

P.A.S.S. Report

(Periodic Administrative Self Study)



**For the
Office of Veterans and Military Resources
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Friday, January 18, 2019



Periodic Administrative Self Study (PASS) Report
for the
Office of Veteran and Military Resources

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Monday, December 10, 2018 (Submitted)
Friday, January 11, 2019 (Reviewed)
Monday, January 14, 2019 (Reviewed)
Friday, January 18, 2019 (Resubmitted)

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Monday, December 10, 2018 (Reviewed)
Monday, December 10, 2018 (Submitted)
Friday, January 11, 2019 (Reviewed)
Monday, January 14, 2019 (Reviewed)
Friday, January 18, 2019 (Reviewed & Resubmitted)

Reviewed, Edited, and Submitted by:

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Monday, December 17, 2018 (Reviewed)
Friday, January 18, 2019 (Reviewed)
Tuesday, January 22, 2019 (Submitted)



Periodic Administrative Self Study (PASS)

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Periodic Administrative Self Study (PASS)

I. Executive Summary

Under the supervision of the new coordinator of the Office of Veterans and Military Resources (VMR), an audit of the office procedures was taken in the fall 2017 semester. The audit was conducted to assess the current state of the office and to develop a clear process on how to track and provide services to veteran-students.

II. Program Overview

a. Brief Organizational History (include significant changes in the past 5 years)

On September 18, 2017, a new coordinator of the Office of Veterans and Military Resources was hired to oversee the day-to-day operations of the office. The VMR Office also has a full-time college office assistant and a part-time certifying official to facilitate VMR processes. The roles of these two members has not changed. In the spring 2018 semester, the location of the VMR Office changed from Loew Hall, Rooms 332, 334 and 346 to Loew Hall, Rooms 328, 326 and 319. In addition, we acquired a new sofa, four new computers, a new coffee maker and a smart board for the Veteran's Lounge located in Loew Hall, Room 319.

b. Description of Services:

The VMR Office recruit students from local New York City Military Bases and the CUNY application pool. We assist veteran-students with filling out the admissions application, collecting application documents, and the submission of the CUNY admissions application waiver. The application waivers are sent to the CUNY - University Application Processing Center (UAPC). We also inform and assist veteran-student on how to submit their DD-214 (*Appendix I*), their "Certificate of Eligibility" (*Appendix II*) and how to fill out the intake form (*Appendix III*).

The VMR Office provides information and assistance using the college's course add/drop form (*Appendix IV*) that ensures all classes taken by veteran-students are in his/her curriculum pattern sheet (*ex. Liberal Arts – Appendix V*). We input the selected class schedule into the CUNYFIRST system. We track the academic progress of each veteran-student during the semester, to ensure adequate academic, attendance and credit progress. All of this information then permits the VMR Office to certify (*Appendix VI*) the veteran-student with the Veterans Administration (VA) and that the student is complying with his/her responsibilities. This entire process is called "*Certifying*" and it ensures that the Veteran Administration (VA) pays for the veteran-student's tuition, fees and Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). This process occurs every semester.

Currently, the congressional bill that describes the types of benefits available to veteran-students is called the "Forever G.I. Bill" also known as the "Colmery Act" (*Appendix VII*). This new bill was active as of August 1, 2018. Prior to the Forever G.I. Bill, there was the "Post 9/11 G.I. Bill". The primary differences to the above laws are:

1. The Forever G.I. bill educational benefits never expire.
2. The Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) in the Colmery Act was reduced from the BAH in the Post 9/11 Bill because more veterans are expected to take advantage of these educational benefits, because they do not expire.
3. Veterans now need to register for nine credits to receive BAH, before it was six credits.

Currently, there is an issue with the United States federal government updating and maintaining the Veteran Administration's computer information system used to keep track of veteran-students using the "Forever G.I. Bill" (*Appendix VIII*)

This system is called "*VA-Once*". The updating of the VA-Once system from the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill to the Forever G.I. Bill has created challenges; specifically, the timeliness of tuition and fee payments made to institutions of higher learning (IHL) and the BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing) payments made directly to veteran-students.

