



# Spring 2022 Mission: S.E.R.V.E. Newsletter

Semester Newsletter. Mission: S.E.R.V.E. – Success, Excellence, and Retention for Veterans in Education

## Congratulations to our Graduates and Transfers!

Congratulations to our LPC Veterans First Program graduates! Looking back, our graduating student veterans made their transition from online classes to in-person after the two-year stay-at-home order due to COVID-19. There was a lot to take in and adjust to, but through their persistence and hard work, our graduates' hard work paid off!

The graduation began with a warm welcome from Todd Steffan, Veterans Supervisor. Followed by the National Anthem sung by Alejandra Quezada-Sermeno, LPC Graduate and UC Berkeley ROTC, and welcome on behalf of Las Positas College from LPC VP of Administrative Services Anette Raichbart. Before the ceremony began, the audience had a moment of silence for two honorable heroes - WWII Army Veteran Dr. John Shirley and Pearl Harbor survivor Mickey Ganitch, both friends of the Veterans First Program.



LPC Veterans First took pride in hosting the Veterans Graduation at El Cerro Ranch in Livermore, CA. Our graduates included: Alejandra Quezada-Sermeno, Bryan Hernandez, Mario Ferrer, Randy Geddings, Kenia Vazquez, Mark Alvarez, Sonder Raymundo, James Perry, AJ Xiong, Kyle Sumpter, Brian Velasquez, Michael Vonnegut, Michaela Ponce-Watts, and Amanda Paustian.

This year's celebration included a Presentation of SALUTE Honors Society & Veterans Graduate Stoll - Todd Steffan, Dr. Jim Ott, Professor James Dobson, LPC VP of Administrative Services Anette Raichbart, and Vice-Chancellor at Chabot-Las Positas Community College District Theresa Rowland.



Our Student Veterans Organization (SVO) shared their gratitude to the Veterans First Program and gifted a beautiful handmade wood plaque to honor Todd Steffan, Veterans First Supervisor, for his unwavering support. In addition, special thanks to Michelle McCumber and Jan Spotorno for presenting the Quilt of Valor. Congratulations to our LPC Veterans First Program Quilt of Valor recipients: Reina Diaz (U.S. Army veteran) and Randy Geddings (U.S. Marine Corps veteran). Thank you for your service!

Special thanks to our Veterans First team for showing up early to set up the ceremony, our gracious hosts at El Cerro Ranch, Ronnie Forbes – One Nation Dream Makers for catering, and Donald McIntyre (LPC Alumnus/Army Veteran and current student at UOP) for the jazz group! It was amazing to see families, friends, faculty, and LPC alumni come together to celebrate this new chapter for our graduates.



Las Positas College | Veterans First Program (VFP)

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## Valedictorian, Trevor Fox Terry US Marine Corps Veteran



Congratulations, Trevor - U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, for graduating with the highest honors and recognition as Valedictorian at Las Positas College!

Thank you for flying out from Texas to join us! This past year, Trevor transferred to The University of Texas at Austin and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology.

“I graduated from Amador Valley High School in 2016 and enlisted as a combat engineer in the Marine Corps, where I served for four years. During my time stationed in Okinawa, Japan, I began taking college courses. I continued my college journey with Las Positas College shortly after I was honorably discharged from the Marines in 2020. My most memorable experience at Las Positas was making fluorescent bacteria using a jellyfish protein. We spliced the protein transcript into the bacterial genome to make them produce fluorescent protein during Cell and Molecular Biology lab.

During my time in the military, I found a passion for the medical field. My future plans including becoming a medical doctor and changing the world through medicine.

I finished my courses at Las Positas College in the fall of 2021, and I just spent my first semester at The University of Texas at Austin. I eventually plan to use my military and medical school skills to work as a humanitarian physician in conflict zones and underdeveloped countries.”

Trevor Terry  
Las Positas College, Fall Class of 2021



We wish you success in your future endeavors to pursue medical school!



## Congratulations to our Fire Academy Graduates!

The goal of the Las Positas College Regional Fire Academy is to give you the tools, training and education you’ll need to be hired as a certified firefighter by a professional fire service agency. Our Firefighter 1 Academy is offered through partnerships with the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department utilizing personnel from Fire Agencies throughout Alameda County. Las Positas College Fire Academy is recognized by the California State Fire Marshall and the State Board of Fire Services as an Accredited Regional Training Program. For info, visit: <http://www.laspositascollege.edu/fst/fireacademy.php>

Congratulations to our team of veterans who completed the 2022 Fire Academy! Proud of you!

