

Department of Finance Award for Innovation in Higher Education
Saddleback College (South Orange County Community College District)
Pathways to Completion: Veterans Credit Articulation Track (V-CAT)
Spending & Implementation Plan

1. The name of the fiscal agent of the application selected for an award.

Fiscal Agent: South Orange County Community College District (SOCCCD)/ Saddleback College

2. The amount of the award as approved by the Committee on Awards for Innovation in Higher Education.

\$2,000,000

3. The amount of funds proposed for expenditure by the fiscal agent, a narrative describing the purposes for which those funds would be expended, and a timeline for expenditure. This narrative should explain how the purposes described are (1) one-time in nature and (2) related to the priorities of the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education.

Saddleback College and the South Orange County Community College District is proud to provide the fiscal management and oversight of the activities in the **Pathway to Completion: Veterans-Credit Articulation Track (V-VAT) Project**. Our institution will be administering the budget and project and have established a work plan to expend all \$2M awarded to our college. We plan for these funds to be “one-time” seed money to expose our state’s instructional faculty to the related curricular content delivered in the military and articulate trainings/experiences with course credit at the California Community College and California State University levels. Once established in the next four years, we hope a cultural shift will occur in the perspective of the DoD as an entity to be considered when performing all articulation work by the institutions in the project. Our goals align with the **DoF Innovation in Higher Education Award Priorities** in seeking means to (1) expedite time for degree completion through application of credit for prior learning through military training, (2) decrease student and state cost of degree attainment, (3) targeting an underrepresented group within California public higher education, and using technology to enhance the student experience and (4) ability to complete.

With several partner universities and the CSU System Office, we plan to provide in-depth training and professional development, offer opportunities for military curriculum, training, and experiential by instructional faculty, build pathways for articulation for meaningful and appropriate course credit, provide online access for review and planning of credit for degree and certificate pathways, and finally, provide opportunities to share findings and lessons learned from the project. This four-year project will be a regional collaborative allowing many of our over two dozen local community colleges and universities to gain from this work; as goals are met and full articulation pathways through transfer are developed for Veterans, this project will have major statewide implications. Our nation's military Veterans are currently returning to California in estimated numbers of between 9,000 and 25,000 annually depending on federal priorities on force size. Those seeking higher education and those with job-retraining needs face a public education system which rarely recognizes their military training and schooling while the private universities in our state as well as many out of state universities have used American Council on Education (ACE) guidelines and other sources to guide their direct course articulation for training and schooling. This results in our Veterans facing a longer timeline towards completing their academic goals. V-CAT and our budgetary plan aims to deliver a sense of cultural understanding of the military experience and curriculum offered by the Department of Defense (DoD) to instructional faculty and a meaningful set of courses articulated to maximize the use of the GI Bill and state educational subsidies and appropriately minimize the overall time towards degree completion for our student Veterans. The four phases will establish the platform for articulation work outside of this project and for years to come.

Expenditure Overview

The V-CAT budget expenditure plan is developed to have an approximately equal level of effort and expenses in the first three years with significantly lower expenses in the fourth year after the bulk of the faculty articulation and training work has been completed. A lead faculty member at Saddleback College and at the CSU system will bring together and lead faculty panels in 20-25 disciplines who will be receiving training on ACE guidelines and military training and reviewing curriculum for articulation. With an estimated 12 regional trainings on credit articulation and 10 site visits to various military training locations in the initial two phases, we hope to increase competency and understanding of military curriculum and ACE guidelines. As the project is implemented, lessons learned and best practices will be disseminated at meetings, conferences, and workshops in California and nationally, and we plan to share our findings and post them on the online toolkit in phase four.

The planned expenditures directly link to the goals in the proposal. Primary focus will be on funding the training of and labor associated with instructional and counseling faculty participating in V-CAT. A majority of the funds will be allocated for personnel costs including faculty leadership, a project manager, clerical support, and support for the work that faculty will be engaged in. Funds will also be allocated for the considerable travel (including conference attendance and training costs) for professional development, collaboration with partners and institutions throughout the state, and for dissemination within the state and nationally. Funds allocated for technology will support development of a web-based articulation tool, integration of the tool with the college district’s student information system, and web-pages and videos for use by faculty and students. The South Orange County Community College District has a 37% federally-approved indirect cost rate, but the project only anticipates using 10% of the awarded funds to support indirect costs for the project. All of the funds described above and summarized in the table, below, are one-time in nature and are directed towards the goal of developing an articulation system to allow veteran students to achieve credit for skills acquired through military training.

Innovation Award Budget

July 2017-June 2021 (4 year project)

Operational Management/Clerical Personnel	\$425,000
Content Leads/Training/Articulation	\$600,000
Funds to be transferred to other application participants	\$75,000
Training/Professional Development	\$300,000
IT/ Training Video Production	\$300,000
Materials/Supplies	\$100,000
Indirect Costs	\$200,000
Total	\$2,000,000

Implementation Plan/ Timeline

V-CAT will be implemented be in four phases over four years. **Phase I** will be to educate faculty, administration, and staff in targeted units on each campus in the framework presented in the American Council on Education’s Military Guide as well as share best practices adopted by those institutions that articulate military training/experience for course credit. Though we are hiring an operational grants manager, the lead faculty from Saddleback College and CSU will be coordinating the activities, developing the relationships, selecting academic disciplines to

pursue, selecting instructional faculty to participate, arranging meetings and conference calls, and much more during the duration of the project. This faculty leadership is vital to build buy in from not just faculty but the multitude of partners in and outside of higher education. The Director of University and College Partnerships at ACE is already engaged in the proposed initiative and has agreed to provide on-site training in best practices within the region. It is important in the first year and a half that we explore national training opportunities and support participants to engage outside our state's borders as we will also take an inventory of common MOS/ratings and training in which our local veterans have in their Joint Services Transcripts to target meaningful articulations. Identifying disciplines to establish core faculty panels is key to making our expenditures and articulations relevant to our local veterans. We also aim to produce a training video to be shared with instructional faculty who cannot attend one of our ACE trainings to broaden the impact and scope of our project.

