Veteran Student Services Office

Mission
The mission of the Veteran Student Services Office is the successful transition and retention of veteran students through outreach and advocacy. The Veteran Student Services Office strives to be a one-stop-shop for students utilizing Veterans Affairs benefits and any student with prior US Military service. The combining of the tactical responsibilities of the VA certification process with the strategic initiatives related to academic and individual support advances UNC Charlotte’s historical and present-day commitment to our military veterans.

Purpose
The purpose of Veteran Student Services Office is processing GI Bill benefits, organizing student events, spreading awareness, recognizing holidays, and keeping the veteran population aware of opportunities both on and off campus.

Who are the Veteran and Military-Affiliated Students?
• Most veteran students are non-traditional; they are older than the average undergraduate, have jobs, families, and often commute to campus.
• Military-affiliated students are spouses or children of veterans or active duty personnel. These students can be eligible for Chapter 35 (parent or spouse is considered 100% disabled or deceased) and Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits (parent or spouse has at least 90 days of active duty).

Psychological Challenges
Veterans have been trained to be self-reliant and proud. In combat, they relied on fellow soldiers who they learned to trust through training and actual combat experience. Coming from the military life of strict discipline and structure to a life with little of either, they can be slower to ask for help from others.

Physical Challenges
Some veterans have suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI), and others continue to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).*

This can affect academic performance including:
• Attention and concentration difficulty
• Information processing challenges
• Sluggish or abstract thinking
• Learning and memory deficits
• Slowed executive functions (problem solving, planning, insight, awareness, sequencing)

Other challenges often associated with difficulties in academic performance may include:
• Stress of family, work, unit, etc.
• Difficulty with time management
• Transition to civilian life
• Sleep disturbances
• Panic attacks
• Financial Stressors

* Not all veterans have TBI or PTSD and not all individuals with TBI or PTSD are veterans.

Continued on next page
Veteran Student Services Office, Continued

**Communication Challenges**

Not all veterans care to talk about their service. They may not want to share specific information about what has happened to them or where they have been. Be aware of questions that might be posed in group settings that might put a veteran in an awkward situation. If veterans do choose to share their story, they can often add a more global perspective to enliven classroom discussion.

**Challenges for UNCC**

- **Residency determination**
  - The most common GI Bill is Chapter 33 Post 9/11 which pays a percentage (depending on length of service) between 40-100% of in-state tuition. Most veterans and their families often relocate and can be considered out-of-state residents in North Carolina.

- **Registration/GI Bill**
  - The processing of the GI Bill certification happens after the student registers for courses and the VA rules can become very complex when determining what the VA will pay for and what we cannot certify.

- **They are not 18 years old**
  - Veteran students often become frustrated with faculty and staff for making them feel belittled and treated like a traditional undergraduate.

**What Can You Do?**

Listen, be open-minded, respectful and show concern.

- Not all veterans are looking for special privileges; they want to be treated like everyone else.
- Veterans can be resistant to those who aren’t veterans or military-affiliated.
- To build trust, be honest and give it to them straight.
- Some look for and miss camaraderie with other like-minded people.
- Some will not ask for help.
- Some need to be told and given instructions. Sometimes it’s best to email instructions, directions and important information so they can read and follow it later.

**Office Location and Contacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNC Charlotte</th>
<th>Alison Jenner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Student Services Office</td>
<td>Assistant Director for Veteran Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnard 103</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ajenner@uncc.edu">ajenner@uncc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>704-687-5488</td>
<td>704-687-0354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veterans.uncc.edu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Swanston</td>
<td>Chip Herrin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Certifying Official</td>
<td>VA Certifying Official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:aswansto@uncc.edu">aswansto@uncc.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cherri18@uncc.edu">cherri18@uncc.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>704-687-1679</td>
<td>704-687-5479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>