# of utah student affairs COUNTY COUNT

The Student Affairs Diversity Council (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

# First Student Shaped Center's Culture of Listening



By Roger Perkins Director, Veterans Support Center

Serving as the Director of the Veterans Support Center has brought me in contact with a slice of Veteran culture with interesting and sometimes poignant impact.

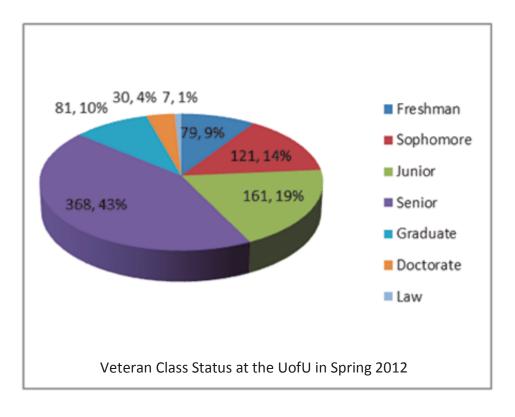
When I first came to the job I was sitting in my office with no phone, no computer, no stapler, no staples, and so on. Into the office walked a young woman who said that she just wanted to talk to another Veteran and they thought of my office, which is good.

The young Veteran and I started talking and it was obvious that she was very high strung and tense. Her gestures were quick and abrupt. Her eyes were shiny, but she wasn't crying. She spoke in an

extremely fast manner, jumping from subject to subject, and it was obvious that this was her regular condition. As we spoke, she said she was suffering from PTSD and was very open with me about that. The depth to which the discussion went caused me some concern so I let her know that I wasn't a licensed counselor or psychiatrist and that I probably wasn't able to do much more for her than listen. She responded by saying "Look. I was a Marine and a damn good one. And I don't want anyone to think I'm a (a crude word for

weakling). But when I say that to other people their eyebrows go up. Yours didn't." Which was true. I understood her to mean she didn't want anyone to think she could not handle her circumstances or take care of herself. This is very much in line with the military ethic of carrying your own weight and, while in the vernacular, her choice of words were clear and specific to her circumstances.

That was an epiphany for me. At that point I understood what a large portion of my job was going





to be. To listen and to understand. Not just from a clinical perspective or by being tolerant of swear words but from an experiential one that is "been there; done that". Since speaking with her, there have been many student Veterans through the office who just wanted to unload to someone who could understand the experiences in a very personal manner, who would just listen and could understand what was bluster and what was a real issue. My office staff (who are all Veterans for just that reason) understand that, when student Vets are in the office talking, job #1 for

them is to listen. Paperwork can wait. Some want to talk about their experiences, some about school, some just want to reminisce about where they'd been and what they'd done. But all of them are looking for a deeper connection; a common understanding of the circumstances without having to explain how they got there or why. This one experience shaped how I personally and our Center professionally present services and conduct business with student Veteran culture here at the University of Utah.

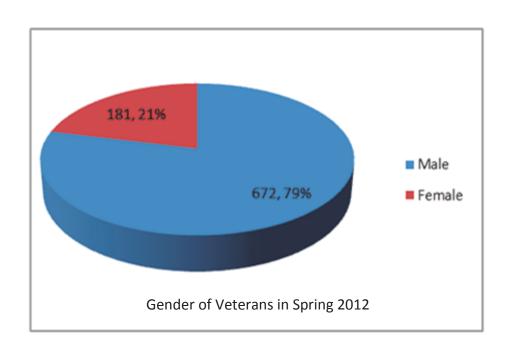
### **NOVEMBER** SEMINAR SERIES

**Female Student Veterans:** Reintegrating After Service; a **Multifaceted Look** 

Lt Col Chris Gedney USAF (RET), MBA, MA, MSW

Who is the female student veteran? This talk will address the multitude of issues surrounding today's female student veterans. Reintegrating back into civilian life has unique challenges for women; transitioning from combat soldier and warrior to mother, wife, daughter, partner, Aunt, Mother. Combine that with the invisible wounds of military sexual trauma (MST) that far too many returning vets have suffered and the integration process becomes that much harder. This discussion will focus on some of the unique issues facing female veterans and offers insight into how best to empower them on to success. The trailer for the movie depicting Military Sexual Trauma, The Invisible War, winner of the Sundance Audience Award will also be presented.

