

VALOR

VETERAN ★ ALLIANCE

February 2020

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Board Members

Brad Aune
LeeRoy Carter
Carol Cwiak
Chris Hanson
Calie Lindseth
Corey Malko
Shelby Moen
Jill Motschenbacher
Jonathan Ross
Craig Schwinden
Andrea Smith
Jerry South
Jim Stoddard
Amy Tichy
Jeri Vaudrin
Nicole Veselka
Lonnie Wangen
Thomas Webb
John Woolsey

Onward and Upward

As we settle into 2020, it seems apropos to address the value of a strong, clear vision for VALOR for the new year. In 2020, VALOR will be finalizing a three year strategic plan which will help the organization take its efforts to the next level. VALOR will remain focused on its important mission - to improve campus climate for student veterans and enhance their success.

During the fall semester, the Board's efforts were focused on furthering three key objectives: 1) Advancing discussion and efforts regarding the establishment of a Veteran Resource Center at NDSU; 2) Continuing efforts to provide input on the implementation of the 8 Keys to Veteran's Success (signed by President Bresciani on February 12, 2019); and, 3) Reconceptualizing and strengthening our campus efforts through strategic partnerships, more consistent outreach, and more readily available information. Progress was made on all the above objectives and the Board's work continues into the spring with efforts specifically



focused on creating a stronger social media presence, the development of a consistent communication strategy and structure, and more regularly updated web content. This inaugural edition of VALOR's newsletter is an effort to provide current and relevant information to our VALOR allies, student veterans, members of the campus, and community partners. This newsletter will be published monthly during the academic year (August through May) and will be distributed through email and posted on our media sites and website. We welcome feedback on the newsletter and your ideas for future features.

Carol Cwiak, J.D., Ph.D.
VALOR Faculty Liaison

Did you know...

- VALOR Ally training has been restructured using PsychArmor's free training <https://www.ndsu.edu/valor/readings/>
- Amy Tichy (VALOR Board Member) wrote a great blog about student veterans <https://www.dce.ndsu.nodak.edu/otlweb/blog/student-veterans-and-your-classroom/>
- NDSU has a policy on military leave <https://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/146.pdf>
- A recent court ruling may allow veterans receiving the GI Bill extra benefits <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/2019/09/03/court-ruling-could-give-veterans-an-extra-year-of-gi-bill-benefits/>



VCO Update
Jim Stoddard



The North Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs has a robust listing of benefits and services that meet a wide-variety of veteran needs. If you haven't visited their site yet - nd.gov/veterans/benefits-services - check it out!

NDSU is a ND Cares business partner and supports ND Cares' mission to strengthen an accessible, seamless network of support for service members, veterans, families, and survivors.



Hello, NDSU student veteran supporters!

For those I haven't spent a lot of time with, my name is Jim Stoddard, and while NDSU does not have a full-time Veteran Services Coordinator, we're trying to cover some of those functions out of my office. My main function is directing a state-wide program aimed at supporting student veterans at all North Dakota colleges and universities. Since I'm based out of NDSU, we're attempting to provide supportive programming to NDSU's students, faculty, and staff. My efforts are not to be confused with those of Scott Fuller in the Military and Veteran Services Office, who does the processing of GI Bill benefits for students.

The term "student veteran" is a bit misleading. A clunkier, but more inclusive term you'll often see is "military-connected" student. This captures more of the range of military experiences we're wanting to support. For example, a currently serving member of the National Guard may not consider herself a "veteran", because she's still serving, and might not be sure if "student veteran" support would apply to her. The same is true with a dependent child of a military family that has moved around a lot, dealt with real fear about their parents' safety at a young age, and had to take on grown-up responsibilities very early whenever mom or dad was away. Any student connected to the military in some way faces unique challenges in integrating into the NDSU community and successfully completing their education, so we want them all to know, we're here to help!

Some brief updates on major projects and items of interest:

- In fall 2019, Casey Peterson, NDSU's interim Dean of Students and Student Success Programs Director, proposed a space on the 4th floor of Ceres Hall as a potential location for a Veteran Resource Center at NDSU.

- After visiting the space, the consensus of the VALOR board was that the proposed space would not be suitable for the intended purpose. The board was asked to clarify the space's purpose and services to be offered, and provided a document that defined the desired elements for a veteran space.

- In a meeting with Casey Peterson in December, he had follow-up questions regarding the board's document, such as: what specific office features the space needs; and, if data was available from any other schools showing measured improvement in veteran success after implementing a similar veteran resource center on their campus. I am in the process of gathering that information.

