

Strategic Enrollment Management Military Considerations

From your Director of Military Outreach

Michael Farnum, March 14, 2017

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide information to the Pacific Lutheran University Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Planning Committee about PLU Military Affiliated Students (MAS.) including: MAS background, utilization of student resources, and recommendations for SEM structural development from the Director of Military Outreach (DMO) and MAS perspective.

It is the belief of the DMO that the goals of this document will support not only MAS but all PLU students, allowing for greater retention and persistence.

PLU MAS Background

Military Affiliated Students defined: The PLU DMO defines MAS as any combination of the following:

- **Active Duty, Guard, Reserve** - members of any U.S. military branch currently serving.
- **Cadet** - a student currently enrolled in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program here.
- **Veteran** - a military veteran is any person who served for any length of time in any military service branch.
- **Retiree** - a person who has been retired from military service. This can be through tenure of service or because of medical necessity.
- **Dependent** - the spouse(s), children, and possibly other familial relationship categories of a sponsoring military member for purposes of pay as well as special benefits, privileges and rights.
- **Military friendly** - any person(s) who support members of military service.
- **Veteran of the Armed Forces including:**
 - Army
 - Navy
 - Marine Corps
 - Air Force
 - Coast Guard
 - National Guard
 - Reserves.
- **Dependents including:**
 - Spouse of a veteran
 - Child of a veteran

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- **May or may not be Utilizing Federal Education Benefits including but not limited to:**
 - [Post-9/11 GI Bill \(Chap 33\)](#) (largest percentage of PLU MAS students)
 - [Montgomery GI Bill \(Chap 30\)](#)
 - [Montgomery GI Bill Selective Reserve \(Chap 1606\)](#)
 - [Reserve Education Assistance Program \(REAP\) Chap 1607](#)
 - [Vocational Rehab \(Chap 31\)](#)
 - [Dependents Education Assistance \(DEA\)](#)
 - [Fry Scholarship](#)
 - [Tuition Assistance](#)

Utilization of PLU Student Resources

PLU MAS utilize a myriad of resources both on campus and off, depending upon the unique needs of the student. This paper will focus primarily on those services provided on campus, which include the following:

(NOTE: the descriptions of the following information resources and services are not all inclusive of the information resources and services available and are from the perspective of the DMO and many MAS. For a full description please follow the link provided)

Asterisks * indicate what the DMO considers to be the most important or “core” resources for MAS. These are the resources that should be centrally located where the most students can take advantage of them.

1. [Academic Advising](#)* This service is especially critical to MAS because unique to MAS who are utilizing Voc-Rehab is the need to provide their VA Voc-Rehab Counselor with an academic plan before they can be authorized to participate in the program and receive funding to pay for their degree. The academic plan must include the following information about the program: a course map, length, pre-reqs, cost, and a plan of how the student will support themselves while attending school. The student is also responsible for demonstrating that the degree they are seeking will lead to a job that according to the Department of Labor’s Occupation Outlook handbook will be in greater-than-average demand upon graduation. Unlike the traditional student who only meets with an academic advisor after they have been accepted to the university, MAS using Voc-Rehab will need to meet with them before being admitted.
2. [Academic Assistance](#)* MAS find advantage with using this resource because they are typically years removed from being a student. Learning the skills again necessary

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- to study, research, and focus on the important areas within a course will improve their grades and enhance retention and persistence.
3. **Campus Safety**. MAS are often assets to this resource as their military training provides them with observation and reporting skills valuable to the safety and security of the university campus and surrounding areas.
 4. **Career Connections*** MAS need assistance translating the knowledge, skills, and abilities they have acquired during their military service into language that can be easily understood by the particular industry they hope to enter. MAS may find advantage by seeking summer employment over attending classes, because typically they utilize the monthly housing allowance provided by the Post-9/11 GI Bill for living expenses, but during the month of August (when PLU has no classes), MAS do not receive that allowance. In order to make ends meet, MAS need to find employment for the month of August, but it is easier to find a job for all three months of the summer than it is to find a job for only one month.
 5. **Center for Gender Equity** MAS both male and female may find opportunities for personal support services, leadership roles and community engagement here.
 6. **Chaplain (Pastor)** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 7. **Clubs and Orgs** MAS tend to be focused on their academics and are less inclined to seek out co-curricular engagement. However, there are several MAS involved in organizations such as the PLU Student Veterans Association (PLU SVA), a subchapter of the national organization the Student Veterans of America.
 8. **Commuter Parking*** Approximately 90% of MAS are commuter and utilize this resource often.
 9. **Computer Labs** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 10. **Campus Concierge** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 11. **Counseling Center*** MAS utilize this resource, and also have access to VA and WDVA counselors, which they may choose to use instead.
 12. **Director of Military Outreach (DMO)***
MAS utilize this resource as the initial point of contact for inquiry and admission into the University's undergraduate, graduate, and ROTC programs. Unlike the typical admission counselor, however, MAS continue to utilize the DMO for academic support, advice, and resource connectivity throughout their entire academic career, as well as for job searches, resume tips, and interview practice for their post-academic career. The DMO serves the following functions:

