The Military at SDSU

Developing a Culture of Appreciation and Support

Troops to College

Overview

The Troops to College program is a statewide initiative among the Governor's Office, the United States military, the California State University system, University of California and community colleges to enhance opportunities for active-duty military and veterans to attend college in California.

San Diego State has taken Troops to College a step further and developed a cross-campus working group designed to promote the services SDSU offers to its veterans.

About the 21st Century G.I. Bill

Today, there are more than 375,000 living U.S. veterans. In 2007, there were 258,000 of living veterans who served during both the Vietnam and Gulf War eras.

- The 21st Century G.I. Bill was signed into law in 2008 to provide veterans the financial means to attend any public college in the nation as well as benefits for those who choose to attend private colleges.
- Veterans are entitled to receive the cost of tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, yearly books and supplies and a one-time re-locating fee to those moving from highly rural areas.

Serving SDSU's Veterans

The new Veterans Center, which opened in fall 2008, supports veteran and active-duty military students at SDSU, home to one of the largest veteran-student populations in California.

SDSU Veteran-Student Population Spring 2009

- 157 active duty military students
- 65 reservists
- 805 veteran students
- 139 dependents of veterans receiving benefits

Admissions and Outreach

San Diego State provides admission consideration and special admissions to active duty military accepted into officer commission programs.

In the fall of 2007, San Diego State initiated a pilot recruitment/outreach program to advise active duty military regarding SDSU admission at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in coordination with Miramar College.

The offices of Prospective Student Services and the Veterans Center participate in education fairs on local military bases.

Joan Putnam, Veterans Coordinator in SDSU Enrollment Services, with students at SDSU's new Veterans Center.

SDSU Veterans Center

SDSU opened its new and much needed Veterans Center on July 3, 2008. The center offers assistance with:

- Applying for education benefits
- Coordinating with the VA work study program
- Processing tutorial assistance paperwork
- Other veteran educational needs

The Veterans Center serves as the hub of the cross-campus Troops to College working group, linking a wide range of support services for veterans on the SDSU campus. The center was the first veterans organization to receive a scholarship challenge.

SDSU Student Veterans Organization (SVO)

Founded in November 2006 as the first SVO in the country, SDSU's SVO has more than 400 members and has received national recognition. As a student run service and support organization, its goal is to improve the welfare of all SDSU student veterans and their family members.

SDSU's SVO strives to:

- Ensure veterans and their dependents are receiving all the benefits entitled to them
- Advocate for additional benefits at the state and federal levels
- Provide a direct link to counseling, mentoring and other programs
- Serve as a model for other universities around the country

Fundraising

Troops to College Funds

The Campanile Foundation, SDSU's fundraising arm, has raised more than $150,000 for the Troops to College program to date. Its goal is to raise funds to provide scholarships, enrichment opportunities and book vouchers to veteran-students as well as support the Student Veterans Organization.

- The effort began with a $50,000 challenge gift from alumni Arthur Barron and his son, Campanile Foundation Board Director Robert Barron.
- SDSU was chosen as one of 10 higher education institutions to receive $100,000 from Wal-Mart as a result of its successful veteran educational assistance program.

The grants will support the development of these programs and provide resources to assist veterans with access to education, adjustment to civilian life and success in completing their degrees.

Professional Science Master's and Graduate-Level Certificate Programs for Veterans and Active Duty Military

SDSU is leading the California State University system in developing a new program to offer Professional Science Master's and Graduate level Certificate Programs designed to take advantage of military background, skills, and experience. We're working with California State University San Marcos, and Military Education Services Officers to create programs that build on the expertise of veterans and active-duty military

A Gateway to High-Paying, High-Demand Jobs

- Provide training and employment opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.
- 24/7 online accessibility – all courses in these first two Professional Science Programs for veterans and active-duty military are available online.

Veteran and Military Benefits Eligible

- These programs qualify for veterans' benefits, tuition assistance, and other sources of financial aid intended to enable you to further your education.
- Veterans' program coordinators will help students maximize their military benefits.

Professional Science Certificate courses count toward a Master's Degree

- Students have the flexibility to start with a four-course certificate program and work toward a master's degree, or start on a master's degree and earn a certificate en route.

Learn more at: www.neverstoplearning.net/military

ROTC: A Program of the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts

Army ROTC

- #1 ranked female Army ROTC cadet in the nation: Christie Plackis, ISCOR Major
- More than 28 years at SDSU
- 115 cadets program for Army Reserve and National Guard
- #1 ROTC language program in the nation; hosting a November 08 National Conference; received a $75,000 Department Of Defense grant
- Winner of the Golden Bear award as the best Army ROTC program in the southwest region of the U.S.
- # 9 ranked Army ROTC program out of 294 in the nation.

San Diego State University Army ROTC Aztec Battalion serves the greater San Diego area in order to train cadets/students to become future officers in our armed forces, as well as leaders in the professional business world.

