

**Utah System of Higher Education
New Administrative Unit Proposal
Cover/Signature Page - Abbreviated Template**

Institution Submitting Request: National Center for Veterans Studies (NCVS)

Proposed Effective Date¹: 08/27/2018

Institutional Board of Trustees' Approval Date:

Proposed Unit Title: National Center for Veterans Studies (NCVS)

Sponsoring School, College, or Division: College of Social and Behavioral Science

Sponsoring Academic Department(s) or Unit(s): Psychology

Proposed Unit Type:

<input type="checkbox"/>	New Administrative Unit
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Institute
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Bureau
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conditional Three-Year Approval for New Center, Institute, or Bureau

Chief Academic Officer (or Designee) Signature:

I, the Chief Academic Officer or Designee, certify that all required institutional approvals have been obtained prior to submitting this request to the Office of the Commissioner.

Craig J. Bryan

Date: January 4, 2019

☒ I understand that checking this box constitutes my legal signature.

¹ "Proposed Effective Date" refers to date after Regent approval when new unit is operational or change to unit is published.

New Unit Description - Abbreviated Template

Section I: The Request

National Center for Veterans Studies (NCVS) requests approval to establish National Center for Veterans Studies (NCVS) effective 08/27/2018. This action was approved by the institutional Board of Trustees on .

Section II: Program Proposal

Administrative Unit Description/Rationale

Present a brief description of the unit. Describe the institutional procedures used to arrive at the action being proposed. Briefly indicate why a new administrative unit or change to the unit is justified. Are similar units offered elsewhere in the USHE or the State? State how the institution and the USHE benefit from the proposed unit or unit change.

This is a request to form an interdisciplinary research institute called the National Center for Veterans Studies (NCVS) at the University of Utah. The NCVS was initially established at the University of Utah in 2010 with a mission to engage in research, education, outreach, and advocacy for improving the lives of military personnel, veterans, and their families. These activities align with the University of Utah's mission to generate and share new knowledge, discoveries, and innovations via research, and to engage communities to promote education, health, and quality of life.

Research

The primary research focus of the NCVS will be to develop and test psychological treatments for preventing and reducing suicidal behaviors, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other mental health conditions among military personnel and veterans; to create innovative methods for improving the identification, detection, and assessment of at-risk military personnel and veterans; and to improve our understanding of the psychological, social, and biological mechanisms that underlie these conditions. These studies will be conducted in collaboration with researchers and collaborators across multiple disciplines within the university. Since its creation in 2010, for example, the NCVS has conducted research in collaboration with faculty members, researchers, and students in psychology, social work, biology, medicine, anthropology, economics, sociology, bioinformatics, and exercise science. The NCVS will therefore serve as a catalyst for researchers across the U who are interested in conducting research with the military and veteran communities, and will foster new collaborations across departments and colleges.

Education

The NCVS will provide training and educational opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in a variety of programs at the University of Utah. Undergraduate and graduate students are able to serve as research assistants on NCVS studies, thereby obtaining applied research experience that supplements classroom-based training and prepares them for graduate training and education. Students will be encouraged to generate original research ideas and to receive supervision and mentorship in research design, methodology, data analysis, and scientific writing. Students will also be able to leverage current and archived NCVS data sources to pursue advanced research training and educational opportunities including the

Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, honors theses, master's theses, and dissertations. Graduate students enrolled in the University of Utah's clinical psychology and social work graduate programs will also have the opportunity to receive clinical training under the supervision of licensed clinical psychologists and clinical social workers working for the NCVS, thereby obtaining intensive training in state-of-the-art psychological treatments for the most challenging issues that affect the military and veteran communities, notably suicide and PTSD.

In addition to educational opportunities for students enrolled at the University of Utah, the NCVS will engage in educational activities aimed at improving the quality of mental healthcare services locally, nationally, and globally. Central to this aim, the NCVS will offer a range of training workshops for licensed mental healthcare professionals focused on disseminating and implementing treatments developed by NCVS researchers, notably treatments aimed at reducing suicidal behaviors and PTSD. These training workshops will be administered and managed by the University of Utah's Core Facility as a Service/Recharge Center, thereby providing a supplemental funding mechanism to support NCVS activities. A unique strength of the NCVS will be its ability to translate research findings into practice. NCVS researchers and staff are regularly engaged in dissemination and implementation efforts locally and internationally.

Note that the NCVS will not offer any courses, degrees, or certificate programs.

