC Charlotte specific issue, but was a national issue brought about by the implementation of a new approach to determining BAH. It did, however, result in a significant increase in our calls as well as walk-in’s. Our campus partners were a tremendous asset in helping us support these individuals (short-term loans, class holds, housing payments…). The issue was resolved by the VA by late November and did not recur in the spring term.

The spring term saw the transition of our certification teams efforts begin to bear fruit as they changed our certification process to expedite the processing timeline and
accuracy (removing the need for multiple corrections; not end product accuracy). 
This change allowed the team to certify the record number of spring students in
record time (ensuring that BAH was received in the beginning in February rather than
delayed into March as in the past). This new process will continue to bear fruit as we
(and our students) see less debt letters in subsequent terms. The introduction of this
change also brought about a better collaborative relationship with our campus
partners as it helped initiate quarterly “check-in” meetings with these individuals
(including third party billing, financial aid, the bursar’s office).

The office continued to produce outstanding, on-going programming in partnership
with OASES, the Counseling Center, the Career Center and other campus offices.
Additionally, stand-alone programming included the November Veterans Week
events (Roll Call and Warriors Breakfast), programs targeting our women’s veteran
population (bi-weekly coffee hours as well as monthly events that have included:
brunch, yoga, and community outings), Camo Classic (relocated to the spring term in
an effort to begin to create two separate “tent-pole” events) as well as community
building efforts conducted throughout the year in the Veterans Lounge continue.

The VSO also partnered with numerous on and off campus partners in producing and
supporting:
• NCSTRIVE (NC Student Transition Resource Initiative for Veteran’s
  Education) Regional one-day conference (April 2019)
• “Improving Health and Reintegration of Veterans with Service Connected
  Disabilities Conference” (February 2019)
• NCDBA (NC Defense Business Association) partnership; worked in
  conjunction with Charlotte Research Institute, Corporate Partnerships and the
  Graduate School to conduct western regional meeting as well as plan
  subsequent sessions on campus.

During the 2018-2019 fiscal academic year, the office certified:
  284 veterans (or dependents using benefits) in summer I 2018
  224 veterans (or dependents using benefits) in summer II 2018
  942 veterans (or dependents using benefits) in fall 2018
  923 veterans (or dependents using benefits) in spring 2019

These 2,373 certified students took 27,342 credit hours generating more than
$9,300,000 in tuition and fees revenue for the university as well as appx. $35.000,000
in funds paid directly to the individual students who then spend those monies on
tuition and fees and in the greater Charlotte-Mecklenburg community.

Moving forward, the largest perceived challenge is staffing levels. The VA
recommendation for certifying officials is 1 for every 250 unique students and
currently we are closer to 1:500. With the broader introduction this fall of A/B terms
into the fall and spring semesters and the extra workload that this will bring (not just
certifications, but grade reports, reporting out to the VA, times a year that tuition and
fees must be calculated…), this shortfall is only going to be exacerbated. We are
countering this by moving some certification responsibilities onto our administrative assistant; but at the same time, we are also making efforts to grow and formalize our programmatic efforts (and create career development opportunities for staff members), and thus are assigning some programmatic responsibilities to our Lead Certifying official. The need to add, first, an associate/assistant director and second, another certifying official (down the road) are items that we must begin to address if we are to continue to grow and become the fully robust office that we strive to be.

2. Student success story

On Saturday, May 11th the VSO graduated one of our outstanding militarily affiliated students, Ms. Abigail Godwin. Abi graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with minors in African Studies and Biology. She will continue her education in the fall before enrolling in a Physicians Assistants MS program in the spring.

Born in Germany, but most recently from Rosewood, NC, Ms. Godwin serves in the National Guard as a Combat Medic/Healthcare specialist and used her benefits related to that service while attending UNC Charlotte. During her time as an undergraduate, she served as a key member of the VSO’s work study team. Abi was our “go to” student worker; capable of designing professional quality materials, or organizing an event!

Abi was an outstanding asset, not only to the veteran’s community, but to the campus as a whole. She was an active member of her sorority (Zeta Phi Beta) where she held multiple Executive Board positions (including the Presidency) and served on their national board as well. She was also a member of the National Panhellenic Council’s Executive Board. In addition to her involvement with the VSO and her sorority, Abi was an active member of the UNC Charlotte NAACP, the National Coalition of Negro Women, 100 Black Women, Senior Class Council and the Physician’s Assistant Association.

