



Fall 2020 Mission: S.E.R.V.E. Newsletter

Semester Newsletter. Mission: S.E.R.V.E. – Success, Excellence, and Retention for Veterans in Education
Please send comments/feedback to lpcveteransfirst@laspositascollege.edu



2.2 Walk for Vets Challenge Goes Virtual

As we know, this year has been one of adjustment, compromise, and pivoting. This was just the case for our 3rd annual 2.2 Walk for Vets Virtual Challenge event. Last year, the event was held on campus featuring 22 stations and a robust participant turnout. This year was a little different and utilized the online environment in a fun and creative way. Using Runsignup.com, the Veterans First Program and the Student Veteran Organization designed an entirely online event, featuring a comprehensive website, 22 unique challenges, a custom hashtag (#CHALLENGE22FORVETS), and so much more. The 22-day challenge took place from October 21st to November 11th, finishing on the eve of Veterans Day.

While the event is fun and bridges the veteran community together with the campus and local community, its intention is to bring awareness and conversation to the topic of suicide. Every day, an estimated 22 veterans are lost to suicide. Our goal with the 2.2 Walk for Vets Challenge is to take the number from 22 to 0 by raising awareness and fundraising for mental health initiatives and events for our student veterans.



The 3rd annual 2.2 Walk for Vets Virtual Challenge raised over \$10,000 and drew nearly 300 participants from across the United States. Participants as far as Hawaii, Alaska, Texas, and Mississippi accepted the challenge. However, our farthest participants were Las Positas Alumni Steven Alvarez and his unit stationed in Afghanistan. The online format allowed for people to create and join teams, ramping up the competition on our individual and team leaderboards. When it was all said and done, **Leticia Rosales-Buie** took first place, completing all 22 challenges and recording an astonishing number of repetitions over the 22-day challenge. **The Heart Guards** took first place on the team leaderboard and had an impressive 16 team members! Thank you to all who participated and made this event memorable and special.



To wrap up the event, the Veterans First Program and its partner the **Pleasanton Military Families** hosted a closing ceremony and celebration on Friday, November 20. During the ceremony, **Dr. Miatta Snetter**, a supporter and family member of the Veterans First Program and Las Positas College, rebranded the ceremony as a commencement. There is no closing or wrap up of the 2.2 Walk for Vets Challenge, instead there is a commencement as we will continue fighting to save veteran lives and take the number from 22 to 0.



Thank you to all of our sponsors, everyone who sent personal donations, our partner the Pleasanton Military Families, the Student Veterans Organization, the Golden State Warriors for donating silent auction items, the student veterans who came together to organize and create this event, the Veterans First Program, Las Positas College, the participants who honored this event, and of course our veterans who risk everything to ensure our freedoms and way of life.



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Fall 2020 Virtual Events!

9.11 Remembrance

A day that will forever live in our hearts and minds was honored virtually this year by the Veterans First Program. The remembrance began with a singing of the national anthem by LPC student, **Alejandra Quezada-Sermeno** and a presentation of colors by the **Golden Gate Young Marines** honor guard. Dr. Dyrell Foster offered remarks of remembrance to the thousands of individuals who lost their lives. Keynote speaker **Lt. Col. Robert J. Darling** gave a rivoting account of his perspective as someone who secured top officials, including the President of the United States to the President’s Emergency Operations Center. Lt. Col.’ Darlin writes a harrowing account of 9.11 in his book *24 Hours Inside the President’s Bunker, 9/11/01: The White House*, ensures that we will never forget.



Hispanic Heritage Month: Our Latinx Student Veterans

Every year Hispanic heritage month falls between September 15 and October 15, it is a time to honor the culture, history, and lives of Latinx peoples. The Veterans First Program held its first Hispanic heritage event this year with an event called *Mi Familia Militar: Latinx Stories of Serving My Country*. The event featured five Latinx student veterans in a panel discussion highlighting their stories and experiences as Latinx individuals in the military and college. **Xochitl Rodriguez-Murillo**, a veteran of the US Army, Councilmember in the city of Woodland (CA), and Deputy Secretary for Minority and Underrepresented Veterans at the California Department of Veterans Affairs served as the moderator for the panel discussion.

The event was broadcasted via livestream with over 30 people tuning into the event. The panel discussion emphasized student experiences in the military and how their Latinx identities intersected with military culture. Panel members shared intimate stories of their lives and offered suggestions to college faculty, staff, and administrators on how to best serve Latinx student veterans as they transition from military to civilian life.

Veterans Day 2020 Featuring Lt. Col. David S. Maurer

US Army Retired Lt. Col. **David S. Maurer** was our guest speaker for our 2020 Veterans Day celebration. His leadership and words of wisdom have left an impact on the community members that attended this virtual event. The key factors that were spotlighted were: leadership, transition, and managing change.

Lt. Col. Maurer managed to capture the most vital traits every individual is struggling with, during these difficult times of sheltering in place and social distancing. His speech has put many minds at ease and has instilled confidence within us, that we will overcome these trying times. Big thanks to you, Lt. Col. Maurer!



