



## CAPTAIN WENDELL M. WILSON OFFICE OF MILITARY AND VETERAN SERVICES

### SFAC BUDGET REQUEST QUESTIONNAIRE – Budget Cycle FY26

- 1. Provide a summary of your unit’s mission/purpose, how you accomplish your unit’s mission or purpose, and a justification of your unit’s student fee allocation in terms of the benefit to students.**

#### **Mission/Purpose:**

It is the mission of the Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services (OMVS) to help veterans and their dependents flourish in their higher education goals. We act as a liaison between the veteran or dependent student, the school, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), and the Texas Veteran Commission (TVC) to ensure these goals are met. Our staff members are committed to assisting veterans and eligible dependent students with federal or state education benefits gained through military service.

#### **How We Accomplish Our Mission:**

We achieve this mission through the following services and programs:

- **VA and TVC Benefit Certification:** We ensure veterans and dependents can access their educational benefits by managing and certifying VA and TVC benefits, serving as intermediaries between students and government agencies.
- **Educational Counseling and Support:** Our office provides personalized guidance on navigating educational benefits, understanding program requirements, and selecting courses that maximize the use of these benefits.
- **Liaison Services:** Acting as the primary contact point, we facilitate communication between military-connected students and key stakeholders within the university, ensuring their specific needs are met effectively.
- **Outreach and Events:** We organize workshops, informational sessions, and events designed to enhance awareness of the benefits available to military-affiliated students, while also fostering a strong sense of community among veterans and their families.

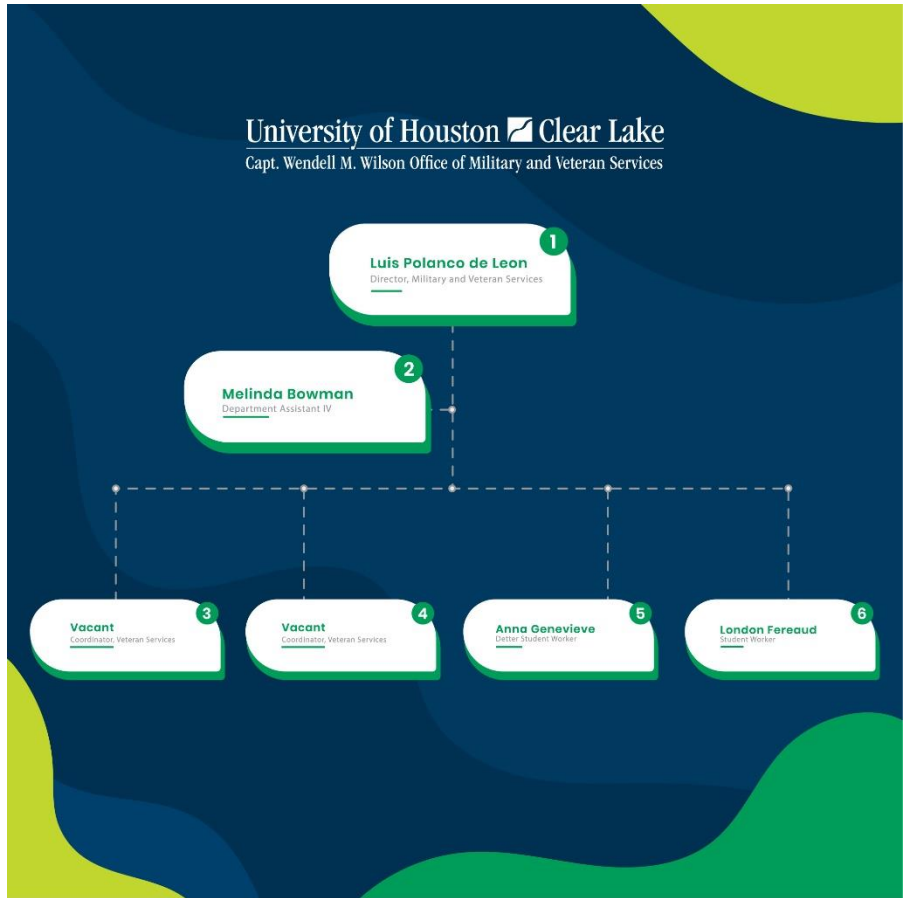
#### **Justification of Student Fee Allocation:**

