



CAVS
**CENTER FOR ADULT &
VETERAN SERVICES**

Kent State University

GROUP 4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Adult and Veteran Services (CAVS) is dedicated to enhancing the experience of non-traditional students; however, out of the non-traditional students it serves, nearly half of the surveyed members have stated that they do not see promotion of the opportunities CAVS provides. Members of the organization express that the most common reason for lack of attendance is that event days and times do not fit into their day-to-day schedules. This case study focuses on taking the foundation CAVS has laid out and enhancing it to work with member's needs and increase activity and involvement within the program.

The theme of this study, "Stay Engaged with CAVS," offers three main ways members of the program can become more involved: CAVS Kids, Kick it off with CAVS, and a Blackboard Learn course page upgrade. Each plan set out to accomplish these goals comes with support from Kent State students who are single parents, above the age of 25, or veterans. CAVS Kids is made to rebrand the already established study groups within CAVS to help parents and their children feel visible and included. Kick it off with CAVS introduces non-traditional students to each other and the educational and social benefits of CAVS before the start of each semester both virtually and face-to-face. The Blackboard Learn course page upgrade is made to increase virtual engagement by providing resources and sharing insights about CAVS while improving awareness and attendance of CAVS hosted events.

Each of these objectives fits the need of more engagement and awareness of the CAVS program. CAVS can use these plans to serve its publics in an even greater way than ever before. With both face-to-face and virtual communication strategies, CAVS can position itself to become a more prominent resource hub for the non-traditional students attending Kent State University.

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PART ONE

I. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Center for Adult and Veteran Services (CAVS) is a program at Kent State University geared toward assisting non-traditional learners in their paths to succeeding in a university created for the traditional college student. CAVS’ current enrollment is a total of 2,800 non-traditional learners; 500-600 veterans and 20 single parents at Kent State main campus.

A non-traditional student is defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as meeting one of seven characteristics: “delayed enrollment into postsecondary education; attends college part-time; works full time; is financially independent for financial aid purposes; has dependents other than a spouse; is a single parent; or does not have a high school diploma,” (Pelletier, 2010). CAVS at Kent State University considers a non-traditional student as: a veteran, an adult learner who is someone who started college after the age of 21 or is still in college after age 25, and students with children. CAVS offers non-traditional students programs and events to help them feel more included and to engage them more with the university. CAVS also offers scholarship opportunities to provide financial help for those who fall under this category.

According to Joshua Rider, the director of CAVS, the organization uses the events and incentives to try to bring together non-traditional students to allow them to make connections to people in a similar situation as themselves. Campuses such as the University of Akron, Ohio University, and The Ohio State University have similar programs. The Akron program, while similar to Kent State’s, provides extra resources including virtual lab accessibility, tutoring, extended office hours, and scholarships. Kent State’s program, however, provides many more services than both Ohio University and The Ohio State University, who focus solely on veteran programs. Although CAVS incorporates all non-traditional students, it provides specific services to veterans so they become more engaged. For example, veterans

must ask for the benefits because they are not automatically given them (Rider). Rider explains that while in the office, he mainly sees the veterans because of this incentivized reason.

CAVS uses several different methods to engage its audience. However, its ability to meet its goal of engaging more people can be hindered by multiple internal and external factors. For example, CAVS target audiences have busy schedules and lives outside of school, so getting people together in one place may be difficult. According to Rob Hard from The Balance Small Business, event attendees have preferences as to when they want to attend certain programs and when they do not. Hard explains it is important to pay attention and consider your target audience and what they want over what is easiest for the organization. When asked if the center provided incentives or prizes for those in attendance, Rider said the center had never explored that and that CAVS has not done much else to get individuals to participate in sponsored events. According to Rider, CAVS has also not researched or asked those enrolled in its services for recommendations on time, location, and event type. Hard gives a list on how to increase attendance: be sensitive to the calendar and clock, identify a unique and convenient location, establish a reputation for delivering excellent programs, and create a great agenda (Hard, 2018). Implementing these ideas may help CAVS achieve their objectives.

Rider explained that CAVS typically holds three events per month with average attendance around 15 members of the 6,000 who are on the email list. Rider also shared that CAVS has a “great email open rate,” but there is just “little-to-no in-person interaction.” The center has a social media presence that attempts to promote events. Its Twitter account has 77 followers and is used to promote meetings and upcoming events, primarily focusing on one event each month based on importance. Smaller, repeating events include: the veterans club, which allows veterans and service members to come together for lunch; the writing workshop, which helps teach writing techniques; and craft and movie night, which is an opportunity for students with children to bring their children for a night of pizza, movies, and crafts. These events have not been mentioned on CAVS Twitter or Facebook creating a lack

of exposure or awareness to the 6,000 targeted members. The CAVS Twitter averages six tweets a month and the Facebook page averages 10 post a month. The events are promoted three main means: flyers, email, and word of mouth from those who do attend meetings. Promotions for CAVS events are typically done through an email focused on the event.

