

**CLAYTON
STATE
UNIVERSITY**

**Community, Belonging,
& Veterans Center**

COMMUNITY, BELONGING & VETERANS CENTER

End of Year Report 2025 -2026

Division of Student Affairs | Student Care & Support



Executive Summary

Major Accomplishments:

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center continued to strengthen student engagement, belonging, and support for military-affiliated students through impactful programming, resource navigation, and community partnerships.

Major accomplishments included serving over 700 military-affiliated students, celebrating 76 graduates, increasing student leadership and mentorship opportunities through initiatives like Laker Navigators and the Student Veterans of America chapter, and hosting signature events such as the Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration and 2nd Annual Community Care Day. In addition to CBVC operations and military-affiliated student support services, the department also successfully managed the Laker Navigators mentorship program, supporting 176 students during the Spring 2026 semester through mentorship, peer guidance, leadership development, and student success initiatives. The center also expanded holistic support services by assisting students and families with VA benefits, academic connections, and financial stability resources while fostering an inclusive campus environment where students feel seen, heard, and supported.

Key Metrics:

- 710 total military-affiliated students served
- 709 students supported with VA and educational benefits assistance
- 76 students graduated in Spring 2026
- 3.06 average GPA among military-affiliated students
- Continued expansion of student engagement, mentorship, and community-building initiatives
- Increased holistic support connecting students and families to academic, financial, and wellness resources

Student Impact:

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center continued to make a meaningful impact on student success by ensuring military-affiliated students and their families received personalized support, access to educational and VA benefits, mentorship opportunities, and a welcoming community that fostered academic achievement, financial stability, belonging, and personal growth.

Strategic Achievement:

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center achieved significant strategic progress by expanding military-affiliated student support services, increasing student engagement and academic success outcomes, strengthening campus and community partnerships, and creating intentional programs that foster belonging, leadership development, and holistic student success.

Challenges:

Despite many successes, the Community, Belonging & Veterans Center faced challenges related to increasing student engagement consistency, limited participation at some support and academic-focused events, balancing the diverse needs of a growing military-affiliated student population, and addressing barriers connected to scheduling, outreach timing, and external factors impacting student wellness, finances, and VA benefits processing.

PRIORITIES FOR 2026-2027

- Increase consistent student engagement and participation in academic success and support initiatives Strengthen outreach efforts to better connect with underserved and less-engaged military-affiliated students
- Expand leadership, mentorship, and peer support opportunities through Laker Navigators and the Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter
- Enhance collaboration with campus and community partners to increase resources and holistic support services
- Continue improving academic success, retention, and sense of belonging among military-affiliated students and their families
- Develop more flexible and intentional programming schedules to better meet student availability and needs

Unit Overviews

Mission Statement:

We champion a welcoming and equitable community—traditional and non-traditional students, veterans, foster-experienced individuals, and dedicated staff are empowered to thrive. Through accessible services, essential resources, holistic support, and intentional engagement, we foster inclusive excellence and expand pathways for upward social mobility, academic success, and personal growth.

Vision & Values:

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center envisions a campus community where all students, especially military-affiliated students and their families, feel valued, supported, connected, and empowered to thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

Core Values:

Belonging and Inclusion

Student-Centered Support

Equity and Access

Leadership and Service

Community Engagement

Integrity and Respect

Collaboration and Empowerment

Holistic Student Success



COMMUNITY, BELONGING, & VETERANS CENTER OVERVIEW

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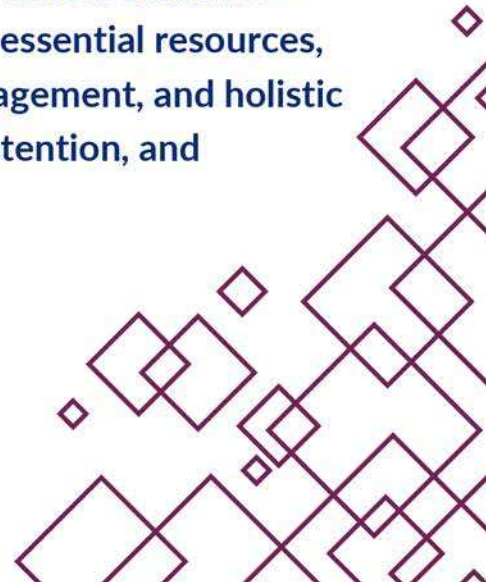
Vision & Values

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Core Values:

- Belonging and Inclusion
- Student-Centered Support
- Equity and Access
- Leadership and Service
- Community Engagement
- Integrity and Respect
- Collaboration and Empowerment
- Holistic Student Success

The purpose of the Community, Belonging & Veterans Center is to provide a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment that connects students—especially military-affiliated students and their families—to essential resources, academic support, leadership opportunities, community engagement, and holistic services that promote student success, belonging, retention, and personal growth.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Unit Lead:
Shenetra White
Belonging & Veterans Coordinator

Student Support Personnel



VA Work-Study Students



Student Veterans of
America (SVA) Chapter



Laker Navigators
Mentorship Program



Community engagement
and volunteer initiatives

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center is a Student Affairs unit within Student Care & Support and the Dean of Students Office.

