



PROMISING BEST PRACTICES

1. Create a veteran’s advisory committee to help direct institutional policies, programs, and services.

Ideal Advisory Committee Members:

Admissions Officer, Assistant Director of Development, Certifying Official, Dean(s) of Academic Program, Director of Counseling Services, Director of Student Programing, Disability Services Officer, Faculty Member(s), Military Family Member, Registrar’s Assistant, Student Veteran (both man and women representative), Vice-President for Student Services

Four horizontal lines for notes.

2. Welcome veterans to your campus instead of thanking them for their service.

Thanking a veteran for their service has become an increasingly common tradition. It is believed to be a sign of respect that communicates gratitude for all that the individual has had to sacrifice during their time in the military. However, it should be noted, that not all veterans receive this gesture with the understanding of it being grounded in warm intentions. Some veterans may perceive the act as being in-genuine, while others may not appreciate the old memories and emotions that are stirred up (not all veterans leave the service with a positive experience).

Four horizontal lines for notes.

3. Identify the needs of student veterans by conducting annual focus groups.

Each campus is different in terms of student populations and their needs. Some campuses have higher numbers of veterans and military family members attending and some only have a few. What works on one campus may not work on another; there is no cookie cutter mold. Therefore it is highly recommended that institutions take the time each year to sit down with their student veterans and listen to their needs.

Four horizontal lines for notes.



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**4. Create a centralized location for all veteran-related resources.**

***Model of Practice:***

The following example comes from Eastern Washington University. Their campus has created a veterans resource center that is roughly 2,000 square feet. The space includes offices for the veteran’s program staff, a veteran’s lounge and study space, and an attached computer lab.

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**5. Sponsor campus activities on significant days of importance.**

It’s important to celebrate days of significance for our students. Doing so creates community and helps them feel like their experiences and cultures are valued. For veterans and military family members, Veterans Day and Memorial Day are two important days that hold particular significance.

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**6. Recognize prior military service during graduation and award ceremonies.**

***Model of Practice:***

Campuses across Washington State and the nation are starting to purchase honor cords for graduating student veterans. These cords are worn with the traditional graduation cap and gown and are a way to honor and recognize veterans for their service.

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**7. Build a webpage that has links to veteran-related policies, programs, and services.**

Research shows that most students today choose the school they attend by doing an internet search and then exploring the websites that come up as a result. This is probably more so for veterans and military family members, because they are able to prepare themselves for months in advance. For those looking to enter pursue a college degree, they begin to explore what they want to do and what type of programs are offered near their home town. This usually involves several internet searches in which the veteran explores the websites that most closely match their desired outcomes.

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**8. Provide opportunities for veterans to volunteer within the local community.**

National and community service is very important to a lot of student veterans. Serving in the military became a way to give back to their nation and gave them a connection to a higher purpose. For many, the need to continue their service does not end after their time in the military does. Many will go on to volunteer in the local community, or work with non-profits, and try to put their skills and knowledge to good use. Institutions of higher education are encouraged to leverage these talents and provide meaningful ways for student veterans to continue to give back.

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