Arizona State University
"Arizona Veterans Supportive Campus" Designation Request
January 18, 2011

Approved in late Spring 2011, Senate Bill 1373, section 41-609, established the certification criteria by which the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) can designate an institution as an ***Arizona Veterans Supportive Campus***. Listed below are the requirements for ADVS certification, along with the relevant actions Arizona State University (ASU) has taken to fulfill those requirements.

1. **A campus survey of student veterans to identify the needs, issues and suggestions of veterans.**

   ASU's Veteran Services section, in conjunction with ASU's Enrollment Marketing and Communications office, developed and distributed a cross-campus student veteran survey. The survey asked numerous questions in various categories, including university faculty and staff, veteran benefits activation and assistance, engagement opportunities, professional development and communications. Additionally, veterans were invited to identify other services needed and make general comments in a free text format. The survey was completed on July 8th, 2011 with 117 veterans responding out of 1,275 (9.2% response rate), and the results were shared with the Veterans Advisory Committee and will be used to guide program initiatives.

   Also, ASU was one of only five schools in Arizona to invite its student veteran population to participate in an independent survey by *GI Jobs* magazine as part of its school rating system for 2012. The survey closed at the end of May 2011, with 47 student veterans participating – the second-highest participation rate for any major university nationwide. The veterans graded ASU in five categories, resulting in the following "Grade Point Averages" that are based on the customary 4.0 scale:

Veteran Resources:	3.3
School Resources:	3.4
Faculty:	3.4
School Environment:	3.5
Career Services:	3.5

   These results contributed to ASU's successful selection as a "Military Friendly School" by *GI Jobs* for 2012, the third year in a row.

2. **A campus steering committee consisting of student veterans, faculty and staff to share information and to develop programs to establish or strengthen a Veteran Supportive Campus based on best practices but that also integrates the campus culture and identifies the real needs of the student veteran.**

   In early 2009, ASU established a **Veterans Services Task Force** that set an initial direction for the veteran program with a number of initiatives and goals with respect to outreach, transfer credit, residency, financial assistance, housing, advising, tutoring and wellness. This task force laid the foundation for the veteran program ASU has today, realizing most of its initial goals. The growth of the veteran program, however, called for a newer and more permanent level of involvement on the part of cross-campus departments that touch the lives of veteran students. In August 2011, a new **Veterans Advisory Committee**, consisting of a cross section of ASU representatives

from all four of ASU's campuses, has begun regular meetings to discuss veteran issues and programs. One of the first goals of the committee was to begin addressing the issues identified by ASU's student survey, as well as to review/update the original task force's recommendations, as a guideline for future initiatives. As a way of integrating veteran awareness within ASU's campus culture, the committee also planned and carried out a number of Veterans Week (November 7-11) events. These events included flag displays at all four campuses, commemorating Arizona's fallen military members in Iraq and Afghanistan since September 11th, 2001; a letter writing campaign that generated 540 letters to troops overseas; faculty/staff veteran awareness training sessions; and a special veteran halftime recognition at the ASU Men's Basketball game on Veterans Day. The committee also participated in the selection process for ASU's new Director of Veteran Services position.

3. **Sensitivity and awareness training on military and veterans' culture, including related issues such as traumatic brain injury, posttraumatic stress disorder, physical and mental disabilities, suicide and hyper-vigilance for faculty and staff.**

   In Spring 2011, Veteran Services purchased and hosted several nationally broadcasted webinars that promoted a greater understanding of veteran issues among university staff. One of these webinars focused entirely on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and was particularly useful to our Disability Resource Center and Counseling staffs.

   During the summer, Veteran Services and Vet Success on Campus representatives conducted a veteran awareness training session for campus housing staff to cover the challenges that could arise for veterans living in the residence halls.

   In November 2011, Veteran Services hosted two university-wide faculty/staff awareness seminars in conjunction with the Veterans Week activities. Dr Robert Stockman of the Phoenix Vet Center was the keynote speaker for both sessions. The training was very well received by university faculty and staff, with 45 attending the Downtown Phoenix campus session and 65 attending the Tempe campus session. An effort is also underway to develop web-based training that will allow faculty and staff to "pull" this information as the need arises.

   Also, in November, the Pat Tillman Veterans Center hosted the presentation of a recent ASU doctoral candidate's dissertation, "Academic Persistence of Military and Veteran Students Following OEF/OIF Deployment," and invited Veteran Services staff and the Veterans Advisory Committee's members.

