



The mission of Merritt College is to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve by helping students to attain knowledge, master skills, and develop the appreciation, attitudes and values needed to succeed and participate responsibly in a democratic society and a global economy

2020-2021

Annual Program Update

Veterans Services

I. Introduction and Directions

The Peralta Community College District has an institutional effectiveness process which consists of the following components: a District-wide Strategic Plan which is updated every six years; Comprehensive Program Reviews which are completed every three years; and Annual Program Updates (APUs) which are completed in non-program review years. While there are individualized Program Review Handbooks for Instructional units, Counseling, CTE, Library Services, Student Services, Administrative units, and District Service Centers, there is one Annual Program Update template for use by everyone at the colleges which is completed in the Fall semester of non-program review years.

The Annual Program Update is intended to primarily focus upon planning and institutional effectiveness by requesting that everyone report upon the progress they are making in attaining the goals (outcomes) and program improvement objectives

described in the most recent program review document. The Annual Program Update is therefore a document which reflects continuous quality improvement. The Annual Program Update serves a critical role in the Integrated Planning and Budgeting cycle of the college in that it provides a vehicle in which to identify and request additional resources that support reaching the stated goals (outcomes) and program improvement objectives in the unit's program review.

Throughout this document, the term "program" is used to refer to any of the following institutional structures: discipline, department, program, administrative unit, or unit.

If you have questions regarding data, please contact Nathan Pellegrin, Director of Research and Planning (npellegrin@peralta.edu).

If you have questions regarding SLOs, PLOs, SAOs or ILOs, please visit the [SLOAC webpage](#), or contact the SLOAC committee member for your division:

Division 1 - Evan Nichols (anichols@peralta.edu)

Division 2 – Laura Forlin (lforlin@peralta.edu)

Division 3 – Heather Casale (hcasale@peralta.edu).

If you have questions regarding the curriculum section, please contact Nghiem Thai (nthai@peralta.edu), chair of the [Curriculum Committee](#).

If you have questions regarding other material in the APU, please contact your Dean or Manager.

This document contains hyperlinks to external documents, spreadsheets, and data dashboards. Some of the links will not work unless you are signed in to Office 365 through the [Peralta Faculty & Staff Portal](#).

You will need the following items in order to complete the Annual Program Update document at the colleges:

- [Program Review or APU document](#) from AY 2019-20.
- [Budget Information](#) for the current and prior fiscal year.
- Any comments or feedback provided during the program review validation process.
- College Goals and Peralta District Goals (see below).
- [Institution Set Standards](#).
- [College 2018 Educational Master Plan Update](#).
- [Guided Pathways Plan](#)
- [Student Equity Plan](#).
- Data drawn from program review dashboards and/or other sources relevant to your department, service area or administrative unit (see below).

Merritt College Institution-Set Standards 2020-2021

Institution-set standards are used to evaluate the quality of the institution as to success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission. The evaluation of student achievement performance may include different standards for different programs, as established by the institution.

Metric	Definition	Set Standard
Course Completion (Success)	the number of student completions with a grade of C or better divided by the number of student enrollments	66%
Certificates	Number of certificates earned in an academic year	222
Degrees	Number of associate degrees earned in an academic year	322
Transfer	Number of students who transfer to a 4- year college/university	187
Licensure (CE)	Examination pass rates in programs for which students must pass a licensure examination in order to work in their field of study	70%
Employment (CE)	The job placement rate of student completing a degree or certificate in a CE program in the year after graduation.	Macro-Region Employment Rate, by Program SOC

College Profile

Student Body Demographics

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Annual Unduplicated Count of Students	12,336	12,861	12,130
Gender			
Female	64%	64%	63%
Male	34%	34%	34%
Decline to State/ Unknown	2%	2%	3%

Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%
Asian	19%	20%	19%
Black / African American	23%	23%	22%
Hispanic / Latino	31%	32%	33%
Pacific Islander	1%	< 1%	< 1%
Two or More	5%	6%	5%
Unknown / NR	4%	4%	5%
White	16%	16%	15%
Age			
18 and Under	15%	15%	16%
19-24	35%	35%	35%
25-29	16%	17%	16%
30-34	11%	11%	11%
35-54	17%	17%	17%
55 and Over	6%	6%	5%