Outreach & Community Engagement

The NCVS partners with several community groups and agencies in order to foster a network of resources for the military and veterans communities. These partners include Continue Mission, the Riderz Foundation, the PJ Foundation, Project UnBreakable, Operation Pay It Forward, the National Ability Center, and Salt Lake Behavioral Health. The NCVS will continue to be engaged in a range of community outreach activities including participation in pre- and postdeployment resource fairs for the Utah National Guard, resource fairs sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs, military-sponsored events (e.g., Utah Air Show, Governor's Day, the Army Ball), and activities scheduled by veteran service organizations and nonprofits. A central feature of NCVS outreach and community engagement is the provision of no-cost psychological treatments to military personnel, veterans, and family members, many of whom do not have easy access to effective mental healthcare services from the VA or their communities. These services will be provided by University of Utah graduate students enrolled in the clinical psychology and social work programs under the supervision of licensed NCVS staff and faculty members, thereby supporting the educational mission of the university.

Leadership and Management of the NCVS

The Executive Director of the NCVS is appointed by the Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences based on the advice and recommendation of a search committee formed for the purpose of identifying a suitable candidate for the position.

The Executive Director will be responsible for identifying and appointing members of the Executive Committee, with consultation and advice from a search committee formed for this

purpose. In addition to the Executive Director, the Executive Committee members will include the Director of Operations, Director of Clinical Services, Director of Training, and Director of Research. The duties and responsibilities of each Executive Committee member will be as follows:

1. Executive Director - The Executive Director will have overall responsibility for NCVS activities and financials; engage with external partners, donors, and funding agencies; and submit proposals for extramural funding. The current Executive Director is Dr. Craig Bryan, PsyD, ABPP, an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and has an adjunct appointment in the Department of Psychiatry.

2. Director of Operations - The Director of Operations will oversee the day-to-day internal operations of the center, to include personnel and resource management; and assist with community engagement, grant proposals, project coordination, and development efforts. The current Director of Operations is AnnaBelle Bryan, MS, a research staff member in the Department of Psychology.

3. Director of Clinical Services - The Director of Clinical Services will oversee the delivery of psychological services conducted within the context of funded and unfunded clinical trials and research studies; provide clinical supervision to graduate psychology and social work students; and submit proposals for extramural funding. The current Director of Clinical Services is Feea Leifker, PhD, MPH, a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology.

4. Director of Training - The Director of Training will oversee scheduling and coordination of NCVS training workshops and presentations; manage the NCVS Training Institute service recharge center; and submit proposals for extramural funding. The current Director of Training is David Rozek, PhD, an Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry.

5. Director of Research - The Director of Research will search for sources of extramural funding; ensure regulatory compliance of NCVS projects and studies; coordinate human and material resources across multiple NCVS projects; and submit proposals for extramural funding. This position is currently vacant and is planned to be filled with a TBD faculty member.

Because the NCVS is housed within the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the NCVS will provide regular reports to the college's dean and Advancement Board, each of which will serve in an advisory capacity. As the NCVS continues to grow, the Executive Director, CSBS Dean, and CSBS Advancement Board will reassess the need to establish an advisory board separate from the CSBS Advancement Board.

In addition, the NCVS Executive Committee will reassess the need to expand its leadership team on an annual basis, and will solicit the input of the CSBS Dean and Advancement Board. If expansion of the Executive Committee is deemed necessary, the Executive Director will form search committees to identify additional members. The search committee will be comprised of

at least one NCVS faculty member or staff person selected by the Executive Director, at least one faculty member from a collaborating academic unit, and at least one student. The search committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Director regarding the appointment of new Executive Committee members.

In the event that the Executive Director retires, leaves the university, or otherwise vacates the position, the CSBS Dean will appoint an Interim Director and form a search committee that will be comprised of at least one NCVS faculty member or staff person selected by the Executive Committee, at least one faculty member from a collaborating academic unit, and at least one student. The search committee will provide recommendations to the CSBS Dean regarding the appointment of a new Executive Director.

Benefit to The University of Utah

The NCVS already serves as a hub for interdisciplinary research and scholarship, and will continue its contributions in this regard in the future. The NCVS currently collaborates with faculty members and students in multiple departments across campus including Psychiatry; Family Medicine; Bioinformatics; Psychology; Social Work; Sociology; Parks, Recreation, & Tourism; Writing and Rhetoric Studies; Law; and Biology. These collaborations include collaborative research projects, grant-funded research, and teaching. As an example, the NCVS has been actively engaged in grant-funded clinical research testing innovative treatment delivery models for service members and veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As part of this research, the NCVS is collaborating with faculty members in the Department of Parks, Recreation, & Tourism to investigate how the physical environment and engagement in recreational activities can moderate treatment outcomes; with faculty members in the Department of Psychiatry to identify neural mechanisms associated with treatment recovery; and with graduate students in the Department of Biology to examine the association of oxytocin with treatment response. In short, a single project will be leveraged to support a host of studies across multiple academic disciplines.