Administrative Leadership



Dr. Sarah Ray
Assistant Dean of Students

COMMUNITY BELONGING, AND VETERANS CENTER

Building Connection, Service, and Student Success

The Community Belonging & Veteran Center serves as a hub for connection, engagement, and support at Clayton State University by fostering belonging among students while strengthening relationships between the university and the broader community. Through intentional support initiatives, community engagement opportunities, and peer connection programs, the Center advances the university's commitment to student success, social mobility, and campus belonging.

Military-Affiliated Students

The Community Belonging & Veteran Center provides dedicated support and resources for military-affiliated students pursuing their educational goals at Clayton State University.

Student Impact

- 710 military-affiliated students received educational benefits and support services during the academic year.
- Of those students, 108 identified as military veterans.

National research consistently shows that military-affiliated students often balance academic responsibilities alongside employment, family obligations, financial transitions, and the adjustment from military to civilian life. Veteran students may also experience challenges related to navigating campus systems, establishing peer connections, and maintaining a sense of belonging within higher education environments.

The Community Belonging & Veteran Center was established to provide a welcoming and supportive environment where military-affiliated students can build community, access resources, and successfully pursue their education while remaining connected to the broader campus experience.



Outreach & Support Initiatives

Throughout the year, the Center expanded communication, outreach, and student support efforts through:

- Targeted communication and engagement initiatives for military-affiliated students
- Resource referrals and individualized student support
- Veteran-focused programming and community-building opportunities
- Exploration of future Green Zone Training initiatives to enhance campus support for military-connected students
- Exploration of Mental Health First Aid Training to strengthen awareness and response to student wellbeing needs

COMMUNITY BELONGING, AND VETERANS CENTER

Building Connection, Service, and Student Success

Community

Community Service & Engagement was revitalized in Fall 2025 and transitioned under the leadership of the Community Belonging & Veteran Center after previously being housed within the Office of Student Activities and Laker Life. Since the revitalization effort, significant progress has been made in identifying and strengthening partnerships with local service organizations and community agencies that provide students with meaningful opportunities for civic engagement and service learning.

Community service opportunities are regularly shared with the campus community through:

- The Community Belonging & Veteran Center website
- Weekly student newsletters and campus communications

Community Partnerships & Engagement

The revitalization efforts resulted in the development of numerous community partnerships with organizations across the region, creating expanded opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage in meaningful service experiences.

Community Care Day 2026

The second annual Community Care Day was held in April 2026 with:

- 108 faculty, staff, and students participating
- Volunteer engagement across K-12 schools, nonprofit agencies, and service organizations

Participating organizations included:

- Women on Purpose
- Noah's ARC
- Local schools and community-based nonprofit organizations
-

A full listing of community outreach and service partnerships is included in the accompanying engagement chart.

Event Name
Pruit Health Hospice
Woman on Purpose
Atlanta Angels
Traditions Health Hospice
Hospice Advantage
Open Hand Atlanta
Aveanna Hospice
Southern Crescent Soccer
Mak A Wish
HERO for Children
DisAbility Link
A Friends House
Crossroads Church
Trees Atlanta
Easterseals
Community Care Day



COMMUNITY BELONGING, AND VETERANS CENTER

Building Connection, Service, and Student Success

Belonging

The Community Belonging & Veteran Center is grounded in the belief that every student should experience a sense of belonging and connection to the university community.

This work is especially important for students from special populations, including:

- Adult learners
- Transfer students
- First-generation students
- Military-affiliated students
- International students
- Other students seeking connection and support during their educational journey
-

Through intentional programming, student engagement opportunities, and supportive space utilization, the Center promotes student connection, engagement, and persistence.

Laker Navigator Program

The revitalization of the Laker Navigator Peer Mentoring Program strengthened peer-to-peer engagement and student support efforts across campus.

During the academic year:

- 15 student leaders were trained to serve as peer mentors
- Peer mentors provided outreach, engagement, and support opportunities for new students transitioning to Clayton State University
- 117 peer network population

The program continues to strengthen student connection, leadership development, and campus belonging through intentional peer engagement initiatives. As the program was previously grant funded priorities in 2026-2027 include exploring sustainable engagement and maximizing available resources.