Because of the above, the process that The VMR Office implements to assist veteran-students has changed:

1. We have veteran-students fill out an intake form.
2. We request veteran-students to submit their DD-214.
3. We instruct the veteran-students on how to access the "Certificate of Eligibility Form" for submission to the VMR Office (this form informs the VMR Office what benefits the veteran-student is entitled to).
4. We help veteran-students fill out the admissions application form in the veterans' lounge.
5. We submit the veteran-student's application fee waiver to the CUNY Central Office liaison.
6. Veteran-students submit their "Certificate of Eligibility Form" to the VMR Office.
7. An appointment for academic advisement is made.
8. During academic advisement, we discuss the different degrees offered at Bronx Community College (A.A, A.S., A.A.S. and certificates), majors/careers, CUNY placement scores, curriculum pattern sheets, and access to CUNYFIRST, Financial Aid, ASAP, College Discovery, Veteran Work Study and the schedule of classes.
9. We add veteran-students to a parking permit list and then submit the list to the Bronco Card Services Office, which allows veteran-students to obtain parking privileges.
10. We submit veteran-students' information into the VA-Once data system in order to request payment for tuition, fees and the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH).

c. Mission Statement:

The Office of Veteran & Military Resources is committed to taking a proactive approach in informing veteran-students and service members about educational regulations and available benefits. We provide veteran-students an environment that connects them with college resources, and helps them navigate the enrollment and graduation processes.

d. Vision Statement

The vision of the Office of Veterans and Military Resources is to address the social needs of veteran-students and service members and increase the awareness of military culture on the BCC campus with the ultimate goal of helping them reach their educational goals and return into civilian life.

e. Department Goals

The VMR Office provides leadership, direction and oversight to new veteran-students and staff members. We assist new veteran-students applying to BCC until they graduate or leave BCC. The following goals were established:

1. Charter the veteran-student club in spring 2019.
2. Assist veteran-students with the CUNY/BCC application.
3. Assist with certifying veteran-students enrollment.
4. Continue collaborating with Public Safety, DisAbility Services and Personal Counseling to help with veteran-student issues.
5. Use STARFISH and CUNYFIRST to identify veteran-student on probation and collaborate with the Academic Success Center for probation workshops.
6. Collaborate with the Learning Commons on offering math tutoring to veteran-students.
7. Update available VMR services on the Bronx Community College website.
8. Develop a survey (*Appendix IX*) for advisement of veteran-students.
9. Enhance the early registration process for veteran-students
10. Provide training/workshops opportunities to update the staff member's knowledge of services available to veteran-students.
11. Purchase new furniture for veteran-student lounge area.
12. Update the Veterans and Military Office bulletin boards with employment opportunities, health benefits, job training, housing information, and community events.

f. Student Learning Outcomes

The enclosed VMR Office survey will be implemented during the fall 2018-registration period for the spring 2019 semester. The data will not be available until mid-spring 2019.

g. Alignment with BCC Strategic Plan

Student success initiatives/activities

1. The veteran-student club was chartered after three years of inactivity. (*Goal 1: 1.2, 1.3 and Goal 7: 7.2*)
2. Veterans Field Day: In recognition of Veterans, month was on November 2, 2017 at the Ohio Field. The Army, Army National Guard, Air Force Recruiters, Lehman College's Veterans office, Lehman Admissions Office, and John Jay College recruiters attended. (*Goal 4: 4.1, 4.2 4.3*)
3. Commissioner Sutton of the Veterans Administration met with President Thomas Isekenegbe, Dean Bernard Gantt, veteran-students (James Taylor, Marcellus McCullough, Krystal Valentin) and John Rosa, Coordinator of the VMR Office. (*Goal 2: 2.1, Goal 4: 4.1*)
4. Three veteran-students were invited to attend NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio's Veterans Breakfast (*Goal 7: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 Goal 4.1, 4.2, 4.3*)
5. Two honor veteran-students were recognized at the CUNY Veterans Academic Awards Breakfast. (*Goal 1. 1.3 Goal 2: 2.1*)
6. Veteran-students marched at the Veterans Day Parade (*Goal 7:7.2, 7.4*)
7. Access to VA-Once was established for Dolly, James and John. (*Goal 6: 6.3*)
8. The VMR Office and Public Safety collaborated to offer Public Safety Officers Positions to veteran-students. (*Goal 6: 6.4 and Goal 4: 4.1, 4.3*)
9. Priority parking permits provided to veteran-students. (*Goal 4: 4.1 and 2: 2.3*)
10. Veteran-students participated in resume workshops and employment with Bronx WorkForce1 Career Center — Anna Venturino, POC. (*Goal 1: 1.2, 1.3*).
11. Veteran-students who are on Probation were identified using The Starfish database. The VMR Office is offering probation workshops to students on academic probation; collaborated with the Academic Success Center, Disability Services Office, and Psychological Services. (*Goal 2: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3*)
12. Implemented a texting APP called "Remind" to communicate with veteran-students. (*Goal 6: 6.3*)

