

Best Practices for Supporting Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students

Providing comprehensive support for student veterans and military-connected students ensures their success in higher education. Below are best practices that institutions can implement to create a welcoming and effective environment.

Identification & Outreach

- Establish processes to identify military-connected students during admission and enrollment.
- Track and analyze enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of military-connected students to measure program success.
- Develop an Advisory Council that includes student veterans, faculty, and staff to address needs and concerns.
- Implement dedicated communication channels (text, email, chat, social media) for outreach and updates.

Veteran Resource Centers & Student Spaces

- Provide a Veteran/Military-Connected Resource Center as a hub for resources and support.
- Designate a lounge space for veterans and military-connected students to foster community and peer support.

Academic & Career Support

- Assign at least one dedicated staff member as the central point of contact for military-connected students.
- Offer faculty and staff training on military cultural competency and capacity-building.
- Provide academic services such as tutoring, advising, and workshops tailored to veterans.
- Recognize military training and experience for academic credit through Joint Services Transcripts (JST), DD-214, CLEP, DANTES, etc.
- Establish student veteran mentoring programs to promote academic and career success.
- Develop veteran-specific courses and learning communities to enhance engagement.

Enrollment & Financial Support

- Implement priority registration for student veterans to accommodate their unique needs.
- Offer waived application fees for military-connected students.
- Enforce a military leave policy that allows for seamless re-enrollment after deployment.
- Participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program to provide additional financial support.
- Develop scholarship opportunities specifically for military-connected students.

Student Life & Engagement

- Support and promote a Student Veteran Organization for leadership and community-building opportunities.
- Establish a textbook lending library to alleviate financial burdens.
- Offer a structured student veteran orientation to ensure smooth transitions.

Employment & Career Readiness

- Develop partnerships with employers to create career services tailored for military-connected students.
- Implement VA Work-Study Programs to provide job opportunities within the campus.

Community & Institutional Support

- Foster top-down support from administration to ensure institutional commitment.
- Create partnerships with local, state, and national veteran-serving organizations to expand resources and services.
- Secure fundraising and development efforts to sustain and expand veteran support programs.

Communications

- Ensure the university website homepage features a prominent link to the Veterans Services page.
- Develop a Veterans Services page that serves as a user-friendly digital hub linking to local, state, and federal benefits and services for student veterans, military-connected students, and their families.

By implementing these best practices, institutions can create a supportive and empowering environment that enables student veterans and military-connected students to thrive academically, socially, and professionally.