Alignment with Institutional Priorities

Student Success: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center supports student success by providing holistic, student-centered services that promote academic achievement, personal growth, leadership development, and a sense of belonging. Through intentional programming, mentorship opportunities, VA and educational benefits support, campus and community partnerships, and resource navigation, the CBVC helps students overcome barriers, stay connected to the university community, and successfully persist toward graduation and future career success.

Retention and Persistence: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center contributes to student retention and persistence by creating a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel connected, valued, and empowered to succeed. Through mentorship, academic and VA benefits support, resource referrals, leadership opportunities, and consistent engagement initiatives, the CBVC helps students overcome barriers, remain enrolled, and stay motivated toward completing their educational goals.

Belonging: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center fosters a strong sense of belonging by creating a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment where students feel seen, heard, valued, and connected. Through intentional engagement opportunities, mentorship, leadership development, peer support, and community-building programs, the CBVC helps students build meaningful relationships and develop a deeper connection to the university community.

Wellness: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center supports student wellness by connecting students and their families to academic, financial, emotional, and community resources that promote overall well-being and stability. Through a supportive environment, mentorship, resource navigation, and collaborative partnerships, the CBVC helps students reduce barriers, manage challenges, and maintain a healthy balance that supports both personal and academic success.

Leadership Development: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center promotes leadership development by providing students with opportunities to serve in mentorship, student organization, volunteer, and peer leadership roles. Through programs such as Laker Navigators and the Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter, students build communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and professional skills while gaining confidence and meaningful campus involvement.

Career Readiness: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center supports career readiness by connecting students with leadership experiences, professional development opportunities, mentorship, community engagement, and campus resources that prepare them for future careers and lifelong success. Through programs such as the VA Work-Study program, Laker Navigators, and the Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter, students gain hands-on work experience, strengthen communication and leadership skills, build professional confidence, and develop transferable skills that enhance workforce readiness and career success.

Enrollment Goals:

- Increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of military-affiliated students through intentional outreach and holistic support services
- Strengthen military-affiliated student enrollment pipelines by enhancing partnerships with admissions, enrollment management, and community organizations
- Improve student persistence by reducing barriers related to VA benefits, financial challenges, academic navigation, and resource accessibility
- Expand engagement opportunities that increase students' sense of belonging, campus connection, and long-term institutional commitment

- Grow participation in high-impact programs such as the VA Work-Study Program, Laker Navigators, and the Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter
- Enhance visibility and awareness of CBVC services to ensure military-affiliated students and families are connected to resources early and consistently
- Support academic success initiatives that contribute to higher GPA performance, student involvement, and overall student achievement outcomes

Major Programs, Services, and Initiatives- The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center advances the university's commitment to student success, inclusive excellence, engagement, and upward social mobility through the following major programs, services, and initiatives:

- Holistic support services for military-affiliated students and families, including VA educational benefits guidance, academic resource navigation, and referrals to campus support services
- Student engagement initiatives designed to foster belonging, connection, leadership development, and persistence
- The VA Work-Study Program, providing students with professional development, peer support, and workforce readiness opportunities
- Laker Navigators Mentorship Program, promoting peer mentorship, student transition support, leadership development, and academic success
- Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter development and advising to strengthen student leadership, advocacy, and campus involvement
- Community engagement and volunteer initiatives that promote civic responsibility, collaboration, and community impact
- Signature campus events and recognition programs, including the Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration and Community Care Day
- Cross-campus and community partnerships that enhance access to academic, wellness, financial, and career readiness resources
- Inclusive programming and outreach initiatives that create a welcoming and supportive campus environment where students feel seen, heard, valued, and empowered to succeed academically and personally

VA Educational Benefits & Resource Navigation

Purpose: To support military-affiliated students and their families by providing guidance on VA educational benefits, connecting students to essential campus and community resources, and reducing barriers that impact academic persistence and success.

Student Engagement & Belonging Initiatives

Purpose: To foster an inclusive and welcoming campus environment that promotes student connection, engagement, belonging, and overall student well-being through intentional programming and relationship-building opportunities.

VA Work-Study Program

Purpose: To provide military-affiliated students with professional development, leadership experience, financial support, and hands-on workplace skills that enhance career readiness and student success.

Laker Navigators Mentorship Program

Purpose: To support student transition, retention, leadership development, and academic achievement through peer mentorship, engagement opportunities, and intentional student support initiatives.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Purpose: To strengthen student leadership, advocacy, peer support, and campus involvement among military-affiliated students while fostering community and student empowerment.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Purpose: To promote civic engagement, leadership, collaboration, and community impact through service-learning opportunities and partnerships that connect students to meaningful volunteer experiences.

Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Purpose: To recognize and celebrate the academic achievements, resilience, and accomplishments of military-affiliated graduates while fostering pride, encouragement, and community support.

Community Care Day

Purpose: To strengthen campus and community partnerships through collaborative volunteerism, wellness initiatives, and service opportunities that promote social responsibility and community engagement.

Cross-Campus & Community Partnerships

Purpose: To enhance access to academic, financial, wellness, and career readiness resources through collaborative partnerships that support holistic student development and success.

Inclusive Programming & Outreach

Purpose: To increase awareness, accessibility, and participation in CBVC programs and services while ensuring all students feel seen, heard, supported, and empowered to succeed.

- **Target Populations:**

VA Educational Benefits & Resource Navigation

Target Populations: Veterans, active-duty service members, reservists, National Guard members, military dependents, and military-affiliated families.

Student Engagement & Belonging Initiatives

Target Populations: Military-affiliated students, underserved student populations, first-year students, transfer students, and the broader campus community.

VA Work-Study Program

Target Populations: Eligible military-affiliated students utilizing VA educational benefits.

Laker Navigators Mentorship Program

Target Populations: First-year students, peer mentors, student leaders, and students seeking academic and social support.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Target Populations: Veterans, active-duty service members, reservists, National Guard members, and military dependents.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Target Populations: Military-affiliated students, student leaders, volunteers, and the broader campus and local community.

Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Target Populations: Military-affiliated graduates, their families, faculty, staff, and campus leadership.

Community Care Day

Target Populations: Students, faculty, staff, military-affiliated students, and community partners.

Cross-Campus & Community Partnerships

Target Populations: Military-affiliated students, underserved students, and students in need of holistic support services.

Inclusive Programming & Outreach

Target Populations: Military-affiliated students, prospective students, transfer students, underserved populations, and the broader student community.

- **Activities/ Programs Offered**

VA Educational Benefits & Resource Navigation

Activities/Programs Offered: VA educational benefits assistance, resource referrals, academic support connections, financial aid guidance, and individualized student support services.

Student Engagement & Belonging Initiatives

Activities/Programs Offered: Campus engagement events, inclusive programming, cultural and community-building activities, student outreach initiatives, and peer connection opportunities.

VA Work-Study Program

Activities/Programs Offered: Student employment opportunities, front desk support, peer mentorship, leadership development, event assistance, and professional skill-building experiences.

Laker Navigators Mentorship Program

Activities/Programs Offered: Peer mentorship, student transition support, leadership development workshops, engagement activities, academic encouragement, and student success initiatives.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Activities/Programs Offered: Student leadership opportunities, advocacy initiatives, peer networking, veteran-focused programming, campus involvement opportunities, and member engagement activities.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Activities/Programs Offered: Volunteer service projects, donation drives, community partnerships, civic engagement opportunities, and outreach initiatives supporting local organizations and schools.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Participation Numbers: Military-affiliated student organization serving a population of over 700 military-affiliated students through leadership and engagement opportunities.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Participation Numbers: Students participated in multiple volunteer initiatives including Community Care Day, Million Meal Pack, Thanksgiving Serving, and local school/community outreach projects.

Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Participation Numbers: 76 military-affiliated graduates recognized during the 2026 celebration.

Community Care Day

Participation Numbers: Students, faculty, staff, and community partners participated in the 2nd Annual Community Care Day through volunteer service and wellness activities.

Cross-Campus & Community Partnerships

Participation Numbers: Collaborative partnerships engaged multiple campus departments, student organizations, and community agencies in support of student success initiatives.

Inclusive Programming & Outreach

Participation Numbers: Hundreds of students engaged through outreach campaigns, workshops, campus events, mentorship initiatives, and community-building programs throughout the academic year.

- **Outcomes Achieved**

VA Educational Benefits & Resource Navigation

Outcomes Achieved: Increased student access to VA educational benefits, improved resource awareness, reduced barriers to enrollment and persistence, and enhanced student financial and academic stability.

Student Engagement & Belonging Initiatives

Outcomes Achieved: Strengthened student connection to campus, increased engagement opportunities, enhanced sense of belonging, and improved student participation in campus life and support services.

VA Work-Study Program

Outcomes Achieved: Provided students with professional work experience, leadership development, financial support, and transferable career readiness skills while increasing peer-to-peer student support within the CBVC.

Laker Navigators Mentorship Program

Outcomes Achieved: Improved peer engagement, strengthened mentorship connections, supported student transition and retention efforts, and increased leadership development opportunities for student mentors and mentees.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Outcomes Achieved: Expanded leadership opportunities for military-affiliated students, strengthened student advocacy and peer support, and increased military-affiliated student involvement and campus representation.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Outcomes Achieved: Enhanced civic engagement strengthened campus and community partnerships, increased student volunteer participation, and promoted leadership and community impact.

Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Outcomes Achieved: Recognized and celebrated military-affiliated student achievement strengthened student morale and community pride, and highlighted academic success among military-affiliated graduates.

Community Care Day

Outcomes Achieved: Strengthened collaboration between campus and community partners, increased student participation in service initiatives, and promoted wellness, leadership, and social responsibility.

Cross-Campus & Community Partnerships

Outcomes Achieved: Expanded access to holistic student support services, improved collaboration across departments and organizations, and increased resource availability for students and families.

Inclusive Programming & Outreach

Outcomes Achieved: Increased awareness and utilization of CBVC services, improved outreach to underserved and less-engaged students, and fostered a more welcoming and inclusive campus environment.

- **Assessment Findings**

VA Educational Benefits & Resource Navigation

Assessment Findings: Assessment data showed continued high utilization of VA educational benefits support services, demonstrating a strong need for ongoing resource navigation, benefits guidance, and individualized student assistance.

Student Engagement & Belonging Initiatives

Assessment Findings: Student participation and feedback indicated that engagement initiatives positively contributed to students feeling more connected, supported, and engaged within the campus community.

VA Work-Study Program

Assessment Findings: Students participating in the VA Work-Study Program reported increased professional confidence, leadership development, workplace experience, and stronger campus engagement.

Laker Navigators Mentorship Program

Assessment Findings: Program data and student feedback reflected positive peer mentorship experiences, increased student connection, and opportunities for leadership growth, while also identifying a need to improve consistent participation and engagement.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Assessment Findings: Initial development efforts highlighted strong student interest in military-affiliated leadership and peer support opportunities, emphasizing the importance of continued organizational growth and engagement strategies.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Assessment Findings: Volunteer participation and community engagement activities demonstrated positive student involvement and strengthened partnerships, while reinforcing the value of service-learning experiences in student development.

Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Assessment Findings: Event participation and feedback reflected increased student morale, pride, and recognition of military-affiliated student achievement and academic success.

Community Care Day

Assessment Findings: Assessment findings showed strong collaboration among campus and community partners and highlighted increased student participation in wellness, service, and volunteer initiatives.

Cross-Campus & Community Partnerships

Assessment Findings: Collaborative efforts improved resource accessibility and referrals for students, demonstrating the effectiveness of partnerships in supporting holistic student success and retention.

Inclusive Programming & Outreach

Assessment Findings: Outreach and engagement data indicated increased awareness of CBVC services, while also identifying opportunities to strengthen communication strategies and improve engagement among less-connected student populations.

VA Educational Benefits & Resource Navigation

Improvements Made: Enhanced individualized student support, increased benefits guidance assistance, improved referral processes, and strengthened communication regarding available VA and campus resources.

Student Engagement & Belonging Initiatives

Improvements Made: Expanded inclusive programming opportunities, increased outreach efforts, diversified event offerings, and implemented more intentional engagement strategies to strengthen student connection and belonging.

VA Work-Study Program

Improvements Made: Increased student leadership responsibilities enhanced professional development opportunities, and improved student involvement in daily operations and peer support initiatives.

Laker Navigators Mentorship Program

Improvements Made: Implemented additional mentorship engagement activities, increased leadership opportunities for peer mentors, strengthened assessment efforts, and expanded student outreach initiatives.

Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter

Improvements Made: Reestablished organizational structure, increased student leadership involvement, and expanded efforts to strengthen membership recruitment and campus presence.

Community Engagement & Volunteer Initiatives

Improvements Made: Expanded volunteer opportunities strengthened community partnerships, and increased student participation in service-learning and civic engagement activities.

Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Improvements Made: Enhanced event recognition efforts, expanded campus involvement, and increased visibility of military-affiliated student achievements and accomplishments.

Community Care Day

Improvements Made: Strengthened event coordination, increased community collaboration, expanded wellness and volunteer opportunities, and improved overall student participation and engagement.

Cross-Campus & Community Partnerships

Improvements Made: Increased collaboration with campus departments and community agencies, improved referral networks, and expanded access to holistic support services and resources.

Inclusive Programming & Outreach

Improvements Made: Enhanced marketing and communication strategies, increased outreach to underserved student populations, and improved awareness and accessibility of CBVC services and programs.

