THE CASE FOR SUPPORT OF JAYHAWK VETERANS

KU is proud to have veterans and active members of the military within our student body, as well as family members of those who have served our nation. KU Jayhawk veteran students enhance the life of our campus community through their exceptional maturity, discipline and skills, forged and then honed by their military training and service. The University of Kansas anticipates that, in the 2015 – 16 academic year, more veterans will enroll than at any time since World War II — over twice the veteran population in 2010. By 2017, projections indicate that KU will have approximately 1,000 students on campus who are either veterans or family members of veterans.

While student veterans are a highly diverse group, they are generally accepted as non-traditional students with unique transition and support requirements. Student veterans are typically older; the majority is first-generation college students; and many have served multiple combat tours. They are accustomed to a former lifestyle of intense pressure, regimented routine, goal orientation and a disciplined combat mindset. For many veterans, KU will be their first formal academic setting since their senior year in high school. Consequently, veterans often find themselves not fully prepared academically, culturally or psychologically to successfully navigate a complex university system or to immediately immerse themselves into the traditional campus lifestyle.

About the Proposed KU Student Veteran Center

To address these challenges, the Office of Graduate Military Programs proposes the establishment of a KU Student Veteran Center. The center will provide student services tailored to veterans’ needs, bolstering their confidence and trust in the university and promoting their success. The Student Veteran Center will accomplish this by establishing a “one-stop shop” for veteran services and addressing the three crucial phases of the student veteran’s university education: (1) transition from the military to the campus (first-year experience); (2) persistence to graduation; and (3) transition from the campus to the civilian workforce.

The support services provided by the KU Student Veteran Center will be aligned with the strategic goals of the University and will enable student veterans to achieve higher rates of persistence and success in the classroom.
The KU Student Veteran Center will provide:

- Pre-admission counseling assistance for prospective students.
- Veteran-specific orientation to assist in enrollment, VA certification and introduction to the college setting.
- A Veterans Learning Community designed to facilitate veterans’ transition into the university. Research shows that students who participate in first-year learning communities develop academic skills more fully, experience greater intellectual development, and tend to earn higher grades.
- Peer mentoring to facilitate the transition from military service to college through the Collegiate Veterans Association network of support.
- Academic advising/coaching to assist student veterans with needs assessment, academic success plans, academic skills development, advocacy, educational interventions, tutoring, and referrals for disability and health-related issues.
- Veteran benefit specialist to assist in establishing eligibility for VA benefits, maintaining resources for students with military obligations, and applying for veteran-specific scholarships.
- Dedicated behavioral health professionals with PTSD expertise to assist those student veterans who require treatment for military stress-related disorders.
- Career advising and planning to assist student veterans seeking veteran-specific internships and preparing for employment. The career specialist will coordinate with other departments and schools in developing a network of veteran-friendly hiring organizations.

In addition to serving the Lawrence Campus, the Student Veteran Center will serve as a resource for KU’s four other campuses. The Center will promote a consistent and uniform approach for veteran issues across the university and provide a centralized resource for faculty and staff who are seeking to help veterans in need of assistance.

Timeline
The Student Veteran Center will be housed on the third floor of Summerfield Hall. Renovation is necessary to adapt the space to this new purpose; anticipated date of completion is January 2017. Renovation costs are estimated at $500,000. Our objective is to establish an endowment to ensure stability of funding and long-term viability of the Center.

HOW YOU CAN HELP
With the help of alumni and friends, we can create a new space offering a new set of services that will offer a warm welcome for veterans entering the university. This center will ease our veterans’ initial transition and provide support through years of education and beyond into the career phase. The benefits of this center will not accrue solely to the veterans served. As veterans bring their hard-won knowledge and perspectives into classrooms across the campus, other students and faculty will find their own experiences expanded and enriched.

Leadership occurs in various forms. The University of Kansas would be proud to have leaders’ names and legacies permanently associated with the Student Veteran Center on Mount Oread. Recognition opportunities for gifts beginning at $25,000 are available.

THANK YOU
We appreciate your consideration of a gift to support the Student Veteran Center at the University of Kansas and welcome questions and further discussion. Please contact us to talk about how your support will make a difference.