



# Veterans KC Newsletter

FALL 2017

## Military and Veterans Resource Center at University of Wisconsin-Wilwaukee

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**JAYNE HOLLAND, M.ED.; INTERIM DIRECTOR, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - COMMUNITY OUTREACH; MILITARY & VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER (MAVRC); UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE**

The Military and Veterans Resource Center (MAVRC) opened in November 2012 to address the challenges faced by current and former service members and to contribute towards 100% of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's (UWM) student veterans earning their college degree, with successful transitions into the civilian workplace.

UWM has over 1,400 military and veteran students – more than any four-year university in the six surrounding states. The average age of these student veterans is 30 years old. UWM is also an urban, commuter campus with the majority of the student veterans living 10+ miles away. What all of this means is that aside from attending classes on campus or online, these older non-traditional students spend very little time engaging with the campus community. Instead the majority of their time they are more likely to be engaged with caring for their young families, their homes, and working full time. This leads to fewer on-campus partnerships for the MAVRC staff. Most often, MAVRC staff found that partnerships with the campus Career Planning and Resource Center and the Accessibility Resource Center to assist student veterans with resume assistance, and accessibility issues were the main reasons they sought out other campus offices.

The common denominator for UWM student veterans however, is the VA. In Milwaukee, the VA Medical Center and the Regional Benefits Office are located next door to each other. This led the UWM MAVRC staff to begin partnering with both offices for the past four years on various projects ranging from hiring initiatives, event planning and support, volunteers, and for the last two years partnering to present the annual VA Mental Health Summit.

The VA Medical Center is mandated to present a Summit each year. The Milwaukee Medical Center approached UWM MAVRC staff last year when the focus of the Summit was veterans on campus and was held at the VA. That successful collaboration led to this current year's Summit, held on the UWM campus.

The focus of this year's VA Mental Health Summit was the holistic care of LGBTQ+ veterans and was held on Friday, June 16. Veterans, their family and friends, community supporters, medical and mental health care providers were

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# Reframing Big NASPA

CHELSEA O'BRIEN, COMMUNICATIONS CO-CHAIR

The 2017 NASPA Annual Conference featured several veteran-focused sessions. Members of the VKC Board attended these sessions, and many of them had good-sized crowds. The concern, however, is that the Annual Conference does not provide a lot of solid professional development for those already deep into student veteran services. Some VKC members focus on attending the Military-Connected Student Symposium instead of the Annual Conference due to the lack of depth of professional development opportunities at the Annual Conference.

After attending both the Symposium and Annual Conference as a Knowledge Community we may want to reframe our expectations of the two opportunities. The Symposium is where we gather as a community to learn from one another, deepen our knowledge, dine with colleagues, and share our experiences. It's focused specifically on the population we're serving, with the occasional theory-based session where we reconnect with our student affairs roots.

The Annual Conference is for the broader student population, with a wide-range of offerings across the student affairs spectrum. Sessions that discuss student veterans sometimes only cover the basics and then dive deeper into the specific details of the

information the presenter(s) are sharing. The basics are things many of us already know and the specific details may not transfer to our institutions. These sessions may be so general that they're aimed at student affairs professionals who only want a taste of serving student veterans.

Based on these descriptions I understand why some professionals who work with student affairs may get frustrated with the annual conference, and why they may choose to not attend in the future. These descriptions are also about learning, we sit in sessions and we learn. We have the same expectations of both events even though they're geared toward different audiences.

What if we changed our expectations of the Annual Conference. If we framed the Annual Conference as a place to share our knowledge and add to the learning of other professionals. We can grow as professionals through presenting, moderating, and sitting on panels. We could be actively contributing to professionals understanding the student veteran population and how to serve them. If we shifted our lens - to that of contributor rather than that of receiver - we may get just as much out of the Annual Conference as we do at the Symposium.

## Military Culture Corner: Did you know?

The Oath of Enlistment is as follows:

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God."

