

Dear WIU Community,

Western Illinois University is committed to providing the best possible experiences for its military service students. Given that less than 10% of the US population has served in the military, there are often aspects of service that civilians do not understand. Research conducted with WIU military service students suggests that faculty, staff, and administrators may not be aware of the challenges our military service students are negotiating on campus. Faculty, staff, and administrators may be creating unnecessary and unintended challenges for military service students through policies and pedagogical practices without ever realizing it.

For this reason, the Veteran Resource Center Liaisons, a group of WIU faculty and staff, have worked with the Veteran Resource Center, Veterans Club, Military Science Department, the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Research (CITR) and the WIU Military Task Force to create a voluntary Military Friendly Credentialing Program (MFCP) for WIU employees. This program is modeled on the Green Zone trainings utilized on many campuses; we've built upon that model based on the unique needs our own military services students have identified. It is important to note that no employee is required to participate, and there is no monetary or other compensation for participation. There is also no penalty for choosing to not participate. Those who earn military friendly credentials will be listed on a Veteran Resource Center website where the length of time they've been credentialed will be recognized.

The goals of the credentialing program are:

- to facilitate spaces for military services students to share their experiences;
- to educate WIU employees about research, resources, and best practices for working with military service students; and,
- to assist the Veteran Resource Center in making WIU as military friendly as it can be.

Unlike one-time trainings that are often impactful in the moment, but sometimes forgotten, the MFCP is based on research demonstrating that the most effective programs for facilitating welcoming environments for military service students require ongoing trainings that integrate students, faculty, staff, and administrators. To be credentialed as military friendly through this program, WIU employees will need to attend two military friendly training programs a semester.

The programs are open to all WIU employees, and more programs will be added to the CITR workshops list as they develop. If you have any questions about the credentialing program or the sessions below, please contact Jeremy Robinett, Assistant Professor, at [jl-robinett@wiu.edu](mailto:jl-robinett@wiu.edu)

Our program offerings will be expanding in upcoming weeks, but we wanted to share the first four opportunities with you.

### **In Their Words - Military Service Student Panel**

February 20, 2019

3:00 - 4:00 pm

Cardinal/Oak Room of the University Union

Space for 30

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about military service student experiences at WIU. Panelists will include members of the Veterans Club, ARMY Reserve Officer Training Corps

(R.O.T.C.) and other military service students. Attendees will leave the session better educated about practices they can implement to make WIU more military friendly for our student service members.

#### Working with Military Service Students - Research and Resource Update

March 20, 2019

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Horrabin Hall 82

Space for 30

This session will provide a review of recent empirical research exploring the experiences of veterans and other military service students in higher education settings. Attendees will receive training in ways of asking questions about military service and experiences, and receive information about national, state, and local resources for working with military service students.

#### In Their Words - Military Service Student Panel

March 28, 2019

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Cardinal/Oak Room of the University Union

Space for 30

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about military service student experiences at WIU. Panelists will include members of the Veterans Club, ARMY Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) and other military service students. Attendees will leave the session better educated about practices they can implement to make WIU more military friendly for our student service members.

#### Working with Military Service Students - Research and Resource Update

April 4, 2019

3:30 - 4:30 pm

Cardinal/Oak Room of the University Union

Space for 30

This session will provide a review of recent empirical research exploring the experiences of veterans and other military service students in higher education settings. Attendees will receive training in ways of asking questions about military service and experiences, and receive information about national, state, and local resources for working with military service students.

Registration for the programs is being coordinated through CITR at <http://www.wiu.edu/CITR/workshops/>.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to support our military service students. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.