Serving Student Veterans

Expanding the Student Care Culture

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Veteran Resource Center
Timber Smith
Timber Smith, MS
Veteran Resource Coordinator
Army Veteran
Admissions Background

Michelle Munns, BBA
Veteran Benefits Coordinator
Who We Are

• University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

• 3 Campuses 1 University
  • Total enrollment: 14,087
  • Student to Faculty Ratio: 20:1
  • 200 Majors, Minors, and Emphasis
  • 44% First Generation students

• Students using education benefits:
  • Spring 2019 - Fall 2019 – 550 (Average between two semesters)
  • Veterans: 450
  • Dependents/Spouses: 150
Who We Are

UW-Oshkosh Supports and Serves Veterans and Their Families

Dedicated Staff:
- 17 Mentoring Staff Members
- 100 Volunteers

Students Served:
- 815 Veterans
- 324 Dependents

Benefits Utilized:
- 815 GI Bill
- Post 9/11 GI Bill
- $1.2 Million
- $1.8 Million
- GI Bill
- GI Bill

Supplemental Payment $166,000

Veterans Resource Center at a Glance:
- 1,514 visits
- 778 Visits by the GI Bill
- 27 Visits to the Vet
- 578 Visits by the Vet

1,514 visits
For the current academic year
Serving the student vet starts and ends with their benefits
Where We Were – Help Desk Culture

• Primarily only helped with benefits
  • Excellent at troubleshooting
  • Explained next steps and how to sign up for benefits
  • Didn’t build rapport
  • Didn’t invite into space

• Work Study students were only hired by word of mouth or referral from friends
  • Old boys club feel
Why change the culture?

• Traditional “Student Veteran” has changed
  • Noticeable visible increase in female veterans
  • Increase in traditional student aged veterans
  • More Adult Non Traditional with deployments
  • Increase of National Guard/Reservists
    • New majority
• Increased interest in student veterans recruitment, retention, and transition
• Opportunity for partnerships
• New expanded presence (2 new Veterans Resource Centers on access campuses)
• Changing expectations
Timber-ism

If the money ain’t right, nothing is right
Leadership

• Defining Leadership Roles
  • Veterans Resource Coordinator – CEO role
    • Vision, culture, programing, manage partnerships, daily operations at 3 VRCs
    • Focus on recruitment, retention, and transition
  • Veterans Benefits Coordinator – CFO role
    • Veteran benefits, data tracking, training of work-study students, student payroll, priority registration
    • If the money isn’t right nothing will be perceived as running right

• Both must work together closely to have successful services and veterans center
• Both should work in the same space to maximize outcomes
• Both roles are needed to have a successful effective veterans program
Leadership

• Partnership
  • Before: Resource Coordinator & Benefit Coordinator functioned individual with minimum overlap
  • Now: Partners in Crime!
    • Plan together, Lead Together
  • Motto:

DO EPIC SHIT
Timber-ism

Take time to share with others what you are doing. Don’t assume they know what they are looking at. Control your narrative.
New Culture

• TEAM Focus
  • Work Study Team
    • New attitude focus/shift in hiring new employees
    • Stress in providing CUSTOMER SERVICE
    • Required engaging student veterans, explaining resources, and giving tours
  • Office Team Meetings
    • TEAM atmosphere encouraged
    • Informing team of current events, projects, university objectives, etc.
  • Team Member Project
    • Every work-study student chooses a project to manage that benefits the VRC, SVA, or both
New Culture

• Promote Inclusive vs Exclusive Environment
  • Every new student veteran and interested visitor gets a tour of the VRC
  • Free Coffee Bar
  • Dependents hired as work study students
  • Invited in interns and student workers who are veteran allies but not veterans themselves
  • Group study areas
  • Invite internals and external services to host office hours inside of VRC
  • Invite general student body and staff to events hosted by the VRC and SVA
Coffee Bar

Team espresso shots!
Vets have been recruited once
They don’t want to be recruited again
Virtual Presence and Self Service Initiatives

• Assistant Social Media, Website and Marketing Coordinator (Student Position)
  • Facebook
• 2 full website overhauls in 2 years
  • Focus on Self-service
• Video phones
  • Virtual consultations for access campuses
• All-in One Machines with scan to email capabilities at all VRC sites
• Veterans Library Guide
• Virtual Open House
Meeting the Modern Student Veteran Where They’re At

• Digitalization of files and veteran forms
• Campus Vision Marketing
• Electronic End of Semester Surveys
  • Paper to Google form
  • Offered bribe (Kwik Trip Gift Card)
  • Previous Responses: 7 - Digital Responses: 54
Meeting the Modern Student Veteran
Where They’re At

Virtual Open House

Veteran Resource Center
UW Oshkosh  UW Fond du Lac  UW Fox Valley

Introduction: The VRC
Meeting the Modern Student Veteran
Where They’re At

Virtual Open House

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National Guard and Reserves Benefits
Meeting the Modern Student Veteran
Where They’re At