Watch as recruits say the oath after enduring the [Marine Corps Crucible](#).

# Reflections on SMCS

**SAMANTHA POWERS, PHD; DIRECTOR, STUDENT VETERAN LIFE; UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

It's been a few months since I attended my first NASPA for military-connected students. I attended the conference at Washington, DC in the beginning of February 2017. I've been to a number of NASPA conferences before, but I was still unsure of what to expect at this conference directly related to the population I now serve in higher education. The guest speakers, break-out sessions and networking were indeed the highlights of this conference.

The guest speakers were knowledgeable, well-spoken and inspiring. Of note was Ms. Betty Mosely Brown, who spoke on the final morning of the conference. Normally a plenary session at conferences on the final morning just before departure are hard to get through. Conversely, Ms. Brown was unbelievably inspiring. Her telling of her story was a testament to the unique experiences of military service members, one to which many of us could relate in one way or another, and others could understand. Coupled with the transition work that many of us are doing, it was easy to see how experiences like hers might warrant attention when separating from the military.

The break-out sessions were extremely varied in intensity. Some were intended for new professionals in the field of student veterans. Some were intended for more seasoned professionals. No matter how long someone has been in the field, there was something for everyone during each concurrent session. They spanned the topics of veteran cultural competency, subpopulations within the military-connected identity, campus programs, career readiness, community engagement, advising and

assessment and research. One session in particular that I attended was delivered by Mr. Siegel called Assessing Faculty/Staff Perceptions of Military and Veteran Students. At my institution, and I imagine at others, engaging faculty to non-mandatory workshops can be difficult. Mr. Siegel presented a program that enables professionals advocating for student veterans to engage faculty from the beginning in order to create a program into which they can buy and participate. I am still in touch with him to this day.

Above all, the networking that occurred at the event was helpful and set up both new and seasoned professionals with the colleagues they can lean on for years to come. In my humble opinion, networking is always the most important aspect of a conference. These are professionals coming together at a national level, once a year, with whom we can connect based on our passions. Additionally, making these acquaintances at a conference and being able to connect with them after-the-fact provides a strong support network whenever we have questions about how to handle a situation, how to begin new programs, and simply share resources and ideas. Though these kinds of networks often exist on regional, state or local levels, it helps to have perspectives from other parts of the country that can improve our services to student veterans. I, for one, benefit the most out of these professional contacts.

All in all, this conference was well worth the trip from the west coast. Although there were some bumps along the way, they can easily be fixed with some simple attention and massaging. I was honored to be able to attend and plan to do so next year and as long as I am in the field.

## Military and Veterans Resource Center at University of Wisconsin-Wilwaukee, cont'd from page 1

invited to attend the free, day-long event. The event featured a diverse array of workshops, breakout sessions, expert panelists and practitioners with experience serving the unique needs of this important but sometimes overlooked veteran community. Traditional VA care, suicide prevention, family care services, addiction treatment and alternative therapies like yoga and outdoor recreation were also just a few of the topics addressed. The keynote speaker was Christine Black, Director of the Military & Veterans Services at Marywood University in Pennsylvania. Black was deployed three times as a member of the U.S. Army and she spoke on her experiences as both a veteran and as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

The MAVRC staff has worked hard for several years to grow partnerships throughout the Milwaukee community. For this Summit with the focus on LGBTQ+ veterans, they knew they wanted to also partner with the LGBT+ Resource Center on the UWM campus. Prior to this year's Summit, the MAVRC and LGBT+ staff had not worked together on a veteran event. However once trust and rapport was established between the two offices, the strengths of both offices working together began to be seen in the quality of the programming and in the preparations for the speakers and exhibits for the event.

The UWM MAVRC and LGBT+ staffs discovered they agreed with each other on the needs to support the veterans who have served us. This led them to work together as they sought out and presented arts-based therapies, presentations by a veteran theater troupe, therapeutic storytelling and an art show. They located presenters for breakout sessions that included LGBTQ+ language and terminology, coming out, locating or starting LGBTQ+ support groups for veterans, mindfulness, meditation, and an opportunity to attend sessions

with Keynote Speaker Christine Black, as well as UWM alumni and LGBTQ+ veteran activist, Miriam Ben-Shalom.