The student fee allocation is critical to our ability to support the university's military-affiliated student population in several ways:

- **Retention and Success:** By ensuring timely processing of benefits and providing tailored guidance, we reduce financial and administrative barriers for veterans and dependents, improving their academic success and retention rates.
- **Outreach and Community Building:** Through outreach initiatives and campus events, we integrate military-connected students into the broader UHCL community, promoting inclusivity and enhancing the overall student experience.
- **Efficient Access to Benefits:** Our office ensures students have streamlined access to state and federal educational benefits, reducing financial stress and allowing them to focus on their academic goals.
- **Specialized Support Services:** The services we offer are specialized to the unique needs of military-affiliated students, ensuring they receive the support they need to thrive in higher education, which in turn enhances the UHCL student community by bringing a broad range of experiences and perspectives.

The continued support of the student fee allocation allows the Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services to provide critical services that help veterans, and their dependents successfully transition into academic life, benefiting the university.

2. **Provide an organization chart of your unit. Include all professional and student staff positions (with names), as well as vacancies. Make sure it is easily identifiable between professional and student staff on the chart.**



3. Present your Budget Worksheet. You are required to show and outline ALL funding sources (i.e. student fees, central funding, grants, gifts, outside sales revenue, auxiliary income, etc.). Use this area to define each funding source, its intended purpose, and how you are utilizing said funds.

Sources of Funding	Uses of Funding
Central / Education & General (Fund 2064) FY2025 Budget: \$190,684	Two SCO for Benefits / Certifications
	Part of Director Staff
	Part of Admin Staff
	Office Operations (telephones, office supplies, copier)
Student Services Fee (SFAC Fund 3049) FY2025 Budget: \$57,640	Student Events
	Part of Director Staff

	Part of Admin Staff
VA Funding-Annual Reporting Fee/Income (Fund 2080) FY2025 Budget: \$5,600	Defray costs of Certification (\$16 / certification)

**4. Did you receive any new funding for FY24? If so, please explain how it is being used. If you received any new one-time funding for FY25, please describe your plans to use those funds.**

We have not received any new funding for FY24 or FY25. However, we are requesting a one-time funding allocation of \$14,000 for FY25 and \$25,000 for FY26 for student workers' salaries. This request is intended to enhance our ability to provide critical support to the military and veteran student population, and we will elaborate further on question #10.

**5. How does your unit support the mission of Student Affairs and contribute to the student experience on campus? Consider the utilization and impact of your unit's services.**

The **Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services (OMVS)** supports the mission of Student Affairs by fostering a welcoming, resource-rich environment for veterans, military service members, and their dependents. Through its specialized services, the OMVS contributes to the overall student experience on campus in the following ways:

**1. Providing Essential Resources and Benefits Navigation**

The OMVS acts as a liaison between veteran students and the VA,

ensuring that students can access federal and state education benefits effectively. This service is crucial for removing financial barriers, allowing students to focus on their academic goals.

**2. Fostering a Sense of Belonging and Community**

The OMVS creates a supportive space where military-affiliated students can connect with peers who share similar backgrounds and experiences. This helps reduce isolation and strengthens their sense of belonging on campus, contributing to overall retention and engagement.

**3. Offering Guidance and Referrals to Campus Services**

The OMVS directs students to vital campus resources, such as academic advising, career services, and counseling. By guiding students to appropriate services, the OMVS enhances their holistic development, helping them thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

#### **4. Enhancing Career Readiness**

Through events like **Veterans Day celebrations** and the **Armed Forces Day**, the OMVS provides opportunities for networking with military recruiters and other employers. These events help veteran students explore career paths, build professional connections, and prepare for life after graduation.

