

Promising Best-Practices for Veteran-Supportive Institutions

Phase I: Strategic Development

1. Strive to be a Veteran-Supportive Institution (being “*veteran-friendly*” is not enough).
2. Incorporate veterans and their families into the institution’s long-term strategic plans.
3. Create an advisory committee for veteran services to help guide policies, programs, and services.
4. Ask about “*Prior Military Service*” on enrollment and initial intake forms.
5. Track veteran-specific data and use it to help guide policies, programs, and services.
6. Allocate financial resources to build capacity for veteran related programs and/or services.
7. Conduct an initial survey and/or focus group to determine the needs of your student veterans.
8. Evaluate the impact of current policies, programs, and services on student veterans.
9. Align the needs of student veterans with program goals and outcomes.
10. Generate a list-serv for veterans and use it to communicate veteran-related information.
11. Design a webpage that is easy to navigate and has relevant information.
12. Encourage students to start a club and/or organization on campus and support their efforts by designating multiple advisors.
13. Explore Federal, State, and private funding sources to build program capacity.
14. Learn about the various services that are available to veterans (on and off campus).
15. Provide services that are designed specifically for student veterans.
16. Welcome veterans to your campus instead of thanking them for their service.
17. Create a stand-alone veterans program.

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Phase II: Implementation

1. Utilize the VA work-study program to help streamline and/or prioritize issues.
2. Host an annual event that welcomes student veterans to campus and gives them a chance to meet other veterans.
3. Encourage staff and faculty to attend annual trainings on veteran-related subjects.
4. Provide veteran cultural competency trainings (include the invisible wounds).
5. Welcome veterans to campus by using familiar signs and symbols.
6. Recognize that criticism of the military and/or political ideals can be taken personally by some students and may also cause them to feel isolated from others.
7. Provide opportunities for student veterans to serve as peer mentors.
8. Encourage all students (in private) to access campus services and other community resources.
9. Consider accepting seating requests in the classroom.
10. Engage in ethical recruiting efforts.
11. Welcome student veterans to your classroom and include a statement about resources and access/disability services to your syllabus.
12. Develop alternative assignments and/or deadlines for those who may still be serving or student with VA health-related appointments.
13. Help veterans and their dependents maximize the amount of financial aid they receive.
14. Host campus events that allow the community to learn about veteran experiences.
15. Sponsor campus activities on days of significance (9/11, 11/11, etc.).
16. Offer tuition refunds for those who are activated or deployed.

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17. Grant maximum amount of credit for prior military training and experience.
18. Offer priority enrollment for veterans throughout the academic year, including summer quarter/semester.
19. Provide opportunities for veterans to volunteer within the local community.
20. Create a centralized location for all veteran-related resources.
21. Designate a point-of-contact for student veterans.
22. Partner with veteran service organizations and allow them to be present on campus a few times each month.
23. Grant tuition deferments or extended deadlines to student veterans collecting service-related educational benefits.
24. Engage the local business community to help create job pipelines for graduating veterans.

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Phase III: Maintenance and Review

1. Regularly seek out updates on veteran and VA related information.
2. Interact with student veterans on a regular basis and provide them with a forum where they can voice their concerns.
3. Provide discounts, grants, or scholarships for student veterans.
4. Recognize prior military service during graduation and award ceremonies.
5. Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensure campus facilities meet current ADA standards.
6. Offer low-cost and/or subsidized childcare program for veterans currently enrolled in courses.
7. Designate a portion of campus housing for student veterans.
8. Streamline enrollment and withdrawal procedures for students who are activated or deployed.
9. Design an orientation course for incoming student veterans that offer 1 or 2 elective credits (C).
10. Write a guide for student veterans that helps explain relevant policies, programs, services, and structure.
11. Identify the needs of student veterans by conducting annual focus groups.