2026-27 Comprehensive Program Review

Program: Veterans First Program

Division: Student Services

Writers: Evelyn Andrews

SLO/SAO Point-Person:

Email your completed form to Karin Spirn and your dean by November 2, 2026.

Helpful Links:

- ★ Tools for Writers - with contacts and info for help with specific sections.
- ★ Program Review Glossary - defines key terms you can review when writing.
- ★ Discipline Data Packets – institutional research about disciplines and student services
- ★ Course Success Rates Dashboard – allows you to research your program's success rates

Detailed information and instructions appear at the end of this form. For help, please contact Karin Spirn at kspirn@laspositascollege.edu.

Section 1: Program Reflection and Planning

These questions appear on all Program Reviews including comprehensive and updates.

1. Please describe your program's most important **achievements** in year 25-26.

- **Clear Pathways for Every Veteran** Our top priority was working toward a big milestone: making sure 100% of self-identified student veterans have a clear, customized Student Education Plan (SEP). Every veteran deserves dedicated time with a counselor to map out the exact courses needed to reach their goals. A solid plan gives students confidence in their schedule, keeps them enrolled semester to semester, and accelerates their path to graduation. Importantly, by extending this push to *all* self-identified veterans—including those not using standard VA benefits—we ensure no military-connected student falls through the cracks. Moving forward, proactively reaching out to veterans who don't yet have an active plan will remain a daily focus.

- **Building Belonging and Academic Confidence** Transitioning from military life to college isn't always easy, so we launched Battle Buddy Study Halls to bring a familiar sense of military camaraderie into the academic space. These sessions gave student veterans a place to study side-by-side, keep each other accountable, and build strong support networks. To back this up, we worked with faculty to hold dedicated office hours, giving students low-pressure opportunities to get one-on-one help with assignments and course material. By linking peer

support directly with accessible faculty, we helped students build both belonging and academic momentum.

- **Community Investment & Financial Relief**
  Thanks to our incredible community partners, we were able to offer over $20,000 in student veteran scholarships and offer to $10,000 in emergency relief funds through the LPC Foundation. Beyond the numbers, these funds serve as a lifeline. Scholarships help alleviate the everyday cost of attendance, while emergency relief steps in when unexpected financial shocks threaten to force a student to drop out. Addressing these financial barriers alongside academic needs demonstrates to our veterans that their community is truly invested in their success.

2. Please describe your most important **challenges** in year 25-26

Behind the data and reporting metrics of the 2025–2026 academic year lies a very human reality: our small team stretched thin while trying to be a lifeline for veterans transitioning into civilian college life. When a veteran leaves the military, they aren't just registering for classes—they are stepping into an unfamiliar world with strict GI Bill deadlines, complex paperwork, and zero room for error. Over the past year, three major roadblocks made it harder for us to give our student veterans the seamless support they earned and deserve.

1. The Summer Gap: Losing Veterans Before They Even Begin
Our biggest heartbreak this past year was watching prospective students walk away simply because our doors were closed when they needed us most. During the fall and spring, our dedicated veterans counselor is an incredible anchor for our students. But in the summer—a critical window when newly admitted veterans are trying to build their education plans and secure fall classes—counseling support drops off significantly.

For a veteran relying on housing allowances tied to specific full-time, in-person course loads, waiting weeks for an answer isn't an option. Several veterans told us they ended up enrolling at other colleges simply because they couldn't reach a veterans counselor here over the summer. With limited summer counseling to guide them into these classes early, schedules got locked in elsewhere, and an incredible community building opportunity was missed.

2. The JST & MAP Bottleneck: Asking Veterans to Navigate the Bureaucracy Alone
Translating military service into academic credit—Credit for Prior Learning—should be a moment of pride and efficiency. Instead, it became a daily exercise in frustration. While the college participated in

the Military Articulation Platform (MAP) to evaluate Joint Services Transcripts (JSTs), our office was advised that it is the student veterans' responsibility to order JSTs, and to not order on students' behalf, as we do not have the bandwidth to chase after JST's.

