



NEWS RELEASE

Santiago Canyon College Offers More Than an Education to Southern California Veterans

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The award-winning college offers programs and staff that specialize in meeting veterans' and their families' academic, social, health, and financial needs.

(Orange, CA) For the fourth year in a row, Santiago Canyon College and the SCC Veterans Resource Center have been designated a Military Friendly® institution, being awarded "Gold Level" for 2023. This award acknowledges Santiago Canyon College's decade-long dedication to serving and supporting U.S. veterans and their families. Established in 2012, the center, known to most on campus as the VRC, was initially a part-time campus service with limited staff; however, with 67% of SCC's student veterans living below the federal poverty line, an increased need has led to the expansion of this critical program. Today, the VRC provides a full spectrum of services to vets and their family members who aspire to earn a certificate, degree, or transfer to a four-year university.

According to the 2021 Census, approximately 100,000 veterans reside in Orange County, many in dire need of support. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development states that 70% of the nation's homeless veterans are in California. With the demand for support growing daily, Santiago Canyon College is taking steps to change the statistics and the lives of Orange County veterans. SCC employs dedicated staff versed in GI Bill requirements to ensure vets receive funding certification within hours, not weeks. Upon enrollment, SCC military programs like the VRC provide veteran students and their families with a welcoming campus community that creates a sense of belonging and focused support while priority registration, full-time academic counseling services, on-site tutoring, access to work-study employment, and VA guidance ensure academic success. In addition, students have access to a physical space where they can study, connect with other military students, or even enjoy a hot meal provided for free. Community partnerships with organizations like the Community Foundation of Orange and the Tierney Center provide additional funding for the VRC to assist with basic needs and housing insecurities veteran students may be experiencing. This Spring, Santiago Canyon College has completed an agreement with "Outside the Wire" through U.S. Vets to provide on-site personal counseling and psychological services, further supporting SCC's veteran students and their families.

"We can never do enough to support the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much for our country and our freedom," stated Santiago Canyon College President, Dr. Jeannie G. Kim. She continued, "Through programs like the Veterans Resource Center, we remain devoted to our mission, providing every SCC student with the individual support and resources needed to achieve their own vision of success and thrive."

The efforts of Santiago Canyon College Veteran's Resource Center are producing notable results. Currently, VRC veteran students have a 33% transfer rate to 4-year colleges where they will go on to receive undergraduate and graduate degrees. In addition, nearly 40% of all students in the VRC program are earning a 3.5 GPA or higher while the vet program exceeds the Military Friendly graduation and career standard by over 14%. With the VRC program's success becoming evident, Santiago Canyon College will remain steadfast in its efforts to grow and support veteran and student resources.