An email survey was sent out to the 6,000 members of the CAVS listserv. The survey garnered 360 responses. More than half of those who identify as non-traditional students have an average of 2-3 children. Between being over the age of 25 and possibly a Veteran, the working adult has more on their plate when children are involved. There is currently a daycare list under the Single Parents tab on the CAVS website. The child care list aids parents looking for childcare in Stow, Akron, or Cleveland areas. The Childhood Development Center on campus is for students, staff and faculty, but can also cost up to \$5,000 a year.

A concern for event attendance has caused us to focus on the fact that non-traditional students who are 25 and older work more than the traditional college student. Seventy five percent of the non-traditional student representatives work more than 25 hours per week. In this case they miss the weekly events on campus, and aren't seen in the Center for Adults and Veteran Services regularly. Because their time is split between class, work, and even parenting they miss out on events CAVS offers. Developing a way to get the CAVS members involved in programs that can help them even if they can't attend physically is a challenge.

The visibility for the Center for Adult and Veteran Services is low. One of the things noted about the organization was the lack of advertisement and circulation around the campus. Fifty two percent of those who took the survey said they do not see any promotion for CAVS programs. Press releases and promotional videos need to be made in order to promote the organization.

The primary publics for CAVS all fall under a narrow category; all of which are groups able to be a part of the CAVS organization. The first public is single parent Kent State students. The secondary

public to this group is Student Media such as Kent State Wired. Student Media is the primary resource for Kent Students and events with access to TV2 and the Kent Stater. The next key public of CAVS is Kent State Students age 25 and older. This group's secondary public is the Kent State Career Exploration and Development Center. This secondary public will benefit the older non-traditional students because studies have shown students above the age of 25, when choosing to go to school, are more interested in receiving their degree and starting their career as soon as possible (Link, 2017). The last key public of CAVS' is veteran students that go to Kent State. The secondary public for this group are the CAVS Alumni. This would be a secondary public for single parent students because they know the experiences of being a single parent, while being able to express experiences they wish they had while they were attending Kent State University.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Center for Adult and Veteran Services (CAVS) is dedicated to enhancing the experience of non-traditional students; however, out of the non-traditional students it serves, half of the surveyed members have stated that they do not see promotion of the opportunities CAVS provides. Members of the organization express that the most common reason for lack of attendance is that event days and times do not fit into their day-to-day schedules. There's a disconnect between what CAVS is doing and what the members of the organization need.

III. PUBLICS

A. Primary Publics

- Single-parent Kent State students
- Kent State students age 25 and older
- Veteran students at Kent State

B. Secondary Publics

- Kent State Student Media
- Kent State Career Exploration and Development
- CAVS Alumni

IV. THEME

“Stay Engaged with CAVS”

The organization's main problem is low attendance and low interaction rates with its students. At the end of this plan, the overarching theme is for CAVS students/members to keep interacting with the organization to maintain a mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and students.

V. KEY MESSAGES

1. Our occasional childcare can offer you time away from kids to let you focus on your degree.
2. Get familiar with CAVS and its benefits, and meet your peers at the same time.
3. Explore CAVS' Blackboard page and get familiar with what the organization can offer you.

PART TWO

VI. OBJECTIVE I

To have an average of 15 single-parent students involved in CAVS attend CAVS-sponsored events in the 2019-2020 school year.

- **Strategy.**

Rebrand the already established study groups within CAVS to help parents and their children feel visible and included.

- **Tactics.**

- a. **CAVS Kids:** *Create a twice-a-week program called 'CAVS Kids' where parents are able to leave their children under the supervision of a child care provider while they study together in a different room with tutors available during the week before finals.*

- i. **Description:**

While CAVS has a great daycare system already in place, we have decided to incentivise and rebrand the program to make it become more well-known and talked about. CAVS Kids will be a program dedicated to enriching the lives of students in CAVS by providing them with daycare while they study. The program will be offered two days per week, probably Monday and Thursday to accommodate those who take classes on other days, and will be offered each week of the semester.

Three tutors will be available two weeks before finals. If members of CAVS choose to take advantage of this program, they will be entered into a raffle each day that they attend over the entire semester to win a \$50 gas gift card at the end of the semester. This program incentivises members of CAVS to come together in a relaxed setting to

study as a group while ensuring their children are being cared for free of cost. All members of CAVS are invited to the event, whether they have children or not.