Course Success Rates

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20*
Total Enrollment (Duplicated Count)	33,288	33,637	32,928
Overall Success Rate	70%	70%	68%
Gender			
Female	70%	70%	69%
Male	69%	69%	66%
Decline to State/ Unknown	77%	74%	64%
Race/Ethnicity			
Black/African-American	62%	62%	60%
Asian	81%	80%	81%
Hispanic	68%	68%	64%
Native American	66%	72%	53%
Pacific Islander	61%	71%	63%
Two or More	65%	67%	68%
Unknown	72%	73%	66%
White	78%	78%	75%
Age			
Under 16	83%	91%	84%
16-18	73%	75%	69%
19-24	65%	66%	64%
25-29	70%	69%	68%
30-34	73%	73%	73%
35-54	74%	73%	71%
55-64	74%	71%	66%
65 and Over	77%	77%	60%

**Includes 'EW' grades*

II. Program Overview

Mission Statement

Please verify the mission statement for your program. If your program has not created a mission statement, provide details on how your program supports and contributes to the College mission.

The mission of Merritt Veterans Services is to support the academic success of student veterans, dependents of veterans, and actively-serving military as they transition from military to civilian life.

Faculty and Staff

List your Faculty and/or Staff. Indicate if they are part-time or full-time. (If names are already listed, they were imported from last year's APU/PR. Add or remove persons as needed to reflect current personnel).

Name	Faculty/Staff	PT/FT
Coordinator: Vacant. Our 3 sister colleges each have one full-time Classified professional in the role of Veterans Coordinator with 100% assignment to Veterans Services		
Counselor: 50% assignment to Veterans Services (15 hours/week)	Faculty	Part-Time
Certifying Official: the responsibilities of Merritt's VA Certifying Official are among the "other duties as assigned" of a Student Services Specialist who is primarily tasked with managing the Welcome Center and the NextUp program. At our 3 sister colleges, the Coordinator is also the Certifying Official.	Staff	Part-Time

III. Program Goals

In this section, indicate programs goals, the status of each, and how they align with College and District strategic goals. Following are the strategic goals for Peralta CCD and Merritt College.

Peralta District Strategic Goals

- P1. Advance student access, equity, and success.
- P2. Engage and leverage partners.
- P3. Build programs of distinction.
- P4. Strengthen accountability, innovation, and collaboration.
- P5. Develop and manage resources to advance our mission.

Merritt College Strategic Goals

- M1. **Completion** - Increase number of degrees and certificates by 20% over the next 5 years.
- M2. **Transfer** - Increase transfers to CSU and UC by 6% annually. (Reach approx. 35% in 5 years).
- M3. **Time to Completion** - Reduce the number of excess units earned by students.
- M4. **Employment** - Maintain at least 82% of students attaining employment in the field of study.
- M5. **Equity** - Reduce the achievement gaps for African-American, multiethnic, and male students.

Below are your Program Goals from your most recent Program Review or APU, if available. Indicate whether the goal has been completed (C), is in progress (IP), no longer applicable (NA), or new (NEW). Be sure to state goals which are *measurable* and *time-based*. Indicate which College and District goal your program goal

aligns to. If your goal has been completed, what evidence supports completion of this goal? How did you measure the achievement of this goal?

Program Goal	Status (C, IP, NA, NEW)	Applicable College Goal(s)	Applicable District Goal(s)	If completed, describe supporting evidence, including measurements of achievements.
Develop a comprehensive program that will establish a greater sense of community within the Veterans population, focused on assisting students in achieving academic and personal success.	IP	M5	P3	
Establish systems to identify student veterans and collect Veterans Services program data in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics (age, race, gender) • Status of VA educational benefits • Success (persistence toward goals) • Customer Service (satisfaction) 	C	M1	P1	Veterans Counselor developed an intake form to track demographic and VA benefits data. Data from the intake form is captured in a continuously-updated Excel spreadsheet. Veterans Counselor created an anonymous Customer Service survey which is periodically emailed to all students enrolled in Veterans Services. From this survey, Merritt Vets consistently identify the program's top two needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veterans Resource Center • Program staff assigned to Veterans Services full-time
Provide professional development training, sufficient staff and office equipment necessary to ensure timely and accurate certification of units and VA benefits for the Veterans Services population.	IP	M5	P5	

IV. Facilities Utilization

Describe your current utilization of facilities, including labs and other space. Confirm previously reported content.