Ask Shay! Veterans Disability Appeals

The Veterans First Program has been blessed with an incredible student veteran who is truly knowledgeable in Disability Appeals for veterans. Mrs. **Christina “Shay” Rosas** served in the United States Marine Corps for 8 years. Her time in service and her articulate attention to detail regarding disability appeals has proven to pay off. Drawing on her own experience, throughout the Fall term, she led a weekly “information sharing” session on navigating service-connected disability appeals. She will continue offering this service in the next semester.

Veterans First Success Series 2020

The Student Success Series featured three events meant to bring career exploration and preparation to LPC student veterans. A very special thank you goes out to all the Rotarians who participated in the Career Kick Off event. The connection they fostered with LPC student veterans will last a lifetime.

The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) hosted the second Success Series event, Navigating the Stressors of Distance Learning. CalVet shared strategies and insights on how to succeed in an online academic environment. Part of the event featured **Dr. Miatta Snetter**, a clinical psychologist from Outside the Wire. Dr. Snetter offered unique approaches to relieving the stress of distance learning and mitigating the feelings associated to such a rapid transition. Thank you to CalVet and Dr. Snetter for your sustained support of our student veterans.

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The final event of the Success Series featured informative presentations about the Warrior Scholars Project and Service 2 School. Thank you **Jesse Rossetti** for

presenting on the Warrior Scholars Project and **Jim Selbe** for providing information on Service 2 School. Thank you to our very own **Noe Ortega** for providing your own experience as a participant in the Warrior Scholars Project.

Veterans Chill and Chat Every Tuesday @ 6pm

You are not alone! This year, COVID-19 has shocked our world. It is the reason students are distant learning and social distancing. **Dr. Sheena Turner-August**, Las Positas Behavioral Health Outreach Coordinator, has kindly offered veterans their own weekly Chill & Chat hour. Hosted by a select intern, the Chill & Chat has become a safe environment for veterans to feel some type of normalcy, while communicating with fellow veterans. It is easy to be isolated and alone during the pandemic, and it is difficult finding a way to avoid this consumption. But the Veterans Chill & Chat brings our veterans together and builds the comradery that we greatly miss.

Mission: L.U.C Leadership, Updates, and Communication

Mission: L.U.C is a dedicated forum for Las Positas student veterans to have meaningful discussion with campus and local leaders.



This semester's first Mission L.U.C meeting featured **Dr. Dyrell Foster**, President (left) of Las Positas College. Dr. Foster and LPC student veterans engaged in

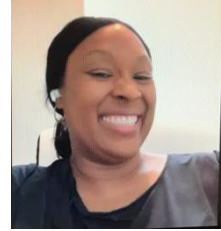
meaningful discussion about the pandemic, distance education, and moving forward as a campus and community.

Other guests on the Mission: L.U.C series included LPC Academic Services Vice President **Whalen** (bottom right) and Administrative Services Vice President **Raichbart**, Interim Dean **Erick Bell** (Public Safety - Advanced Manufacturing - Transportation - Health and Kinesiology

(middle left) and Psychology faculty **Dr. Sheena August-Turner** (top right). Student veterans also had an opportunity to chat with CLPCCD Director of Employee Labor Relations and US Army Veteran



David Betts and LPC Academic Senate President **Sarah Thompson**.



Thank you to all of our campus and community leaders. It means

a lot to our students and the Veterans First Program that

you take time out of your busy schedules to engage our students and discuss the issues impacting their lives the most. The challenges we face as a unique population at the college can go under the radar, but with your engagement and support you are helping us elevate these issues and find success.



Thank You VP William Garcia!

This section of the newsletter is dedicated to **William Garcia**, Vice President of Student Services. VP Garcia has been a strong supporter and friend of the Veterans First Program and student veterans at Las Positas College. We salute you! Thank you for showing up to our events and making time to check in with us. It mattered to us. We wish you the best in the next step of your professional journey, where we know you will positively impact those around you.





LPC STUDENT VETERAN SPOTLIGHT Noe Ortega and Steven Smith



Noe Ortega
US Army Veteran,
Business Administration Major

In 2011, immediately after graduating from high school he started his military career as a Cavalry Scout. In 2013, Noe decided to attend Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS). After being selected he attended Airborne Training (Jump School) at Fort Benning, GA and then went straight to The Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) to become a Green Beret Weapons Sergeant. Upon graduation of SFQC Noe received orders to 7TH Special Forces Group in Eglin AFB, but had the privilege to attend Military Free Fall school in route to FL. He deployed to Afghanistan to conduct Village Sustainment Operations, where he lived with, trained, and led Afghanistan Local Police and Commandos on presence patrol and combat operations. Down the road, Noe deployed to Colombia on anti-narcoterrorism orders. His roles in Colombia included, advisor to a Partner Nation Joint Task Force, instructor for three different combat skills, synchronization of US Special Forces efforts with Civil Military Support Element and Military Information Support Operations, and logistics for training ammunition. Once he returned state-side, he separated from the US Army on May 1st, 2018 after seven years on active duty.

