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ABSTRACT

The Pat Tillman Veterans Center (PTVC) at Arizona State University (ASU) will build the VETS4TECH (V4T) STEM internship program that will place ASU student veterans at USG and DoD facilities. Specifically, we will target involvement in, and progression towards, STEM career fields. To do so, we will pursue the following objectives, in collaboration with ASU's Fulton School of Engineering and prospective employers who desire to onboard and mentor STEM interns, to include DoD installations and federal facilities such as Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories. V4T will:

- 1) Motivate prospective and current student veterans to learn more about STEM opportunities (e.g. engineering, information technology, cybersecurity, chemistry, biological sciences, etc.) and the value of such degrees that can translate to top-tier service-oriented careers.
- 2) Establish avenues of approach for prospective and current student veterans to build STEM-related practical experience, internship opportunities, develop professional connections and offer the chance to leverage the soft skills and other tradecraft assets acquired while serving in the military.
- 3) Spotlight prospective and current student veterans to advocate support for an underserved minority of the workforce and rally STEM-related organizations to help build the workforce development pipelines from military service, to higher education and beyond.

V4T will provide 16 internships to ASU veteran students at DoD and other USG facilities, with the goal of those students ultimately gaining full employment with the same internship provider or another agency or facility.

ASU has one of the largest veteran student populations of any higher education institution in the US, with nearly 7,000 full-time residential and online students. Importantly, over 30% of those veterans are enrolled in a STEM major, providing a large applicant pool for V4T internships.

The V4T program at ASU was envisioned by senior leadership at the *Fulton School of Engineering*, *The Pat Tillman Veterans Center*, and the *Global Security Initiative* as a way of developing career pathways and employment pipelines for its large veteran population. We have done this in the context of the *DoDSTEM Strategic plan*, and will meet *Goals 1, 2, and 3* of that plan. We know that veterans are not only highly motivated students, but potentially highly qualified USG employees who can help meet the nation's need for STEM talent in both practical and research careers.

Veterans with recent/existing background clearances, knowledge of DoD, and STEM focused majors are ideal candidates to fill the STEM pipeline more quickly and with efficiency, and ASU in intends to grow this program over the following years. We have serious interest from multiple USG and DoD agencies and facilities, and we intend to partner with the large number of community colleges in Arizona with sizable veteran populations to further expand the reach and sustainability of V4T.