At present, the Certifying Official and Veterans Counselor each have an office in R-105, the Welcome Center area of the Student Services building. It should be noted that since neither person has 100% assignment to Veterans Services, these office spaces also serve other programs and populations.

After two years of advocacy by the Vets Counselor, Certifying Official and students, Merritt administration agreed to designate a space for the Veterans Connection Center: R-108, the former assessment room next to the main Counseling office. Light renovations, such as removing countertops, installing an ADA-compliant door, painting and carpet replacement were scheduled with Merritt's Project Management company, Kitchell Construction, when COVID-19 forced campus evacuation. Furniture and equipment to create a Vets study and lounge space is being purchased using funds from the \$100,000 grant secured in Summer 2018.

V. Program Update Data

In this section you will review and reflect upon the data for your program. Use data which measure performance on outcomes relevant to the mission and goals of your program, which will vary according to which area of the college your program is in.

In your response, refer to data applicable to your program obtained from the APU dashboards and/or other sources.

APU Data Dashboards:

- [Course Completion and Retention Rates Dashboard – Instruction](#)
- [Course Completion and Retention Rates Dashboard – Student Services](#)
- [Enrollment Trend and Productivity Dashboard](#)
- [Degrees and Certificates Dashboard](#)

For departments or programs in the Student Services area, refer to reports provided by institutional data systems (i.e., PeopleSoft or SARS), results of student surveys, or external reports (i.e. [IPEDS](#) or [Launchboard](#)). Include the number of students served over an academic year and summarize their demographics.

For departments in the Business and Operations areas, use data which track the key function provided to the College, such as facilities usage for events, tickets received and closed, the number of invoices process or the time to disbursement.

Use historical data (3 years is recommended, if available) to estimate a baseline, then use this to project activity and inform requests for the coming year.

Describe any significant changes and discuss what the changes mean to your program. Consider whether performance or service gaps exist for disproportionality impacted students. Focus upon the most recent year and/or the years since your last comprehensive program review. Cite data points from the program review dashboards or other data sources relevant to your service, business, operations or administrative area to support your answer. If you wish, you may include screenshots of the dashboard to show filtered results containing the relevant figures. Instructions on taking screenshots for [Windows](#) and [Mac](#))

In terms of disproportionately-impacted populations, it's worthwhile to note that while the overall Merritt student population is roughly one-third male, two-thirds female, Merritt Vets trend in the opposite direction: two-thirds male, one-third female. African Americans comprise the largest ethnic group of Merritt Veterans (39%), followed by Whites (18%) and Latinos (15%). This differs significantly from Merritt's overall student population, which in Spring 2020 was 34% Latino, 22% African American, 18% Asian and 15% White. Since it serves a higher proportion of African American males than other demographic groups, the Merritt Veterans program is a DI-serving program.

On course completion and retention, the 4-year trend from 2016 to 2020 shows Vets mirroring the general population, often doing slightly worse (by one or two percentage points) in these categories than students overall. A striking exception to this overall trend is our largest Veterans age group, ages 35-54, which boasted a completion rate of 90.3% in 2019-20, versus the general population completion rate of 79.3% for the same age group.

District-wide, the number of degrees and certificates awarded has trended upward for the last four years, with Merritt showing an overall increase of 26% from 2016 to 2020. Among Merritt Vets, this trend is even stronger: from 2016-2020, the number of degrees and certificates earned by Merritt Veterans increased 42%. Disaggregated by race and gender, we see more good news: degrees and certificates earned by African American Veterans jumped 54%, and by males, 55%.

