Adult Education Boot Camp – Basic Information to Ensure Veterans Success

A Presentation on behalf of the Military Support Services Task Force

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Commission for Adult Learners Charge

• To review the availability of services at each Penn State Campus
• To work with Student Affairs Research and Assessment to create a survey for veterans
• To determine and create a list of best practice, programs needed to support veterans that can be implemented university-wide
Goals of presentation

• Current veteran student information

• Best practices for serving veterans

• President Barron’s Imperatives
Why are we here?

- Nationally, more veterans going to college
- Veteran student enrollment at Penn State has more than tripled:
  1335-3223-4257
Why the influx?

- Implementation of the Post 9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) in 2009
- Over one million veterans have used Post 9/11 benefits, with over 30 billion dollars spent.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (Chapter 31) benefits
Who are we serving?

• Most have served during the United States Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) 2001-2009, and ongoing contingency operations, with nearly one third having been deployed two or more times

• Veterans who served prior to 9/11/01
What do we think we know about veterans?

- Median age of 29
- Many are part-time students and families to support
- Combat veterans with injuries – often need accommodation from Disability Services
### Number of students receiving military benefits

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<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
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<td>Hazelton</td>
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<td>Schuylkill</td>
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<td>Wilkes-Barre</td>
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<td>Great Valley</td>
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<td>Lehigh Valley</td>
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<td>Worthington-Scranton</td>
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<td>Brandywine</td>
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Number of students receiving military benefits

60-160 veterans

York
Mont Alto
Erie
Harrisburg 300

UP/World 2800

Berks
Altoona
What do the veterans think?

- 15.2% response rate (approx. 2500 sent)
  - 87% - Welcoming climate
  - 81% - Desire to connect with other veterans
  - 80% - Would use a veterans lounge
Who is assisting veterans?

- Each campus has at least 1 Certifying Official
- Certify VA educational benefits
- Only UP are veterans
- Fulfill multiple roles
University-wide Programs/Initiatives

Comprehensive approach to serving veterans:
- Veteran/military-specific webpage
- Student sponsorship program
- Veteran specific counselors
- Facebook and/or Twitter
- Veteran rooms/lounge
- Veterans Advocacy Group
- Support with veterans specific organizations
- Section 702 legislation response
Section 702 Legislation

- August 2014, Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (“Choice Act”) signed into law
- The VA will disapprove programs of education under the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Montgomery GI Bill at public universities if the school charges the veteran/dependent tuition and fees in excess of the resident rate
Section 702 Legislation – Penn State’s Response

Effective May 11, 2015-

- All veterans with qualifying service, regardless of Chapter 33 status, will receive the in-state tuition rate.

- All TOE (Transfer Of Entitlement) recipients currently receiving benefits under Post 9/11 and Chapter 35 (Dependents Educational Assistance) will qualify for the in state tuition rate. Students will remain grandfathered at the in-state rate.
Mt. Alto (84 veterans)

- Student Veterans Association (SVA)
- New Student Veterans Welcome
- Veteran Peer Mentors
- VA Work-Study program
- On-campus student success support services
- Veterans training as Lion Ambassadors
Altoona (160 veterans)

- Referrals for health care
- Referrals for financial assistance, social interaction through ODS fraternity and off-campus veterans organizations
Berks (126 veterans)

- Support with the transition
- Peer Mentoring
- Support with career transition
- SVA
- Veterans & dependents information workshops
Fayette (35 veterans)

- Admissions counselor for adults/veterans
- VA Work Study positions
- “Got Your 6” PSFE Community Group
- VA Center Counselor
- Campus Veteran Mentor Group
- SVA
University Park/World Campus (2800 veterans)

Veterans Specific Office offering:
• GI Bill certification/Priority Registration processing
• Triage counseling and referral
• 25 VA Work Study positions
• Sponsor program for incoming veteran students (new for Fall 15)
• Veterans study lounge (new for Fall 15)
• Veterans Advisory Group
• Student Veteran Organizations - Advising
Community Resources

Centre County Veterans Service Officer:

**Brian Querry**, Director
Willowbank County Office Building
420 Holmes Street, Room 333
Bellefonte, PA 16823
Phone: 814-355-6812
E-mail: bquerry@centrecountypa.gov

James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center

State College, Veterans Outpatient Clinic
2581 Clyde Avenue
State College, PA 16801
Phone: 877-626-2500

Altoona VA Medical Center
2907 Pleasant Valley Blvd
Altoona, PA 16602
Phone: 877-626-2500
Community Resources

Veterans and Servicemembers Legal Clinic

Michael Foreman, Director
Phone: 814-865-3832
E-mail: mlf25@psu.edu
For student and non-student veterans
Community Resources

- American Legion
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Navy League/Marine League
- Vet Center - Mobile Vet Center
- CareerLink Vets Education Rep.
- Service Access Management
Pres. Barron’s Imperatives

- Excellence
  - Military & Veteran Support Services Committee
  - Veterans Advisory Board
  - Best practices across the University
- Student Engagement
  - Difficult for veterans as adults
  - University culture
Pres. Barron’s Imperatives

- Diversity & Demographics
  - Veterans diverse in experiences
  - Add unique interactions within and outside classroom
  - Better recruitment of this population
- Student Career Success & Economic Development
  - More career preparation assistance
  - Translate military experience on resume
Pres. Barron’s Imperatives

- Accessibility
  - Priority registration
  - Section 702 Legislation (replacing need for Yellow Ribbon)
  - Need Veteran-specific scholarships
  - Improve prior learning assessment

- Technology
  - World Campus
Committee
Recommendations for Action

Need demonstrated for more comprehensive veterans services:
• Survey results review/action
• Veterans helping veterans
• Ongoing faculty and staff education
• Veterans Forums
• Veterans Advocacy Groups
Questions?

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Thank you!