This event will be promoted to all members of CAVS, but specifically targeting single parents by hanging flyers in the Women's Center as well as through email and social media. CAVS will also pass out fliers at the CAVS Veteran's Day event (the organization's most highly populated event) and CAVS orientation to advertise more for CAVS Kids.

- b. Student Media Story:** *Work with student media to have a story written about CAVS Kids to post on KentWired. It will include information about the new and improved study group program for single parent students on Kent State's campus and will be sponsored by CAVS.*

i. Description:

This will help make more people in CAVS aware about the childcare and tutoring opportunities available to them before finals. Working with KentWired will promote the event through a student-written story that features the benefits of the program which we hope will persuade CAVS members to participate. Student media may even reach out to the single parents within CAVS which could cause a domino effect of awareness among the members in the organization.

VII. OBJECTIVE II

To have an attendance of 50 Kent State students age 25 and older at two optional CAVS orientations before the start of each semester.

- **Strategy.**

Introduce non-traditional students to each other and the educational and social benefits of the CAVS program before the start of each semester both virtually and face-to-face.

- **Tactics.**

- a. **Kick it off with CAVS (KOC):** *Schedule two orientation days at the start of each semester for the CAVS organization that brings everyone that falls under the non-traditional student category together to become aware of CAVS and what it means to be a non-traditional student. This orientation is also available to all students virtually.*

- i. **Description:**

Kick it off with CAVS is an orientation before the start of each semester designed similarly to Destination Kent State. There will be two orientation dates for the students to pick from as well as a virtual orientation. KOC is going to be a two hour long event that introduces non-traditional students to CAVS, its staff, and where it is located on campus. During this two hour orientation, students will get a tour of campus, learn about resources available to non-traditional students, and meet one another. During the in-person orientation, students will have lunch in the Schwartz Center and have the opportunity to ask the staff of CAVS questions about the program. Students who attend the in-person orientation will also be given a CAVS t-shirt, a CAVS water bottle, and an academic yearly planner. The in person orientation will be held on two different dates before the start of each semester. These orientations will be held from 12-2pm.

All non-traditional students accepted to Kent State will be asked to register for the in person program and if they are unable to attend they will immediately be redirected to a virtual version of the event on the CAVS BlackBoard Learn page. The online orientation will include a virtual tour, an introduction to all of the employees of CAVS, and an overview of what CAVS does. The virtual KOC will also include an explanation of all of the resources available to non-traditional students on Kent's campus as well as an introduction to a few non-traditional students.

b. Acceptance Invitation: *Once accepted into the University, all those who fall into the non-traditional student category will be sent a letter inviting them to attend the Kick it off with CAVS (KOC) orientation.*

i. Description:

Once a non-traditional student is accepted into Kent State, they will be sent a welcome packet from CAVS that includes a congratulatory letter, a letter explaining what CAVS is and the link to the CAVS BlackBoard page. In the letter they will be invited to the KOC Orientation where they can register online through the link they are given or begin their virtual orientation.

VIII. OBJECTIVE III

To utilize Kent State University's Blackboard Learn as a promotional outlet to double attendance at CAVS hosted events from its course page in the 2019-2020 school year.

- **Strategy.**

Increase virtual engagement on the CAVS course page through Blackboard Learn by providing resources and sharing insights about the program while improving awareness and attendance of CAVS hosted events.

- **Tactics.**

- a. **Blackboard Upgrade:** *Take the already established Blackboard Learn CAVS course page to the next level by incorporating weekly announcements, creating a more accessible resource folder, and providing a brief on what CAVS is and all they have to offer.*

- i. **Description:**

CAVS currently uses Blackboard Learn as a resource hub for all those who fall into the adult student category. The goal is to make this course page more organized and make it so that it's useful to all non-traditional students.

To start, at the top of its already established page there is a logo titled "Resources for Adult Students." This will be changed to serve the bigger audience of all non-traditional students (i.e. single parent students, and veteran students). Next, the welcome video posted will be updated and replaced by the promotional video described below. The social media links for CAVS will remain where they are currently which is underneath the welcome video. The following five videos CAVS provides on its course page-- top tips for student

success, graduate planning system, using the syllabus, instructor insight, how to relieve stress-- will remain on the course page except will be placed into strategic folders that include *Student Success*, *Learning Skills*, *Blackboard Essentials*, *Monthly Calendar*, and *Self Care*. Also found on the CAVS Blackboard Learn page will be the 'Kick it off with CAVS' virtual orientation for those who are unable to attend the in-person orientation.