III. Management Review

a. Key Processes and procedures

1. Veteran-Students are identified by referral from the Admissions Office.
2. The veteran-student is eligible for a CUNY application waiver that is administered by the VMR Office.
3. Veteran-students fill out an intake form to identify the veteran-student's contact information, CUNY application waiver information, and possible veteran-student benefits.
4. Veteran-students are to submit a "Certificate of Eligibility" (COE) from the Veterans Administration (VA) or they are informed on how to request the COE.

5. The intake form, the DD-214 and the Certificate of Eligibility will permit the veteran-student to make an appointment for advisement.
6. Advisement sessions allow the student to create a class schedule and receive information about the different services offered at Bronx Community College.
7. The veteran-student's class schedule and credits taken during each semester is entered into the VA-Once data system. This prompts the Veterans Administration to pay the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to the veteran-student and payment of tuition and fees to Bronx Community College.

Record Keeping

At the point when the veteran-student fills out the VMR intake form, submits the DD214 and submits the Certificate of Eligibility, a file is created in the VMR Office. The student's file may have the following:

1. VMR intake form
2. Copies of transcripts from all schools previously attended
3. Copy of the transfer evaluation
4. Copy of "Certificate of Eligibility"
5. A summary grade report of the veteran-student's progress at BCC (*Degree Works – Appendix X*)
6. Copies of the veteran-student's curriculum pattern sheet
7. Copy of CUNY placement test scores
8. Copy of VA form 22-1995, form requesting change of program (*Appendix XI*)
9. Copy of all VA form(s) 22-1999b, form requesting change in student status (*Appendix XII*)
13. Tuition calculator for each semester (*Appendix XII*)

b. Website/Marketing Materials/Printed Resources

1. The VMR Office is currently updating the Veterans page on the BCC website.
2. We are working on a VMR banner with BCC Marketing Department.
3. The VMR Office uses the bulletin boards outside in the third floor of Loew Hall to post jobs, career fairs, health opportunities, housing information etc.
4. The VMR office has promotional materials to attract veteran-students.

c. Space

The VMR Office has a main office in Loew Hall, Room 326, a veteran-student lounge in Loew Hall, Room 319, and a coordinator's office in Loew Hall, Room 328.

d. Technology/Other Resources

1. The veteran-student lounge (Loew Hall, Room 319) has four computers, one printer and one smart board.
2. The main office (Loew Hall, Room 328) has 3 computers and one printer
3. The coordinators office (Loew Hall, Room 328) has one computer and one printer

e. Budget

1. The VMR Office has one hundred dollars for office supplies in ProfTech.
2. Mid-year Data 2017-2018

	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% changed	Spring 2018	% Change
Number of Veteran-Students Certified	186	126	-32%	149	+18%
Number of Veteran-Students who opened email messages	24	12	-50%	No email sent	
Number of Veteran-Students who opened text messages	N/A	N/A	N/A	145	No benchmark
Veteran-Students Tuition Paid	\$321,535.48	\$246,323.34	-23%	\$342,241.94	+39%

IV. Staffing Review

a. Organizational Structure

1. John Rosa, Coordinator of VMR Office
2. Dolly Rosario, CUNY Office Assistant
3. James Taylor, Veteran-Student Certifying Official
4. Veteran Work Study Students — Marcellus McCullough, Marilyn Gonzalez, Margie Guzman, Anthony DeGroat, and Krystal Valentin

