

INSTITUTIONAL READINESS: GUIDELINES FOR BECOMING A VETERAN-FRIENDLY CAMPUS

Military service can delay, interrupt, and otherwise complicate personal educational goals. Those who have served or are serving, as well as their family members, have endured significant hardships. The transition from military to college can be difficult and is at times filled with unnecessary barriers. In fact, these barriers often deter many veterans and military members from pursuing higher education, even though they have earned significant educational benefits from their service.

Institutional readiness refers to marked efforts made by individual higher education campuses to identify and remove barriers to the educational goals of veterans. By creating “veteran-friendly” campuses, colleges and universities can help create a smooth transition and ensure the success of this unique group of students. The following guidelines provide reasonable steps that each institution can take to welcome current military members, military veterans, and their families, helping them avoid unnecessary hurdles to pursuing higher education.

Starting and staying in college

1. Encourage current and former military members to utilize educational benefits and attend college.
2. Encourage veterans to continue or complete study that was started during service or interrupted by duty requirements.
3. Become a Service-members Opportunities College (SOC), a nationwide consortium aimed at making the educational goals of service-members and their families more accessible.

Policies and Procedures

1. Recognize that many current and former military members may require policy and procedural flexibility - especially in the areas of admissions, orientation, and registration deadlines - due to deployments or other military related issues.
2. Award appropriate credit for military training and experience when applicable to the individual’s degree program. Recognize and follow the American Council on Education Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services in determining the value of learning acquired in military service.
3. Develop procedural directives for instructors, counselors, admissions officials and other key staff to recognize and assist with common difficulties faced by current and former military members, creating a “safety net” to help these students remain on track and be successful.
4. Provide current and past military members who have had their education interrupted by deployments with opportunities to complete their degree programs under the conditions of their initial student agreement.

Service & Support

1. Designate a senior administrative official to oversee programs for current and former military members, monitor institutional compliance rules and regulations, and serve as a primary point of contact for the MDVA regional higher education coordinator serving their campus.
2. Create a task force to identify and resolve issues affecting veterans on campus.
3. Implement ways to identify veterans and military members, starting with the admissions process, maintaining an effective way to directly communicate with these students.
4. Provide space for Veterans Resource Centers and ensure campus ownership and investment.
5. Through the Veterans Resource Center, provide comprehensive information and assistance for current and past military members, ensuring that they are aware of the benefits, regulations and potential limitations of veterans' assistance programs.

6. Provide and support opportunities for peer support among current and past military members and their families.
7. Provide faculty and staff with awareness training on veterans' issues.

Offices on your Campus to involve:

1. Veterans Affairs – GI Bill
2. Academic Advising Center
3. Office of Career Development and Internships
4. College Counseling and Resource Center
5. Continuing Education Program
6. Health Service Center
7. Office of the Registrar
8. Admissions
9. Business Office
10. Office of Special Services
11. Residency Life – Housing office
12. Faculty Senate

Training Available:

***2009 Atlanta RPO School
Conference***

When: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 through Friday, April 3, 2009

Where: Crowne Plaza Atlanta-Ravinia Atlanta, Georgia

For more information - <http://gavco.org/>

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