

# One Inclusive Thing: Supporting Veterans at GVSU

## SUPPORTING VETERANS AT GVSU

Student veterans are a unique population at GVSU, with their own set of struggles, strengths, and stereotypes. For instance, faculty may not know that:

- Veterans only have 36 months of funding to complete their degree.
- 56% of student veterans said they had inadequate financial resources to stay in college even with GI Bill help.
- 62% of student vet are first-generation students.
- Nearly three-fourths said that advancing their education was the number one reason they served.
- Student vets feel that professors (63%), and non-veteran students (70%), don't understand their unique challenges.
- On average, student veterans have higher GPAs, graduate at higher rates than other adult learners and take on more difficult degree programs than their non-military counterparts.
- Veterans are 160% more likely to pursue graduate degrees.
- 25% of veterans earn more than one degree or certificate.

## Military 101

- Different services: Navy, Air Force, Army, Marines, Coast Guard, Space Force, etc.
- Different Jobs: Mechanic, diver, musician, etc.
- Officers: responsible for planning missions, giving orders, and assigning tasks
- Enlisted: responsible for carrying out orders and completing missions
- Reserves/National Guard: Part-time but can be deployed at any time
- Active Duty: Full-time military

## Should I Ask Veterans About Their Service?

Not all vets want to talk about their military experience. Be respectful of their choice to disclose or not disclose their military status.

- If they seem open, ask: What branch? What job? Where were you stationed? How much time spent active?
- Encourage them to ask questions in class—vets were trained not to question authority.
- Acknowledge public anniversary dates: Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Corps/Coast Guard birthday

# What Veterans Want Faculty to Know

- They are a diverse group: gender, race, jobs, reasons for joining.
- Reserves are part of the military; they can be deployed at any time.
- They did not all kill someone and do not all have PTSD.
- They do not go to college “for free.”
- Veterans who have invisible wounds of war are not dangerous or violent.
- Military service has changed them.
- They differ in how much they identify with their military service.
- Their families serve(d) with them.

# How Faculty Can Show Support in the Classroom

- Strengthen communication and exhibit flexibility
- Encourage participation in activities and groups on campus
- Recognize the carefree college attitude of some undergrads can be hard for veterans to relate to.
- Help connect veterans with student life—promote Laker Vets (Student Veterans of America Chapter)
- Understand how some situations may be triggering—i.e. large groups of people, such as a protest.
- Encourage all students during the first week to actively participate—veterans are trained not to question authority so they may not ask questions
- Provide flexibility with assignments, exams, and studying.

# Training and Advising Resources

- Reach out to Military and Veterans Resources Manager, Jill Hinton Wolfe ([wolfeji@gvsu.edu](mailto:wolfeji@gvsu.edu)) with questions.
- Laker Vets (SVA)
- Registrar ([vetrec@gvsu.edu](mailto:vetrec@gvsu.edu)) –GI Bill issues
- Veterans lounge—0072 Kirkhof Center
- For teaching resources, contact the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center (Pew FTLC) at [ftlc@gvsu.edu](mailto:ftlc@gvsu.edu).