- In February 2020, I'll be attending a symposium on military-connected students hosted by NASPA, the national professional organization for student affairs professionals. I hope to come back with good information to share and some ideas that we could try out at our campus to support student veterans.

- I am also the staff advisor to the Bison Student Veterans (BSV) student organization. This is a chapter of the national Student Veterans of America (SVA), whose purpose is to advocate for, and assist veterans with achieving their educational goals and transitioning into meaningful employment. BSV's membership is now up to 33 members. One of BSV's goals for the coming year is for a small group of members to attend the SVA's national conference in January 2021. Other plans include activities throughout the year for NDSU's non-traditional-aged military students to bond with and support each other.

If you have questions, you can find me in the Veterans Educational Training Office, located in Ceres 329, (701) 231-9706, or via email at james.stoddard@ndsu.edu.



Veteran's Voice

Craig Schwinden
VALOR Student Veteran Representative

Hello Fellow Student Vets!

My name is Craig Schwinden and I am the Student Veteran Representative for VALOR. I have had the privilege of being a part of this organization for the past three semesters. I feel it is an important obligation of those who serve or those who have served to help our fellow veterans in any way possible. Being located at North Dakota State University, our organization's focus is obviously on helping veterans succeed in their educational goals, but we also want to help our faculty, staff and non-veteran students understand the challenges of being a student and a veteran or military member.

First, a little about me. I retired honorably from the U.S. Air Force Reserves on September 30, 2016 after 28 years of service. When I retired, I wrapped up almost 17 of those years as a loadmaster on C-130E/H aircraft. It was the "best job I ever had" (remember the movie 'Fury')? I am now in my fifth semester at NDSU and I am just a few credits short of junior standing while majoring in Emergency Management. I was born and raised here in Fargo, but have also lived in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, North Carolina and Virginia.

I hope to focus my column in the newsletter on student veterans' issues, such as how we can welcome our new veteran students to the campus and where they can go to get help with their studies as they start their journey at NDSU. Please look through the newsletter for information on matters of interest to student veterans as well as other information and updates from both on- and off-campus partners. Don't forget to check out the calendar of events, which will feature meetings and activities that

you may want to participate in. VALOR will also be highlighting a student veteran every month; be sure to check out this month's profile of the president of the Bison Student Veterans Association and U.S. Marine veteran, Mikhail Wicker... OORAH!

Thank you for your past or current service. You are part of a brother/sisterhood that truly understands what it is to really be free and the high cost of that freedom. Nothing is truly free, and you are or were a part of that. Don't ever let anyone tell you what you did or are doing isn't important or making a difference. Sometimes, it's hard for people to understand that, but that is alright; you do. You can reach me at craig.schwinden@ndsu.edu to share your feedback and ideas.



EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT QUESTIONS?

You can connect with the Military and Veterans Certification services at <https://www.ndsu.edu/veterans/> or visit their office located in 211 Ceres Hall or call 701-231-7985 or email ndsu.veterans@ndsu.edu.

NDSU NEWS



North Dakota State University and the North Dakota Air National Guard have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to better serve the research, service, educational and workforce needs of North Dakota. The goal is to provide quicker pathways for military students to earn their degrees by recognizing previously completed course work from a recognized military institution. NDSU's Departments of Emergency Management and Criminal Justice/Political Science are the first to agree to waive the college minor requirement for all military students who have completed 15 credits from a recognized military institution. This reduces time to degree achievement for students pursuing these majors. In the photo at left, Col. Darrin Anderson, 119th Wing commander, and Dean Bresciani, NDSU President, sign the MOU on January 14, 2020.



Fargo VA Health Care System

“The Fargo VA Health Care System is a Joint Commission accredited medical/surgical hospital with more than 30 acute care beds, a 38 -bed Community Living Center, Primary Care and Specialty Clinics, and 10 Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs).

The Fargo VA HCS oversees the provision of health care to more than 33,000 Veterans living in North Dakota, 17 counties in north-west Minnesota, and one northeast South Dakota county. The Fargo VA HCS has approximately 300,000 outpatient visits annually. The Medical Center is affiliated with the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, providing training to medical students, and Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, and Surgery resident physicians. The facility is also a training facility for nursing and allied health care students.

The Fargo VA HCS is continually innovating as evidenced by our many improvement and expansion projects. In the last two years, the Fargo VA HCS opened several new and expanded departments, to include: Imaging department, with new state-of-the art equipment; Community Living Center (19,000 square feet) with 38 private rooms, large recreation and dining atriums, and beautiful views of the Red River; Primary Care clinic space with 30 additional exam rooms; Lab; Intensive Care & Dialysis Unit; Emergency Department; New CBOCs in Bemidji, Grafton, Minot, Dickinson, and Williston.”