4. **Student veteran orientation programs, including student veteran guides for the first day on campus, an optional student veteran orientation session and at least one optional only course taught by a veteran or by a trained volunteer on veteran issues.**

   Veteran Services conducted veteran-specific orientation sessions at all four campuses as part of ASU's 2011 Fall Welcome. The orientations welcomed veterans to campus, provided assistance for VA educational benefits processing, identified veteran and university services and resources, and introduced students to members of the ASU Alumni, Veterans Chapter. Veteran orientations are planned for Spring 2012 as well.

Beginning in Fall 2010, ASU offered a new Student Success for Veterans (LIA 294) course. This course was designed to bring together veterans for the common goals of academic success, university integration, support, resource sharing, and networking. The course is offered in the fall and spring terms and has been taught by a veteran since its inception.

5. Peer mentoring and peer support programs for student veterans.

ASU veteran students receive peer counseling and support through the 20 VA work study students who work alongside full-time staff in the Veteran Services and Veterans Upward Bound offices. The vast majority of full-time staff in those offices, as well as the VA's embedded staff for ASU's VetSuccess on Campus program, are veterans themselves. Other avenues of peer support include the Student Veterans Club and the Student Success for Veterans course on the Tempe campus. Additionally, the ASU Alumni, Veterans Chapter, became a formal organization in April of this year. The Veteran Alumni Chapter has worked jointly with the Student Veterans Club for service events, such as the Salute to Service football game and the Veterans Day parade in Tempe. Members of the Alumni Chapter also routinely attend Student Veterans Club meetings to actively promote mentoring opportunities. Several mentors and protégés have been matched on a one-to-one basis.

6. **Outreach strategies to local military bases.**

ASU's Veterans Upward Bound staff makes regular visits to Luke AFB to encourage referrals to its preparatory classes in English, reading, mathematics and computer literacy. Members of Veteran Services/VetSuccess on Campus have also participated in the educational fairs of Luke Air Force Base, Ft Huachuca and Yuma Marine Corps Air Station this year.

Undergraduate Admissions and Veteran Services staff have developed a planning document which includes outreach strategies to establish open communication with local, as well as out-of-state military installation educational liaisons. This year marked the State's passing of HB 2410, allowing veterans with an honorable discharge to receive in-state tuition rates after demonstrating their intent to become Arizona residents. This effectively expands the "local" area to a number of bases in neighboring states where ASU can offer distinct educational advantages.

In June 2011, ASU participated in the second annual symposium by the *Arizona Coalition for Military Families.* Members of Veteran Services and VetSuccess on Campus joined a panel to present veteran issues to a statewide group of educational leaders.

ASU was also selected for the United States Marine Corps' Leadership Scholar Program (LSP). The program gives marines the ability to plan their transition from active duty to a university/college education, guaranteeing acceptance after they have met ASU's academic requirements.

Lastly, ASU has provided staffing at community events honoring and serving veterans on an ongoing basis, e.g., informational booths at the new Post 9/11 GI Bill workshops at the AZ

National Guard Headquarters and Mesa Community College; tables at Pat's Run Expo tent; collaboration with the East Valley Veterans Center to provide an ASU presence on site; transfer information at Mesa Community College's Veteran Meet & Greet, etc.

7. **One-stop resource and study centers on campus for student veterans, their families and student family members of the Armed Forces who are currently deployed.**

ASU officially opened the **Pat Tillman Veterans Center** on August 16, 2011. Located in a 3,340 square foot space in the Memorial Union on the Tempe campus, the center provides a single point of contact for ASU veterans and their dependents, bringing together academic and student support services to promote a smooth transition from the military. The center also provides assistance for veteran benefits, deployments, information and referrals, as well as a place where veterans can gather for study groups and social activities.

The Tillman Center is home to ASU's key staff: the Director, Program Manager, Military Advocate, VetSuccess on Campus representatives, and Benefits and Certifications staff.

The **Military Advocate** is unique as an overall ombudsperson that provides consultation, guidance, referral, and advocacy services to help current and prospective military/veteran students and dependents navigate the various services provided by ASU, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other agencies.

ASU was chosen as one of the first eight institutions to be part of the VA's pilot program, **VetSuccess on Campus**. Two VA staff, a vocational rehabilitation counselor and a Vet Center outreach coordinator, are assigned and located on ASU's campus to assist veterans with services such as vocational testing, career counseling, readjustment counseling, etc., to promote successful completion of educational and employment goals.

8. **Community-based collaborations to allow the private sector to support veteran's resources centers through financial and in-kind gifts.**

ASU has established an account with the ASU Foundation to handle donations from the community, prompted by the inquiries from companies and individuals interested in supporting the new Pat Tillman Veterans Center. Donations can be for set-up costs, on-going operations and scholarships.