Minutes

Military, Veterans and First Responders Task Force

Date: January 30, 2020

Location: Rhatigan Student Center Room 261 (Olive Room) Meeting Time: 9:00a – 10:30

Attendees: Michael Bearth, Larry Burks Sr., Deanna Carrithers, Camille Childers, Chief Rodney Clark, Lai-L Daugherty, Sally Fiscus, Zach Gearhart, Dr. Jay Golden, David Gomez, Corey Herl, Donna Hughes, Joe Jabara, Darin Kater, Dr. Marche Fleming-Randle, and Randy Sessions

1. Welcome and Introductions – Chief Rodney Clark opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the task force. He introduced himself and Dr. Fleming-Randle as co-chairs for the task force. Participants were asked to introduce themselves and state their affiliation to the military and/or university community.
2. Purpose of the Task Force – Dr. Jay Golden thanked everyone for their service and provided an overview of the process along with his expectations. He provided some initial observations and potential ideas for recommendations. Potential ideas/thoughts included:
   1. a building/office to co-locate military, veterans and first responders. Potential spaces could include co-location with the City of Wichita services. This space could include a tribute wall for those Shockers who have fallen in addition to Shockers who have demonstrated exemplary service in support of the WSU military community.
   2. ideas for how to provide credit for military, veteran and first responders to receive credit for service
   3. enhanced services for spouses and dependents
   4. identify opportunities to increase enrollment
      1. expand ROTC programs including a potential Air Force ROTC program
      2. expand presence at McConnell Air Force Base
   5. opportunities to honor veterans at Athletics events

Dr. Golden indicated that he recognized that staff, faculty, students and community members have other commitments and requested their support in this process as part of shared governance. He indicated that he would follow up at the 45-day mark and then request a presentation with findings and recommendations at the end of process. He indicated that he expected a succinct report that includes research of other university models and provides recommendations including priorities for moving forward.

Upon conclusion of all task forces, a university town-hall will be hosted to share all findings/recommendations by the end of semester.

1. Data Overview – To set the stage for the discussion, a video was played that was edited by a WSU student about the military and veteran experience. The video provided context and helped frame the conversation for the research section of the discussion. Participants received a handout from the Office of Planning and Analysis regarding the census population of military, veteran and dependent students. Based upon the data, it was stated that this population had a more diverse population that most groups on campus. Also, an article about the military-affiliated student experience in higher education was also provided.

In addition, a slide from the most recent campus climate survey was shared. The slide showed a graph that indicated 27 percent of students feel comfortable in the military and veteran student center.

Deanna Carrithers indicated that this is one slide out of a comprehensive report and should be analyzed in context. It was stated that less than one percent of respondents were military-affiliated. She indicated that this is an important nuance because the Military and Veteran Student Center was developed specifically for military, veteran and dependent students. She indicated that a wider dissemination planning process was underway, and it is important to contextualize the information. Task force members were encouraged to follow-up with her if they have additional questions.

After reviewing the university data, Chief Clark provided a draft report of preliminary recommendations based upon the data received. The preliminary recommendations were shared as an initial starting point for discussion and were not conclusive. Chief Clark indicated that he welcomed feedback and looked forward to working with the task force to provide a report. As the conversation continued, Dr. Fleming- Randle provided an overview some of the current military and veteran activities. For example, she provided budget information and highlighted that many of the ideas discussed were currently in process but could be enhanced. To ensure we provide an accurate account of the current landscape, Dr. Fleming- Randle suggested we proceed with the six pillars (working groups) to include:

* Define first-responders and current activity on campus
* Current services/supports for military, veteran and dependents (what do we have now?)
* Funding options for military, veterans and first-responders
* Research on other university military, veterans and first-responder models/services
* Future plans
* Research/Identify a potential military, veterans and first-responders center/location

Dr. Fleming-Randle indicated that we should plan to have the majority of the work completed by the 45-day mark and then refine that information as we move forward. All task force members would be sent a list of pillars (work groups) by which to sign-up. Future meetings would consist of pillar updates and task force members could use that large group meeting time to ask questions.

1. Task Force Assignments and Next Steps – Dr. Fleming-Randle indicated that Deanna would send out the minutes and pillar work group options. Task force members are asked to sign-up for a pillar group.
2. Next Meeting – Chief Clark indicated that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, February 13 at 9a in RSC 261 (Olive Room).