

Veteran's Services at CU Boulder

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“Today’s Topics”

- Office of Veteran Services Mission
- What is a Veteran?
- Campus Resources
- Veterans Transition to College
- Plans for our Future
- Now the Numbers
- Points of Contact



Barney Ballinger, Director Office of Veterans Services

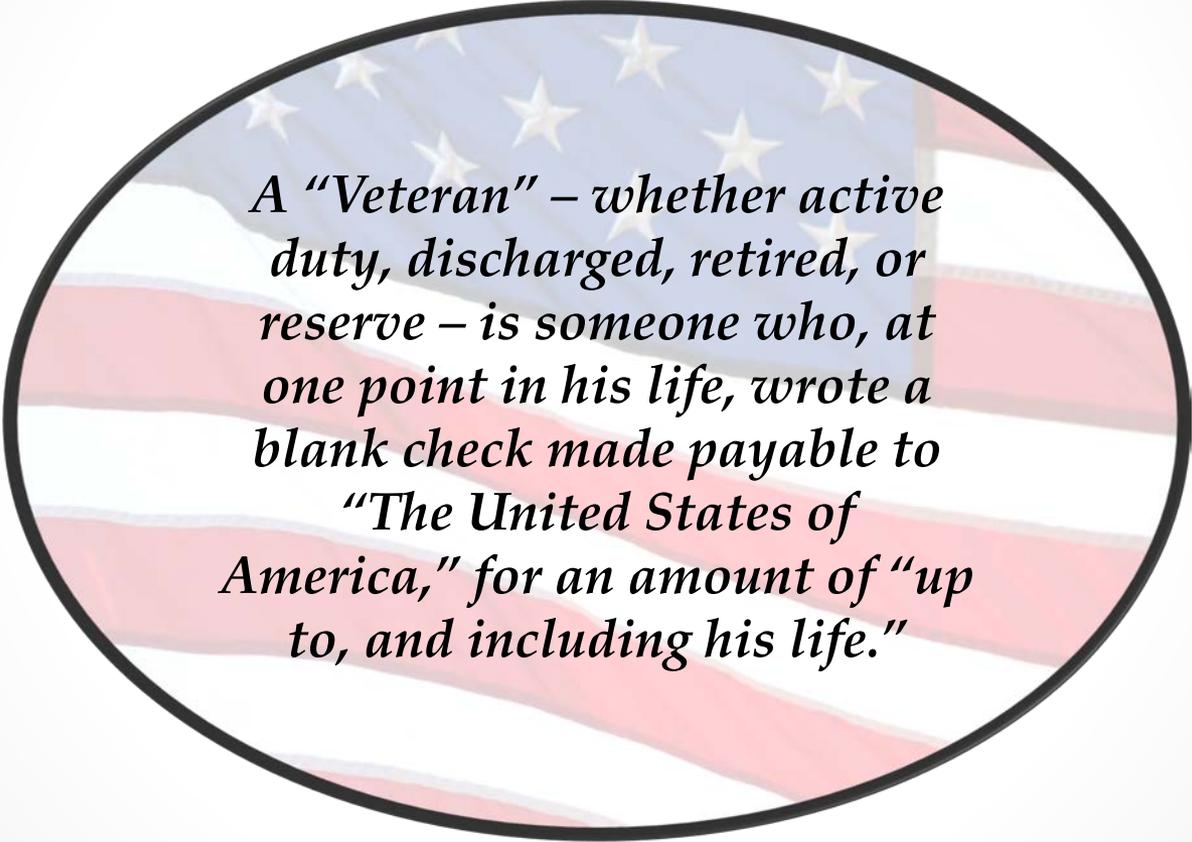


“CU-Boulder Student Veterans Serving in Iraq and Afghanistan”

Mission

- Advocate on campus and in the local community
- Assists student veterans transition from the military to the academic environment
- Provides a support network on campus to ensure academic success
- Provides referrals and support in the local community
- Veterans Services: <http://veterans.colorado.edu>

WHAT IS A VETERAN?



A "Veteran" – whether active duty, discharged, retired, or reserve – is someone who, at one point in his life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount of "up to, and including his life."



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Campus Resources



Student Veterans Center (SVC)

- Centralized source of information and support for returning veterans
- A place to network and meet other student veterans
- The Veterans Services Program Manager and the VA School Certifying Officer are located in SVC

VA Work Study

- The Department of Veteran Affairs overseas work study program
- Student Veterans support the operation of the SVC, Student Veteran Orientation, VA certification process, and volunteer activities in the local community

Student Veterans of America Chapter

- Assist veterans in making their transition to campus
- Assist CU-Boulder in creating resources and policies to ensure success of veterans

Veteran Services Working Group

- Supports and advises Office of Veteran Services on “best practices” to support student veterans on campus

Center for Students in Transition

- Specialized academic advising and counseling for student veteran population

Counseling and Psychological Services

- One-on-one counseling on transition from military to college, coping skills, as well meditation techniques

Veterans Transition to College Campus

- Rely on student veterans for support and advice
- Tend to feel isolated on campus
- Rigid military structure to flexible schedule on campus
- Faculty and student body “do not understand their service”
- Lack of support structure on campus

Academic Advisors – How You Can Help

- Assist in making connections on campus
- Institutional tracking of student veteran numbers and needs
- Help to erode aversion to seeking support at a later date

Plans For The Future!