Christopher Foo - U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, Veterans SALUTE Honors recognition, Cadet keynote speaker Luis Garcia Montoy - U.S. Marine Corps Veteran, and Dyonn Lawrence - U.S. Army Veteran, Recipient of the Top Nozzle Award



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## Dr. John B. Shirley Veterans First memorial Scholarship

Dr. John B. Shirley was an advocate and friend of the LPC Veterans First Program. In 2015, Dr. Shirley attended the Veterans Center Ribbon Cutting in support and celebration of the opening of the LPC Veterans Center. The Shirley family was able to establish a memorial scholarship in his name. Huge thanks to everyone’s kind donation to make this scholarship possible!



This memorial scholarship for student veterans honors Dr. John B. Shirley, Livermore council member (1958-1966), mayor (1963-1965), veterinary doctor, and World War II hero. Dr. Shirley was a leader in starting the Las Positas College Veterans Center and gave his support throughout the years.

## LPC Welcome Week & Club Fair Day



Las Positas College celebrates the campus reopening for in-person classes after two years of being online. The Veterans First Program took part in setting up their booth at both events, LPC Welcome Week and Club Fair Day, to not only represent the program but also spread the word of the Student Veterans Organization.

There were games available for students to interact with, prizes, and merch. Many students also participated in the Cupid Shuffle that can be found on your YouTube. A huge thank you to those who checked out the Veterans First Program booth and continue to support our program! Stay connected with our social media platforms to learn about our future events.



## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual HerStory: Honoring Women Veterans

This year, The Veterans First Program hosted the 10th annual Honoring Women Veterans event. This event was hosted on March 9th from 4 pm to 6 pm on Las Positas College Campus.

This event was hosted in honor of women veterans and women on active duty serving the U.S. military. The women veterans’ event is intended to bring awareness to the often-overlooked struggles and triumphs of women serving in the armed forces.



To start the evening Air Force ROTC student Alexandria Quezada-Sermeno performed the National Anthem. This was performed Live in lecture hall 2420. Shortly after, the scheduled talk commenced.

Keynote speaker Virginia Wimmer, US Air Force veteran and Deputy Secretary of Women Veterans Affairs of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, along with Xóchitl Rodriguez Murillo, Deputy Secretary of Minority Veterans Affairs at the California Department of Veterans Affairs welcomed the group. Opening warrior prayer was led by Dr. Doral Gonzalez, retired Lieutenant Colonel, US Army.

These speakers discussed the difficulties that women in the military face. Problems such as sexism and sexual harassment are common issues faced by women in the military.

Veterans Tracey Walker (US Navy Veteran; LPC Fire Academy Graduate), S. (Stephanie) Maria Caballero (US Navy Veteran, LPC Marine Biology major), Arica Steedley (US Army Veteran, Computer Network Technology major), Gissela Agurcia (US

**HERSTORY**  
Women Veterans  
10th Annual  
Honoring Women  
Veterans

Las Positas College  
March 9, 2022 from 4-6 pm  
Women Student Veterans Panel  
Sharing HERSTORY

Moderated by Adriana S.  
US Marine Corps Veteran  
LPC Alumnus, CSUEB History Major

Tracey W.  
US Navy Veteran  
LPC Alumnus, Fire Science

Arica S.  
US Army Veteran  
Network Admin. & Security Major

S. Maria C.  
US Navy Veteran  
Biology/PreNursing Major

Gissela A.  
US Marine Corps Veteran  
LPC Alumnus/SJSU Engineering Major

Marissa M.  
US Air Force Veteran  
Pre-Nursing Major

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Marine Corps Veteran, Transfer to SJSU Engineering major), and Marissa Macale (US Air Force Veteran, Pre-Nursing major) took time to tell their own personal stories of their time in the military.

Many of their stories noted a notion in the military that women weren't as capable as men. Each of these veterans had to go to lengths to overcome these notions and prove themselves. Macale's story noted how women's boundaries aren't always respected in the military. She explained how this created an environment where sexual harassment could occur.



Arica talked about the difficulties she experienced being one of the first women in a primarily male unit. She also discussed her experience taking care of her daughter while she was on active duty.

In addition to the speakers, facilitator Adriana Santos, US Marine Corps Veteran and Transfer student to CSU East Bay (History/Teacher Education major) took a moment to summarize the leaps and bounds women veterans have made to contribute to the armed forces and the obstacles they overcome.