The Student Success folder will include study tips, tutoring resources, how to succeed as a non-traditional student, plus more. The Blackboard Essentials folder will include step-by-step tutorials on how to use Blackboard and how to navigate the CAVS course page. The Monthly Calendar will include a list of upcoming CAVS events and also list campus-wide events that the CAVS audience would be interested in attending. The Self Care folder would include things like the "How to relieve stress" video they provide as well as more useful tips on how to practice self care.

Finally, utilizing the announcements tool in Blackboard Learn will help to make the CAVS course page more user-friendly and also help to promote CAVS-hosted events. The announcements feature on Blackboard would be useful to CAVS because any time an announcement is made, it pops up on everyone's homepage who is in the course and they will also get an email notification of the same announcement. This can help spread the word even more of what all CAVS is doing to help the students it serves because every Kent State student must use their Blackboard Learn page to access all of the courses they are enrolled in.

b. Promotional Video: *Showcase on Blackboard Learn what CAVS is and what all it has to offer for non-traditional students through a promotional video created by professionals and aired on Kent State's student-run television station, TV2.*

i. Description:

Kent State's student run television station, known as TV2, is broadcasted across the Kent State campus and all throughout Portage County. To better promote the CAVS organization, professional videographers and actors chosen from the organization will be hired to create a one minute promotional video showcasing what CAVS is all about and all they have to offer for non-traditional students.

This promotional video will be aired on TV2 as a regular commercial that is played throughout all their shows: There are 5 mini-newscasts, 5 live newscasts, 5 entertainment shows, and 2 sports shows every week. This video will also be available on the upgraded CAVS course page on Blackboard Learn as well as the CAVS official website.

The video will be creatively directed by one of Kent State Student Media's film majors and will include voice memos from Joshua Rider, director of CAVS, and other employees and members of the organization. The voice memos will simply explain what CAVS is and what previous/current members have to say about what this organization has done for them. The video will also use a wide variety of footage gathered from CAVS hosted events, and some shots of non-traditional students in their natural elements (i.e. veterans, single parents, or adults).

IX. ADDITIONAL GENERAL TACTIC

★ **Nontraditional Student Statues:** *Post three statue-like figures around Blast-Off during Welcome Weekend to hand out flyers to those who approach them.*

- **Description:**

During Blastoff, Kent State organizations gather in Risman Plaza to promote themselves for the upcoming year. By making a Veteran stand still and dress in his military fatigue and painting his face green, he will appear to be a statue. A woman painted all gold will hold a fake baby, also painted gold, to appear as a single parent. She will remain still for an hour and a half also. Finally, an older man will hold a cane in one hand and two books in the other, painted gold again. The “statues” will trade shifts once after a 90-minute shift, totaling roughly three hours of promotion.

The ‘statues’ will hand out flyers about the CAVS organization to those who approach them. The flyers will feature information about its resources and a brief quote from a nontraditional student regarding what it means to be a nontraditional student. This is a guerilla tactic that will hopefully gain a mass amount of attention. We hope that by working with student media, we will have a story written about the ‘statues’ that also features the entire CAVS organization.

X. BUDGET

CAVS Kids

Total: \$2,476	Fall Semester: \$1,238	Spring Semester: \$1,238
2 Babysitters	\$8.25 per hour 4 Hours per week 15 weeks per semester \$990	\$8.25 per hour 4 Hours per week 15 weeks per semester \$990
3 Tutors	\$8.25 per hour 4 hours per week 2 weeks per semester \$198	\$8.25 per hour 4 hours per week 2 weeks per semester \$198
Gift Card	\$50	\$50

Kick it off with CAVS

Total: \$1,200	Fall Semester: \$600	Spring Semester: \$600
Pizza/Snacks/Drinks	\$100	\$100
CAVS T-Shirt	\$5 per t-shirt 50 t-shirts \$250	\$5 per t-shirt 50 t-shirts \$250
CAVS Water Bottle	\$2 per water bottle 50 water bottles \$100	\$2 per water bottle 50 water bottles \$100
Yearly Planner	\$3 per planner 50 planner \$150	\$3 per planner 50 planner \$150

Blackboard Learn CAVS Course Page Upgrade

Total: \$50	
Promotional Video	\$50

Nontraditional Student Statues

Total: \$800	
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6 Actors	\$20 per actor \$120
Body Paint/Costumes	\$500
Flyers	\$180