Wednesday, November 14 (One week earlier than usual) 12:00 PM-1:30 PM Pano East, Union



## **TOP TEN TIPS TO BETTER SERVE STUDENT VETERANS**

Veterans are those people in our society University of Utah. who have stepped up to accept the physical and mental burden of personally protecting 1. Don't assume they are 'typical freshmen' leave the military and come to school, they working in for several years. bring a wealth of experience covering things like project management, leadership, cross- 2. Most Veterans are direct in how they cultural coordination, different from the average freshman and

The University of Utah's veteran population require different management. Here are makes up 3% of our total student some things you can do to better population. Of that, 22% are women. understand and serve veterans at the

- the Constitution of the United States and who may lack maturity or the ability to the nation as a whole. Most of them do not understand how the U works. Veterans are go to combat, but all of them accept that usually older and are coming out of a possibility when they enlist. When they professional environment they have been
- and specific speak and act. Understand that being direct professional skills pertaining to their military is not the same as being aggressive or rude. specialty. As a result, they are dramatically It's merely a way to get to the answer faster.

- **Don't misunderstand this as challenging** comes up more often than it should. your authority or being disrespectful.
- War on Terror is a news article. many years.
- 5. The military doesn't make policy, they apply it. Don't assume our student 9. There is spectrum of experience in the Veterans were involved in decision military that encompasses how long making on a national level for actions the someone was in, what they did for a job, government has taken. You will find as where they were assigned, and whether many different opinions among Vets as they served during wartime or not and a you will the open population.
- 6. Understand that there are a multitude 4 years in the military, for example, is of skills the average Veteran brings along vastly different than that of someone with when they separate - leadership (not to 10 or 20 years. Watching a movie does be confused with management), project not capture that experience for the management, time management, civilian. analytical skills, judgment, and more. Recognize that many are experienced 10. Recognize their service and sacrifice if managers and leaders.

- 3. Because they are coming from a 7. Never ever ask a Veteran if they professional environment where they had have killed someone. It's none of your expertise and were encouraged to be business and it is not a topic of discussion innovative they will ask leading questions. Veterans like. Unfortunately this question
- 8. Not all student Veterans carry the 4. Don't assume you understand the burden of PTSD (though all Vets military experience. To most the Global understand that burden). And those who To do are generally dealing with the problem student Veterans it was their reality for to the point where they are functioning well on campus with the help of their friends and community.
  - variety of other personal and professional factors. The experience of someone with
  - you wish. A simple "Thank you" goes a long way.

# **EVENTS**



- Nov 3rd U vs WA football
- ♦ GI's of Comedy Show Nov 3 @ 6pm **Guest House**
- featuring Michael E. Bird, Gould Auditorium Marriott Library
- Utah American Indian Film

free screenings @ 7p Nov. 7, 14, 16, & 28

- Veteran Recognition Night Nov 8 @ 4:30 Union Lounge
- The Forgotten War" Fri., Nov 9 @ 8:45am
- Fri., Nov 9 @ 11am Union Ballroom
- 57th Annual Veterans Day

Sat., Nov. 10 @ 7pm

"The Real Thanksgiving

Wed., Nov. 14 @ 12p **Resource Center** 

 Hunger Banquet Mon., Nov. 19 @6p Union Salt Air Rm

### **HUMAN RESOURCES OFFERS "INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE" SERIES**

The Human Resources Training and Development team is offering a special 'Inclusion in the Workplace' series for the fall 2012. The series focuses on widening understanding of how we interact and can support individuals within the workplace.

Classes include:

'Generations in the Workplace' on Thursday, November 1st 'Our Behaviors' on Thursday, November 8th 'Safe Zone' on Thursday, December 13th

You can register for these classes and view class descriptions on the HR website at http://training.hr.utah.edu/class calendar.jsp.



For more information and recourses, please visit:

sadc.utah.edu

Debra Daniels, Co-chair Women's Resource Center Kari Ellingson, Co-chair Student Development Michael Bard, Registrar's Office Kajsa Berlin-Kaufusi, Center for Learning Abroad Arlyn Bradshaw, Dean of Students Office Karen Cone-Uemura, Counseling Center Branden Dalley, Union Administration Nelly Divricean, International Center Kris Fenn, Bennion Center Eduardo Galindo, ASUU Student Adrienne Howell, TRiO Nedra Hotchkins, Graduate Student Scott Jensen, Housing & Residential Education

Trisha Jensen, Orientation & Leadership Development Suzanne Jones, Registrar's Office Carol MacNicholl, Center for Disability Services Kai Medina-Martinez, LGBT Center Susan Miller, Campus Recreation Sana Muller, ASUU Sam Ortiz, Student Rachana Patel, Office of Admissions Cynthia Powell, Student Health Center Valery Pozo, Career Services Erica Rojas, Financial Aid & Scholarships Claudia Snow, Union Administration