



# Summer 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](mailto:lpcveteransfirst@laspositascollege.edu)



## Operation Gateway12 Goes Virtual

Livermore, CA – This year marked our 12th annual Operation Gateway (Op-G12) New Student Veterans Orientation offered in a total online virtual format at Las Positas College. We had over 40 new student veterans that were either military dependents, active military, or veterans. Our focus of Op-G12 was to connect students with valuable resources to help them transition and succeed at Las Positas College. The big difference with this year’s format was the use of technology where students were required to login daily on the Zoom platform. OP-G12 included reflections and homework to ensure that students were understanding each day’s event and presentations. Operation Gateway opened on July 29, 2020 with the singing of the national anthem by LPC student Ms. Alejandra Quezada Sereno, followed by opening remarks from LPC President Dr. Dyrell Foster. Our themes for Op-G12 were Campus, Community, and Camaraderie.

### Day 1 – Campus Resources

*“College was especially sweet because of the*

*positive, hopeful atmosphere of a college campus.” Jerry Kramer*

Viviana Martinez, USMC Veteran/LPC student, facilitated “campus resources” day. Guest speakers representing over 12 resources on campus delivered informative and engaging presentations followed by questions. Topics covered ranged from financial aid to computer lab resources to resources available from the disability resource center.

### Day 2 – Community Resources

Community colleges play an important role in helping people transition between careers by providing the retooling necessary to take on a new career. Ron Payne, US Army Veteran/LPC Alumnus, facilitated “community resources” day. Representatives from over 15 community organizations covered topics ranging from medical services, career support, and navigating the Dept of VA system.

Day 3– Facilitated by Destiny Goddu, USMC Veteran/LPC alumnus, fellow peer student veterans shared their experiences with leadership opportunities, scholarships, internships, as well as services provided by the Veterans First Program at Las Positas College. Student veterans, past and present, shared words of encouragement and emphasized that they are not alone in their struggle returning to college after serving their country.

A big takeaway from the last day was to emphasize that we care, the Veterans First Program and fellow peer veterans care, and the LPC veterans first community has their “SIX.”



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## Operation Gateway 12 Reflections

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS



#### Catherine Alfaro, Financial Aid Outreach Specialist and Dreamer Resource Liaison

Operation Gateway 12 had a different feel online; however, as expected, the Veteran's Resource Center did such a great job at hosting and building community and excitement during the day. Everyone seemed so engaged and ready for the presentations. I was glad to know that a lot of people were interested in Financial Aid and asked so many great questions. Since Operation Gateway 12, I have connected with many Veterans and have assisted them with the Financial Aid process. I love being part of Operation Gateway because working with students and providing Financial Aid information is what I love to do. I know online learning is not easy; nevertheless, the students were there to face the day and the challenge. I hope to be part of many Operation Gateways in the future.



#### Operation Gateway 12 students when asked “what was impactful about OPG-12?”

“Just knowing and understanding all the opportunities and possibilities that are at our fingertips.” (N. Ortega)

“The camaraderie among the veterans and the VRC center. It really helped me feel more comfortable.” (A. Luiz)

“I felt that Dr. Snetter's presentation was very impactful. I also loved the community resources presentations and of course the Engineering Tech Presentation.” (T. Leach)

“The idea we can reach out for help, we’re not alone.” (A. Paustian)

“Learning more of the available resources and getting to know all the awesome people that are there to help.” (K. Vazquez)

“Day 2, seeing what kind of community we have around us, and seeing all the people and programs that are out there to help.” (N. Crocker)

“Learning about Financial Aid.” (X. Qiu)

#### Himani Tiwari, MS, LPC Disability Resource Center Director



Being new to the LPC community, it was my first time participating in Operation Gateway 12, to welcome our student Veterans and their families. Right from the beginning, I was blown away by how well it was conceptualized, organized, and executed. Student employees and staff coordinating the event presented with a sort of contagious enthusiasm. The event was extremely professional. It was interesting to see how despite being an online event, it was very personal and intimate. Presenting at Operation Gateway 12 was a valuable opportunity and honor for me. What I found was a tight knit community of students and staff that were completely engaged and eager to help and support each other. It made me want to belong to this community. It takes a lot of internally motivated people doing their best to put up an event like this. I am inspired to someday have similar events for our community of students with disabilities too. To sum up, Gateway 12 was a huge success!!





## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT Interview with Mr. Tom McGaffney



**Tom McGaffney**  
**USN Veteran/LPC Alumnus**

### ***What are you up to after leaving LPC?***

I have since moved to the great state of Minnesota where I am continuing my education at Concordia University in pursuit of a B.S. in Finance.

### ***What is the difference between your new school and Las Positas College? Where would you rather be?***

My new school does not compare to LPC. The staff, Professors, and resources at LPC are superior in every way. I wish LPC had 4-year programs so that I could have spent a couple more years at a school that shows compassion to their students.

