

Veterans Task Force Meeting Agenda  
March 29, 2018  
CCC 178

**Purpose Statement:** To start a habit of listening to our student veterans to understand issues that affect them at LCCC.

**Attendees:** Joe Schaffer, Judy Hay, Clark Harris, Tammy Maas, James Miller, Brandi Payne Cervera, Stephen Crynes, Maggie Albers, Lacey Shandera, Kevin Yarbrough, Shauna Best, Melissa Plumley, Jim Mcdonnell, Wesley Frain, Michelle Kallhoff

**Guest:** Linda Garcia

- Introductions
- Memorandum for Veterans Issues
  - Progress update
- Open Discussion

## **Memorandum**

To: President Joe Schaffer

From: Phi Theta Kappa and Student Veterans of America

Date: December 8, 2017

RE: Student Veterans' Concerns

The Phi Theta Kappa Honors in Action Team researched the issue of veteran suicide as an Honors Institute topic regarding the rights and responsibilities of citizens. This research resulted in outreach and interviews with a variety of Laramie County Community College agencies and groups, including the Student Veterans of America. From interview and research, the team discovered a variety of issues that we believe could be addressed at LCCC to improve the experience of the student veteran community and make LCCC an officially veteran friendly school.

### **Issues:**

1. Research shows that veterans do not seek help when they need it. This has contributed to a rate of approximately 22 veterans per day committing suicide. Veterans also face financial and academic stress as they move through college.
2. Counseling and Campus Wellness advisors do not have training for veterans' issues.
3. LCCC accepts credits from the Joint Service Transcript to contribute towards waiving COLS 1000, but does not accept Community College of the Air Force credits, even though CCAF is regionally accredited and most military members are Air Force members due to the presence of Warren Air Force Base, Air National Guard Base.
4. Veterans often receive conflicting information within Student Affairs regarding financial aid, advising, services, and more. For example, veterans are under different funding models, including the Montgomery GI Bill, Post-9/11 GI Bill, and state tuition assistance and federal tuition assistance. The current Student Veterans of America Advisor has taken on veterans' issues along with his full time job.
5. Scheduling impacts veterans' funding. For example, students who are taking online classes do not receive the same housing allowance as face-to-face classes. In addition, block classes that meet for part of the semester can leave a student under the 12 credit hour requirement for a portion of the semester, and their funding can be reduced.
6. Military credits from the JST and CCAF are counted toward a student's electives, but not toward COLS 1000.

### **Solutions:**

1. **Create a COLS 1000 veterans cohort class** that provides veterans with knowledge about mental and health resources on campus, academic research and evaluation to succeed in classes,

and encourage a veterans mentorship program to be created through this process. Specifically, we suggest that a component on veterans' suicide and resources is offered as a unit in the class.

2. Apply for grants to **train counselors to meet the needs of veterans.**
3. LCCC should accept CCAF credits on an equal basis with JST credits for a COLS 1000 waiver.
4. **Consider hiring a Veterans Service Organization official (VSO)** with cross-training in veterans' services, advising, and financial aide. The VA also provides college resources to create veteran friendly campuses through the **VITAL** program, which could be implemented on an **institutional basis during in-service.** In addition, provide **VITAL training at adjunct orientation.**
5. **Code short classes as 16 week classes** with a start and end date within the time and provided consistent training for advisors regarding scheduling service members.
6. **Consistently apply military credits toward electives and meeting the COLS 1000 requirement.**

Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,

Phi Theta Kappa Honors in Action Team and Student Veterans of America