Starting at 5 pm scholarships were presented to eligible women veterans attending LPC. Blue Star Moms presented \$500 scholarships to Kenia Vazquez Garcia, Christina Bueno, and Amanda Paustian. Daughters of the American Revolution presented \$500 scholarships to Kenia Vazquez Garcia and Christina Bueno.



Sherry Jensen of the Valley Veterans Foundation presented a \$5,000 scholarship to Arica Steedley.

Following the scholarship presentation, Quilts of Valor, an organization that presents custom quilts to veterans to honor their combat service. Recipients include Christina Marie Bueno (US Air Force veteran), Virginia Wimmer (US Air Force veteran), Victoria Hudson (US Army veteran), and Patty Wernet (Retired US Army Colonel). In addition to presenting to veterans, Quilts of Valor also presented a special "quilt of gratitude" to Evelyn Andrews, US Navy Dependent, for her support of veterans at Las Positas College.

This year's talk was an inspiring and enlightening display of the accomplishments and triumphs of women veterans in the modern-day. The event was attended by nearly a hundred individuals and served to provide scholarships to several student veterans in attendance of LPC.



## LPC Veterans First Program – Cupid Shuffle for V-Day

The LPC Veterans First Team, along with other students, celebrate Valentine's Day by dancing to the Cupid Shuffle, featuring our new LPC Veterans First hoodies! Scan the QR below to watch the video.





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## Student Veterans helping with The Market

The Market is open to all students, employees, and the greater community with free groceries distributed on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

The Market is held every third Tuesday of the month from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm in Parking Lot E. Groceries may include fresh produce, pasta ingredients, canned food, beans, rice, and much more! Huge thanks to our student veterans for volunteering as well as the LPC student government in helping make The Market possible!



Free Tri-Valley Food Resources:

- Alameda County Fairgrounds Drive through Pantry
- Cal Fresh Program and Food Today
- “Drive-thru” Emergency Food Distribution at the Alameda County Pleasanton Fairgrounds
- County of Alameda COVID-19 Food Distribution, Testing, and Services Map
- Free Groceries at St. Michael’s Community Care Drive Through
- Muslim Community Center East Bay Drive Through Food Distribution

Stop by the Veterans First Center in Building 1310 for groceries as well!

## Black History Month

This year in celebration of black history month, Las Positas College veterans center designed a beautiful T-shirt with words printed on the front that read, " I celebrate Black history month in recognition of the achievements of all African American military veterans." Las Positas Veteran Center also visited the campus Black cultural center to support their grand opening. The black cultural resource center is a space to study, arrange for academic and health counseling, and a place to hang out or participate in fun activities such as open mics, movie nights, and game nights!



## English Tutoring sessions with Dr. Jim Ott

Need help with an essay or some other courses? Dr. Jim Ott is here to help! Dr. Ott teaches our veterans English 1A course and is available to aid student veterans, active duty, and veteran family members with essays and other assignments!



Dr. Jim Ott’s passion for education prompted him to serve as an elected school board trustee and to earn his B.A. in English from San Jose State University in 1979 and continued his time at SJSU to earn his M.A. in 1980. Later in 2015, Dr. Ott earned his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Saint Mary’s College.

“Writing and sharing these narratives assists veterans in making meaning of their experiences as they transition from military to civilian life... What a powerful way for veterans to affirm that their experiences are important and that a civilian teacher cares enough to want to hear them.”

Contact info: [jott@laspositascollege.edu](mailto:jott@laspositascollege.edu)  
Phone: 925.424.1234  
Office: Room 2165

## Veterans Job Fair

The Veterans Job Fair was held on March 24th from 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm at the Tri-Valley Career Center in Pleasanton, CA. Our Veterans Team: Todd Steffan, Mario Ferrer, along with Lisette Rocha (Financial Aid Outreach Specialist) helped table the event. Many people stopped by the in-person event with family and friends.

This event drew in several veterans which was also open to members of the public. Landing a job can be difficult. Recruiters deal with dozens of applicants on a regular basis, because of this, many applicants feel discouraged or find it difficult to stand out from the pool of other applicants. To help veterans who encounter this issue in the hiring process, LPC Veterans First Program joined the Tri-Valley Career Center in setting up their resource booth at the event.



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## Summer/Fall 2022 Registration Do you have an updated Ed Plan?