### ***Tell us about your greatest moments at Las Positas College.***

Overall, my time spent working in the VRC was my favorite. Specifically, when Ron Payne and I dressed up as a pirate and captain America for Club Day. We blared missy Elliot and danced until we were forced to stop. Then we danced to some goofy carnival music. We stole the show that day.



### ***What tips or tricks would you tell new student veterans to make it through college?***

I would tell them to utilize all available resources offered by the VRC. Apply for scholarships and get involved with clubs and organizations. Meet people and develop support groups. Help each other in both professional and personal aspects of life. Do not be afraid to ask questions or ask for help.

### ***What are your three educational wishes?***

1. I would wish for either the LPC VRC to come to my new college or for me to finish my degree at LPC.
2. I would wish for every veteran to have the awesome LPC experience that I had.
3. I would wish for internships to open again so that we all could develop our professional resumes before we graduate.

### ***Better to go to college first then join the military? Or vice versa?***

I went to college before the military and failed to commit to it. The result was a large loan bill with nothing to show for it. The military prepared me for college in that it showed me my potential. Just because I was not a good student in high school did not mean I was not fit for high level math, science, etc. I went to college after the military with a strong mindset and a drive that was not something I had before. My wife on the other hand, went to college before the military. After she got out of the service, because she had a four-year degree and the technical experience from the navy, she landed a high paying career right out of the gate. She has since become my “Sugar-Mama.”



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## Save the Date! Upcoming Fall 2020 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](http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans)**

### September

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Remembering 9.11 – Never Forget Guest Speaker: Retired Lt. Col. Darling	Sept. 11, 2020 – Fri.	11 am-12 pm
Mission L.U.C. with LPC President Foster	Sept. 15, 2020 – Tues.	11 am-12 pm
Veterans Success Series: Navigating the Stressors of Distance Learning	Sept. 29, 2020 – Tues.	12-1:30 pm
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health & Wellness Services	Every Tuesday	6-7 pm

### October

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mi Military Familia: Stories of Serving my Country as a Latinx <i>In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month</i>	Oct. 8, 2020	11 am
Mission L.U.C. with Vice President Whalen and Vice President Raichbart	Oct. 14, 2020 – Wed.	11 am-12 pm
2.2 for 22 Challenge Walk for Veterans – Virtual Event	Oct. 21 – Nov. 11	Open
Veterans Success Series: 2nd Annual "Kick off Your Career" Workshop hosted by the Rotary Club of Livermore	Oct. 27, 2020	4 pm – 6 pm
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health & Wellness Services	Every Tuesday	6-7 pm

### November

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mission L.U.C. with Interim Dean Bell and Professor Sheena Turner-August	Nov. 18, 2020 – Wed.	11 am-12 pm
2.2 for 22 Challenge Walk for Veterans – Virtual Event	Oct. 21 – Nov. 11	Open
Veterans Day Virtual Presentation	TBA	TBA
Veterans Success Series: Gaining Academic Skills and Advancing to a 4 Year College/University – presented by Service to Schools and Warrior Scholar Project	Nov. 17 - Tues.	TBA
Veterans Chill n Chat with the Student Health & Wellness Services	Every Tuesday	6-7 pm

### December

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date - Day</i>	<i>Time</i>
Mission L.U.C. with David Betts, Director Employee and Labor Relations, Chabot-Las Positas	Dec. 8 – Tues.	11 am-12 pm

Las Positas College | Veterans First Program (VFP)

3000 Campus Hill Drive, Building 1310 | Livermore, CA 94551 | 925.424.1570 | [www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans](http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans)



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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: <b>885 1925 8951 (pw: veterans)</b> 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: <b>885 1925 8951 #</b> <b>Password: 040665 #</b></p>
<p>Quick Question, Ask Us!</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/</a> Right Navigation &gt; Quick Question, Ask Us!</p>
<p>Request a Virtual Appointment with a Veterans Counselor</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/</a> Left Navigation &gt; Veterans First Program &amp; Services &gt; Request an Appointment or Drop-in</p>
<p>Get Involved with the Student Veterans Organization</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/</a> Left Navigation &gt; Student Veterans Organization</p>
<p>Student Veterans Peer Chat Hour – Buddy Check</p>	<p>Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs from 12-1 pm Zoom Meeting ID: <b>885 1925 8951 (pw: veterans)</b></p>
<p>Virtual Tutor Sessions for Math, Science, ENGL1A, Statistics</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/</a> Navigation &gt; Veterans First Program &amp; Services &gt; Tutoring</p> <p>Visit: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/tutoring.php">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/tutoring.php</a></p>
<p>VA Course Certification Form</p>	<p>Visit our veterans website: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/</a> Left Navigation &gt; Getting Started &gt; Certify Classes</p> <p>Visit: <a href="http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/certifyclasses.php">http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/certifyclasses.php</a></p>

### *Gratitude to our Newsletter Editors!*

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