

Tutoring program aims to help student veterans

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Veterans having a tough time adjusting to college life may find help in a new tutoring program tailored specifically to their needs.

The spring semester marks the beginning of the Writing Center Tutor Corps, a new program aimed at the needs of Texas State's veteran community. The program's methods involve military-based techniques and workshops to assist student veterans in developing and improving writing skills, as well as transitioning into the social world of a university.

Strategies in the program include mission-oriented workshops that set specific objectives for student veterans and a more structured environment for improving writing skills.

The basis for the program spawned from the experiences of Micah Wright, Writing Center Veterans Coordinator. After serving four years in the Marine Corps, Wright attended the University of Texas-San Antonio where he discovered coming from a different discipline made it difficult to relate to the student body.

Wright's familiarity with the disconnected lifestyle of college veterans and serving students prompted him to help them settle into a non-military atmosphere through peer assistance using military-concept programs.

"The whole mission is to bring veterans together," Wright said. "Because military students are non-traditional, the best way to bridge the gap is to increase the veterans' ability to adapt."

Tutor Dean Shaffer said a critical purpose of the program is to help student veterans, as well as those currently serving in the military, complete their degrees.

"Graduation rates for veterans have been steadily declining," Shaffer said. "They don't feel socially active and as a result, wind up dropping out."

Shaffer said if a student veteran makes it through the first year, their chances of graduation increase, rendering the program's efforts vital early on in their college career. The program aims to achieve this by making the college experience a



Elise Laird, Staff Photographer

Beckie La Point, criminal justice senior, spreads awareness to Jesse Huertas, criminal justice senior, in The Quad Jan. 31 to help gain participants for the Veteran's Writing Program.

comfortable rather than unfamiliar one for veterans.

"We're working to make it more accessible to veterans," Shaffer said. "All the tutors have been trained in the program's methods. So, if someone is comfortable with one tutor, they can stay with that tutor."

The program is also working with organizations such as Veterans Alliance at Texas State in order to expand its reach among the campus community.

Jeremy Casselberry, Navy veteran and president of Veterans Alliance at Texas State, emphasized the importance of using the tutoring program and VATS to bring the serving student community together.

"We're really helping to get the word out," Casselberry said. "We have more than 1,100 veterans on campus. So, we're hoping this helps get them connected with one another."