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- Represent PLU as widely as possible at area military installations, military-related organizations, and organizations with active military outreach, such as AFA, AUSA, the Chamber of Commerce, and Boots to Shoes.
 - Serve as a primary point of contact for prospective and currently enrolled military affiliated students and families as needed and appropriate.
 - Assist PLU in recruiting, enrolling, retaining, and serving military affiliated populations on campus and in the community, as well as helping PLU understand how to do so.
 - Work with the Academic Division and Associate Provost for Graduate and Continuing Education to develop programming of interest to military affiliated individuals and organizations.
 - Serve as an initial point of contact for military affiliated personnel and organizations seeking information regarding PLU partnerships, auxiliary services, volunteer opportunities and other engagements.
13. **Disability Support Services*** MAS, especially combat veterans returning from service, may have service-connected disabilities including Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI,) spinal, joint, and muscular injuries, missing limbs or eyes and may need special accommodations for learning and test taking.
 14. **Diversity Center** As a group with various experiences, background and cultural capital, MAS benefit from many of the programs, tools and support provided by this resource.
 15. **Financial Aid** Unlike traditional students, most of the MAS utilize educational benefits that cover all of the costs for tuition, fees and books. Common issues with financial aid come from misunderstanding the order in which moneys are used to pay those tuitions and fees. An example is when a young first generation college student sees the Financial Aid award letter and a \$20,000 scholarship and assumes that the university is going to pay the student that money to attend school. This is not uncommon.
 16. **Gym** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 17. **Health Center** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would, though they may have VA medical benefits and/or other private insurance and chooses to use those as a primary resource.
 18. **Key Card Access** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 19. **Kreidler Lounge*** This resource serves as PLU's "Vet Center", a place for MAS and commuter students to utilize between classes. It is not an exclusive space and that is often seen by MAS as a negative because MAS who tend to gravitate toward one

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- another feel that their conversations have to be carefully restricted in order to not offend younger or non-MAS. Kreidler does have many of the standard amenities that you would find in larger university vet centers, such as a kitchen, couches, tables and chairs, computers, an information board, the VetCorps Navigator and a television. Items it lacks include on-site resources such as the DMO, VA Certifying Official, and close proximity to all of the resources on this list. See attached map.
20. **Language Resource Center** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 21. **Library** Commensurate with the length of time spent outside of academia, MAS may require more instruction than the typical student on the types of resources available within the Library system as well as how to access and utilize them. This resource also houses several other information and support resources such as the Writing Center, Computer Help Desk, and Academic Assistance Center to name a few.
 22. **Pool** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 23. **Student Involvement and Leadership**. MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 24. **Student Life** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.
 25. **Student Services*** MAS utilizing VA educational benefits use this office on a fairly regular basis due to the fact that it houses the VA Certifying Official. See VA certifying Official.
 26. **Student Veterans Association (PLU SVA)**. This student club/org is often used by MAS as a platform from which to gain resume experience as a student leader or community organizer, and to develop relationships with other military and non-MAS.
 27. **VA Certifying Official*** Unlike traditional students, MAS who are utilizing VA educational benefits need to visit with a PLU VA Certifying Official prior to each semester and after registration in order to file a document that will allow the student to be certified for the classes, receive a housing allowance, and allow the university to be paid for the classes.
 28. **VetCorps Navigator*** This resource is one that is not organic to PLU, but is in partnership with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and AmeriCorps. The VetCorps Navigator is a 10 month position, is hired by the DMO, and receives a monthly stipend as well as an educational award at the end of their 10 months. The purpose of this position is as an augmentation to the university's veteran transition support resources and is paid for out of the budget of the DMO.
 29. **Writing Center** MAS typically utilize this resource as many traditional students would.