In **Phase II** V-CAT will create core academic faculty panels based on subject matter expertise and curriculum within CSU-GE areas and CTE areas to work to train together and begin to review ACE exhibits and military curriculum standards to crosswalk military training/experience for course credit so student veterans attending Saddleback College who seek CTE certificates or degrees and/or transfer will have clearly outlined agreements for course credit and pathways to completion and ultimately viable careers. These faculty panels will utilize the ACE guide to assess how military training lines up with college curriculum in each discipline area and course.

Next, in **Phase III**, the bulk of the review and articulation work will be done by the faculty panels. A dedicated articulation officer/counselor supported by the V-CAT will develop articulation agreements and, with IT personnel, populate the building the V-CAT web portal. Saddleback faculty will agree on methods for offering credit for prior learning through challenge exams and ACE guidelines. The V-CAT leads at Saddleback College and CSU along with the articulation officer will work with partners at the CSUs to ensure approved coursework aligns with transfer curriculum. Finally, a web portal will be developed to serve as an open source access point for potential student veterans, current student veterans, and nonparticipating colleges and universities to review and consider the crosswalks established for military training/experience course credit. To the extent feasible, the college will enhance the physical space on Saddleback College's campus to provide increased access to direct assistance and counseling for military personnel and veterans. As we spread the work done in this initiative, the web portal will be central to our training and scaling up of the impact of this work. During this phase, we will also arrange opportunities for faculty to visit and experience certain pertinent military training.

In **Phase IV** the V-CAT program will offer professional development and training opportunities to other colleges and universities in California. We will disseminate knowledge and experience gained by these sessions at conferences, workshops, and webinars after the first three phases are completed will share best practices with other California community and public universities.

The timeline of actions can be found below:

Activity	Responsible Party(ies)	Projected Timeframe
V-CAT Program Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner Engagement • DoD Engagement • ACE Engagement • Faculty Outreach • Hire Project Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VETS Program Coordinator • Saddleback College • Partner Institutions 	July 2017 – August 2017
Phase 1: Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site ACE Training • CAEL Conference • Build digital repository and input JSTs • Locate and Support Faculty Trainings Nationwide • Review Best Practices in Articulation • Begin creating initial discipline faculty panels based on targeted course areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VETS Program Coordinator • CSU V-CAT Lead • Saddleback College and CSU Faculty • Project Staff 	September 2017 – May 2019
Phase 2: Content Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to create the majority of discipline faculty panels based on targeted course areas • Visit trainings sites at specific military schools • Develop articulation plan to officially crosswalk military training and experience with college coursework • Begin to articulate credit for military training/experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddleback College and CSU Faculty • VETS Program Coordinator • CSU V-CAT Lead 	December 2017 – May 2019
Phase 3: Articulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddleback College IT Personnel 	January 2018 – August 2019

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate credit for military training/experience • Develop Military Toolkit Website • Enhance My Academic Plan to include articulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saddleback College and CSU Faculty • Articulation Staff/Faculty • VETS Program Coordinator • CSU V-CAT Lead 	
<p>Phase 4: Scaling Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate the model and train peer institutions • Continue to articulate credit for military training/experience 	<p>VETS Program Coordinator CSU V-CAT Lead</p>	<p>January 2019 – June 2020</p>

Goals and Objectives

Pathways to Completion: V-CAT Project is developed with the primary intent of innovating and taking bold steps in public higher education in the state of California. If only 5,000 per year of the approximately 50,000 student veterans in the California Community College system receive 3 units of course credit as a result of this initiative, the state of California will save approximately \$2.5 million per year in redundant education and veterans will save approximately \$700,000 per year in GI Bill benefits.

We aim to articulate far more credit for prior learning and will strategically seek meaningful content areas that have clear ACE recommendations and a bulk of student veterans having completed said training by the DoD.

4. If applicable, the amount of funds to be transferred by the fiscal agent to other participants in the application, the amount of funds proposed for expenditure by each participant, a narrative describing the purposes for which those funds would be expended, and a timeline for expenditure. Again, this narrative should explain how the purposes described are (1) one-time in nature and (2) related to the priorities of the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education.

The proposed expenditure plan ensures that partner institutions are financially supported to engage in the work to be undertaken to ensure the project’s success. As fiscal agent, South Orange County Community College District/Saddleback College will ensure that faculty stipends, professional development, and travel expenses for employees at participating

institutions are paid by SOCCCD. As the Innovation Award Budget found above shows, \$100,000 has been set aside to be transferred to other application participants as needed for other costs (e.g. for staff support for entering veteran transcript information into a database). The award budget includes \$25,000 for three participants (CSU Long Beach, CSU Fullerton, and Cal Poly Pomona).

Fiscal Management:

Funds will be administered by the Dean of Transfer, Career & Special Programs under the direction of the Vice President for Student Services. Program staff will collaborate with appropriate staff in the college's Fiscal Office to ensure funds are expended in accordance with the priorities of the Awards for Innovation in Higher Education.