July 28, 2014

BEST PRACTICES FOR VETERANS ASSESSMENT INDEX

MILITARY FRIENDLY STATUS
☐ Member of SOC Consortium
☐ Periodically reviews adherence to SOC Consortium guidelines
☐ Complies with changes required by VA, DOD, DOE, TVC, and pertinent state and federal agencies regarding veteran and military students

CAMPUS VETERANS SUCCESS CENTERS
☐ Has a designated veterans services office or Resource Center
☐ Provides one-stop services or direct referral contacts for veterans and university services
☐ Provides designated area for confidential discussions with veterans and military students
☐ Includes gathering, information and study area for students
☐ Has an administrative point of contact for student veteran and dependent benefits
☐ Has a VA certifying official
☐ Has (or combines) a Hazlewood certifying official
☐ VA reporting fees assigned specifically to veterans services training and operations

TOP-DOWN SUPPORT
☐ CEO, or designated high-level administrator, maintains oversight of veterans support
☐ High-level administrator or senior faculty member advises veteran support services and serves as “champion” on veterans issues on campus
☐ These duties, full or part-time, are incorporated into the director or advisor’s position description
☐ The designated director or advisor preferably is a veteran
☐ CEO appoints or reviews Veterans Advisory Council faculty, staff and student veteran membership
DATA AND TRACKING
- CEO or top-level staff responsibility and oversight for measuring and tracking the success and graduation rates of the campus veteran, dependent and military student populations, and for reporting relevant data as required.
- CEO ensures annual or semester reporting to A&M System VSO on total enrollments of veterans and dependents.

ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENT VETERANS
- Institution-sponsored student veterans organization operational on campus, to include a faculty advisor.
- Awareness-building activities on behalf of veterans, dependents, and families are planned and initiated on and around campus on a regular basis.
- Peer-to-peer academic mentoring network for veterans is offered.

ENGAGEMENT OF FACULTY
- Orientation programs offered for faculty and staff regarding student veterans, military, and dependents, including awareness of special needs for disabled veterans.
- Faculty mentoring program operational.
- Ongoing interaction and support of veterans as students, from informal social gatherings to use of “Veteran Friendly” type decals on faculty office doors to sponsorship of outreach projects such as veterans textbook exchanges.

COMMITMENT TO VETERAN ACADEMIC SUCCESS
- Updates for student veteran program requirements distributed every academic term.
- Priority registration for veterans.
- Credits-for-service is actively supported.
- On-line and distance courses are offered.
- Participates in College Credit for Heroes program from TWC.
- Expedites re-admission for military and veteran students affected by deployment or medical conditions.
- Participates in Yellow Ribbon program.
- Participates in ACAP, USMC Leadership Scholar Program, or similar transition programs.

HEALTH AND COUNSELING SERVICES
- Veteran-oriented mental health counselor, with training in PTSD and TBI counseling, designated at the campus counseling center or health center.
- Crisis hotline contact numbers clearly and prominently posted in campus facilities and online.
- Campus clinics maintain active contacts with external counseling services available to veterans, to specifically include crisis, family, and marital counseling.
Private, on-campus counseling rooms provided for veterans and family members

Student veteran health care services information and contacts provided during orientation

Texas A&M System’s TexVet outreach programs and resources utilized

Campus facilities for veterans and military are ADA-compliant

TRANSITION SERVICES
- Orientation sessions offered each semester to incoming veterans and military students
- Orientation sessions are mandatory for incoming veterans
- One hour, for-credit veteran transition class is offered
- Faculty or staff mentor is designated for each student veteran for the duration of his or her academic program at the university
- Student veterans are continuously offered career assessment counseling, job fair/recruiting information and corporate networking opportunities

EXTERNAL CONNECTIONS AND NETWORKS
- Veterans support office and veterans support advisor/director maintains ongoing networking with external veteran-oriented groups, such as VFW, American Legion, DAV, Wounded Warrior Project, etc.
- Relationships are nurtured with major student-oriented groups, such as Student Veterans of America, IAVA, Lone Star Veterans and others
- Support offices maintain contacts with local, state and federal agencies affecting veterans
- Regular institutional participation involving external military events, celebrations or projects involving veteran service outreach
- Institutional advancement offers guidance to veterans support offices for fundraising, grants and other revenue-enhancing paths to fund veterans outreach
- Connections with possible corporate and donor sponsors are cultivated

COMMUNICATIONS
- University website homepage features prominent link to primary veterans support page
- Veterans support page serves as user-friendly digital hub linking to federal, state and campus benefits and services for student veterans, military and families
- Websites and other communications venues regarding veterans are not exploited by commercial entities or for commercial promotional purposes, directly or indirectly
- VSOs maintain current contact information on all enrolled student veterans and provide continuous informational and networking updates
- VSO staff maintains professional links to veterans support organizations and regularly attend professional training conferences, webinars and related venues