The NCVS will also leverage its many archived datasets and ability to establish collaborations with military and veterans organizations across the U.S. to address health and social issues impacting military personnel and veterans. The NCVS currently oversees more than 20 datasets from a wide range of studies conducted over the past decade. These data come from multiple clinical trials, health surveillance studies, and laboratory-based projects. In addition to these datasets, the NCVS has collaborative relationships with institutions and organizations around the U.S. that enable access to even larger datasets including the Millenium Cohort Study, the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (Army STARRS), and the South Texas Research Organizational Network Guiding Studies on Trauma and Resilience (STRONG STAR) data repository.

The NCVS is the only research institute of its kind in the State of Utah. At a national level, the NCVS is also unique due to its broad focus on research, clinical services, and education. Since its inception in 2010, the NCVS has received considerable recognition at the community, state, and national level, and has become an important part of the University of Utah community.

Within the State of Utah, the NCVS has existing partnerships with the Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System, Hill Air Force Base, and the Utah National Guard. At the federal level, the NCVS has partnered with a large number of agencies including the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Several letters of support are included in the appendix to this proposal.

Consistency with Institutional Mission/Institutional Impact

Explain how the unit is consistent with the institution's Regents-approved mission, roles, and goals. Describe how the existing administrative structures support the proposed unit and identify new organizational structures that may be needed. What changes in faculty and staff will be required?

The mission of the NCVS is consistent with the University of Utah's mission to foster student success and preparing them for lives of impact as leaders and citizens. Many of the students who volunteer and/or work for the NCVS come from diverse backgrounds including previous military service, first-generation students, physical disabilities, and underrepresented racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. These students have represented a wide range of majors and academic disciplines including psychology, social work, business, sociology, mathematics, and economics. The NCVS has also contributed to the education and training of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars pursuing advanced degrees in psychology, social work, sociology, biology, psychiatry, bioinformatics, and pharmacy. The NCVS's extensive collaborations across the University of Utah's many academic units and departments, therefore serves as an exemplar of the "one university" model described by President Ruth Watkins. The education focus of the NCVS's mission does not stop with student training. NCVS faculty and students are regularly engaged in dissemination and implementation efforts aimed at translating knowledge and discoveries about military and veteran mental health and quality of life at the local, national, and global levels.

The work of the NCVS also aligns with the University of Utah's four strategic goals:

- 1. Develop and transfer new knowledge.** The NCVS's consistent track record of extramural funding has enabled the center to attract and recruit high achieving students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty members from diverse backgrounds. The NCVS's research focus on developing and testing psychological treatments for high-risk service members and veterans provides university students with the opportunity to learn about an increasingly urgent public health issue for the State of Utah and the nation as a whole: rising suicide rates. The suicide research conducted by the NCVS is widely recognized as cutting-edge and innovative, laying the foundation for establishing the university as a national center of excellence for suicide prevention.
- 2. Promote student success to transform lives.** Undergraduate students who volunteer and/or work for the NCVS have high rates of graduation, and over one-third

subsequently pursue graduate education. Multiple students have used data from NCVS studies for honors theses and Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) projects. Graduate students have similarly high rates of achieving important educational milestones (e.g., preliminary examinations, dissertation defense) and high rates of scholarship and fellowship awards. NCVS datasets and facilities are frequently used by graduate students for the purposes of completing master's theses, dissertations, and other scholarly work. The NCVS also plays a critical role in supporting university students who do not volunteer for the center, especially student veterans struggling with PTSD, suicidal thoughts, and other mental health conditions. In many cases, these students are unwilling to access services from the University Counseling Center and are ineligible for healthcare services from the VA. By offering psychological treatment to student veterans in need, the NCVS fills a critical gap for an important subgroup of students with unique needs, thereby increasing the likelihood of degree completion and reducing the risk of early dropout.