Student Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes Assessed

- Increased knowledge of VA educational benefits, campus resources, and support services
- Improved leadership, communication, teamwork, and professional development skills
- Increased sense of belonging, peer connection, and self-confidence
- Enhanced self-advocacy and resource navigation skills
- Increased understanding of civic engagement, service, and community responsibility
- Improved career readiness and workplace professionalism through experiential learning opportunities

Assessment Methods

- Pre- and post-assessment surveys
- Student reflection responses and testimonials
- Mentorship and leadership development evaluations
- Supervisor evaluations through the VA Work-Study Program
- Observation of student leadership, communication, and engagement skills
- Student feedback forms and qualitative assessments
- Resource navigation and student support tracking
- Follow-up conversations and student success narratives

Results/Data

- Military-affiliated students maintained a 3.06 average GPA
- 76 military-affiliated students successfully graduated in Spring 2026
- Students demonstrated increased confidence in utilizing campus and VA resources independently
- Student feedback reflected stronger peer connections, increased leadership growth, and improved sense of belonging
- VA Work-Study students demonstrated growth in workplace professionalism, communication, and leadership skills
- Mentorship participants reported increased academic encouragement, support, and campus connection

Evidence of Student Growth

- Students demonstrated stronger self-advocacy and problem-solving skills when navigating academic and personal challenges
- Student leaders and mentors showed increased confidence in communication, teamwork, and leadership responsibilities
- Military-affiliated students reported feeling more connected, supported, and engaged within the university community
- VA Work-Study students gained transferable professional skills and workplace experience that supported career readiness
- Student testimonials reflected increased motivation, academic persistence, and personal growth through CBVC involvement

Improvements

- Expanded leadership and mentorship development opportunities for students
- Increased intentional outreach and resource awareness efforts
- Enhanced professional development experiences within the VA Work-Study Program
- Strengthened collaboration with campus and community partners to improve holistic support services
- Improved assessment and feedback collection methods to better measure student learning and growth

- Increased focus on creating inclusive programming that strengthens belonging, persistence, and student success

Assessment and Data Analysis

Assessment and Data Analysis: The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center utilized both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods to evaluate student engagement, learning, satisfaction, and overall program effectiveness. Data was collected through student service tracking, program participation records, surveys, student testimonials, mentorship assessments, and observational feedback to support continuous improvement and strategic decision-making.

Students Served:

- 710 military-affiliated students served through CBVC programs, services, outreach, and resource support initiatives
- 709 students supported through VA educational benefits and resource navigation assistance
- 76 military-affiliated graduates recognized during the Spring 2026 Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration

Program Attendance:

- Students participated in mentorship programs, volunteer initiatives, leadership development opportunities, campus engagement activities, and community service programs throughout the academic year
- Signature initiatives included Community Care Day, Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration, Laker Navigators programming, volunteer outreach projects, and student engagement events

Engagement Rates

- Increased student utilization of CBVC support services, leadership opportunities, and resource navigation assistance
- Continued student involvement in mentorship, volunteerism, peer support, and campus engagement initiatives
- Strong engagement among military-affiliated students seeking academic, financial, wellness, and career readiness support

Satisfaction Survey Results

- Student feedback reflected positive experiences related to belonging, peer connection, leadership growth, and support received through CBVC services
- Survey responses indicated students felt welcomed, supported, and more connected to campus resources and the university community
- Students reported increased confidence in navigating academic and VA-related processes independently

Demographic Participation

- Participants included veterans, active-duty service members, reservists, National Guard members, military dependents, first-year students, transfer students, peer mentors, student leaders, and underserved student populations
- Programs and services supported both traditional and non-traditional students across diverse academic, personal, and professional backgrounds

Data and Why It Matters

Budget Overview- The CBVC utilized institutional funding and campus resources to support student engagement initiatives, leadership development programs, community service activities, recognition events, and operational support services for military-affiliated students and the broader campus community. We would like to start providing scholarships for those that run out of benefits in the middle of a degree program and are in good standing.

Major Expenditures

- Student engagement and programming initiatives
- Community Care Day and Military-Affiliated Scholar Celebration expenses Marketing and outreach materials
- Student leadership and mentorship activities
- Volunteer and community engagement initiatives
- Office operations and student support resources
- Food, supplies, event materials, and student appreciation items

Funding Sources

- Institutional funding through Student Affairs
- University operational support
- Campus partnerships and collaborative resource contributions
- In-kind community support and donations for select initiatives and service projects

Grants or External Funding

- Community partnerships and external collaborations supported select volunteer and engagement initiatives
- Continued exploration of grant opportunities and external partnerships to expand student support
- programming and resources

Resource Needs

- Increased programmatic and operational funding to expand high-impact student support initiatives
- Expanded staffing and student support capacity to better meet growing and complex student needs
- Enhanced marketing and outreach efforts to strengthen student engagement, awareness, and utilization of services
- Broadened professional development and leadership opportunities to support student growth and success
- Strengthened resources for wellness initiatives, community engagement, and support for military-affiliated student populations

Collaboration and Partnerships

Academic Affairs- Collaborated with Center of Academic Success, Career Services, and other departments to support student retention, academic success, classroom advocacy, and student referrals.