Describe the program's progress on Service Area Outcomes and/or Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUOs) since the last Program Review or APU. For instructional programs, describe the program's progress on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and, if your discipline offers a degree or certificate, please describe the department's progress on Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

The Service Area Outcome for Merritt Veterans Services measures the number of students in our program who have completed both an Abbreviated (ASEP) and a Comprehensive Student Education Plan (CSEP) by their third semester of enrollment. In the last SAO reporting period, 99% of students served by our program had ASEPs on file and 74% had CSEPs. One reason for the discrepancy between ASEPs and CSEPs: by definition, a CSEP covers at least 3 semesters. Many Vets come to Merritt having already attended several other colleges and therefore don't need three semesters to complete their degree or transfer goals. Instead, the Veterans Counselor researches course articulation to apply those previously-earned units to Merritt degrees and certificates, thereby saving the Veteran time and GI Bill funds. Another reason for the discrepancy: CSEPs map out a student's pathway semester by semester, whereas an ASEP gives the student an overall list of required courses with the flexibility to determine the order in which they will complete those courses and their unit load. Since many Veterans are working and raising families in addition to attending college, they often choose courses solely on the basis of scheduling. Vets therefore wait for each semester's Course Schedule to be published, then construct their schedules based on when, where and in what format their required courses are offered.

Describe the **results of** your department/program/service assessment of student and Program Learning Outcomes/AUO/SAO. Indicate when and where dialogue is occurring. Discuss **changes/updates/resource requests** made to your program based on the assessment of outcomes of the SLOs/PLOs/SAOs/AUOs assessed in the past year and discuss their alignment with the [ILOs](#).

As noted in our 2018 Program Review and in our APU's from 2016, 2017, and 2019, Merritt is the only Peralta College that lacks a full-time Classified professional assigned 100% to Veterans Services. In our three sister colleges, these individuals initially served as their campus Certifying Official and grew into the role of Veterans Coordinator as they assumed increasing duties to the program. As previously reported, data from our student satisfaction surveys show that Merritt Vets cite a lack of adequate staffing and the lack of a Veterans Resource Center as their top two concerns with our program. By securing the one-time \$100,000 Veterans Resource Center grant and selecting R-108 as a location, we finally have the means to address one of those two concerns. But insufficient staffing remains a problem: in any given semester, 20% of Merritt Vets report problems related to fees and VA benefits:

- they get charged out-of-state fees in violation of the VACA Act; correcting their residency status takes months
- they can't enroll on time due to erroneous Bursar's Holds resulting from delayed processing of VA benefits

- they don't receive the living stipend to which they are entitled because of errors in certification of their classes

Until Merritt commits to adequately staffing this program, these and other compliance issues will persist. The consequences of continued noncompliance can be as severe as VA-decertification of the entire college, which means that no Veteran will be able to use their GI Bill benefits at Merritt... and consequently, we will lose almost all Veteran enrollment. Shall we wait for that axe to fall, or will we join our sister colleges in committing more staff time to this program?

In this year's Resource Request section, there is only one item. Please consider it seriously. We're not even asking for a full-time Vets Coordinator anymore; after five years, we've beaten that horse to death. Instead, we propose a compromise: our Certifying Official was recently promoted to NextUp Program Manager. NextUp is a small program serving former foster youth. Veterans are disproportionately likely to have been in the foster care system: it's not uncommon for a teen aging out of foster care to join the military because it provides the housing, food, financial support and mentorship that they aren't getting from family. Given the synergy between these two student populations, combining two small-to-medium sized programs under the leadership of one Program Manager makes thematic sense and will result in more time and attention devoted to Veterans Services than is currently the case.

The following item is for instructional programs only

Discuss how your PLOs align with the [ILOs](#).

VI. Curriculum: N/A

Note: If your department, program, or unit does not have a curricular component, please skip to the Section VII.

VII. Funded Resources: We were told to skip this section

For each resource allocation request from previous year's APU, indicate whether it was funded. Describe the outcomes and accomplishments for any requests which were funded.

Brief description of resource request	Was request funded? (Yes or No)	Funding Source (Specify Fund or Grant)	Total Award Amount	Outcome/Accomplishment
TYPE: Personnel - Classified Staff AMOUNT: \$100,000 JUSTIFICATION: Veterans Program Manager: responsibilities include VA certification of students' course schedules, processing of VA benefits, maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations, managing annual VA audits, benefits consultation, coordination of workshops and events, budget management, program outreach and recruitment, PR and publicity, communication through Merritt Vets listserv and social media, annual Service Area Outcomes assessment, Program Review and APUs, training and management of VA student workers.				
TYPE: Technology and Equipment - New				