#### **5. Supporting Veteran Student Success**

The OMVS addresses the unique needs of veteran students within the broader UHCL community, ensuring that policies and practices consider their specific challenges. This effort aligns with the mission of Student Affairs to promote student success by supporting the wide range of backgrounds and experiences within the student population.

#### **Impact on the Student Experience:**

By offering personalized support and guidance, the OMVS empowers veterans and their dependents to transition smoothly into the academic environment, supporting their success and personal growth on campus. This, in turn, positively impacts the overall campus climate, contributing to a richer, more diverse student experience at UHCL.

#### **6. What did you learn in your annual assessment that is impacting your programs and services now?**

In our annual assessment for the **2023-2024** cycle, we learned several key insights that are currently impacting the programs and services offered by the **Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services (OMVS)**:

## 1. Need for Increased Educational Programming and Community Engagement

- **Insight:** We learned that military-connected students highly value workshops and community-building events, but many expressed a desire for more frequent and varied opportunities.
- **Impact:** To address this, we are enhancing the frequency and scope of educational workshops, as well as fostering more opportunities for students to connect through social events. This effort aligns with our goal to hold 4 workshops and 2 community-building events during the academic year, with data collected to measure student satisfaction.

## 2. Importance of Demographic Data for Targeted Services

- **Insight:** The review of military-connected student demographics revealed important insights regarding the diverse makeup of our student population, including gender, race, age, and academic performance.
- **Impact:** By understanding the demographic composition, we can tailor our services to better meet the specific needs of our students, ensuring that we offer resources that reflect the unique challenges faced by each group.

## 3. Student Satisfaction with Services

- **Insight:** Initial feedback through surveys indicated that students generally appreciate the assistance provided by the OMVS, but there is room to improve responsiveness, and the clarity of information provided.
- **Impact:** Based on this feedback, we are working on streamlining our communication processes and ensuring that students can easily access information about their benefits and other resources. We will use this satisfaction data as a baseline to further refine our approach in future semesters.

## 4. Process Improvement in Certification and Compliance

- **Insight:** A review of our certification process highlighted areas where procedural improvements could reduce error rates and increase the efficiency of benefits processing.
- **Impact:** We have established a **Certification Work Group (CWG)** to review our procedures and implement best practices by summer 2024. This initiative is essential for ensuring compliance with state and federal guidelines while minimizing administrative errors.

## **Overall Impact:**

These findings have reinforced the need to continuously adapt and improve our services to enhance the experience of military-connected students. By focusing on data-driven decision-making, we aim to create a more supportive and effective environment for our veteran and dependent students, which aligns with the **Student Affairs** mission to improve the overall student experience on campus.

### **7. Describe any new programs and/or initiatives for the current year.**

The Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services (OMVS) has introduced several new initiatives this year to enhance support for our veteran and dependent student community:

#### **1. Information Sessions at the Start of Each Semester**

We are now holding information sessions at the beginning of every semester to ensure that new and returning military-affiliated students are aware of the resources available to them. These sessions cover essential topics like VA benefits, campus services, and academic support, allowing students to start the semester fully informed and prepared for success.

#### **2. Armed Forces Day Event**

We have expanded our outreach efforts to the wider UHCL community by organizing an annual Armed Forces Day event. This event is open to all students and community members and includes participation from military branch recruiters, offering students an opportunity to learn about military careers and network with professionals in the field. The event also serves as a bridge between the university and the local military community.

#### **3. Student Assessment Survey**

To better understand the unique needs of our students, we have launched a student assessment survey. This initiative allows us to collect valuable feedback directly from students to ensure that our programming is responsive to their needs. Based on the survey results, we will be able to develop tailored programming and services to support their educational and career goals more effectively.

