

## Accommodations Everyone Can Provide

### Two very impactful ways of marketing include

- A president or chancellor who supports and welcomes veterans
- Customized information to individual military service members and veterans about both the military and nonmilitary financial education benefits available
- Tailored marketing to veterans (such as the MS in Leadership and Management degree brochures)

### Meet ADA standards

- Ensure physical access to all facilities
- Ensure that everyone can safely use equipment and materials
- Arrange instructional spaces to maximize inclusion and comfort



### Physical space beyond the ADA

<i>Rooms that could cause problems</i>	<i>Potential Solutions</i>
A large room with multiple entrances and exits	Allow student veterans to sit in a location (such as the back row of the room) where they can easily watch everyone and where their “back” is secure. While best practices generally tries to get students sit closer to the instructor than towards the back of the room, for some student veterans, this practice should be reversed.
Rooms that force students to place their backs to others	Consider the arrangement of your office – when a student veteran comes in to see you, are they forced to sit with their back to the door?
Courses with large numbers of students	Provide a course section that are veterans-only or have reserved spaces for student veterans. When student veterans know they are around their peers, they can relax and not worry about what may be in whose backpack.
Rooms near construction or external sources of loud sounds	Provide sections of courses in rooms that have few windows and only one door.
Blind corners	Mirrors so that students can see people coming.

### Training should be provided for all employees

#### *You could:*

- Train faculty/staff in certain areas (make mandatory)/Ensure that advisors and other personnel are trained on how to obtain transcripts for all branches of service
- Train counselors in PTSD/TBI/MST and other wounds
- Train Access Services staff in PTSD/TBI/MST and other wounds
- Have close communication among disabled student administrators, counseling services, and veteran services officers

#### *So that employees can:*

- Be aware – student may be having a bad day
- Recognize symptoms
- Give trigger warnings (very difficult to know)
- Use your resources (internal and external)



### Have patience, because

- In some instances, veterans are new to their disabilities, without prior history or knowledge of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)/Section 504 eligibility. Additionally, some might be unaware of their rights as students with disabilities or how to go about receiving academic accommodations (Madaus, 2009).
- Veterans with newly acquired injuries (both seen and unseen) may just be developing an understating of how their disability may affect their learning.

- The psychological process for accepting disability status will take time, especially for those with a military background. At first, veterans may view their disability –and asking for help –as a sign of weakness.
- Many student veterans are facing other adjustments beyond that of initial entry into post-secondary education, such as reintegration into the social and family lives they held before their active duty assignments.

### Get students involved by encouraging them to

- Become a chapter member of the SALUTE National Honor Society for Veterans and/or SVA
- Start a student veterans organization/club
- Create a peer mentor program
- Start an intramural program for persons with disabilities



### Establish

- Special admissions accommodations such as easy admission and exit procedures, special admissions information sessions, and communicate policies to help service members who deploy.
- A campus-wide interdepartmental committee on veteran services
- Customized student orientation program for military service members or veterans
- Group Counseling
- Drug abuse and suicide prevention programs
- A campus-wide interdepartmental committee on veteran services
- Customized student orientation program for military service members or veterans
- A single point of contact on campus/staff member or office designated as the point of contact for military service members and veterans
- Special outreach and services for women veterans
- Veteran-specific orientations or breakout sessions in informational conferences



### Other best practices

- Find ways to get veterans to self-identify
- Track veterans' enrollment and progress
- Make it easy to find information
- Establish a section of the website specifically for veterans
- Provide a handbook or guide specifically for veterans
- Clearly communicate your policies on military transfer credit and other ways for recognizing prior learning
- Provide advice and guidance on career choice
- Provide activities to help student veterans integrate with non-veteran groups
- Educate administrative support and reception and switchboard personnel on where to direct inquiries made by student service members and veterans
- Include veterans in diversity discussions on campus

### What not to do

- Don't assume that a student has seen combat, and don't make assumptions about how easy or difficult a deployment may have been
- Don't presume that all student veterans are Republicans/conservatives. Student veterans have opinions about foreign policy, our leaders, and the conflicts that we are engaged in range go from far left to far right. What they share is a commitment to service and a can-do attitude toward mission accomplishment—important characteristics from any point of view.
- Don't treat your student veterans like charity cases. The military trains its personnel to be self-reliant and goal-oriented. Offers of help that come across as patronizing will quickly alienate your student veterans.
- Don't ask your student veterans to speak for all veterans, and don't pressure them to speak about issues or events that may single them out or make them feel unnecessarily uncomfortable.
- Don't treat students in a condescending or patronizing manner. This will be especially unappreciated by veteran students. They may have seen a lot of things already in their life, and may be more experienced than you in many ways. You have information they do not have about the school, but the manner in which you deliver it to veteran students will matter.
- Don't pretend that you have direct experience with the military unless you actually do. You may be proud of the service of a family member or significant other, and indicating this pride is one way to develop a welcoming environment for student veterans. But don't assume that you know all about the military simply because you someone in the military—any more than one can assume they know all about what it means to be a different race just because they have a friend of that race.