Brief description of resource request	Was request funded? (Yes or No)	Funding Source (Specify Fund or Grant)	Total Award Amount	Outcome/Accomplishment
<p>AMOUNT: \$15,000 JUSTIFICATION: One multifunction printer/copier/scanner. Install phone and phone line. Upgrade IT comparable to smart classroom and install six desktop computers with IT access.</p>				
<p>TYPE: Technology and Equipment - New AMOUNT: \$2,000 JUSTIFICATION: New dual-screen computer and multifunction color printer/copier/scanner, ergonomic keyboard and mouse.</p>				
<p>TYPE: Professional Development - Individual/personal PD needed AMOUNT: \$4,000 JUSTIFICATION: Required conferences, workshops and training to maintain currency with VA regulations and to implement best practices.</p>				
<p>TYPE: Facilities - Other AMOUNT: \$5,000 JUSTIFICATION: Remove 2 countertops. Paint walls. Shampoo carpet. Install code keylock door. Install two large cubicles for private meeting/office space.</p>				
<p>TYPE: Supplies - Noninstructional Supplies and Materials AMOUNT: \$20,000</p>				

Brief description of resource request	Was request funded? (Yes or No)	Funding Source (Specify Fund or Grant)	Total Award Amount	Outcome/Accomplishment
<p>JUSTIFICATION: 2 sofas, 1 coffee table, 4 lamps, 1 conference-style table, 1 computer desk, 15 rolling desk chairs, 1 refrigerator, 1 microwave, 1 coffee maker, 1 water dispenser, 1 locking 4-drawer file cabinet, 1 small pantry cabinet, 2 bookshelves, 2 cork boards, 3 display racks, 1 flat-screen TV with 3 bluetooth headsets, 2 trash cans, 1 wall clock, paper goods (cups/plates, etc.), printer ink, 1 large whiteboard, dry-erase markers and eraser.</p>				
<p>TYPE: Supplies - Software AMOUNT: \$2,000 JUSTIFICATION: Survey Monkey, Kahoot, PDF converter, Photoshop</p>				
<p>TYPE: Supplies - Instructional Supplies and Materials AMOUNT: \$10,000 JUSTIFICATION: Textbooks for Veterans Lending Library and book rental program</p>				

VIII. Resource Requests

In the tables below, please add resource requests for your program for the **2021-22 fiscal year**. Indicate if the request is being made as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are submitting multiple requests under the same category, prioritize them by assigning a rank to each request ('1' indicating the highest priority request). Include only one request per row; if additional rows are needed, insert new rows in the table ([how to add rows](#)).

Personnel Resource Requests

Personnel Sub-Category (Full-Time or Part-Time Faculty, Classified, Student Worker)	Description/Justification	Percent Time	Estimated Annual Salary Costs	Estimated Annual Benefits Costs	Total Estimated Cost	Priority Rank (1=Highest priority)	COVID-19 Related (Yes/No)
<p>Classified Program Manager: Although the Veterans Coordinator at each of our sister Peralta Colleges is assigned 100% to Veterans Services, we propose combining Vets and NextUp program management under one FT position. This is an upgrade from the status quo, where a Coordinator has been requested for 5 years with no result.</p>	<p>Veterans Coordinator: responsibilities include certification of students' course schedules, processing of VA benefits, maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations, managing annual VA audits, benefits consultation, coordination of workshops and events, budget management, program outreach and recruitment, PR and publicity, communication through Merritt Vets listserv and social media, annual Service Area Outcomes assessment, Program Review and APUs, training and management of VA student workers.</p>	<p>50% assignment to Vets Services</p>	<p>\$40,000</p>	<p>\$10,000</p>	<p>\$50,000</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>No</p>

Resource Requests (Non-Personnel)

Resource Categories

- Professional Development (Department wide)
- Professional Development (Personal/Individual)
- Required Reasonable Accommodation
- Service Contract
- Supplies: Software
- Supplies: Books, Magazines, and/or Periodicals
- Supplies: Instructional Supplies
- Supplies: Non-Instructional Supplies
- Supplies: Library Collections
- Technology & Equipment: New
- Technology & Equipment: Replacement
- Other

Resource Category (select from above list)	Description/Justification	Total Estimated Cost	Priority Rank (1=Highest Priority)	COVID-19 Related (Yes/No)
None Requested				

IX. Participants

Please provide the list of members who participated in completing this program review.

Stefani de Vito (Counselor), Margie Rubio (Certifying Official)

Thank you for your time and effort in completing the Annual Program Update!