The VA Mental Health Summit for 2017 was a tremendous success on several different levels. Over 300 people attended the Summit. It offered LGBTQ+ veterans on the UWM campus and across the Milwaukee community the opportunity to feel acknowledged, welcomed and understood. The VA staff offered presentations on healthcare eligibility, mental health access, benefits and discharge upgrades. Some veterans attending discovered they had access to services that had previously been denied to them for a variety of reasons. The VA staff met many new LGBTQ+ veterans and assisted in connecting them to new services and programs. The event also led the staffs of the MAVRC and LGBT+ resource centers to realize they needed to continue to continue to work together to improve the support and assistance provided to LGBTQ+ veterans on the UWM campus. These efforts are continuing as they begin to plan events together on campus for Veteran's Week in November.

### Call for Programs for 2018 SMCS

**Don't forget to submit your session proposals for the [2018 Symposium on Military-Connected Students](#)! The deadline for submissions is **September 29th**. Save the date on your calendar to join us in New Orleans February 15-17, 2018**

# ROTC Versus Veteran

JAIME RICHARDS, DIRECTOR, VETERANS SUCCESS CENTER AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Campuses with both Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs and a student veteran population span the full-continuum of the military career; from those just beginning and those who have fully separated.

The ROTC began with the Morrill Act of 1862 which required land-grant institutions to include military tactics as part of their curriculum. Now many institutions have ROTC programs that support one or more branches of the service. Current ROTC cadets fulfill degree requirements as well as participate in physical fitness training, learn military history, and attend summer military training. While some are prior service enlisted, most cadets have no previous military experience. For most cadets it is not until after graduation and their commissioning that their military service starts.

## About This Newsletter

The VKC publishes a semi-annual newsletter highlighting stories, fellow veteran-focus organizations, campus events, programs, and professionals, along with important national stories that affect the student veterans on our campuses. If you would like to contribute or have an idea for a story, please reach out to Christine or Chelsea. We look forward to learning with you!

Lauren Runco, Chair

Chelsea O'Brien & Christine Black, Communication Co-Chairs

Contact us at [NASPAvkc@gmail.com](mailto:NASPAvkc@gmail.com)

Student veterans are most frequently older with 3-10 years of enlisted military experience and often have characteristics of non-traditional students, such as being married, a parent, or holding a part-time job. Nearly 80% of those who join the military do so for access to education benefits and consider their education as part of what they “earned” for their service. These current or former military service members then use this opportunity as a pathway to their “civilian” career goals.

Both ROTC cadets and veterans bring different experiences and perspectives to campus. Cadets can be some of the brightest and most motivated students on campus. They are eager to lead, but have limited military or life experience. Veterans have leadership, followership, and real world experiences, but are transitioning educationally and personally as part of a life change. While there is an experiential gap between the two groups there are opportunities for partnerships for events such as cookouts or fundraising. Both groups can learn from each other and help create a military supportive and connected campus.

# Meet your VKC Board:

## **Lindsay Church-Zike**

Assistant Director

Student Veteran Life

University of Washington

VKC Region V Coordinator

I decided to get involved with the VKC because I believe in greater efficacy through collaboration. That collaboration happens on our campuses every day but it is imperative that we also collaborate with those in our field so that we can learn and share best practices for serving the students that we are charged with creating programs for. Through the NASPA VKC, I hope to further educate myself of the successful practices happening across the nation, share knowledge with the NASPA VKC network, and build a stronger community of professionals who have dedicated their lives to serving veterans and military families.



