

Veterans Higher Ed Affinity Group  
February 6 2014  
Hosted by National Louis

## **Intro and Overview (Amy)**

Rush Vet Center – Canceled

### **SVA Conference Update** (Scott Stratton, Devry; James Flagg, Governors State)

- This is an annual conference to discuss new trends and initiatives with representatives from prominent organizations to attend a 3 day event.
- Day 1 take-aways:
  - “Where did you serve” is a great question to help staff engage veterans in conversation
    - Also “what branch were you in”, personal stories from life, workforce questions, family based questions.
    - All of these are examples of finding common ground.
  - Attendees were given stats on grad rates, completion, and field of study as part of “Million Records” Initiative.
  - There is a Chapter Tier program (low level, high level)
  - SVA alumni network will be a priority and should be established in schools : mentorships, corporate partners, etc
  - Kognito: training software for staff/faculty
  - Coverage of 2014 scholarships; over 20 discussed.
  - Invite politicians and ask questions about what you can do for us and find out what agenda is for corporate visitors.
- Visit to Arizona State University – Pat Tillman Veterans Center
  - This seems like the best run veterans office that Scott has seen, with 9 full times staff and 18 VA work study students.
  - It’s a one stop shop for all veteran services including career counseling, vet success, government programs, etc for 2700 student veterans
  - Persistence for vets is at or above the average at this school (91%, 90% average)
- Action items highlights:
  - Build campus veterans council
  - Get on SVA presidents page
  - Concentrate on family programming that includes kids/spouses
  - Get DATA on veteran population such as retention rates and a needs survey conducted
    - This helps makes numerical argument based on persistence.

### **CMG: Create a Vision, Make the Case, Get it Done Update** (Cindy)

- We began this discussion of how to leverage the Valuing Veterans Pledge to our benefit. We realized we need to plan since there are so many different levels of implementation.
- We asked our members to get data on the veterans and so far have about 8 or 9 institutions that have participated. The city colleges have had difficulty finding this.

- Ed Davis “it is difficult because we have a lot of data but it’s not accurate. Our intake questions aren’t clear or simple and this results in unclear data. We are adding a director of veterans services that will help in the future.”
- We plan to take the data and build a vision for the vets report for participating institutions to make the case: “here are the concrete numbers”.
- The next step in this is the student survey (timeline handed out and discussed in detail)
  - Haydee may have difficulty with this because of internal standards at institution.
- Group generally agrees that timeline is doable.
- **ACTION: Draft e-mail and cite reason for IRB exemption**

#### **Google Group (Jeremy Giacomino, Depaul)**

- There is a google group set up for the affinity group and most members have been invited.
- This is a free way to share information that eliminates need for distribution list because you just use the e-mail of the group and the frequency of messages can be controlled. The individual controls have often they receive e-mail. This group is asked to do it once a day.
- [Mccormick-veterans-higher-education-affinity-group@googlegroup.com](mailto:Mccormick-veterans-higher-education-affinity-group@googlegroup.com)

#### **NLU Veterans Program**

- We received grant from McCormick for this a few years ago
- Advice was sought by NLU veterans
- It offers wrap around support for everything that a veteran might need to aid in vet transition
- We don’t have the resources to provide this, so we use foundations and services around the city.
- The program rotates around student life cycles. Our priorities are outreach and engagement.
- Engagement is vital because without the program becoming a confidant of the veteran, they will not fully utilize the services.
- This has helped us go from 28% veteran student attrition to 14% attrition. We also follow up with students who did not reenroll to offer support
- Sharing documents is a great idea for vet centers. If you need help creating, just ask around!
- Faculty Training Update (Amy)
- As part of IL joining forces, co-chaired with Ryan, we are doing faculty training which was identified as a priority. We need to train faculty to understand value of having veterans in classroom and understand issues that affect vet students along with practical tips in the classroom. Faculty was often deficit based and we are trying to address these concerns.
- CAEL was funded by McCormick and Charlotte Cahill developed a curriculum for training. It is now set and is about 2 hours long. It has been vetted by volunteers and we got positive feedback. In addition, we have created a webinar/online workshop which conveys same material. The concept is to create tools for IL so that capacity can be built in institutions since we cannot train everyone. This is to empower the team to do trainings at own institutions. The team is the veteran services coordinator and one faculty member to do training and we will “train the trainer”. Beta testing is taking place at National Louis and Swick.
- We need help at the train the trainer sessions and we ask that veteran services coordinators attend one. They will be at Swick, Peoria, Cascasquia, and one other. Think about who you want

as your faculty person, and this will be the “vet ally”. Trained faculty get decal that says ally and have IJF at the bottom as branding. This is a cost free, 2 hour training. This is low budget so we are training while beverages and parking is covered by participants. Ideally, this is a two person team that will attend the trainings from each institution.

- What do you think of this? Sheri Gross “ I think it’s awesome and I have a faculty member that can go. We are doing a lunch and learn for faculty on veterans in April, so this is a great segue for us.”
- Can we do this? Most raised hands that they are interested in doing this ~12. No one said they were not interested.
- How do we get word out? There are listserves being created by Paul, but we need more. Scott “IJF and this group are the highest concentration in the state so we are the only logical start”. Pete LaFaie “Dan and Iddba has a list of veteran faculty at schools.” Hayley Nunez “Nashua (?) initiative is a great place to fish around.” Agnette “We are doing training this month and we are trying to figure out how to get buy-in. We have training curriculum already and a primary faculty member that is pushing.”
- Please e-mail CAEL if you have any further thoughts or ideas about how this looks on the ground.

#### **Veterans as Strategic Assets Initiative (Paul Knudtson, National Louis)**

- Presented trifold for the initiative and the concept of changing the picture of veterans as talented assets.
- Working on translation, expectations, and challenges
- We want veterans to move from a corporate responsibility to a talent group
- National Louis is the fiscal agent for this.
- The bottom up approach is being used. Veterans will meet with local organization to transfer veterans to a top-of-the-mind resource for hiring.
- Engagement: This is a matter of veterans rebranding themselves. Networking partners will be geographically tailored to each event that is planned as veteran-employer interfaces.
- Communication: we have marketing materials, a welcome center, and a number of websites to facilitate effective networking.
- It’s incredibly important to get students to this event. Students need to hear this from the veterans services agents at schools that this is not a job fair or a workshop. It is a statewide collaboration that helps build career. They will hear a panel discussion on veterans skills and how those can be translated into a job or an interview. This can be skill building.
- The students will have the chance to hear information straight from the source (employers)
- This is networking, and they will have business cards.
- Getting students there can involve organizing students at the institution level and then make an effort to get them there via caravanning or the like.

#### **Open Mic**

- There is now a GI Benefits comparison tool that will be posted to the Google Doc which is only for Post-9/11 chapter benefits. There is a benefits estimator and this should be double checked

to make sure that it is accurate. Please do this! Not all schools are on this so check to make sure you are on there. If you have multiple locations, then keep an eye out for minor differences in the names.

- General's vet center is open and will be fully furnished tomorrow. We also won the governor's award for education in veteran's affairs.
- Scott: There is a GI school complaint tool. Schools' points of contact are not always clear and your school needs to seek out if there are complaints being made. This is a chance to solve problems so it should be taken advantage of.
- Study done with Paul shows that there is no data that directly connects veterans and success. There is a survey brought up that is trying to collect that data. Talk to Paul directly.

#### Next Steps (Amy)

- Downtown McCormick for the next meeting.
- June 19<sup>th</sup> 11-3 at Depaul