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MICHIGAN VETERANS EDUCATORS

Guiding Practices: Recruiting and Retaining Student Veterans, Service Members and Dependents 2013

The Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators (CMVE) mission is to serve all Michigan public community colleges and universities in their efforts to support student Veterans, military service members, and their family members.

At the first gathering (March, 2012) of Michigan's public university and community college representatives who work with military and Veteran students learned about the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (<http://www.cas.edu>) and the standards and guidelines for Veterans and Military Programs and Services. CMVE recommends that each public postsecondary institution follow the standards that best fit its mission and environment.

The CMVE conducted a survey of all of its member institutions, which includes Michigan's 15 public universities and 28 community colleges, to identify current practices and standards which have been demonstrated to be effective in assisting student veterans at each respective institution.

The goal of the survey, which aligns with the CAS Mission for Veterans and Military Programs and Services (VMPS) is to: *Provide, facilitate, or coordinate programs and services for student Veterans, military service members, and their family members; identify student*

Veterans and military service members and establish a community that connects and supports this population.

It is essential that institutions assist student Veterans, military service members and their family members with:

- *Transitions from military service to higher education*
- *Integration into institutions and campus life*
- *Issues related to deployment of active duty students or activation of National Guard and Reserve units*
- *Reintegration following activation*
- *Establishment of procedures to facilitate progress toward education goals*

Many of the guiding practices presented in this document are followed by name(s) of CMVE institutions that are implementing a practice for a specific standard or guideline. Institutional representatives should review this list and direct questions on how to proceed or implement a practice to the representative from the institution(s) listed. Contact the CMVE Best Practices and Professional Development Committee about practices that other institutions should learn about and utilize, to inquire about a workshop/webinar, etc., or if your institution should be associated with a practice. For purposes of this guide, the term Veteran is used to describe those who have

previously served in the military, as well as those currently serving in the military. Many practices may also be applied when working with military dependents.

Campus-Wide Collaborative Practices

- Reach out to relevant individuals, campus offices, and external agencies to establish, maintain, and promote effective relations; disseminate information about their own and other related programs and services; and coordinate and collaborate, where appropriate in offering programs and services to meet the needs of students
- Collaborate with key departments to streamline campus administrative procedures for student Veterans and military service members
- Establish a Veteran advisory group on campus
 - *“Vet Success Committee”/“Veterans Task Force”/“Military Oversight Committee” – University of Michigan-Dearborn, Oakland University, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo Valley CC*
Includes representatives from Veterans Support Services, Certification Office, Dean of Students, Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Student Activities, Disability Support Services, Student Affairs Technology.
These committees bring together multiple departments in collaborative efforts to develop and enhance Veteran services. Included on these committees may be representatives from Veterans administrators, VA certifying officials, Dean of Students, disability support services, student life, technology departments, Ombudsman, Career services, VetSuccess on campus, counseling center, as well as faculty members and current student Veterans.
- Facilitate development of a campus-wide community of student Veterans, military service members, and their family members to provide opportunities to connect with their peers
 - *CMVE Student Support Committee – contact Steve Rellinger (Central Michigan University), Merry Jo Brandimore (Saginaw Valley State University) or Retired Major General Michael Lehnert (USMC)*
- Provide, directly or in collaboration with other institutional units, education and training for faculty and staff on issues relevant to student Veterans, military service members, and their family members
 - *Kognito simulation training for faculty and staff – Central Michigan University*
 - *Veterans Outreach Panel – Central Michigan University -- offers a forum for dialogue between students Veterans faculty, staff and community members. Panel presentations, including a Q&A session and are scheduled during each semester*
 - *Department meetings – Schoolcraft College and Wayne State University – attend and educate faculty and staff on student Veterans*
 - *Lunches – Macomb Community College – offer lunch topics on Veteran issues*
 - *Trainings – Michigan State University, Mott Community College, Northwestern Michigan College – offer trainings on PTSD, certification process, contributions Veterans can make to the campus and obstacles they may face in and out of the classroom*
- Communications – Utilize various methods e.g., website, fliers, Facebook, email, institution Portal, and institutional communications department to reach out to students, faculty and staff and alumni on Veteran issues
 - *CMVE Recruiting & Outreach Committee – Contact Sarah Mellon (University of Michigan-Flint) or Michael Brennan, (Oakland University)*