This created an immediate breakdown. Veterans were left confused about how to request their JSTs, how to track them, or how those credits would actually move through Admissions and MAP. Our team stepped up to guide them, follow up on missing files, and keep records moving, but we did it on a zero-dollar budget increase. While $50,000 in grant funding was awarded to the college for MAP implementation, none of it reached Veterans First Program to support the heavy administrative lift.

3. Administrative Overload: Caring for Students vs. Feeding the Spreadsheets

Beyond leading the Veterans First Program and showing up daily for our student veterans, our Veterans Program Supervisor is carrying a heavy administrative burden. Managing constantly changing state and federal compliance mandates—such as VA Enrollment Manager certifications, Vision Aligned Reporting, and state fiscal reconciliations—has introduced immense pressure to the role.

Her responsibility also extends to directing the Engineering Technology Learning Community, effectively doubling her program coordination workload. She handles these demands with incredible dedication, but the current scope goes beyond what one person can comfortably sustain. Re-evaluating our administrative support and team capacity is essential if we want to preserve both employee health and program excellence over time.

3. What are your upcoming **plans**? Please note any ways that these support student achievement and equity.

Moving from the military to a college campus shouldn't feel like navigating a maze. Our team at the Veterans First Program is dedicated to supporting our student veterans from day one through graduation, but to do that well, we need to make a few key operational upgrades.

What we're working on next:

- **Facilitating Joint Service Transcripts** process with student veterans. We plan to pursue a one-year Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) grant with support from a Partnership Resource Team (PRT). The goal is to develop and implement a more coordinated process to increase the conversion of admitted veterans to enrolled students by providing timely outreach, registration support, and assistance with requesting and evaluating Joint Services Transcripts (JSTs). Earlier JST evaluation can help veterans receive applicable credit

for military training, reduce unnecessary coursework, and potentially shorten time to degree completion at Las Positas College.

- **Counseling when students actually need it:** We're advocating for summer counseling so incoming veterans aren't stuck waiting to build their ed plans or register for classes. We want 100% of our veterans set up with an education plan so they can use their VA education benefits and connect them early to peer networks like Battle Buddy Study Halls.

- **Giving credit where it's due:** Navigating Joint Services Transcripts (JST) can be frustrating. With additional dedicated funding, if available, we can be more proactive in working with veterans on a clearer hand-off between Admissions, MAP, and the Credit for Prior Learning counselor so veterans get credit for their military service without having to run around campus figuring it out themselves.

- **Less administrative friction, more student time:** We would like to build a stronger partnership with Administrative Services/Business Office so our team has clear guidance on how to appropriately use and drawn down on our Veterans First Program allocation from the Chancellor's Office for operational and program needs. Having that support up front would help us make informed purchasing decisions. We want to avoid situations where needed expenses are later denied or asked to find another funding source.

Section 2: SLOs/SAOs

This section is completed every three years as part of the Comprehensive Program Review, with brief annual check-ins on the Program Review Updates. The following resources will be useful when completing this section:

- Three-Year Assessment Template
- Aggregated and Disaggregated Data from the following sources:
  - ELumen (if saved--no longer available online)
  - CurrlQunet
  - Student Success Dashboard

1. During the 2023-2026 three-year assessment cycle that just concluded, what did your program set out to learn through your PSLO/CSLO/SAO assessments?

- *N/A*

2. Based on your analysis of your PSLO/CSLO/SAO assessment data, what conclusions did you draw about student outcomes and equity in your program?

- *N/A*

3. Explain potential plans to improve student outcomes and close equity gaps.

1. Strengthen support for women veterans.
Women veteran population is lower than the overall campus female population. We hope to expand programming that fosters connection, belonging, leadership, and wellbeing for women veterans. Activities may include targeted outreach, peer connection opportunities, mentoring, wellness programming, and events such as Honoring Women Veterans.

2. Expand academic support for older, returning student veterans.
Develop more flexible academic support, particularly in math, for veterans who may be returning to school after a significant period away from the classroom. Support could include tutoring, embedded academic assistance, refresher workshops, and access to course materials that help rebuild academic confidence and preparedness.

4. Describe any obstacles that you encountered in your assessment process and any supports that would be helpful.

- *N/A*

Section 3: Data Discussion

This section is completed every three years as part of the Comprehensive Program Review. Workshops and office hours will be offered in Fall 2026 to support Program Review writers.