Attracting Veterans to Campus

- Military Student Day (March 21st)
- Collaborating with local military bases transition offices
- Career fairs targeting veterans
- Military friendly campus - Outreach and Publicity
- Best support network on campus in Colorado

Early Registration

- Goal is to have early registration in place by Fall 2012
- Student veterans can achieve their degree in 36 months
- Supports student veterans academic pursuit and success in life

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Now the
Numbers!



Withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 and Afghanistan 2013

- Military force is reducing its size – exodus of veterans
- *Increased presence on campus* using federal education benefits
- Support network is vital to their success

CU-Boulder Numbers

- Military community is around 750 on campus
- *Enrollment numbers from August 2011 to January 2012 have doubled*
- Average GPA for current student veterans is 3.2
- Graduation average GPA 3.4
- 14 Credit hours taken by student veteran

Barney Ballinger, Director Office of Veterans Services

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GI Bill Benefits

- GI Bill Timeline
 - Application for benefits
 - Registration for classes
 - Request for enrollment certification
 - Payment by the VA to the student/school
- What the GI Bill can cover (Post 9/11)
 - Tuition and standard fees – includes health insurance and RAP
 - Tutorial Assistance - \$100/month and \$1200/benefit
 - Licensing and Professional Exams
 - Testing Fees
 - Study Abroad
 - Books
 - Living Stipend

GI Bill Benefits

- Post 9/11 BAH and how it works
 - Must be at least half time
 - BAH paid at rate of pursuit rounded to the nearest 10
 - 59% is 60% payment
 - 74% is 70% payment
 - 44% is 0% payment
 - Must take at least one on campus class to receive 100% rate
 - If all classes are distance learning then the BAH is paid at 50%
 - How BAH is calculated in a non-standard term
 - $(\text{Hours} \times \text{Standard Term Weeks}) / \text{Non-Standard Term Weeks}$

GI Bill Benefits

- Special Circumstances
 - The VA will pay for an F
 - In order to have a repeat paid for the student must pass
 - If the program requires a certain grade then the student must achieve that grade the second time around
 - The VA will NOT pay for a W
 - Self-paced online courses should be treated like a term based course
 - A 3 credit hour course uses $\frac{1}{4}$ of a day of benefit for every day it is enrolled in outside of the standard term
 - There is no more break pay
 - Summer enrollment

Attitudes and Assumptions

Do not assume that all veterans have the same views about the wars in which they have participated or which they have supported during their military service.

Do not assume that all veterans are interested in hearing about your views about the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan or elsewhere.

Do not assume veterans want to talk with you about their military experiences. Some might, and others do not.

Respecting the Student Veteran

- Remember - not 18 years old!
- Not conventional life
- Rich, full life and experiences
- Bring value to one's military experience
- School just a part of larger life commitments
- The identity of veteran is only one identity that veterans have; each veteran has many other identities. Get to know someone by learning about many aspects of who they are.



Normalize The Process or Transition

Veterans need the same support that everyone else needs – an environment that is welcoming and free of overt or subtle discrimination.

Help student vets know of vet services center – important to help integrate into CU.

Make space to talk about how to relate with other students in the classroom

Shift in Mindset

- Culture of the military
- Check List Mentality
- Back to student mode – big transition from ordered life
- “Let me help you find the answer.”
- Need facts – how to navigate the system: direct, clear
- Academic tempo: normalize
- Provide reference points

MONEY

- **Some (many) just want to get done.**
- **Utility to degree in service of career.**
- **Extra classes can mean more money or longer term here. When told you need to take classes for betterment, not necessarily true when focused on completion**

Matthew Tomatz, MA, LPC
Counseling and Psyc Svcs

Transfer Credits

BIG FOCUS

PTSD and TBI

Do not assume that all veterans have PTSD or any other mental health problem. The majority of veterans—including those returning from active duty in combat zones—do not have a diagnosable problem.

Insomnia

Memory Problems

Poor Concentration

Emotional Lability

Depression

Anxiety

Irritability

Fatigue

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Counseling Connections

PROVIDE HOPE!

Develop Support Network!

Wardenburg Health Center
Psychological Health and Psychiatry

Counseling and Psychological Services
Walk-in 10am to 4pm, M-F

Academic Advising Issues/tips

Key issues:

Academic Preparedness vs. Compression of Degree to 36 months

- The GI Bill does not incentivize “starting slow”, as every month (not credit) counts... less than 15 credits/term may cost money in the long run.

However

- Repeating/Withdrawing is also costly!
 - “W”s prompt repayment to VA
 - “F”s may need to be repeated

Encourage use of tutoring services from the start

Discuss trade-offs (“W”s vs. “F”s)

Deliberation in scheduling (to finish within life of benefit, and to avoid “W”s)

Scheduling Needs

- At CU*:
 - Nearly 40% married
 - Nearly 25% have children
 - Nearly 50% hold part time job
 - Majority do not live in Boulder



Consider Continuing Education Supplemental Enrollment at Community College CLEP exams

Persistence

- “Dropping off the Map” is more likely than disruptive or antisocial class behavior

Intrusive Advising?

Confidentiality

- Some students are hesitant to seek help (of any kind) for fear that it will reflect poorly on their permanent record
- Advisors are often a first responder to crises

Acknowledge FERPA, and academia vs. the military
Be aware of your own resources on campus

Bureaucratic Frustration

- 1/3 of CU Veterans report lack of credit for military training to be most frustrating thing about being a student at CU.
- Finding a syllabus for a course taken 10 years ago may be difficult...

Discuss military training in context of résumé
Bring clarity to transfer credit processes
Where possible, make a direct referral

Questions?

