Veteran and Military Affiliated Students at UTSA

Military Affiliated Students bring unique life experiences to our campus environment which enhance the diversity of every classroom and enrichment activity they are involved in. This population is nontraditional in the truest sense and your role as a faculty or staff member is vital to their success. This module will assist in providing you the information you need to understand the military affiliated student better. Together, we can successfully assist this population in making the transition from military service to our academic community at UTSA.
RECOGNIZING THE MILITARY COMMUNITY ON CAMPUS

4,024 Enrolled at UTSA

2016 UTSA VETERAN AND MILITARY AFFILIATED POPULATION

4% of UTSA Total Population are VETS, ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVE & GUARD

14% of UTSA's Student Population is comprised of VETS, ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVE & GUARD, their DEPENDENTS, and ROTC

Military Affiliated Population

- 2,428 Dependents
- 1,269 Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & Guard
- 327 ROTC

THE PILLARS OF SUPPORT

Veteran Services Advisory Committee
VetSuccess on Campus
Student Veteran Association
Veteran Certification Office
WHO WE ARE
The Veterans Services Advisory Committee is a formal presidential standing committee formed in 2011 that consists of representatives from key departments across campus.

OUR FOCUS
The main focus of VSAC is to assist veterans in making a seamless transition from military service to the UTSA community by providing a military-friendly campus environment that directs student veterans toward a degree, certificate, or program completion.

TARGETED SUPPORT
VSAC has established six subcommittees to reflect the commitment made by UTSA in serving its veterans and their families.
The VetSuccess On Campus program is a collaborative effort between the University of Texas at San Antonio and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure a supportive on campus environment for student veterans.

The main focus is to assist UTSA student veterans in navigating through college as well as helping our veterans to secure gainful employment after graduation. This is done with the help of two senior VA vocational rehabilitation counselors.

Providing guidance with regard to a variety of services such as healthcare benefits, vocational rehab, career and readjustment counseling, disability compensation, life insurance, etc.
WHO WE ARE
The Student Veteran Association is open to all veterans, active duty, students, faculty, and staff at UTSA.

OUR FOCUS
The main focus is to serve and advocate for the student veterans and their family members to foster Esprit De Corps among our members.

TARGETED SUPPORT
Provides comprehensive information, support, networking, professional opportunities, mentoring programs, academic support, and guidance to aid veterans and their families in their intellectual and professional pursuits at UTSA.
WHO WE ARE
UTSA Certification Officers go through extensive training as well as attend multiple conferences in order to stay current with legislative issues and changes within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

OUR FOCUS
The main focus is to serve our students in the most effective and efficient way possible so they may achieve their educational goals.

TARGETED SUPPORT
Ensure that eligible UTSA students receive their federal educational benefits, send certifications of enrollment to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of the students and act as a liaison for the Student Veterans Association on campus.
THE UNIQUE CULTURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF STUDENT VETERANS

- Less than 1% of those in the United States actually volunteer to serve in the military.
- Powerful dedication and solid bond to their brothers and sisters in the profession.
- Goal oriented, motivated and mission focused, strong sense of teamwork.
- Have broad life and cultural experiences, global perspectives.
- Reluctant to ask for help or show weakness, conditioned to do it all and not complain.
- Accustomed to a very structured environment, clear hierarchy and chain of command.
- Take their roles seriously whether it is in the military or as a student.
- Usually more mature, many are older than the average age of most transfer students.
COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT VETERANS

- Uniforms present sense of identity
- Strong common beliefs & values

MILITARY vs Academia

BRIDGING THE GAP

Embrace the diversity that veterans bring to the campus.

- Takes pride in independent thinking
- Different goals
COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT VETERANS

MILITARY vs Academia

BRIDGING THE GAP

Be aware of resources on campus for veterans.

- Mandated authority
- Few visible markers of status
COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT VETERANS

MILITARY vs Academia

BRIDGING THE GAP

Create an inclusive, welcoming classroom environment for everyone, including veterans.

- Structured training/clear goals
- Demands vary across disciplines
- Assumes students have the skills
COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT VETERANS

MILITARY VS Academia

BRIDGING THE GAP

If possible, make an effort to get to know student veterans in your class.

- Bonding & social support inherent
- Competitive; a sense of solitude
COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT VETERANS

MILITARY vs Academla

BRIDGING THE GAP

Know your own limitations, you are not alone, and not responsible for counseling students.

- A focus on being tough/taking action
- A focus on intellectual performance
COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENT VETERANS

MILITARY vs Academia

BRIDGING THE GAP

Be aware of on campus resources such as ones listed below.