It's that time again! Priority Registration for student veterans for Summer/Fall 2022 was April 25th. Veterans' priority registration status is guaranteed for veterans, active duty, and/or reservists/guards who have satisfied the checklist below.

Checklist for LPC Veterans Priority Registration: Do you have...

1. Proof of discharge (DD214) or documentation of currently in the U.S. armed service?
2. An updated ED plan completed with an LPC counselor?
3. A GPA of 2.0 or higher?
4. Less than 100 units or credits completed?
5. Completion of LPC online orientation and Math/English self-assessments?

For information about registration, contact the LPC Veterans First Office, and check your ClassWeb for registration date and holds.

Need to speak with a veterans counselor?

Visit [www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans](http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans) for drop-ins or to make an appointment with LPC Veterans Counselor Jose Calderon.

## Beautiful fish tank donation from our team

This beautiful fish tank was gifted to the LPC Veterans Center by our Veterans team member, Darel Lopez, and maintained by Stephanie Caballero who aspires to be a marine biologist. Thank you to our student veterans for enhancing the beauty and atmosphere in our Veterans lounge and study area. We have a school of fish in the tank. Come visit!



## Give Veterans A Smile 2022

Southern Alameda County Dental Society, along with the UOP Dugoni School of Dentistry, and the Union City Dental Care Center, held a free day of dental services for our nation's veterans.



This event was free of charge for Veterans of the United States armed forces. Each patient received a dental screening, cleaning, an oral health kit, and potential treatment of their most critical dental needs. The Health Center was kind enough to extend its generosity and grant services to the children of veterans who needed dental cleaning. Throughout this whole event, volunteers provided service dogs to ease the nerves of the veterans and or their children.

Comments received:

"I expected a routine visit and a packed event and was worried about finding out how bad I had been at taking care of my mouth. They provided a free check-up, an x-ray and a cleaning. It was great, the staff were friendly and accommodating. I didn't see any flaws but I think it'd be great if more people could participate." (J. Vidal)

"I was expecting to wait for an hour or so, have a dental student to take care of me so that they can have in-person practice and still have issues after the visit since it's all free. I did not just get a free cleaning, I was actually able to get a free deep cleaning since I have gum issues. It was fantastic. If they will do this every year or even twice, veterans won't need dental insurance anymore. It was way better than most community dental places. The Doctor was top class and they were hands on with me. They gave me a lot of tips and advices to help me stay on top of my gum issues. I did not wait in line, there was no payment, the staff was helpful and kind, and most importantly my mouth feels amazing. I can't really top that off. All I can say is thank you!" (C. Carpio)



Overall, Union City provided a fantastic day for all veterans for a day at the dentist.



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## Remembering Our Fallen

Remembering Our Fallen is a photographic war memorial that honors our country's military Fallen from The Global War on Terror (9/11/2001 - 8/30/2021). The Patriotic Production has been designed to travel the world and includes both military and personal photos. Its legacy will be that these men and women will be remembered and their names will be spoken while helping to lessen the grief of their families.



The memorial includes 31 Tribute Towers with military and personal photos of almost 5,000 of our nation's Fallen. The Tribute Towers were set up in front of Building 1600 Quad Area at Las Positas College from May 12th to May 16th for the general public to visit.

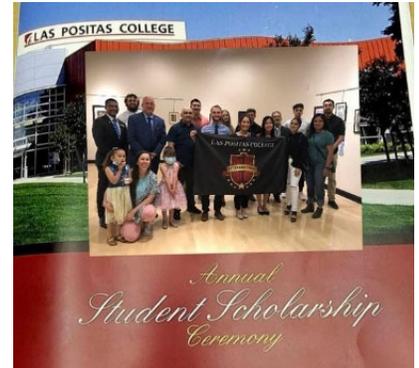
On May 12th at 10 am, Elaine Johnson opened the ceremony by singing the National Anthem. Following this, Dr. Doral Gonzales presented a Native American Warrior Prayer. Our keynote speakers included Kevin Graves, Gold Star Dad of the Joseph Graves Foundation. This ceremony served as a moment of silence to honor those who sacrificed and gave their lives for our country.