## **Michael Kirchner, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor

Organizational Leadership

Purdue University—Fort Wayne

VKC Region IV-E Coordinator

I am an assistant professor in Organizational Leadership at Purdue University-Fort Wayne. I conduct research on the impact of support services for veterans, as well as military leader development. As an Army veteran and former director of a Veterans Resource Center, I wanted to remain involved in support student veterans during their academic careers. I'm excited to continue engaging with the VKC and meeting others who work to improve the experience of student veterans on college campuses.



## Organizations to be Aware of: TAPS Education Support Services

TAPS is the national organization that provides comfort and care for the families of America's fallen heroes. The mission of TAPS is to provide peer-based emotional support to all those who are grieving the death of someone who died during or as a result of their military service to the United States, regardless of the relationship or cause of death.

Through an established peer mentoring network, case work, access to free and unlimited counseling, and online support services, TAPS supports the families of the fallen 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Survivors can connect with others in-person at TAPS grief seminars and retreats for adults, and TAPS Good Grief Camps and Campouts for children. Families and members of the public can also honor the fallen through Team TAPS and teams4taps events.

TAPS publishes and distributes grief and trauma resources, including survivor resource guides, materials and the quarterly TAPS Magazine. TAPS connects families with community-based care; through partnerships with Vet Centers and other nonprofits.

TAPS understands the needs of a grieving heart do not follow an 8 to 5 business day. We are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through our National Military Survivor Helpline. Answered by a TAPS survivor care team member since 1994, TAPS provides vital and sometimes lifesaving support at any time, day or night. On average the Helpline receives 1,508 calls per month. Each call begins with a survivor care team member who

connects with the survivor and stays on the phone until an action plan is put into place or survivor receives the help they need.

Through our Casework department, TAPS provides immediate critical financial assistance to those surviving family members confirmed to be in urgent need for necessities. These grants are often for surviving families who have fallen on hard times as a result of their overwhelming grief and subsequent loss of employment. The objective is to support and stabilize survivors in their moment of need. When the urgency has passed, adult survivors who receive an Emergency Grant from TAPS are connected with third-party resources for financial counseling to guard against these shortfalls in the future. In addition to emergency funding the Casework department also assists with resolving issues regarding burials, benefits, eligibility, records, legal and more, while a network of other organizations consult regularly on everything from healthcare and insurance issues to financial hardship and credit counseling.

TAPS Education Support Services, helps surviving families of military loss to access education through the VA, state waivers and private scholarships. The Education Support Service team can answer questions to help survivors understand benefits and eligibility. Through a partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs, staff can help correct any barriers the survivors may have in accessing benefits. Staff also works with the individual universities to guarantee the schools understands the benefits the families are eligible for. For more information, call TAPS at 800-959-TAPS (8277) or email [education@taps.org](mailto:education@taps.org).

## Did You Know?

**The VA has implemented a new access portal for students with entitlements to access their Statement of Benefits. Beginning Friday, July 28, current Post-9/11 GI Bill beneficiaries are able to download a "Post-9/11 GI Bill Statement of Benefits" through Vets.gov. The information is real-time data pulled from the same system used by VA education benefit processors.**

**The Post-9/11 GI Bill Statement of Benefits is a document generated through the Vets.gov portal that provides details on remaining entitlement, eligibility percentage, and benefit end date for beneficiaries who have already applied for the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The VA is encouraging schools to accept this document in lieu of a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) to verify students' entitlement and eligibility for Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits. All students should be encouraged to create an account, so that they have access to the most up to date information about their benefits.**

# Calendar of Events

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work

**Conference Name:** Military Social Work Conference

**Conference Location:** Austin, Texas

**Conference Dates:** September 5-8, 2018

**Link to Registration:** <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/ceu/military-social-work-conference/>

**When proposal submissions are due:** Call for submissions will be available Fall 2017

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** National Guard Association of the United States

**Conference Name:** General Conference and Exhibition

**Conference Location:** Lexington, KY

**Conference Dates:** Sept. 7-10, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://www.ngaus.org/activities-advocacy-and-professional-development/139th-general-conference-exhibition>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** DAVA- Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary

