Supporting Student Veterans
Including those with hidden disabilities

Kaela Parks

Disability Support Services

Veterans Awareness Week 2011

Disability, Accommodation, and UD

✓ Students with disabilities use the accommodation process to achieve equal access – disclosing disability then working with UAA to identify reasonable adjustments to put in place

✓ Student veterans with disabilities can be less likely to disclose disability and request accommodation

✓ Universal Design reduces barriers and minimizes the need for accommodation - benefits wide range of individuals not just those with disabilities (DSS offers workshops on UD)

Ideas to Help UAA Become More Student Veteran Friendly

1. Make sure processes and language are clear. (websites, forms, brochures, handouts, and other materials should be simple and intuitive to navigate)

2. Include different ways for contact to occur (office hours as well as email or live chat, online forms as well as paper based forms)

3. Ensure that online information can be used with assistive technologies (DSS holds workshops each semester)

4. Be student centered (go beyond the minimum effort to ensure that questions are answered and students get the runaround)

Ideas to Help UAA Become More Student Veteran Friendly (continued)

5. Think about nontraditional students when designing programs (types of events, times, days, locations, advertising methods)

6. Educate yourself (check out items from the DSS lending library, invite a facilitator for a staff meeting devoted to ideas for supporting student veterans in your particular area)

7. Partner with Other Organizations - VA, American Legion, etc

8. Seek feedback (ask the students you serve if you are meeting their needs or if there are areas in which you can improve)

Resources – Articles

- [Veterans and the Community College: A Training Guide](#) (2011) from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

- Report following discussions at the Veterans Success Jam, held in May 2010 titled:[Accommodating Student Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Tips for Campus Faculty and Staff](#) (June 2011)

- National Council on Disability's [Invisible Wounds: Serving Service Members and Veterans with PTSD and TBI](#) (March 2009)

Resources – Articles

- Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disabilit's: <u>Special Issue on Veterans with Disabilities</u> (2009)

- American Council on Education's <u>Serving Those Who Serve: Higher Education and America's Veterans</u> (November 2008)

- Inside Higher Ed's <u>Valuing Veterans</u> (June 2008)

- NASPA Journal's <u>From Combat to Campus. Voices of Student Veterans</u> (2008)

Resources - DSS Lending Library

Books:

Down Range: To Iraq and Back

Once a Warrior: Wired for Life

Healing from War

Webcast: Psychological Needs of Returning Veterans

The handout from this webcast covers a wealth of information related to helping campuses become trauma-informed

Video: Hidden Wounds (57 minutes)

A documentary that explores the stories of three veterans and their experiences with PTSD and depression

Resources – Websites

Student Veterans of America

http://www.studentveterans.org/

Department of Veterans Affairs Information for Education Professionals

http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/landing_schools.htm

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

http://www.iava.org/

Family and Friends of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans

http://supportyourvet.org

Resources – Websites

Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions

http://www.vetfriendlytoolkit.org

NASPA Veterans Knowledge Community Website

http://www.naspa.org/kc/veterans

News Articles from NASPA Veterans KC

http://www.naspa.org/kc/veterans/news

Veterans in Higher Ed National Clearinghouse

http://vets.arizona.edu/clearinghouse

Contact Information

Kaela Parks, Director

Disability Support Services

University of Alaska Anchorage

Ph. 907-786-4535 Fax 907-786-4531

www.uaa.alaska.edu/dss

kaela@uaa.alaska.edu