Enrollment Management- Partners with Admissions and Bursars to support recruitment, onboarding, outreach, and transition efforts for military-affiliated and transfer students.

Athletics- Collaborating with Athletics on student engagement opportunities, campus programming, and initiatives that promote student involvement and campus connection.

Faculty- Works with faculty members to increase awareness of military-affiliated student needs, provide student advocacy, and strengthen academic support and communication efforts.

Community Organizations- Partners with local schools, nonprofits, volunteer agencies, and community organizations for service-learning opportunities, donation drives, and community engagement initiatives.

External Agencies- Collaborates with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veteran service organizations, and external support agencies to assist students with VA educational benefits, referrals, and support services.

Alumni- Engages military-affiliated alumni and graduates through recognition events, mentorship opportunities, networking, and student encouragement initiatives.

Other Units within Student Affairs- Maintains partnerships with Counseling and Psychological Services, Disability Services, Housing, Career Services, Financial Aid, Student Engagement, and wellness initiatives to provide holistic student support and coordinated care services.

Marketing and Communication Efforts

Social Media Handles- Utilizes university and CBVC social media platforms to promote events, student resources, engagement opportunities, leadership initiatives, and military-affiliated student success stories.

Communication Campaigns- Implements targeted email campaigns, digital flyers, newsletters, announcements, and campus communication efforts to increase awareness of CBVC programs, services, events, and support resources.

Outreach Initiatives- Conducts outreach to military-affiliated students, prospective students, transfer students, and underserved student populations through campus events, orientation programs, classroom engagement, resource fairs, and personalized student communication.

Student Engagement Strategies- Increases student engagement through mentorship programs (SVA/ Laker Navigators), leadership opportunities, volunteer initiatives, community-building events, inclusive programming, peer support efforts, and intentional relationship-building strategies designed to strengthen belonging and student success.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Operational Challenges- Balancing increasing student support needs with limited staffing and operational capacity while continuing to provide individualized services, programming, outreach, and event coordination.

Student Needs Trends- Increased demand for holistic support related to VA educational benefits, financial challenges, mental wellness, academic support, career readiness, and resource navigation services.

Space/Resources- Limited physical space and program resources created challenges in accommodating growing student engagement, programming expansion, and private student support needs.

Participation Gaps- Inconsistent engagement among some student populations, particularly students with work, family, military, or commuter responsibilities, highlighted the need for more flexible outreach and programming strategies.

Staffing Concerns- Limited staffing and reliance on student support assistance impacted the department's capacity to expand programming, increased outreach efforts, and provided additional individualized student support services.

Addressing Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center addressed operational and student support challenges by implementing more intentional outreach strategies, strengthening campus and community partnerships, and expanding leadership and peer support opportunities through programs such as Laker Navigators and the VA Work-Study Program. The department increased communication efforts through email campaigns, social media outreach, and personalized student engagement to better connect with underserved and less-engaged student populations.

To address participation gaps and scheduling barriers, the CBVC offered programming at varying times throughout the day and continued developing flexible engagement opportunities that accommodated students balancing work, military, family, and academic responsibilities. The department also strengthened referral processes and collaboration with campus partners to improve access to academic, financial, wellness, and career readiness resources.

Despite staffing and resource limitations, the CBVC maximized student support through student leadership involvement, mentorship initiatives, volunteer engagement, and collaborative campus efforts that promoted holistic student success, belonging, and persistence.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2026 - 2027

- Increase consistent student engagement and participation in CBVC programs and services
- Expand outreach efforts to better support underserved and less-engaged student populations
- Strengthen the Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter through increased membership, leadership development, and programming initiatives
- Enhance academic success, retention, and persistence outcomes for military-affiliated students
- Increase leadership development and career readiness opportunities through mentorship and the VA Work-Study Program
- Expand campus and community partnerships to strengthen holistic student support services
- Improve assessment strategies and student feedback collection to better measure student learning and program effectiveness
- Continue fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where students feel seen, heard, valued, and supported

Student Testimonials and Stories:

"The CBVC did not just help me with my VA benefits — they helped change my life. Through their support, I was able to receive guidance with my VA compensation process, gain employment through the VA Work- Study Program, and reduce financial stress so I could focus more on school and my family. The staff made sure I felt seen, heard, and supported every step of the way."- Deborah

"Being involved with the CBVC helped me grow as a leader and build connections on campus. Through mentorship and engagement opportunities, I became more confident, more connected to the university, and more motivated to succeed academically and professionally."- Asia

"The CBVC created a space where students feel like family. Whether military-affiliated or not, students know they can come to the center for guidance, support, encouragement, and genuine care."- Wesley

FALL 2025 INFOGRAPHICS

LAKER NAVIGATORS

FALL 2025 AT A GLANCE

The Laker Navigator Program is designed to provide guidance, support, and connection to ensure participants do not have to navigate their journey alone. The program offers a trusted point of peer contacts who helps new students identify challenges, access campus and community resources, and stay on track toward their academic, personal, and professional goals. By focusing on advocacy, accountability, and empowerment, the Laker Navigator Program works to reduce barriers, increase engagement, and foster confidence. Resulting in belonging, and long-term success.