VERY IMPORTANT

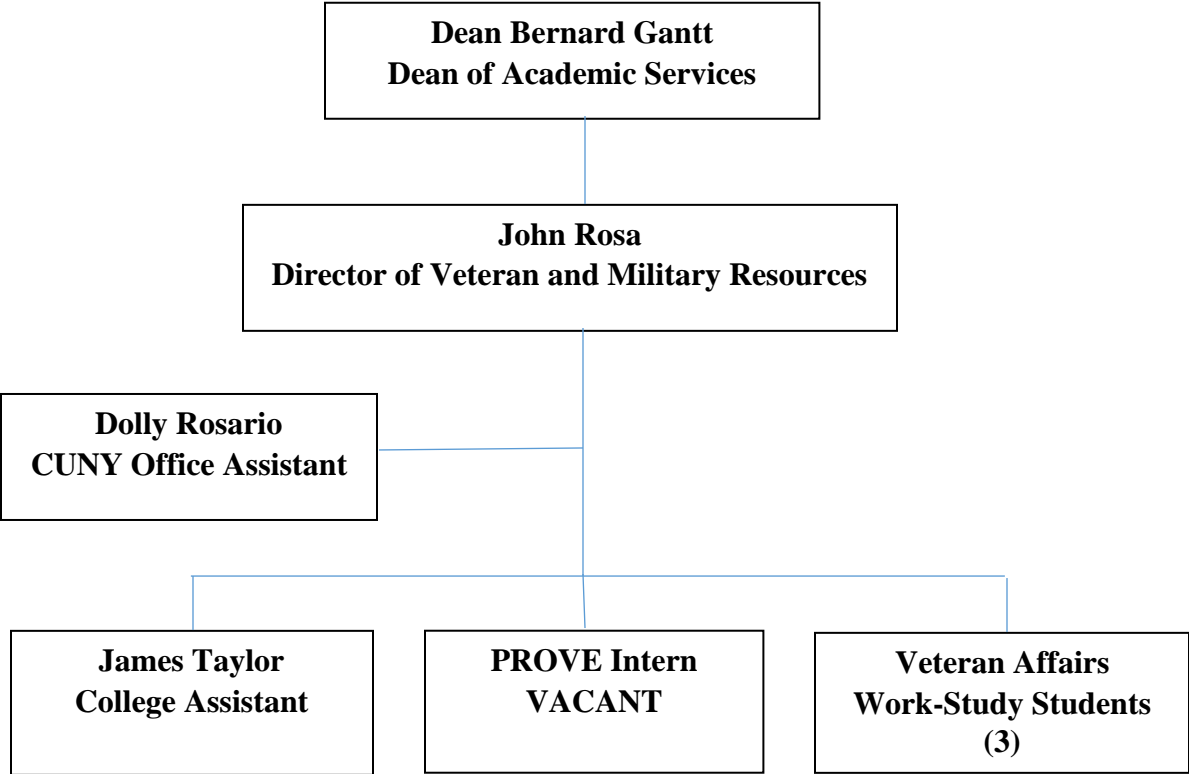
The VMR Office needs a full time Certifying Official. Currently, the college assistant line for the Certifying Official is 1,040 hours per year. Based on the limited number of hours allocated under the college assistant line the Certifying Official assist with the following:

1.	Rectification of outstanding debts to college from VA	240 hours/year
2.	W, WN, WU, INC reporting and data collection	210 hours/year
3.	VA-Once reporting	200 hours/year
4.	Veteran work-study time sheets and contracts	32 hours/year
5.	Problems solving VA work-study payment issues	100 hours/year
6.	Webinars	130 hours/year
7.	Tuition checks	75 hours/year
8.	IPEDS	20 hours/year
9.	Certifying process	75 hours/year
10.	Orientations	6 hours/year
11.	Generating debt letters	15 hours/year
12.	Progress report	35 hours/year
13.	Student's questions@ payments, benefits	60 hours/year
14.	Miscellaneous	100
	Total	1298 hours/year

As you can see, the certifying official already exceeds the allocation of time and there is a lot that has to be completed by the director and other support staff.

Veteran & Military Resources at Bronx Community College
Loew Hall 326

Organizational Chart



b. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

c. Training structure

All VMR staff attend training sessions that are offered by the VA and other veteran related organizations (see below):

1. The Veterans Justice Symposium — John Rosa (*Goal 1: 1.3*)
2. Certificate for Veterans Service Providers (CVSP) Training from Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 2017 - James Taylor, Dolly Rosario and John Rosa (*Goal 1: 1.1, 1.3*)
3. Webinar - updates on Forever GI Bill on March 14, 2018 at 2 PM — James Taylor and John Rosa (*Goal 5: 5.1*)
4. VA Southern & Eastern Regions Training for new SCC): 3/27/18 — 3/30/18 — John Rosa (*Goal 5: 5.1*)