• Materials update
  • Everything Branded with UWO Camo
  • New Student Checklist
  • Office Brochure
  • New Student Welcome Folder
  • Benefit Handouts
Timber-ism

An open door makes for limitless possibilities
Partnerships

• Community Engagement
  • External
    • Winnebago County Veterans Service Office – office hours
    • Wisconsin Department Of Workforce Development – office hours, Government and Municipalities Job and Internship Fair, Military Resume Translation Workshop
    • Various Veteran Service Organizations – panels, coffee bar, fundraisers, etc.
    • American Red Cross - Workshops
  • Internal
    • UWO Police – Corn hole Tournament
    • ROTC – Rabbit and Turkey Shoot
    • Career and Professional Development - Government and Municipalities Job and Internship Fair
    • Veterans Advisory Council - representatives from various campus departments
    • Polk Library – Office Hours
    • Writing Center – Office Hours
    • Women’s Center
    • Athletics – Military Appreciation Football Game

• Student Veterans Association (Most Important)
Program and Partner Pics

Sink your Certifying Official!

Help us raise $1,000 in pledges and our certifying official, Michelle, will take the plunge!!

Make your pledge in person or online!
Team: UW Oskosh Veterans
Candy Drive

When Ryan Borgmann was 7 years old, he wanted to donate his Halloween candy to military overseas. His mom reached out to the Veterans Resource Center at UW-Oshkosh to help out. The past two years were a great success but this year we want to collect even more candy for military members overseas!

Want to help out? Simply drop off any candy at donation bins listed in the locations below.

Where:
- UWO Veterans Resource Center
- Boys and Girls Club of Oshkosh
- Winnebago County Veteran Services Office

When: October 23rd – November 6th
Program and Partner Pics
LIBRARY Bootcamp

Academic research can be confusing and time consuming. This one hour session will discuss library and research strategies that will help you more efficiently approach and complete your research assignments.

Topics will include:
- Reading a Research Assignment
- Constructing a Topic
- Efficient Searching Strategies
- Choosing The Best Searching Tools
- Making Polk Library Work for You

Oct 17 at 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Oct 22 at 2-3 pm
Oct 30 at 3-4 pm
Nov 20 at 10-11 am

All sessions will be held in Polk Library Room 116a

Katie, Writing Center Representative at VRC

Katie has a Bachelors of Science in English with a Creative Writing minor. She is a Graduate Student for the Master of Arts Program in English.

Hobbies: Reading, Video Games, Whiskey Enthusiast

VRC Hours:
Tuesdays & Thursdays 3-4:30pm
Program and Partner Pics

MARCH FOR THE 22
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15 @ 6:00 PM IN FRONT OF POLK LIBRARY

Never Let Your Buddy Fight Alone
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Be Willing To Listen,
Not All Wounds Are Visible

2.2 Mile Veteran Suicide Awareness Walk

[Image of a poster with a silhouette of a soldier and a photo of people holding signs]
Program and Partner Pics
VETERAN GRADUATION RECOGNITION RECEPTION

Stop by before or after the ceremony with your friends and family to be recognized for your service and academic success!

Saturday, December 14th
7:30am-1pm
Pollock House
(765 Algoma Blvd)
Program and Partner Pics

MILITARY EXPOSURE TO BURN PITS
Wednesday, November 14
in Reeve Theatre from
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

American Red Cross Mind-Body Workshop
Come learn easy to use skills such as breathing exercises and mindfulness techniques to help manage stress and trauma.
October 8th
11am-12pm 1pm-2pm
UW Fox Cities Rm M-1130
Free lunch will be provided!
Contact Timber Smith at smithk@uwosh.edu
before October 1st to RSVP

Brought to You By:
UW-Oshkosh Veterans Resource Center
American Red Cross
Program and Partner Pics

**Government and Public Service Career Fair**

**April 15, 2020 | 12 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.**

**Culver Family Welcome Center**

625 Pearl Ave, Oshkosh, WI

- Connect and network with employers in the government and public service sector at the city, county, state, and federal levels.
- Professional dress is strongly encouraged.
- Register at the link below to receive email notifications about the event.

https://bit.ly/5PFf3c

Hosted by:

**Masculinity Monday**

**November 11, Veterans**

Co-sponsored by the Veterans Resource Center and Student Veterans Association.

Are you ready to challenge man box culture on campus? We invite you to join these open conversations about masculinity. All who wish to discuss masculinity are welcome.

11:30am-12:30pm in Reeve 221

**Women’s Center**

Masculinity is an alternative action, equal opportunity educator and employer. Please contact the Women’s Center at or 903-300-2361, extension 2150 in or contact the campus online on campus. ***Allider 000-000-000***
Program and Partner Pics
Timber-ism

Find the reason to say yes and not multiples ones to say no
What’s Next?

• Where Are We Going?
  • Rollout of veterans syllabus statement
  • Scholarship for dependents and spouses of veterans who don’t qualify for benefits
  • Transition Mentorship Program (Battle Buddy Program)
  • Green Zone Training