TOTAL BUDGET USED: **\$4,526**

XI. SCHEDULE

Month:	Event:
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send out babysitting and tutoring applications for CAVS Kids ● Secure room for KOC ● Order merchandise for welcome boxes ● Put together welcome boxes
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure a space for CAVS Kids ● Mail welcome boxes
JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create promotional video ● Hire babysitters and tutors ● Put together KOC schedule ● Schedule KOC catering ● Buy costumes and hire soldier statue actors ● Create virtual orientation
AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create Blackboard Page ● Send press release about CAVS Kids ● Host KOC Events ● Send Blackboard announcement about events (WEEKLY) ● Print flyers for Blast-Off ● Have soldier statue actors pass out flyers at Blast-Off ● Launch virtual orientation
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY) ● Secure room for KOC Events
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY) ● Send out babysitting and tutoring applications for CAVS Kids ● Order merchandise for welcome boxes ● Put together welcome boxes
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send welcome boxes ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY) ● Hire babysitters and tutors
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schedule KOC catering ● Put together KOC Schedules ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY)
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Host KOC Events ● Send press release about CAVS Kids ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY)
FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY)
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY)
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send Blackboard Announcements (WEEKLY)

XII. EVALUATION

Objective	How will we measure its success?
<p>To have an average of 15 single-parent students involved in CAVS attend CAVS-sponsored events in the 2019-2020 school year.</p>	<p>Regular attendance at CAVS will be measured with the use of a check in book for those who arrive.</p>
<p>To have a combined attendance of 50 Kent State students age 25 and older the two CAVS orientations before the start of each semester.</p>	<p>To have new members either sign new member applications or register online with a specific link.</p>
<p>To utilize Kent State University's Blackboard Learn as a promotional outlet to double attendance at CAVS hosted events from its course page in the 2019-2020 school year.</p>	<p>Use google analytics to measure the number of click the link gets and to measure the active time on the web page.</p>

#

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Primary Research:

1. Met with the director of CAVS, Joshua Rider
2. Survey sent out to CAVS members through an email listserv
3. Analyzed CAVS social media platforms and how well they are doing
 - a. 73 Twitter followers
 - b. Facebook reach = 47

Secondary Research:

- Conducted online research-
 1. Reviewed examples of previous emails CAVS has sent to members
 2. Reviewed CAVS website
 3. Received information from Scott Crawford
 - a. Social media analytics
 - b. Number of attendees typically seen at CAVS events
 4. Reviewed other university's adult and veteran programs
 - a. University of Akron
 - b. Ohio University
 - c. Ohio State University

Sites Used:

1. <https://www.uakron.edu/uaaf/>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
2. https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/veteran_services.cfm
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
3. <http://veterans.osu.edu/>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.

4. <https://osumarion.osu.edu/future-students/admissions/adult-students.html>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
5. https://www.aascu.org/uploadedFiles/AASCU/Content/Root/MediaAndPublications/PublicPurposeMagazines/Issue/10fall_adultstudents.pdf
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
6. <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/increasing-event-attendance-1223783>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
7. <https://www.powerretail.com.au/marketing/google-ad-visibility-under-50/>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
8. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/sem3.20115>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.
9. <https://www.kent.edu/cavs/single-parents-1>
 - a. Used in situation analysis.

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FORMAL RESEARCH

For the formal research portion, types of research we recommend for the Center for Veteran and Adults Services would be to conduct multiple focus groups, create an online survey, and have short, informal interviews with people who attend their events. First, conducting focus groups and offering incentives for those who participate would be a good way to get feedback from those who are members of CAVS already to find out what benefits them and what could be improved upon within the organization. Also, people who are considered non-traditional students but have never heard of CAVS would be a good population from which to receive good feedback about how to make more people aware of the organization. According to Cosmic, focus groups can help companies, agencies, and/or organizations appreciate how people feel about experiences they are having. Next, creating an online survey that is comprehensive would provide good feedback for CAVS and would be beneficial because people are able to take it from the comfort of their own home and are submitting the survey anonymously will allow them to express their honest opinions and beliefs. Our last survey received over 350 respondents who were non-traditional students, proving that surveys are an effective way to reach this population. Lastly, for those attending events, people who work for CAVS can formulate a casual conversation with attendees to get a feel for why they came to a specific event and what would draw them to come to more. The targeted population for the formal research is students eligible to register for CAVS at the Kent State University main campus. Because there are currently 12 members who regularly attend the CAVs meetings and events, the sample size for the formal research would be 10% of current CAVS members. With that, we can expect to learn that not many people know what CAVS is or the opportunities it provides; we expect

to learn this based on our previous survey's results. Also, we will be able to learn how to best reach people involved in CAVS and what they need and want to get out of the program.

APPENDIX C

CITATIONS

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