V. Assessment Plan (How, what and when assessments are conducted in the department; what data are reviewed/considered)

1. We have a developed a series of survey questions that will be administered to veteran-students after they have been academically advised. The survey was created with the assistance of the Vicki Cedeno, Academic Program Specialist, from the Office of Academic Affairs. The Survey will measure the veteran-students' knowledge after the academic advisement session. We will measure knowledge in the BCC majors/curriculums, student services and academic pattern sheet needed to graduate.
2. We have a sign in sheet at the entrance of the Veterans and Military Office. The sign in sheet tracks the traffic in the office. We track visits to the lounge, visits to certify and visit for academic advisement.
 - a) 1,326 Veteran-students came to the veterans' lounge area in the fall 2017
 - b) The VMR Office provided services for 1,680 students in the spring 2018 semester (*a 5% increase*)
3. We have a tally of how much money is generated by the tuition and fees from the different veteran-student benefits. The benefits are Chapter 31 — Vocational Rehabilitation, Chapter 33 - Forever G.I. Bill, Chapter 35 — dependents and spouse of disabled/diseased veterans and Tuition Assistance (T.A.) benefits — active duty benefits for tuition.

Fall-18 Expected Income	
Chapter 33	\$282,041.95
Chapter 30	\$6,580.30
Chapter 31	\$8,585.40
Tuition Assistance	\$10,410.40
Total expected Income	\$307,618.05

4. We had an email list that communicated with all the certified veteran-students. We sent emails about academic advisement, employment, and veteran-student activities. The software used is called "***Survey Monkey***". The data provided by Survey Monkey stated that veteran-students' use of the email communication was less than 13%. See table below:

We decided to use a texting application called "Remind" to communicate with veterans and the use was 97%. See table below:

For the fall, 2018 semester we had 97.4% of the veteran-students receiving and opening the texted from The Veterans and Military Office using the "*Rewind*" APP. This is out of a total of 35 text sent to 148 veteran-students.

Mid-year Data 2017-2018

	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	% changed	Spring 2018	% Change
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Number of Veteran-Students who opened email messages	24	12	-50%	No email sent	
Number of Veteran-Students who opened text messages	N/A	N/A	N/A	145	No benchmark
Veteran Students Tuition Paid	\$321,535.48	\$246,323.34	-23%	\$342,241.94	+39%

VI. Self-Study Methodology (Description of the current self-study process)

The self-study survey was created by the Veterans and Military Office and approved by the Academic Program Specialist (Vickie Cedeno) in the Office of Academic Affairs. The survey will be given to veteran-students when s/he arrives for academic advisement. After the advisement session, the staff will collect the survey from the veteran-student. The survey will be implemented in the fall 2018 semester for the spring 2019-class schedules.

VII. Findings (include data tables or charts; highlights of comments from surveys)

The survey has not generated any data because it is too soon.

A. Areas of Strength

1. The VMR Office is very cohesive and collegial.
2. The VMR Office is able to communicate with veteran-students faster because we can text all veteran-students information.
3. We are adhering to the standards set by VA in the "School Certifying Manual" as required by federal law.

B. Areas in Need of Improvement

No need of Improvement

C. Action plans and timelines

We are following up with phone calls to all veteran-students after we send a text message, in order to reinforce the texted information. We also call veteran-students the day before an advisement appointment to remind him/her to come into the office.

The Department of Veterans Administration, Bronx Community College and The City University of New York audit the VMR Office.

- A. The VA requires institutions of higher learning (IHL) to provide a current 85/15 calculation for all terms on or after August 1, 2018 (*Appendix XIII*).
- B. The VA requires all school certifying officials (SCO) to go to yearly training and multiple webinars every year on new educational benefits, laws or updates awarded to veterans. Currently, The Forever G.I. Bill is used to determine veteran-student benefits.
- C. The New “Forever G.I. Bill” has added an additional report – “The veteran-student progress report” (*Appendix XIV*).
- D. The VMR staff has attended one or more of the following "Forever G.I. Bill training:
 1. Veteran Administration Southern and Eastern Regions Veteran Education Conference
 2. School Certifying Official Training at Manhattan College
- E. The Veterans Administration requires the School Certifying Official to report all the veteran education benefits that have been disbursed. The document used to report the funds disbursed by the VA and received by Institutions of Higher Learning (Bronx Community College) is called The Intergraded Postsecondary Education Data System or the IPEDS report.
 1. IPEDS request of Veterans Benefits:
 - a) 2016 to 2017 (*Appendix XV*)
- F. Every year, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) have an evaluation via a survey and are awarded or not awarded a medal called "Military Friendly Schools".
 1. We have been awarded the bronze medal for the 2018 school year