3. **Engage communities to improve health and quality of life.** The NCVS provides transformative and innovative health care to service members, veterans, first responders, and their families. Less than half of Utah service members and veterans are eligible to receive healthcare from the VA, and very few licensed mental health professionals in Utah have been trained to provide this community with the most advanced and effective treatments for suicide risk and PTSD. The NCVS has therefore become the “go-to” source for Utah veterans in need, especially for those who are unable or unwilling to receive services from the VA. In order to reach these communities, the NCVS is regularly engaged in community outreach activities. NCVS students and staff attend a wide range of military and veteran-focused events including pre- and postdeployment briefings, Governor's Day, the Utah Air Show, and Veterans Day memorials. In addition, the NCVS provides educational presentations to community agencies and non-profits, and attends local conferences and trainings to promote the NCVS and solicit referrals. Finally, NCVS leadership sits on multiple community, state, and national task forces and advisory boards including the Governor's Suicide Prevention Task Force and the Utah Suicide Prevention Coalition's firearm safety committee.
4. **Ensure the long-term viability of the university.** The NCVS's strong track record of extramural funding has provided a significant amount of facilities and administration support to the university. In addition, the NCVS's focus and mission has provided a unique opportunity for expanding and broadening university development efforts, thereby contributing to the university's continued success. Although other universities have established centers and institutes that focus on military and veteran research, the NCVS's mission is especially unique owing to its focus on developing and improving psychological treatments for military personnel and veterans, expertise in translating science into practice, and its national scope. The NCVS has collaborated with many of these centers and universities (e.g., University of Southern California's Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families, Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families, Purdue University's Military Family Research Institute). None of these other centers and institutions conduct the type of

research conducted by the NCVS (specifically, clinical trials for suicide prevention and PTSD).

Physical Resources Available in Gardner Commons

- 1. NCVS Central Office.** The NCVS's central office is located on the third floor of the new Gardner Commons building (Suite 3525). The central location of the Gardner Commons on the University of Utah campus provides easy access to students and faculty members, and is adjacent to the Marriott Library and the Student Union, where the Veteran Support Center is located. The NCVS central office includes office space for the center's leadership team, shared work stations for graduate students and undergraduate students, and two consultation rooms designed specifically to meet the needs for conducting clinical research and training. The center is also located adjacent to the John Short NEXUS Core, designed to foster and promote interdisciplinary research.
- 2. John Short NEXUS Core.** Managed by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the John Short NEXUS Core includes team rooms for project coordinators and teams that need space for specific projects. Three conference rooms (12 seats each) are fully wired for conference utilities and innovation. Touchdown space for grants management specialists are available to provide team consultation for external grant preparation. Several NCVS staff members and postdoctoral fellows currently use specially-designed office space located within the NEXUS Core to work on multiple grant-funded treatment studies and research projects.
- 3. Focus Group Room.** A state-of-the-art room is available for researchers across the university to conduct focus groups that are common in social science and medically-oriented research. The room is equipped with one-way glass connecting to an observation booth where students can be trained in focus group methodologies. It also features high quality audio and video capability and is available for web-conferencing.
- 4. Large Conference Space.** Two large auditoriums are available in the Gardner Commons Building that can be used for training workshops and forums hosted by the NCVS.

For Conditional Approval of New Centers, Bureaus, and Institute's ONLY

Explain how proposed change is fully supported by external funding.

The NCVS has been fully funded by extramural funding since its creation in 2010. The considerable majority of this funding comes from the Department of Defense, although NCVS researchers have also received funding from the National Institute of Mental Health, the Department of Veterans Affairs, private foundations (e.g., Bob Woodruff Foundation), and corporate donors (e.g., The Boeing Company, Wells Fargo Bank).

Explain how the proposed change requires only a modest effort in terms of staff and space needs with normally no permanent staff or permanent facility assignment. Explain how the entity is already affiliated with an existing academic program or department.

The NCVS is already affiliated with the Department of Psychology within the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and utilizes existing space and resources located in newly-constructed Gardner Commons building.

Finances

What costs or savings are anticipated with the actions proposed? What new facilities or modifications to existing facilities or equipment are needed? Describe any budgetary impact on other programs or units within the institution. If new funds are required, describe expected sources of funds.

Current grants and contracts supporting the NCVS include extramural grants and contracts with periods of performance extending for the next five years:

W81XWH-16-2-0004 (PI: May, Wesleyan University)

Military Suicide Research Consortium

3/5/2018-3/4/2021

Couples crisis response planning to reduce post-discharge suicide risk

\$1,481,100

AFRL-RQKHC-2016-0009 (PI: Williams, Department of Psychology)

Department of the Air Force

6/11/2018-12/30/2019

Validation of a mobile smart phone app to assess sleep quality

\$83,965

W81XWH-18-2-0022 (PI: Bryan, Department of Psychology)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Authority

7/1/2018-6/30/2023

Brief Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (BCBT) Replication Trial

\$4,918,546

10048924 (PI: Leifker, Department of Psychology)

Bob Woodruff Foundation

5/1/2018-4/30/2018

National Center for Veterans Studies R&R Program

\$124,357

N/A (PI: Anestis, University of Southern Mississippi)