• Steps for advancement are clear
• Many options & classes to choose from
UTSA serves more military families than veterans. They are a diverse group who typically are adaptable due to constant geographic mobility & playing multiple roles in the household. Some may also have difficulty with building relationships in new environments due to having such persistent, dynamic turmoil in their lives. The transition that occurs when their service member deploys, separates or retires can impact their academic performance. Instructors should not be hesitant to reach out to these students if they see them falling behind.

Understand that veterans may have difficulty transitioning due to the significant differences between going from the highly structured environment of the military to the very loose, unstructured environment of the academy.

Be aware that many military students have served in combat, some multiple times; military experiences cover the gamut both in the United States and overseas and in many situations and positions. Veterans can enrich your classroom by providing real world and cultural experiences.

Veterans do not want anything they haven’t earned, but we need to recognize that some may need some form of accommodation or academic support and may be reluctant to seek it out. This module outlines the support structure that is available to student veterans.

Never ask a veteran if they killed anyone while serving, it is inappropriate to do so and will shut down further conversation. Also, please do not allow other students to do this either, it will have the same reaction.

ROTC cadets are pursuing their degrees while training to be commissioned officers in the US Army or US Air Force. It is important to understand that ROTC students are very committed to both goals. You can look to these students to be leaders in your classroom. They exude leadership, analytical and interpersonal skills and must be effective in time management to juggle their busy days. All of them have days that can start as early at 0600 and end well into the evening hours. Some may also be working part time jobs in addition to their service commitments.
UNDERSTANDING STUDENT VETERANS
Stressors & Hassles Among Student Veterans

- Family Expectation
- Financial Security
- Preparing for Test
- Skills Development
UNDERSTANDING STUDENT VETERANS
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Symptoms of PTSD

- Bad Memories
- Guilt
- Sleep Problems
- Numbness
- Nightmares
- Hopelessness
- Hypervigilance
- Avoiding
- Anger
- Flashbacks
- Self-Destructive Behaviors

Ways to Prevent PTSD

- Talking Openly
- Meditating
- Limit Alcohol Consumption
- Participating in Enjoyable Activities
- Adequate Sleep
- Eating Healthy
- Exercise
UTSA Services and Resources

**VETERAN SERVICES**
- Veteran and Military Affairs
- Veteran’s Certification Office
- Veteran Services Advisory Committee
- Student Veterans Association

**STUDENT SERVICES**
- Student Disability Services
- Counseling Services
- Army ROTC
- Air Force ROTC

**ACADEMIC SERVICES**
- Writing Center
- Math Lab
- Tomás Rivera Center
- Veteran Study Room, JPL 3.03.54
Student Disability Services

Student Disability Services May Recommend Some of the Following Accommodations

**Coping with Stress**
- Attendance leniency
- Allow for short breaks
- Seating near door or wall
- Extension of due dates
- Connections with other services on/off campus

**Concentration Problems**
- Audio record lectures
- Front row priority seating
- Extended time for testing
- Reduced distraction area for testing

**Interacting with Others**
- Clarify expectations
- Give positive feedback
- Assign a peer mentor/partner
- Alternative communication options (ALD)
- Encourage the veteran to walk away from frustrating situations

**Motor Skills Issues**
- Alternate media/test
- Adaptive technology
- Tardiness leniency
- Accessible seating
- Volunteer note takers

**Memory Problems**
- Extended time for testing
- Written instructions
- Electronic Calendar
- Captioning of videos
- Provide all lectures/notes in an electronic format

**Contact**
Counseling Services offers a comprehensive and integrated model of care.

### Common Interpersonal Issues
- Family Problems
- Problems with significant other
- Roommate issues
- Conflict with faculty/employer
- Problems with peer group

### Common Psychosocial Issues
- Lack of financial support from family
- Limited access to healthcare
- Basic needs such as housing and food
- Transportation

### Issues That Interfere with Academics
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Procrastination
- Lack of Motivation
- Working too many hours/financial issues
- Depression/Anxiety
- Learning Disability
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

### Counseling Services
- Individual Counseling
- Consultation
- Couples Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Psychiatric Referral
- Learning Disability Testing
- Biofeedback
Supplemental Instruction
- Series of weekly study sessions
- Integration of study skill development with course material
- Sessions guided by successful students
- Supervised by a team of experience coordinators

Learning Assistance
- In-class Workshops
- Outreach Workshops
- Expert Learner Series
- Special Topic Workshops
- Undergraduate Workshops

Tutoring Centers
Drop in tutoring available at:
- Q Lab
- MH Tutoring Center
- Durango Tutoring Center

Academic Coaching
- Identify students’ study strengths and needs
- Work one-on-one with students
- They offer support in time management, procrastination, test preparation, note taking, and reading strategies.
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Chapell et al. 2005;


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