**Conference Name:** National Fall Conference

**Conference Location:** Lexington, KY

**Conference Dates:** Sept. 28-30, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://auxiliary.dav.org/news/Events.aspx>

**When proposal submissions are due:** N/A

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

**Conference Name:** The State of the American Veteran Conference 2017

**Conference Location:** Los Angeles, CA

**Conference Dates:** September 28-29, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <http://cir.usc.edu/savc2017>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** The Texas A&M University System

**Conference Name:** 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Military and Veteran Education Support Symposium

**Conference Location:** Texas A&M University, San Antonio, TX

**Conference Dates:** Oct 4-5, 2017

**Link to Registration:** [http://utdirect.utexas.edu/txshop/item\\_details.WBX?](http://utdirect.utexas.edu/txshop/item_details.WBX?)

[application\\_name=OCSYSCON&component=0&dept\\_prefix=OC&item\\_id=27&cat\\_seq\\_chosen=01&subcategory\\_seq\\_chosen=00](http://utdirect.utexas.edu/txshop/item_details.WBX?application_name=OCSYSCON&component=0&dept_prefix=OC&item_id=27&cat_seq_chosen=01&subcategory_seq_chosen=00)

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NAVPA - National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators

**Conference Name:** NAVPA's 41st Annual Training & Conference

**Conference Location:** Atlantic City, New Jersey

**Conference Dates:** October 23-26, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://navpa2017.org>

**When proposal submissions are due:** N/A

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** The American Veterans Center

**Conference Name:** 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Honors

**Conference Location:** Washington, D.C.

**Conference Dates:** October 26-28, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <http://www.americanveteranscenter.org/avc-events/annual-conference/>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** Noda

**Conference Name:** 2017 Orientation Professionals Institute

**Conference Location:** Louisville, KY

**Conference Dates:** November 3-5, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <http://www.nodaweb.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=960148>

**When proposal submissions are due:**



**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NASPA

**Conference Name:** 2017 NASPA Western Regional Conference

**Conference Location:** Honolulu, Hawaii

**Conference Dates:** November 4-7, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://www.naspa.org/events/17WRC>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NASPA

**Conference Name:** NASPA Region I Conference

**Conference Location:** Springfield, Mass

**Conference Dates:** November 12-15 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://www.naspa.org/events/NASPA17RI>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NASPA

**Conference Name:** Women's Leadership Institute

**Conference Location:** Amelia Island, FL

**Conference Dates:** December 3-6, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://www.naspa.org/events/2017WLI>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** Noda

**Conference Name:** 2016 Women's Leadership Institute

**Conference Location:** Amelia Island, FL

**Conference Dates:** December 3-6, 2017

**Link to Registration:** <https://nirsa.net/nirsa/institutes/2017-womens-leadership-institute/>

**When proposal submissions are due:**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** SVA-  
Student Veterans of America

**Conference Name:** National Conference 2017

**Conference Location:** San Antonio, TX

**Conference Dates:** January 4-6, 2018

**Link to Registration:** <http://conference.studentveterans.org/>

**When proposal submissions are due:** N/A

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NASPA

**Conference Name:** Symposium on Military-Connected Students

**Conference Location:** New Orleans, LA

**Conference Dates:** February 15-17, 2018

**Link to Registration:** <https://www.naspa.org/events/2018smcs>

**When proposal submissions are due:** September 29, 2017

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** DAV –  
Disabled American Veterans

**Conference Name:** 2017 Mid-Winter Conference

**Conference Location:** Arlington, Virginia

**Conference Dates:** Feb 25-28, 2018 (tentative)

**Link to Registration:** <https://www.dav.org/events/2018-mid-winter-conference/>

**When proposal submissions are due:** N/A

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NASPA

**Conference Name:** NASPA Annual Conference

**Conference Location:** Philadelphia

**Conference Dates:** March 3-7, 2018

**Link to Registration:** <https://conference2018.naspa.org/>

**When proposal submissions are due:** Sept. 1