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The Laker Navigator Program **successfully mentored 68 freshmen** and new transfer students for Fall 2025. This was the first semester of the restart of the Laker Navigator Program after almost one (1) year.



The Laker Navigator mentors were **invited by six (6) CSU 1000 instructors** to participate in their classes for the Fall 2025 semester, and to mentor students by providing real life situations.



12.27% of freshmen students participated in the Laker Navigator Program — and of those, **96% reported improved academic performance** and a stronger sense of being seen and supported.

WHY THIS PROGRAM MATTERS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

The Laker Navigator Program matters because it creates equity and access to support by intentionally reaching students who may not naturally seek help, ensuring that success is not left to chance but built through consistent guidance, meaningful relationships, and intentional connection to opportunity.

COMMUNITY, BELONGING & VETERANS CENTER

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FALL 2025 AT A GLANCE

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center (CBVC) empowers students—especially veterans and military-connected individuals—by providing a welcoming, inclusive space, personalized support, and meaningful connections. Through targeted programs, advocacy, and community-building initiatives, the center ensures every student feels seen, valued, and equipped to succeed academically, personally, and professionally.



The CBVC served 715 enrolled military-affiliated students, where we provided assistance in their transition, sense of community and belonging. The center also served as an information hub, source for community service and veteran affairs support.



Military-affiliated students raised their overall **GPA from 2.96 (Summer 2025) to 3.03 (Fall 2025)**—a direct result of CBVC's focused academic support and advocacy.



All military-affiliated students in need, received personalized support from the Community, Belonging & Veterans Center, including help with VA education benefits and ways to pay for college, ensuring they have the resources and advocacy needed to succeed.

The CBVC matters because it gives military-affiliated students a sense of familiarity and understanding, reflecting the experiences of serving or supporting a family member who served, while providing support and connection on campus.



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FALL 2025 CAMPUS IMPACT

ENGAGEMENT

36.9% of military-affiliated students actively participated in CBVC events, taking advantage of opportunities to connect and engage with campus resources.

These students gained access to tailored support, networking opportunities, and guidance that help them navigate life and personal development.

CBVC engagement helps non-traditional students feel welcomed, supported, and connected, providing a space where their unique experiences are recognized and valued.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Students connected with CBVC completed 250+ service hours, fostering civic engagement and reinforcing their role as active, contributing members of the Clayton State community.

Students actively giving back through CBVC programs help strengthen campus-community partnerships and inspire a culture of service.

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL



"Before I met Mrs. White, CBVC Coordinator, my VA compensation claim was at 0%, and I felt completely lost trying to navigate the process on my own. With her guidance, support, and expertise, she helped me complete every step correctly, and I was able to get my claim approved at 100%. I couldn't have done it without her—she made a complicated process manageable and gave me confidence every step of the way."

Elaine, Senior, Veteran, BA of Science



Community, Belonging, & Veterans Center

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SPRING 2026 INFOGRAPHICS

COMMUNITY, BELONGING & VETERANS CENTER

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SPRING 2026 AT A GLANCE

The Community, Belonging & Veterans Center (CBVC) empowers students—especially veterans and military-connected individuals—by providing a welcoming, inclusive space, personalized support, and meaningful connections. Through targeted programs, advocacy, and community-building initiatives, the center ensures every student feels seen, valued, and equipped to succeed academically, personally, and professionally.



The CBVC served 710 enrolled military-affiliated students, of the 710 students:

- 110 are Military Veterans
- 99 Active Duty and Reserve



RETENTION & COMPLETION

- 3.06 Average GPA of military affiliated students
- 76 military-affiliated students graduated in Spring 2026

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Community, Belonging, & Veterans Center (CBVC) held **15 service opportunities** for Clayton State University students.

In April 2026, the CBVC organized the **2nd Annual Community Care Day**, with 108 student, faculty, and staff volunteers and 11 service sites.

BELONGING

The Laker Navigator Peer Mentoring program held **19 engagement events** with **457 participants**.

The program continued partnership with CSU 1000 instructors to provide inside the classroom peer mentoring support.

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