Student Veteran Organizations

- Connect with the CMVE Student Support Committee
 - *Contact Steve Rellinger (Central Michigan University), Merry Jo Brandimore (Saginaw Valley State University) or Retired Major General Michael Lehnert (USMC)*
- Provide support and advisement for student Veteran organizations
 - *Encourage student Veteran organizations to attend conferences and events with other organizations*
 - *Facilitate meetings with student Veteran organizations from other nearby institutions – Oakland University,– Foster partnerships between SVOs, particularly between university and local community college groups*

Support Services

- Offer admissions support, orientation, financial aid, housing and logistics, advising and mentoring, and learning communities; and provide current information on education benefits for Veterans
 - *Work-Study through the VA – Western Michigan University*
 - *Vet Net Ally Program– Grand Valley State University -- to introduce faculty and staff to the facts about student Veterans and the transition to college, dispel myths, and provide on-campus and community resources to attendees. Upon completion of training, each participant is given a "Vet Net Ally" placard to display in her/his work area*
 - *Military Services Checklist for Success – Northwestern Michigan College, University of Michigan-Dearborn, and Kalamazoo Valley CC*
 - *Provide a welcome packet of information – Kalamazoo Valley CC – upon admission, all Veteran students receive a packet in the mail as well as a welcome letter from the Veteran services department, inviting them to*

- *attend a student Veteran open house at the beginning of the semester.*
- *Offer Learning Communities just for student Veterans – Wayne State University*
- *Offer Academic Tutors just for student Veterans – Wayne State University*
- *Offer emergency money for Veterans awaiting benefits*
- *Designated Veteran Housing (dorms and married housing) – U of M-Ann Arbor*
- Veterans Resource Center
 - *A visible resource center with lounge, computers/printers, Vocational Rehab (away from Registrar's or certifying official) – Central Michigan University, Saginaw Valley State University, University of Michigan-Flint, Wayne State University, Western Michigan University*
- Obtain Input from Student Veterans
 - *Resource Survey – Grand Valley State University, University of Michigan – Flint*
 - *Graduation Survey – Mott CC, University of Michigan - Ann Arbor*
 - *Graduation Focus Group – University of Michigan - Ann Arbor*
- Offer Continuous Contact with Student Veterans
 - *At Point of Entry, have a One-on-One meeting – Delta CC, Macomb CC, and Northwestern Michigan*
 - *Designated Advisor – Mid-Michigan CC, Southwestern CC*
 - *Designated Financial Aid Advisor – Delta CC*
 - *Contacting Students who are Contemplating Dropping Out – Macomb Community College – ask student Veteran to meet with the counselor/advisor and/or Veteran services staff to discuss how it will affect benefits as well as degree completion; Lake Superior State—arrange a meeting with certifying official; Michigan*

Technological University—meeting with advisor and Dean of Students; Mid-Michigan Community College—meeting with academic advisor and/or retention team; Northwestern College—one on one contact and survey

- Be highly visible to student Veterans, military service members, and their family members with at least one readily identifiable staff member to serve as an institutional point of contact (POC) to coordinate services, provide advice, and advocate for students with issues related to their military status and student status
 - *Each CMVE Institution has at least one primary contact person. This role of this individual will vary based on the size and structure of each institution. Designated Point of Contact outside of the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid or Registrar – Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Ferris State University, Kalamazoo Valley CC, Lansing CC, Northwestern Michigan College, Schoolcraft College, U of M-Ann Arbor, U of M-Flint, Wayne State University, and Western Michigan University*
- Offer a Specific Course for the Transition
 - *Military Transitions in Society – Michigan State University -- This seminar is designed to help student Veterans, active duty military, and their family members become academically and personally successful while examining transitions from military life to civilian life and studying the history of Veterans in the United States.*
 - *Resiliency Training – Western Michigan University*
 - *Holistic Health – Western Michigan University*
- Tracking Students (Veterans, Active Military and Dependents)*
 - *Ask the following question on application:*

Are you:

- 1) a Veteran
- 2) on Active Duty Military Service
- 3) part of the National Guard or reserves
- 4) a spouse or military dependent

- *Track the student from the time they submit an application through graduation (and if possible, employment) – Western Michigan University, Mott Community College*
- Implement Enhanced Web Site:
 - *Veterans Network – Grand Valley State*
 - *Web-site examples:*
 - *Muskegon CC -- muskegoncc.edu/pages/800.asp*
 - *Mott CC -- mcc.edu/Veteran/index.shtml*
 - *Michigan State University-- Veterans.vps.msu.edu/*
 - *Oakland University – oakland.edu/veterans*
 - *University of Michigan-Dearborn-- umd.umich.edu/Veteranservices*
 - *Wayne State University -- omveb.wayne.edu/*
 - *Western Michigan University -- wmich.edu/military/*
 - *CMVE Web Site -- global.cmich.edu/CMVE/ -- recommend all CMVE institutions have a link to the CMVE web site*
- Acknowledging Student Veterans
 - *Provide a Student Veteran patch and ask them to display it proudly on backpack, etc. – Mott CC*
 - *Provide graduation cords for Veterans including graduates, faculty and staff – Grand Valley State, Western Michigan University*
 - *Offer a dedicated scholarship for student Veterans – Southwestern Michigan College*