1. RPIE Data Review: Discuss any significant trends in the data provided by the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (or any other data you use for decision-making and planning).

*(**Note**: Not all Programs have RPIE data available; if your program does not have a data packet or dashboard data, you may note that in the response box and reach out to the RPIE team.)*

Data may come from:

- RPIE Data Packets
- Transfer data
- Succes Rates Dashboard (scroll down on page)
- Requested data from the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE)
- SLO/SAO data
- Data from program-created surveys or investigations
- Any other relevant source of quantitative or qualitative data

Summer 2025 data highlight a major age gap between Las Positas College's general student body and its veteran population. Over half of campuswide students (52%) are 19 or younger, compared to just 8% of veterans. Instead, nearly **half of our veteran students (49%) fall into the 25–39 age range**, compared to only 14% campuswide.

This confirms that veterans are a distinct, largely non-traditional student population. Many are returning to college after military service and may be balancing employment, family responsibilities, financial obligations, and the transition from military to civilian and academic life. Because traditional college systems focus heavily on younger students, tailored support—like the Veterans Resource Center, dedicated counseling, peer coaching, and targeted transition events—is critical to helping veterans feel connected and supported by peers who understand their lived experiences.

2. Equity: Did your data reveal any patterns of inequity? If so, please explain those patterns and any actions that should be taken at the program or college level.

An observation:

Summer 2025 campuswide data shows a balanced gender ratio (52% female / 47% male), whereas **veteran students are predominantly male (73% male / 27% female)**. Campuswide demographic trends don't reflect an inequity in the veteran population.

Action: While serving the majority male veteran group, the Veterans First Program must maintain targeted outreach, mentorship, and community-building (e.g., *Honoring Women Veterans*) for female veterans, so they feel welcomed and stay supported at LPC.

3. Course Modality (Instructional Programs Only): In reviewing your program's data packet and Succes Rates Dashboard, are there differences in success rates by modality (i.e. face-to-face, asynchronous, synchronous, hybrid, or hyflex)? If so, reflect on what might account for differences and any actions that should be taken. (Non-instructional programs may also choose to reflect on online vs. in-person services if applicable).

- *Write responses here*
- *Add or remove bullets as needed*

4. Program-Set Standard (Instructional Programs Only): The program-set standard is a baseline that alerts programs if their student success rates have dipped suddenly below 95% of the rolling 5-year average. There

is no punishment for not meeting the standard, and many valid reasons this may occur. When a program does not meet this standard, they are asked to examine possible reasons and note any actions that should be taken, if appropriate. | Program-set standard data can be found on this page

5a. Did your program meet its program-set standard for successful course completion in AY25-26?

Yes____ No____

5b. If your program did not meet your program-set standard, discuss possible reasons and how this may affect program planning or resource requests. Success rates for individual courses can be found on the Success Rates Dashboard.

- *Write responses here*
- *Add or remove bullets as needed*

Section 4: Special Topics

These questions have been chosen for this year's Comprehensive Program Review to meet reporting mandates (for accreditation, Ed. Code, or other sources).

1. Mission: Describe 1-3 examples of how your program's work has aligned with the college's mission, vision, values, and/or educational master plan over the past three years. (Possibilities might include new initiatives, resource allocation/use, program improvements, or other activities). • Mission, Vision, and Values • Educational Master Plan

- Academic Success & Equity: From VA education benefits certification to tailored educational planning (SEP) and scholarships, our Program removes the unique barriers military-connected students face. Our hands-on support, such as Operation Gateway, weekly hot meals, snacks in the Veterans Resource Center lounge, makes sure veterans and military connected students do not just enroll but stay on track to finish their goals in an inclusive, supportive environment.

- Community & Wellbeing: Through the Veterans Resource Center, peer support with the Student Veterans Organization, partnering with community (e.g., 2.2 for 22 Challenge for Veterans on suicide prevention and mental health support) on mental health initiatives, and transition/new student veterans' orientation like Operation Gateway, our Program builds a

genuine sense of belonging and connectedness to the campus. Our lounge alone gives veteran a place to connect, decompress, and feel supported – aligning directly with LPC's focus on personal wellness, mutual respect, and campus culture.

