

Marques Dredd Testimony RCC Veterans Club

TO

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The transition from a military life style to a student can be a challenging experience. I was medically discharged from the Air force. When I return from Iraq, I found myself in a lost place and trying to find out what my next step would be. After many attempts to find employment, I decided that college would give me better opportunities to fulfill my goals. When I first began at Riverside City College, life was a challenge. For instance, I did not know where to start and what classes to take. At the time, I felt that the veteran's office would not offer much help and I chose to try things on my own. A semester later, I spoke to another veteran who suggested coming to one of the veteran meetings. I quickly realized that there were many veteran resources to help get on track. After attending a few meetings, it was clear that there were many opportunities as well as veterans in the same situation that I was in. This inspired me to become more active and Join the club.

The main purpose of the Veterans club is to keep the students informed on upcoming events, opportunities, and a place to associate with other students that have come from similar situations. As a club we strive to be recognized as positive, motivated students that have a lot to offer RCC as well as the community. We also want other clubs and organizations to understand that although we have military backgrounds, we are individuals who embrace our individuality and our diversity and value those traits in others.

The Veterans Resource Center (V.R.C.) which opened in spring of 2011 has played an important role in giving veteran students' access to resources that otherwise would not have been offered. Some examples are: quicker priority registration, access to computers and the ability to print, laptops that can be checked out on a weekly basis, V.A./AMVET officers that can help file claims. These are just a few of the resources that the center provides. Another benefit of the resource center is the Staff. They are always willing to help and provide the most up to date information to students on G.I. Bill benefits and processing the paperwork.

As a Veteran pursuing higher education the resources and Student Veterans Association (Veterans Club) have motivated me in many ways. I chose to take the position as President of the group because I believed that my experience could help others achieve their goals too. Working with our Veterans club Advisors Garth Schultz and Santos Martinez, I learned a lot about how to network with College staff, organize events, and how to provide information that can help promote positive veteran influence. Further, I understand what the responsibilities of a club are and how to make it successful. These are all skills that I will continue to use as I transfer to California Polytechnic State University in the winter and throughout the rest of my life.

Sincerely,

Marques Dredd

Veterans Club President (9/2012- 6/2013)