General Institutional Practices

Be knowledgeable about and responsive to the needs and experiences of student Veterans, military service members, and their family members. Including:

- Articulate a vision and mission for programs and services that ties to the institutional mission
- Set goals and objectives based on the needs of this population that tie into the institution's goals and objectives
- Advocate for programs and services
- Promote campus environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, integration, and success
- Find and identify means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that either foster or inhibit mission achievement
- Initiate collaborative interactions with stakeholders
- Prescribe and model ethical behavior
- Be knowledgeable about federal, state, and local laws relevant to the programs and services
- Develop and continuously improve programs and services in response to changing needs of these students
- Recognize environmental conditions that may negatively influence the safety of staff and students, and propose interventions that mitigate such conditions
- Possess the knowledge and skills to assist student Veterans, military service members and their family members with transition and orientation to campus and to address the needs of Veterans with disabilities.

*Each CMVE institution is asked to include the application question and identify student Veterans, military members and dependents for the purposes of tracking academic progress. MCCA/PCSUM will be working with Michigan's Center for Education Performance & Improvement (CEPI) to attempt to collect college and university data on student Veterans, active military and military

dependents in the P-20 Student Longitudinal Data System

Outreach in the Community

CMVE believes it is important to be working with various local and statewide groups to assist Veterans and their families. Here is a list of current groups that CMVE has ties to:

- Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) and the Local College Access Networks (LCANs) – www.micollegeaccess.org
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation -- www.mitalent.org/Veteran/
- Michigan Works Agency -- <http://michiganworks.org/>
- U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
- Michigan Veteran Affairs Agency -- www.michigan.gov/dmva
- Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program -- www.yellowribbon.mil/
- Michigan Association of County Veteran Counselors -- www.macvc.net/
- Employer Support of Guard & Reserve -- www.esgr.mil/
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Local Veteran Organizations e.g., VFW

Resources to help CMVE Member Institutions

- National Association of Veterans Program Administrators (NAVPA) – *To promote professional competency and efficiency through an association of members and others associated with and involved in Veterans education assistance programs.* www.navpa.org/index.html
- American Council on Education (ACE) Online Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Campuses –
 - *The Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Campuses is an online collaborative resource designed to help colleges and universities build better programs for*

student Veterans. The toolkit highlights promising practices including Veteran-specific orientations, on-campus Veteran service centers, prospective student outreach efforts, faculty training, and counseling and psychological services tailored to student Veterans. It also includes video clips, profiles of student Veterans' programs across the U.S., and a searchable database of tools and resources.

vetfriendlytoolkit.org/

- American Council on Education (ACE) Military Credit Guide
 - *The American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide presents ACE credit recommendations for formal courses and occupations offered by all branches of the military. All recommendations are based on ACE reviews conducted by college and university faculty members who are actively teaching in the areas they review. Courses and occupations can be searched using the ACE identification number, military course number or title, training location, dates completed, or subject and level. New courses and occupations are continually being evaluated by ACE, and these entries are added on a daily basis. The Military Guide includes all evaluated courses and occupations from 1954 to the present*
- www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx

- Institute for Veterans and Military Families
 - *The IVMF leverages higher education to design, develop and deliver world-class educational programs for Veterans, their families and community stakeholders. The institute's educational programs are designed to provide Veterans and their families with the skills needed to be successful in education, work and life*
- vets.syr.edu/education/
- VetNet
 - *Transitioning from military to civilian life presents unique challenges. To make things easier and provide structure, a few of the leading organizations in Veteran career development have combined forces to create one, easy place to start*
- www.vetnethq.com/
- 8 Keys to Success
 - President Obama's administration announced in August of 2013 eight "keys to success" for serving veterans in higher education. A list of the eight keys along with information about the schools that are making a commitment to addressing the keys is provided by the White House website.
- www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/08/13/8-keys-success-supporting-veterans-military-and-military-families-campus

To contact any of the institutional representatives, visit the CMVE web site their contact information:
<http://global.cmich.edu/CMVE/Contact.aspx>