Supporting our Military Connected Students both in and outside the Classroom

The purpose of this presentation is to showcase the three specific approaches that the Department of Veteran and Military Services implements in order to assist our military connected students in transitioning into the university setting. The three main areas of focus are our New Veteran Orientation, our FYS 131 – Veteran Integration into Higher Education, and the use of the Yellow Ribbon program. The Veteran Orientation will focus on how we focus on transitioning into the university setting. FYS 131 will focus on adjusting into a rigorous academic course load. The use of the Yellow Ribbon program has served in helping retain students dealing with financial challenges. Our approach for this project focused on tracking retention rates of the participants in these three areas and will be presenting our data on these three area, along with any identified patterns What we have found, particularly with the FYS 131, is that our retention rates tend to be higher for those who are participating or using these services. We will be presenting modifications that we have either implemented or have made in these three areas, based both student feedback and data gathered. These changes include a reformatted orientation, an online offering of FYS 131 being developed, along with a proactive communication plan directed toward the parents of our dependents.

Semester	# of Attendees	Sum of 2nd Term After Orientation	Sum of 3rd Term After Orientation
Fall 2016	45	37 (82%)	34 (75%)
Spring 2017	12	9 (75%)	7 (58%)
Fall 2017	47	36 (77%)	31 (67%)
Spring 2018	21	12 (57%)	12 (57%)
Fall 2018	41	36 (88%)	32 (78%)
Spring 2019	23	13 (57%)	11 (48%)
Grand Total	**133**	**109 (82%)**	**97 (73%)**

The goal with our New Veteran Orientation is to assist with the transition into the university setting by connecting our students with department staff and resources while focusing on creating a welcoming environment for our students. Over the course of the past six semesters, we have worked on refining the orientation process to be more effect and meaningful for our students.

Fall 2016 Retention	**Course**	**All FTFT**
Fall 2016 to Spring 2017	91%	93%
Fall 2016 to Fall 2017	81%*	76%
Fall 2017 Retention	**Course**	**All FTFT**
Fall 2017 to Spring 2018	100%	89%
Fall 2017 to Fall 2018	76% (82%)^	73.5%
Fall 2018 Retention	**Course**	**All FTFT**
Fall 2018 to Spring 2019	76% (82%)”	92%
Fall 2018 to Fall 2019	-	-

*2 students left the university for jobs.. Both earned higher than a 3.5 GPA

^1 student graduated. If counted as retention, the number would be 82%

The purpose of the course is to explore and examine the challenges for Veterans integrating into the world of higher education. Additionally, Veterans probe the differences and similarities between the military and civilian culture, while conducting serious inquiry into the cultural aspects of the Veteran experience within higher education. The overall purpose is to build upon Veterans global cultural experiences and critical thinking skills as a framework to recognize and assess how culture fashions the human experience.

Modifications made, based on retention and student feedback:

- ⇨ Developed a spring semester option for Flagstaff students
- ⇨ Developing an online version for statewide and online veterans, to be offered in 2019-2020 academic year

Fall 2017 Retention	**Yellow Ribbon**	**All FTFT**
Fall 2017 to Spring 2018	71%	89%
Fall 2017 to Fall 2018	62%	73.5%
Spring 2018 Retention	**Yellow Ribbon**	**All FTFT**
Spring 2018 to Fall 2018	100%	NA
Spring 2018 to Spring 2019	100%	NA
Fall 2018 Retention	**Yellow Ribbon**	**All FTFT**
Fall 2018 to Spring 2019	88%	92%
Fall 2018 to Fall 2019	-	-

The purpose of the Yellow Ribbon Program with the GI Bill® is to cover the cost of out-of-state tuition for those utilizing Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill® at 100%. This is an agreement between the University and the VA to split the cost of the out-of-state portion together. This is allows NAU to be a viable option for students who may not be able to cover the cost of out-of-state tuition on their own.

What we have found is that a number of dependent students have challenges establishing in-state residency during their first semester. In those situations where the students have missed the university deadlines, the Yellow Ribbon program can be an appropriate option for the students who qualify. As we have been noticing that there are patterns with the first semester of our dependents, we are tracking those utilizing Yellow Ribbon.

Modifications being made’ base on working with various student scenarios:

- ⇨ Communication process to the parents through New Student Orientations
- ⇨ Communication process to the parents through Military Connected Newsletter

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