Military Suicide Research Consortium

2/1/2018-1/30/2022

Project Safe Guard

\$1,951,962

10045664 (PI: Bryan, Department of Psychology)

Utah Department of Human Services

2/28/2017-9/29/2019

Zero Suicide Training

\$273,375

51005315 (PI: Bricker, College of Health)

Kendeda Fund

11/1/2015-10/31/2018

HPHP Mental Health

\$750,000

W81XWH-16-1-0522 (PI: Garland, College of Social Work)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity

8/1/2016-7/31/2021

Targeting Chronic Pain and Co-Occurring Disorders in the Community with Mindfulness-Oriented Recovery Enhancement

\$3,434,996

W81XWH-15-1-0632 (PI: Baucom, Department of Psychology)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity

8/1/2015-9/30/2018

Technologies for assessing behavioral and cognitive markers of suicide risk

\$2,355,470.00

W81XWH-14-1-0272 (PI: Bryan, Department of Psychology)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity

9/1/2014-8/31/2019

Improving universal suicide prevention screening in primary care by reducing false negatives

\$3,441,421

The Boeing Company (PI: Bryan, Department of Psychology)

Suicide and Trauma Reduction Initiative for VETERANS (STRIVE)

\$2,999,005 (3 years)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (PI: Bryan, Department of Psychology)

Peer to Peer Programs for Military Suicide Prevention

\$2,563,833 (3 years)

National Institute of Mental Health (PI: Rozek, Department of Psychiatry)

Neural mechanisms of treatment response in high-risk veterans with PTSD

\$228,000 (3 years)

National Institute of Mental Health (PI: Bryan, Department of Psychology)

Identifying suicidal subtypes and dynamic indicators of increasing suicide risk

\$1,072,141 (2 years)

Grant and contract proposals that have been submitted but have not yet been scored include projects with additional funding for two to three years (if funded):

Military Suicide Research Consortium (PI: Brown, University of Pennsylvania)

Suicide risk and sleep in treatment: an intensive daily sampling study

\$232,141 (2 years)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (PI: Taylor, University of North Texas)

Sleep and suicidal ideation: an intensive daily sampling study

\$698,040 (3 years)

U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity (PI: Morimoto, University of Utah)

Neuroplasticity-based computerized cognitive remediation for posttraumatic stress disorder

\$350,000 (2 years)

As summarized above, the NCVS has been extremely successful in obtaining extramural funding from federal agencies, and partnering with researchers at the University of Utah and other universities who have also been successful in obtaining federal funding. The NCVS remains active in pursuing additional sources of extramural funding; all four members of the core leadership team have received grants and/or contracts, and currently have grant applications and proposals under review as principal investigators or co-investigators. Key to this expansion has been the success of NCVS postdoctoral fellows, all of whom (three total) have received funding as PIs during the past year.

In addition to grants and contracts, within the past year the NCVS created a service/recharge center managed by the University of Utah Cores. This service/recharge center provides revenue for the NCVS based on training workshops and presentations provided by NCVS staff members for various community agencies. Revenue generated by the service/recharge center will be used to support NCVS operations and research. In its first year of operations, the service/recharge center generated \$20,000 in revenue. For FY2019, the Training Institute has an estimated \$30,000 in contracts scheduled thus far. The NCVS is currently in the process of certifying additional instructors here in Utah and in other parts of the U.S. (e.g., Texas, Connecticut). Trainings conducted by these new instructors will also be coordinated through the service/recharge center, and will generate additional revenue.

Finally, the NCVS receives approximately \$30,000-50,000 per year in private donations and corporate gifts. The largest donation comes from the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, who hosts an annual motorcycle rally ("Ride to Zero") to raise funds for NCVS suicide prevention efforts. This event is held each year on the last Saturday of each August. Additional fundraising and development efforts are planned to build on the initial success of this community partnership, which has been positively influenced by the NCVS's R&R Program, a two-week program developed by the NCVS that provides treatment for military personnel and veterans with PTSD. The initial success of this program (i.e., 70% of participants experiencing significant reductions in PTSD symptoms, 50% of suicidal participants experiencing significant reductions in suicidal ideation) has generated considerable interest from private foundations (Bob Woodruff Foundation), corporate supporters (Boeing), and other organizations (LDS Foundation, Wells Fargo Bank,

Wattis Dumke Foundation, PJ Foundation, Operation Pay It Forward, Project UnBreakable).

The sustainability of the NCVS will therefore include the continued pursuit of extramural grants and contracts from federal agencies, with a particular focus on the Department of Defense. In addition, the NCVS will continue to expand its Training Institute and development efforts to supplement extramural funding.