Noe began working for Docon Inc, a construction company, as a carpenter a month after his separation. The following year he decided to return to school full time to major in Business Administration. He was able to keep his job, with Docon Inc, but they moved him to the office as an estimator and to assist project managers. Noe began school in the Summer of 2019 and has been in school since then with plans on transferring to a 4 year University. Noe credits the tutors and staff members of the LPC Veterans First Program to his success and they have made the college experience great. Noe knows the transition from service to the classroom can be complicated and frustrating, but there are programs and resources out there that can help through difficult times. Thank you, Noe!

Steven Smith
US Navy Veteran
Transfer to Samuel Merritt University

Steven was in the Navy for 5 years where he served as a hospital corpsman. He became a medical laboratory technician by trade and served in several hospital settings including the Naval Medical Center San Diego, Naval Health Clinic Oak Harbor, and even overseas at the Multinational Medical Unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Steven has worked in many different areas including clinical chemistry, hematology, microbiology, blood bank, and various others. Steven claims, “It was a challenging field, but it was rewarding and helped me discover my passion for healing others.”



Through his experiences in Navy medicine, he came to the conclusion that becoming a nurse would be the best fit for him in the medical field. After his days of active duty service, he became a nursing major and it has been a great decision. Great leaders in the Navy and professors at LPC have taught him how to be successful in his courses. Steven became a tutor to not only help fellow veterans pursue the same major, but to help all veterans trying to succeed in higher education. He believes that veterans hold key attributes that make them great assets to any company they work for or start, and higher education is an extremely important stepping stone to getting there.

Steven has received wonderful news this semester. He has been accepted and will enroll in the Nursing program at Samuel Merritt University. The Veterans First Program thanks Steven for his dedication to helping his fellow veterans and being an active supporter of our events, causes, and celebrations. Congrats Steven! Keep in touch!



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Save the Date! Upcoming Spring 2021 Events

Events are subject to change. Please visit the Veterans First Program website for the most current information and for URL ZOOM information: www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans

January

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
First day of classes- Spring 2021	Jan. 19, 2021 – Tues.	All Day
Veterans First Program Virtual Open House	Jan. 23, 2021 – Sat.	9am- 2pm
Veteran Success Series: Keynote Speaker General Mattis **for student veterans only**	Jan. 26, 2021 – Tues.	2pm- 3:15pm
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health Center	Every Wednesday	6-7 pm

February

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mission L.U.C. with Shawn Kumagai, Dublin City Council	Feb. 9 . 2021 – Tues.	11 am-12 pm
Veterans Success Series 2: TBA	Feb. 23, 2021 – Tues.	TBA
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health Center	Every Wednesday	6-7 pm

March

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Honoring Women Veterans	Mar. 10, 2021 – Wed.	TBA
Mission L.U.C. with Dean Ward, Dean David, and Dean McElderry	Mar. 23, 2021 – Tues.	11 am- 12pm
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health Center	Every Wednesday	6-7 pm

April

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mission L.U.C. with Dean Nan Ho	Apr. 1, 2021 – Thurs.	11 am-12 pm
Veterans Success Series 3: TBA	Apr. 27, 2021 – Tues.	TBA
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health Center	Every Wednesday	6-7 pm

May

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mission L.U.C with Chancellor Ron Gerhard	May. 5, 2021 – Wed.	11 am- 12pm
Veterans First Commencement Celebration!	May 22, 2021 – Sat.	TBA
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health Center	Every Wednesday	6-7 pm

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Our Commitment to Student Veterans VIRTUAL ONLINE SERVICES

<p>Veterans Resource Center Virtual Reception Desk</p>	<p>VRC Virtual Reception Desk via Zoom Zoom Meeting ID: 885 1925 8951 (pw: veterans) Mon - Thurs from 9 am to 5 pm; Fri 9 am to 1 pm</p> <p>Phone Dial: +1 669 900 6833 (US Toll) OR +1 346 248 7799 (US Toll) Meeting ID: 885 1925 8951 # Password: 040665 #</p>
<p>Quick Question, Ask Us!</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/ Right Navigation > Quick Question, Ask Us!</p>
<p>Request a Virtual Appointment with a Veterans Counselor</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/ Left Navigation > Veterans First Program & Services > Request an Appointment or Drop-in</p>
<p>Get Involved with the Student Veterans Organization</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/ Left Navigation > Student Veterans Organization</p>
<p>Virtual Tutor Sessions for Math, Science, ENGL1A, Statistics</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/ Navigation > Veterans First Program & Services > Tutoring</p> <p>Visit: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/tutoring.php</p>
<p>VA Course Certification Form</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/ Left Navigation > Getting Started > Certify Classes</p> <p>Visit: http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/certifyclasses.php</p>

Gratitude to our Newsletter Editors!

Mission S.E.R.V.E. team writers: Ron Payne, Viviana Martinez, Salvador Victoria
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