3. Use of technology.

The VSO continues to have an active presence on both Twitter (#UNCCvetservices) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/UNCCvetservices/); promoting events and activities both in advance and often taking advantage of Facebook’s live-streaming capabilities. This year we have tasked a work study to build-out our social media presence and we are now also on Instagram (unccvetservices) and LinkedIn (UNCCvetservices).

Additionally, Veteran Student Connection “Project” in Canvas continues to function as an active site for discussion and inquiry. The page’s focus is on event
announcements and calendaring, creating a forum for discussion among veterans, and to make resources available to the UNC Charlotte veteran student population.

Finally, we continue to work with Information Technology on Project ID – 8 - Veteran Students Self Service Portal. (See section 3)

### Section 2: Professional Development

#### Annual Reporting

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<th>Dean of Students: Veteran Services Office</th>
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<td>College/Division</td>
<td>Division of Student Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Unit Manager</td>
<td>William Wilson</td>
</tr>
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**Note:** It is not necessary to fill in each box

#### Individual accomplishments (Use first and last name)

Tori Williams: Graduated with her Master of Arts degree in Communication with a concentration in Public Relations, from Southern New Hampshire University

#### Publications for 2018-2019 (Use first and last name)

NA

#### Honors and Awards (Use first and last name)

#### Conference Presentations (Use first and last name)

#### Professional Association and or Involvement (Use first and last name)

William Wilson: Southeastern Council on Military Education (SECOME), Board Member
Piedmont Veterans Coalition (PVC), Board Member
UNC Military Affairs Working Group

#### Grants or Funding obtained (indicate grantor, grantee, amount, and whether funds are new or continuing)

- $15,000: Kenneth R. Miller gift to fund books and supplies to veteran students’
- $5,000: Kenneth R. Miller gift to fund Campus based Green Zone training
- $3,000: Kenneth R. Miller gift to support the Student Veterans Association
- $2,000: Kenneth R. Miller gift to fund Veterans Park

### Section 3: Reporting for Plans/Goals for 2018-19

- *Specifically, as we move back into our renovated office and lounge space we will:*
  - Take advantage of the proximity to make better use of our VA work study students...
The consolidation of the office and the lounge back into Barnard, in addition to the new training regiment with the VA work study students has facilitated this as planned. Additionally, we have been able to task the work studies more intentionally to increase our marketing, social media, and programmatic presence.

- Develop more customer focused documentation with “take-aways” that our students can refer back to throughout their time at UNC Charlotte.
- Pairing this, in conjunction with our offices marketing investment is beginning to bear fruit as we move into the summer SOAR season. Later this month, we will have a fully redesigned marketing as well as materials approach.

- Work with ITS to make the certification process as transparent as possible.
- Progress on this project has been slowed due to overall campus priorities and resources, Information Technology Project ID – 8 - Veteran Students Self Service Portal will create a web-based application that will serve as a self-service portal for Veteran Students as well as a single view of the student case information for the staff to track and monitor a veteran students tenure at UNC Charlotte. Current projected timeline for completion is December 2019.

- Use Veteran Campus Climate Survey to help develop a VSO Master Plan
  - Used the initial survey results to revise and improve year two survey. Introduced services related questions help inform process improvements. The information obtained from this survey (and the year two iteration), combined with the team’s work in developing their Mission, Vision and Values will be combined with the results of the Program review to develop a Master Plan.

- Develop and implement faculty and staff veteran climate survey
  - Put on hold due to the late delivery of first climate survey data.

- Work across campus to help UNC Charlotte live up to its founding ideals
  - Partnering with HR for an initial roll-out of Green Zone training this summer. The goals include: build cultural awareness of veterans on campus, provide context for what it means to transition to the civilian culture from military culture, clarify reasonable expectations for adaptations to new lifestyles, identify PTSD as a common disorder among military veterans and where to get help on campus, deconstruct preconceptions and prejudices, and form productive approaches when veteran behavior is problematic

- Continue to enhance campus and community outreach through joint programs with both on and off campus partnerships
  - As the office has stabilized, we have been able to build/rebuild bridges both on campus and in the community. We are beginning to be seen as a trusted partner.

- Continued progress on the development of the campus Veterans Park project
  - Ground breaking was Monday, May 27th. Expected completion is fall 2019 with plans to host a grand opening during Veterans Week in November.

Section 4: Plans/Goals for Next Year
- NA