Veterans Crisis Line:
1 800 273-8255 (Press 1)

Contact the VA for non-emergencies:
Fargo: (701) 239-3700

Outside of the Fargo calling area: Toll-free 1-800-410-9723

If you are sick and wish to speak to a nurse, press 4.

For hours between 4 p.m. to 8 a.m., please call the telephone care line: 1-866-687-7382



Fargo VA Health Care System

CALL TO ACTION:

NDSU Needs a Veteran Resource Center

The American Council on Education (ACE) recommends student veterans have veteran-specific space that offers centralized services (e.g., benefits, tutoring, academic advising, career counseling, peer mentoring, disability support services, etc.); an area to study with computers; an area where student veterans “can spend time, interact with peers, find the answers to their questions, and feel comfortable”; and, a home base for VA work-study students (Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions, 2018). In 2012, 71% of colleges and universities had veteran centers (ACE, From Soldier to Student II, 2012). Research shows that the transition to college is a difficult one for veterans and holistic approaches that minimize stress, isolation, and complexity aid in veteran success, retention, and completion (DiRamio et al., From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student-Veterans, 2008).

In 2017, NDSU received over \$3.4 million in tuition and book revenue through certified educational benefits associated with military service. In addition, over \$700 thousand in State Tuition Assistance was paid to National Guard students in 2017 to offset their college expenses. Benefit revenue to NDSU has increased since 2017 - it is time for a Veteran Resource Center at NDSU!



valor.veteran.alliance.organization/

Dates	Meetings and Events
February 1	Sausage Cook-Off, Fargo AMVETS, 2:00–5:00 PM 1001 1st Ave S, Fargo
February 5	Cass CVSO VA Outreach, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM VA HCS, Fargo
February 5	Understanding VA Education Benefits, 1:00–2:00 PM VITAL Webinar Series, U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs CI & IND ENG, Room 207 (NDSU) http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/vitalseries/
February 7	Bison Student Veterans Meeting, 3:00 PM Peace Garden Room (MU/NDSU)
February 11-12	Spring Career Expo @ FargoDome 1:00–4:00 PM (11th) & 10:00 AM–2:00 PM (12th)
February 12	Veterans Coffee Hour, 10:00 AM –12:00 PM Fargo Air Museum, 1609 19th Ave N, Fargo
February 12	VALOR Board Meeting, 3:00–5:00 PM Room of Nations (MU/NDSU)
February 12	VFW Post #762 Meeting, 6:00 –7:30 PM 202 N Broadway, Fargo
February 13	FMWF Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee 11:00 AM, Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead
February 13	DAV Chapter 1 Meeting 7:00–8:00 PM Super Buffet, Fargo
February 18	Bison Student Veterans Meeting, 4:00 PM Meadow Room (MU/NDSU)
February 26	Free Walk-in Legal Clinic (for low-income veterans) 1:00–4:00 PM, Fargo VA HCS, Room 1C86
March 4	Cass CVSO VA Outreach, 9:00 AM–3:00 PM VA HCS, Fargo
March 4	Understanding PTSD & Treatment, 1:00–2:00 PM VITAL Webinar Series, U.S. Dept of Veteran Affairs Location TBD (NDSU) http://va-eerc-ees.adobeconnect.com/vitalseries/
March 6	Bison Student Veterans Meeting, 3:00–5:00 PM Peace Garden Room (MU/NDSU)
March 11	Veterans Coffee Hour, 10:00 AM –12:00 PM Fargo Air Museum, 1609 19th Ave N, Fargo
March 11	VALOR Board Meeting, 3:00 PM Rose Room (MU/NDSU)
March 11	VFW Post #762 Meeting, 6:00 –7:30 PM 202 N Broadway, Fargo
March 12	FMWF Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee 11:00 AM, Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead
March 12	DAV Chapter 1 Meeting 7:00–8:00 PM Super Buffet, Fargo
March 25	Free Walk-in Legal Clinic (for low-income veterans) 1:00–4:00 PM, Fargo VA HCS, Room 1C86
March 31	Part-Time & Summer Job Fair, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM Ballroom (MU/NDSU)

8 Keys to Veterans' Success

1. Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans.
2. Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.
3. Implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
4. Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space for them (even if limited in size).
5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans.
6. Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention, and degree completion.
7. Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
8. Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

<https://www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families/8-keys-success-sites>