Air Force ROTC

- More than 50 years at SDSU – Prominent alumni include an Air Force Chief of Staff
- 145 Cadets from 8 area schools (majority SDSU) producing ~25 USAF 2nd Lts annually

Extremely Involved in San Diego Community:

- Honor Guard a prominent regional symbol
- Annual Fall Festival for area schools
- Event staff at annual "Making Strides for Cancer Walk"
- Mount Soledad remembrance events
- San Diego Veterans Day Parade
- "Success Enabled Pilots" Student Organization provides ground school and flight training for prospective pilot candidates

All cadets participate in Summer ROTC Field Training at Maxwell AFB, AL:

- SDSU earned 2 "Top Gun" Awards (2007 and 2008)
- 11 distinguished graduates and superior performers (2007-08)
- More than half of the SDSU cadets ranked in the "Top Third" nationally

Naval ROTC

- Active program at SDSU for 26 years
- One of the top three largest units in the country
- 300 students on 5 local campuses participate in the program; the majority of students at SDSU and USD; approximately 100 students at SDSU (60 active duty and 40 midshipmen)
- Active duty members receive all pay and benefits while attending college; Marines use the GI bill benefits and Navy officer candidates receive up to $10,000 per year for tuition, books and fees.
- Of our 300 students, 52 are combat veterans: 15 recognized for valor in combat, 5 purple hearts
- NROTC students participate in 5,000 hours of community service annually.
- Students take Naval Science course for credit each semester
- Average cumulative GPA: 3.30

SDSU Athletics

- The Athletic Department has donated more than 6,000 game tickets per year since 2004 for distribution to the local military community through on-base ticket outlets and Navy and Marine Corps commands, including the San Diego Armed Services YMCA, the Camp Pendleton YMCA, and Marine Corps Community Services Miramar. The in-kind value of these donations since 2004 is more than $750,000.

- The October 11 football game against Air Force was the 4th Annual GEICO Fleet Week Football Classic. SDSU's partnership with Fleet Week San Diego to host this event features a donated tailgate party for military members and their families, performances by Navy and Marine bands, military flyovers, and special recognition of wounded warriors and veterans during the game.

- SDSU athletic teams have made visits to the sick and wounded in Balboa Naval Hospital, opened practices to wounded warriors, provided coaches and teams for on-base events, and judged on-base contests.

- In August 2008, the Aztec football team conducted its first two practices at Camp Pendleton and the team stayed there as well.

- On November 11, 2008, the San Diego State men's basketball team honored the Student Veterans Organization during half time.

- On campus, the Athletic Department partners with the SDSU Veterans Center, helping to support and offer programming to the hundreds of student veterans that call San Diego State their school.

SDSU Visualization Center

Our Visualization (Viz) Center focuses on the rapid prototyping of information and visualizations of the entire globe to support US humanitarian and reconstruction efforts.

- The center has processed massive amounts of geospatial data and satellite imagery to provide critical information to first responders and US warfighters.
- To apply its visualizations to tactical situations, the center develops scalable communications tools for use in austere environments, where communication links may save lives.
- The center has also worked to support Defense Department efforts to link NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations) to military operations during humanitarian operations and natural disasters including Banda Aceh and Hurricane Katrina.
- The center has constructed intelligence and detection systems to combat bio-terrorism, and is working to extend communications to unreachable areas in support of military operations during humanitarian missions.
- The center provides specialized training to military officers, Navy SEALS, the National Guard, and federal law enforcement officers through SDSU's Homeland Security Master's Program.

SDSU Alumni Association's Annual War Memorial Ceremony

The memories of San Diego State fallen Aztecs have been honored annually for the last 11 years at the War Memorial wreath-laying ceremony on Aztec Green. The observance features a flyover of World War II vintage planes.

Dedicated November 23, 1996, the San Diego State University War Memorial was commissioned and funded by the SDSU Alumni Association's Veterans War Memorial Committee. Located just west of Aztec Center and north of the campus trolley station, it is recognized as one of only two college campus monuments west of the Mississippi.

The War Memorial monument is a three-sided reinforced concrete monolith faced with Sierra White granite standing 25 feet high. The sleek column, its broken and jagged top symbolizing untimely death, was designed by former SDSU art professor Jesus Dominguez. All three sides are etched with 217 names of former San Diego State students lost in service to their country during military conflicts: World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Library Project

Robert Fikes, Jr., SDSU librarian and historian, wrote his 2006 report *Supreme Sacrifice, Extraordinary Service: Profiles of SDSU Military Alumni* on the topic of SDSU veterans.

Much of Fikes' research revolves around the SDSU War Memorial monument, dedicated in November 1996. Fikes primarily focuses on wartime deaths of SDSU alumni from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, since most of the names on the war memorial were from these three conflicts. However, his report also covers more recent casualties of U.S. military personnel. In addition, Fikes devotes several pages to SDSU alumni who have reached the pinnacle of the military hierarchy as generals and admirals. Finally, Fikes includes as an appendix to his report various military benchmarks of SDSU alumni as well as statistics related to the SDSU War Memorial.

The full report can be found at http://alumni.sdsu.edu/warmemorial

Web Resources

www.sdsu.edu/veterans
www.svosdsu.org
www.ces.sdsu.edu/military
www.ces.sdsu.edu/veterans_affairs
www.troopstocollege.ca.gov
www.calstate.edu/veterans