

Motion presented to Faculty Senate 4/21/15

Proposal to Adopt and fully implement New York's Eight Keys to Veteran's Success

Rationale

Binghamton University has been listed as a Military Friendly Institution for seven years by the publication GI Jobs. In order to maintain and live up to this designation, it is important that Binghamton provide an on-campus environment for our military students that aligns with external standards. Binghamton University is making strides to meeting one external standard in particular.

On July 29, 2014 President Stenger signed an affirmation letter to the U.S. Department of Education acknowledging our commitment to implementing the U.S. Department of Education, Veterans Affairs, and Defense's "Eight Keys to Veterans' Success".

In turn, the University Faculty Senate supports "New York's Eight Keys to Veteran's Success" and asks that campuses review, adopt, and actively participate.

- Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans.
- Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.
- Implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
- Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space for them (even if limited in size).
- Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans.
- Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention, and degree completion.
- Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
- Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

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Binghamton University is already in compliance with or implementing many of these stated goals. See attached addendum for a line-item breakdown.

It is recommended that the "Eight Keys to Veteran's Success" be adopted with the following text included in both the Faculty-Staff Handbook and University Bulletin beginning in Fall 2015

"Binghamton University recognizes the significant value that student Veterans bring to our campus and believe that it is important that we ensure that Veterans receive the best possible educational experience. We are committed to implementing, and sharing, promising practices as outlined in the "Eight Keys to Veteran's Success". (Shown on page 1.)

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Addendum

Breakdown of Progress Toward Implementing the Eight Keys to Veteran's Success

1. *Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans.*
 - a. Zach DuBord has recently been assigned to develop programming, support, and outreach initiatives to improve the culture of trust and connectedness on campus. In this role he is also the University Certifying Official for GI Bill benefits. He is working with the SA-chartered Veterans Student Organization (VSO), connecting with SUNY-Broome to help student-veterans transfer more easily, and striving to raise awareness on campus.
 - b. Student-Veterans will be offered the opportunity to attend a specialized orientation specifically for student-veterans during the Summer 2015 Orientation sessions. This orientation will feature early registration for student-veterans to get them started on the path toward academic success.
 - c. Veteran Services, in partnership with Dr. George Catalano, is developing a UNIV 101 (Students in Transition) course specifically for student-veterans to be offered in the Fall 2015 semester.
 - d. Lisa Hrehor, Director of Health and Wellness studies is working with Veteran Services to assist student-veterans in registering for and completing health and wellness courses to fulfill requirements and to help the student-veteran manage their health and well-being.

2. *Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership*

Brian Rose, Vice President of Student Affairs, consistently works with Veteran Services to improve visibility and provides a platform to bring issues forward. President Stenger has worked with us to provide opportunities for Veterans Day programming. This is an ongoing initiative. The addition of Zach DuBord to the Veteran Services office has allowed Binghamton to make meaningful connections with campus veterans and establish a conduit of information from students to the administration.

3. *Implement an Early Alert System to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.*

The Discovery Program and TRIO Office are piloting an early alert system this semester for select students exhibiting academic problems. We expect that this system will be available campus-wide for all students in the Fall 2015 semester. Any student-veteran for whom an early alert is received will be contacted by the appropriate advising office and/or the Veterans Services Office.

The Student-Veteran Orientation will be the vehicle used to provide these students with a connection to the Fleishman Center for Career and Professional Development and to the Financial Aid Office. Thereafter, the VSO and the Veterans Services Office will collaborate with the Fleishman Center and Financial Aid to provide ongoing programming and opportunities for engagement.

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4. *Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space for them (even if limited in size).*
 - a. Zach DuBord's office is located in the CIW Library to provide student-veterans with easy access to him and to University Tutoring. Also, because of the volume of students that utilize CIW, the student-veteran will not feel singled out or "targeted" going into the area.
 - b. We have been unable to provide designated lounge or study space for student-veterans due to the small number of veterans on campus and the lack of space available, but have used the Veterans Office and Transfer Student Lounge as landing point for campus veterans. A proposal has been submitted to repurpose the transfer student lounge as dedicated student-veteran space.

5. *Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans.*
 - a. Both Marty Wygmans and Zach DuBord belong to the Southern Tier Veterans Support Group which brings together community agencies and services available to veterans.
 - b. Len Sas, State Veteran Counselor from the NYS Department of Veterans Affairs visits campus at least twice per semester to provide information and support to student-veterans and University employees who are also military veterans, as needed.

6. *Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention, and degree completion.*

Student-veterans are indicated in the Banner system and this provides on-going access to demographics, financial aid information, GPA, enrollment, and degree completion data. This information is used to identify student-veterans who may be eligible for scholarships, need support to raise their GPA, or help registering for the appropriate classes.

7. *Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.*

The Veterans Services Office has been in contact with the Vet Net Ally program and are working to identify availability and venue for faculty and staff professional development. We would welcome the opportunity to partner with the CLT or other faculty group to move this initiative forward.

8. *Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.*

The Veterans Services Office is currently wrapping up a research initiative from the 2013-2014 academic year to determine student-veteran perceptions of our campus and our "veteran friendly" status to drive future initiatives.