

Military Connected Learners – Success on Campus

Problem/Issue Statement

A global workforce requires, minimally, a bachelor's degree for marketplace entry. To adapt to job market needs, veteran students frequently need higher education degrees. Yet, data indicate they face difficulties transitioning from a military style of technical learning and a hierarchical organizational structure to a university learning environment, as well as mental health challenges. Military connected learners at all levels, including active duty and dependents – can benefit from programs supporting their educational goals and movement to viable careers.

Universities began developing support services to veteran students pursuing undergraduate studies, but a gap remains for advanced degrees, with limited services extended to military connected graduate students on a case-by-case basis without an institutional support structure. As part of a broader strategy, securing additional federal funds through targeted programs would begin to address these gaps. The VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment program currently funds two schools in Kansas through VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC), so expansion opportunities for the initiative could enhance the university and services in the state. The impacts of military related efforts at K-State are far reaching including expanding opportunities for programs and partnerships.

Request Description

We request support to develop an initiative (MHUB) that establishes a central service hub for military connected learners to provide a comprehensive support system to veterans and their families in achieving their career goals. MHUB will highlight integrated services to support students through their undergraduate and graduate work, match their career needs with educational opportunities, such as personalized career planning especially in STEM, business, security studies areas, and assist in the transition to leadership and managerial roles in a civilian organizational structure. As part of MHUB, establishing a VSOC Counselor would heighten the level of support provided.

Request Goals and Expected Outcomes

MHUB aligns with the university's priority to support development of a global and Kansas workforce. This request enhances the strategic partnership with Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley in supporting the career needs of veterans and their families. Building on the College of Education's Military and Veterans Educational Initiative to organize the various military-related activities across the college as a comprehensive and sustainable approach to working with students, MHUB will continue existing efforts for undergraduates and develop support for graduate students. MHUB will integrate resources to expand efforts to provide holistic - academic, career, life, mental health - support to military connected students interested in pursuing advanced degrees in all academic areas, with an initial focus on supporting STEM interests (academic areas).

Ongoing review of the initiative will include regular needs assessments to monitor student needs and how they are being addressed. As a result, we expect to see an enhanced pipeline for military connected learners, including veteran students pursuing advanced degrees.

Appropriations Subcommittee

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

Request Type

Funding Request

Bill Language Request