### **8. What challenges or opportunities do you foresee for the current year and next year?**

#### **Challenges:**

#### **1. Resource Allocation and Funding**

As we implement new initiatives, ensuring adequate funding and resource allocation can be a challenge. Balancing the budget while expanding our programs and services may require strategic planning and possible adjustments to ensure that we can meet our goals without compromising the quality of our services.

**2. Engagement and Participation**

While our new initiatives, such as the information sessions and Armed Forces Day event, are designed to increase engagement, we anticipate challenges in ensuring high participation rates. It will be important to effectively promote these events and programs to maximize student involvement and community support.

**3. Adapting to Evolving Needs**

The needs of our veteran and dependent students are diverse and may evolve over time. Staying responsive and adaptable to these changes while maintaining a focus on our core mission can be challenging. Continuous feedback from students and stakeholders will be crucial in navigating these evolving needs.

**Opportunities:**

**1. Enhanced Student Support and Success**

The introduction of information sessions and tailored programming presents a significant opportunity to improve student support and success. By providing students with the tools and information they need early on, we can better support their academic and career goals.

**2. Strengthening Community Relations**

Our Armed Forces Day event offers an excellent opportunity to strengthen ties between UHCL and the local military community. Engaging with a broader audience can enhance our visibility and foster stronger relationships with potential partners and supporters.

**3. Data-Driven Improvement**

The student assessment survey provides a valuable opportunity to gather data that can drive improvements in our programming. By leveraging this feedback, we can make informed decisions and continuously enhance our services to better meet the needs of our students.

**9. Did you have any Student Fee funds in excess of \$5,000.00 swept at the end of FY24? If so, describe how much and in which areas the funds came from.**

Yes, we did have an excess of \$22,199 at the end of FY24. Of this amount, \$20,246 came from the salary/wage/fringe category. The excess in this area was primarily due to the director's position being vacant for a significant part of the fiscal year until we filled the role. The remaining \$1,953 represents the residual amount left after accounting for other expenses. Most of the excess was a result of the unfilled director position, which led to a lower-than-expected expenditure in salary and fringe benefits.

**10. Are you requesting any new one-time funding for FY25 or FY26? Present your budget request with appropriate justification. \*Note that only one-time funding requests (no base requests) will be reviewed for FY25 and FY26.**

Yes, we are requesting one-time funding for FY25 and FY26 to cover the salary of our two student workers.

**Justification:**



Our student workers play a crucial role in supporting the daily operations of the Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services (OMVS). Each semester, we serve approximately 550 military-affiliated students, including both veterans and dependents. Student workers are essential in helping us manage the high volume of administrative tasks, coordinating events, and providing valuable support to both staff and students. Securing one-time funding for their salaries will ensure that we can maintain our current level of service without impacting on our existing budget allocations. This request will allow us to continue offering these critical services and programs, ensuring the effective support of our veteran and dependent student population.

**11. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5.0% in your total FY26 budget and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

In the event of a 5.0% reduction in our total FY26 budget, the Capt. Wendell M. Wilson Office of Military and Veteran Services (OMVS) would implement a strategic approach to minimize the impact on our core services. Our primary focus would be to maintain essential functions that directly support our veteran and dependent students while identifying areas where efficiencies can be achieved. The 5% reduction represents \$2,882, which would have to come out of funding for events and programs.

To accommodate this reduction, we would prioritize the following strategies:

1. **Streamlining Operations:** We would review and streamline our current operations to identify any areas where we can improve efficiency. This might include optimizing workflows and reducing redundant processes to make better use of our existing resources.
2. **Reducing Non-Essential Expenditures:** We would assess non-essential expenditures and consider temporary reductions or eliminations in areas such as discretionary spending on events or supplies that do not directly impact student support.
3. **Increasing Volunteer and Student Involvement:** We would leverage volunteer support and increase the involvement of student workers to help mitigate the impact of reduced funding on operational tasks and program delivery.