



NEWS RELEASE

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GI Jobs Magazine Honors UW-Eau Claire
for Support for Student Veterans

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EAU CLAIRE — The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has been named a 2010 Military Friendly School by GI Jobs magazine.

The list honors the nation's top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace America's veterans as students, a GI Jobs news release stated. The 2010 Military Friendly Schools list can be viewed online at www.militaryfriendlyschools.com/mfspr and will be published in GI Jobs' annual "Guide to Military Friendly Schools," to be distributed in September.

"We are honored to be recognized for our efforts in supporting our student veterans at UW-Eau Claire," said Beth Hellwig, vice chancellor for student affairs and dean of students.

The Military Friendly Schools list was compiled following research that included polling more than 7,000 schools nationwide. Criteria for making the Military Friendly Schools list include efforts to recruit and retain military and veteran students, results in recruiting military and veteran students and academic accreditations.

Many departments and offices at UW-Eau Claire provide services for military veterans enrolled at or seeking admission to the university, said Marc Goulet, interim associate dean for student development. Those services include benefits advice through the Veterans Services office; review of past academic work, including military transcripts, through the Admissions office; help with granting leaves of absence for military service through the Dean of Students office; and individual and group counseling through Counseling Services.

A recent development in support of student veterans is the creation of a new Veterans Center in UW-Eau Claire's Schofield Hall.

"The addition of a Veterans Center will provide a visible place for our veteran students to learn about all of the educational and personal support systems available to them on the UW-Eau Claire campus," Goulet said, adding that community partners, including area Veterans Affairs

representatives and veterans services staff from the state Department of Workforce Development, will offer their services in the Veterans Center.

UW-Eau Claire's Veterans Services office, located within Registration Services, assists students who are military veterans with obtaining the federal and state education benefits to which they're entitled.

"We have approximately 300 veterans receiving federal education benefits at this time," said Diane Stegner Roadt, Veterans Services office supervisor, noting there are six federal veterans education programs under which veterans can qualify for benefits, depending on when they served in the military, deployment and several other factors.

The number of veterans on campus is expected to grow, both because of the increasing number of veterans completing their terms of service in ongoing U.S. military operations and because of the provisions of the recently enacted Post-9/11 GI Bill, Stegner Roadt said.

"It's the first time that payment has been made directly to the school to cover tuition and fees, and it's the first time that an active-duty military member can transfer his or her military education benefits entitlement to a spouse or dependent," she said.

UW-Eau Claire's Nontraditional Student Services often is a first point of contact for military veterans exploring whether to apply at the university, said Bonnie Isaacson, nontraditional student adviser.

Isaacson also teaches a course, "Introduction to University Curriculum," for adult students during their first semester at UW-Eau Claire and encourages veterans to enroll. In addition, she includes campus news of interest to veterans in a regular newsletter for nontraditional students and is a member of the UW Systemwide Committee on Veterans Issues, which meets twice a year to discuss concerns and needs of veterans on UW System campuses.

"Some of what we've done here at UW-Eau Claire — our Veterans Advisory Committee and our new Veterans Center — has been a model for other universities represented on the committee," Isaacson said.

UW-Eau Claire will continue to look at ways it can help military veterans working toward a college degree, Goulet said. For example, recent changes have streamlined the fulfillment of academic requirements for students who are veterans or currently serving in the active military, he said. Under those changes, students who have completed military basic

training/boot camp receive one credit of physical activity, and, in general, veterans' service-learning graduation requirement is assumed to have been met.

As the student veteran population grows in the coming months and years, it will be important to have veterans' unique needs in mind, Goulet said.

"We recognize that there will be many veterans who will be looking to get an education at UW-Eau Claire, and we are dedicated to offering them the best support possible," he said.

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