Special thanks to our volunteers: Fire Academy cadets, Middle College students, and student veterans and staff for helping set up the towers! For those interested in the Patriotic Production: Remembering our Fallen, check out their website at [www.patrioticproductions.org/rememberingourfallen](http://www.patrioticproductions.org/rememberingourfallen)



## Congratulations to Scholarship Recipients!

This year, approximately \$40,000 was awarded to LPC veterans and military families! Thank you, veterans service organizations, for your continued support. You supported non-traditional older students, veterans with children, single parents, veterans who have hidden disabilities, and all pursuing their degree to either transfer to a 4-year university or start their career in their desired industry.



Congratulations on your Scholarship!

## Student Veterans Organization

The Student Veterans Organization (SVO) is a group of student veterans, service members, and dependents dedicated to the goals of camaraderie, veteran advocacy, and helping student veterans' transition to academic and civilian life. The SVO hosts numerous events for student veterans in order to bolster a sense of camaraderie and build a social support network for student veterans. Events have included: paint nights, hiking, virtual game nights, Christmas events, and volunteer work. Along with events, the SVO also advocates for student veteran values at campus administrative meetings.

This year the SVO was led by Arica Steedley, Kenia Vasquez, Isiah Steedley. For more information or to join the SVO please contact the Veterans First Office.

## Virtual Veterans Welcome Center

The Virtual Veterans Welcome Center is here to help. It is an online service that aims to help veterans with challenges they encounter at LPC and questions about the services offered at the Veterans Resource Center. The Center is regularly staffed by peer student veterans.

Login to Zoom – Meeting ID: 885 1925 8951. The password is "veterans". Check the LPC Veterans First Program website – [www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans](http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans) for operational hours (varies each term).

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## Introducing Career Launch



Career Launch is a program that provides an opportunity to explore options and paths, accesses the hidden job market to land internships and jobs, and improves self-confidence and preparation for your career journey.

The first 20 student veterans who sign up will receive free lunch on the scheduled group coaching days, a workbook, and lots of tips and techniques to launch your career! The Veterans First Team asks for those interested to respond honestly to reflection questions, complete skill-building assignments in the workbook, and attend weekly group coaching for the period June 13-July 11.

Take the 28-day challenge with us! Only for military veterans, reservists, dependents/spouses of veterans, and active duty.

## VA Course Certification Form

To receive educational benefits, student veterans must certify that they are taking classes at the College. This can be done at

[www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/certifyclasses.php](http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/certifyclasses.php).

Please remember to fill out these forms after enrolling in your classes to ensure you will receive veterans' educational benefits. If you have any specific questions regarding Course Certification, ask us at the Virtual Welcome Center or check out the frequently asked questions on our website.

## Veterans Chill and Chat

Sometimes, life can be hard. The LPC Veterans Chill & Chat is an opportunity for veterans to socialize and express themselves. Chill and Chat took place via zoom every Tuesday from 6-6:50 pm during the Spring term. Facilitated by an MFT Counseling Intern, student veterans spoke freely about their challenges and successes in college. Great opportunity to network, meet other students, and exchange information.



## Veterans Learning Community: Mission Ready

The Veterans First Program has laid the groundwork for a new learning community, Veterans First Learning Community: Mission Ready. Our second cohort will start this Fall 2022.

Mission Ready is joining the group of established learning communities, including: the Umoja Program, the Puente Project, Engineering Technology, and Gateway to Success.

It is a program which groups student veterans together to create a more cohesive and interactive learning environment. Mission Ready strives to provide student veterans with a veteran friendly space to learn and meet their academic goals.

Mission Ready students participate in English 1A (course code 22776, instructed by Professor Jim Ott, and Communications 1 (course code 23461), with Professor Dobson. Any student veteran can join the Veterans Learning Community: Mission Ready to take advantage of support the learning community provides. Both courses are required in order to participant in this special learning community.

Books will be paid for these courses.

## Swords to Plowshares: Outreach Rep in the Veterans Resource Center

At Swords to Plowshares, veterans have access to many great programs such as employment and training, legal services, supportive services, and housing programs. Check out their website at [www.swords-to-plowshares.org](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org) for more information.

Check out their platforms!

Website: [www.swords-to-plowshares.org](http://www.swords-to-plowshares.org)

Email: [supportvets@stp-sf.org](mailto:supportvets@stp-sf.org)

Instagram: [swords-to-plowshares](https://www.instagram.com/swords-to-plowshares)

Facebook: [vetshelpingvets](https://www.facebook.com/vetshelpingvets)

Twitter: [vetshelpingvets](https://twitter.com/vetshelpingvets)

*Special thanks to our Newsletter Editors:  
Kimberly Brutus and M. Stephanie Caballero.*

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