- Leadership & Career Growth: Our Program helps student veterans build on their confidence as older, returning students to college and transitioning from military to workforce career planning. Partnering with community and industry, we have held career prep and networking workshops with veterans in the workforce.

2. Regular Substantive Interaction (Instructional Programs Only)

To meet our college, ACCJC, state, and federal standards, **all online instructors** must demonstrate "**regular and substantive interaction**" (RSI) with students. That is, we must be clearly providing instruction and interacting with our online students, just like we would in an on-campus class. The following reflection questions allow us to capture how RSI is occurring in our classes.

The following documents explain requirements and best practices for RSI:

- ACCJC Quality Continuum Rubric for Distance Education
- Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements

2a. If your program offers DE courses, how are Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements met in your area? Examples appear on the DE addendums of your Course Outlines of Record. Place an X next to each method used in your courses.	
	Course materials make clear to students how often and when the instructor will interact with students (e.g. syllabus/home page lists email/office hours/other ways to communicate and typical response times)
	Provides direct instruction over Zoom (e.g. regularly scheduled live online class sessions in synchronous/hybrid/hyflex courses)
	Provides direct instruction through instructor-created videos (e.g. lecture videos created using Studio in asynchronous courses)
	Provides additional information from various sources/mediums to engage students with course content (e.g. instructor-curated content in Canvas pages that help deepen students understanding of course content)
	Facilitates discussions (e.g. through Canvas discussion boards, Pronto, Studio, or Hypothesis)
	Provides feedback on students' coursework (e.g. through detailed rubrics and/or assignment comments in Speedgrader; note: a grade alone does not quality as RSI, nor does auto-graded feedback students may get through completing publisher content)
	Responds to students' questions (e.g. through timely responses to student messages in Canvas Inbox, discussion boards, social annotation assignments)

	Facilitates student success through ongoing outreach (e.g. posts announcements; uses "Message Students Who" to encourage struggling students to attend office hours or access free tutoring)
	Other [explain]:

2b. What challenges if any have you faced in implementing RSI? What additional training or resources might instructors in your program need to increase the quality of RSI in online courses?

- *Write responses here*
- *Add or remove bullets as needed*

Section 5: Program Review Feedback

What questions or suggestions do you have about this year's Program Review forms or process?

- *Write responses here*
- *Add or remove bullets as needed*

Detailed Instructions

Instructions

1. Send an electronic copy of this form to Program Review chair, Karin Spirn, and your Dean by Monday, November 2.
2. Please respond to questions with enough detail to present your information; it doesn't have to be long.
3. If the requested information does not apply to your program, write "Not Applicable."
4. Even if you don't have much to report, we want to hear from you, so your voice is part of the college planning process.
5. Optional/suggested: Communicate with your dean while completing this document.

Sections: There are five sections to the document:

1. Program Reflection and Planning
2. SLO/SAO Review
3. Data analysis
4. Special topics
5. Feedback on the PR template and process

Time Frame: This Program Review should reflect your program status during the 25-26 academic year. It should describe plans starting now and continuing through 2026-27. It is fine to discuss topics beyond these time frames, but please specify the time frame in your responses.

Audience: Deans, Vice Presidents of Student Services and Academic Services, All Planning and Allocation Committees. This document will be available to the public.

Uses: This Program Review will inform the audience about your program. It is also used in creating division summaries, determining college planning priorities, and determining the allocation of resources. The final use is to document the fulfillment of accreditation requirements.

Equity: Here is the LPC definition of equity, which is a guiding principle in reviewing programs: "Equity is parity in student educational outcomes. It places student success and belonging for students of color and disproportionately impacted students at the center of focus."

Please note: Program Review is NOT a vehicle for making requests. All requests should be made through appropriate processes (e.g., Instructional Equipment Request Process) or directed to your dean or supervisor.

Helpful Links:

- ★ Tools for Writers - with contacts for help with specific sections.
- ★ Program Review Glossary - defines key terms you can review when writing.
- ★ Fall 2023 Program Reviews
- ★ Program Review FAQs

For help with your program review, please contact Karin Spirn at kspirn@laspositascollege.edu