



SVS NEWSLETTER MAY, 2021

SUPPORTING FINANCIAL TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In order to support transition to higher education and acknowledging the financial challenges that study can bring with it, ACU has established the Student Veteran Technology & Book Grant. This grant is available to all student veterans in their first year of study and aims to support transition into study by alleviating some of the financial burdens of study such as textbooks and/or purchasing new technology.

This month the recipients of the Technology and Book grant for semester one were announced. There were 9 students selected to receive the grant. These students received a \$500 voucher to be used at the School Locker where they can purchase technology, textbooks, and/or supplies. This was a total of \$4500 in grants supplied to student veterans in their first year of study who identified they could benefit from assistance in purchasing technology and/or textbooks.

We are looking forward to semester 2 where we will be awarding several more grants to recently commenced students.

RECOGNIZING VETERAN IMPACT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

In line with ACU's mission and identity there is a strong focus on engaging within the community and giving back where possible. To recognise the contributions made by student veterans studying at ACU we developed the Student Veteran Impact Award. This award provides an opportunity for students to nominate themselves and peers for recognition of academic achievement in conjunction with active involvement within the university or wider community.

Nominations for the Student Veteran Impact Award closed early in 2021 with several students recently being announced as recipients. Two continuing students were announced as recipients of this award, Daniel Hema and Michael McLaughlin.

Daniel is currently completing a Bachelor's in educational studies with the intent to transfer to Bachelor of Primary Education in semester 2 2021. Daniel has been actively involved within the ACU community in addition to working within the community setting.



Pictured: Michael McLaughlin

Michael is completing a Bachelors of Psychological Science and has been actively involved in supporting the veteran community on campus.

Both students demonstrated a high level of academic ability in addition to the community engagement.

These students will be presented their awards at the Inaugural Award event being held in November 2021. Nominations will open again for students to apply; selected students will also be presented with their awards at this event.



ACU Veteran Exercise Lifestyle Program

WHAT IS THE EXERCISE LIFESTYLE PROGRAM

The ACU Veteran Exercise Lifestyle program is a full-funded exercise support program available to student veterans and their families at ACU. The Veteran Exercise Lifestyle Program is designed to maximise veteran health and provide an additional service to the veteran community. The program includes access to the Exercise Lifestyle Clinics (ELC) on campus with highly trained staff who oversee the program, 1-on-1 sessions, and group training.

The program is facilitated by Clinical Exercise Physiologists operating within the Exercise Lifestyle Clinic (ELC). The initial offering of the program was for student veterans completing study at ACU, hoping to provide additional flexibility to access health and fitness services whilst studying.

This year the program has increased its scope to provide access to the program for families of veterans and the wider veteran community. The feedback from participants has been very positive with many family members taking advantage of the program as well as students.

OFFERING SUPPORT NATIONALLY

The ACU Veteran Exercise Lifestyle program was initially piloted in semester 2 2020. Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback the program was continued in its second iteration during semester 1 2021. During this second iteration staff at the Exercise Lifestyle Clinic in Melbourne have been facilitating sessions in addition to the Brisbane sessions. This has allowed for significant expansion of the program and for students at the Melbourne campus to take advantage of face-to-face sessions. The hopes are to continue expanding the program to other campuses such as Strathfield in NSW.



For those students who are looking to balance their academic lifestyle with appropriate physical care, this program will work for them. Open over multiple days with large amounts of hours, any timeline will work for the student. With the vast degree of expertise, student veterans can request any kind of training and have it organised for them.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The exercise lifestyle program is a tremendous success that is thoroughly well received by the student veteran cohort. Looking to the future we are hoping to expand the program to wider reaches within the community through with additional funding.



University Experience Day

Providing pathways to Higher Education

Transitioning from defence can be a challenging time. Providing current and ex-serving members with all future pathways allows for the most informed decision. Higher education is a complex pathway and often one that has not seemed available to service members in the past. The University Experience Day is a tailored experience specifically for current and ex-serving members of the ADF to see what 'a day in the life of' a student looks like. A big focus of the day is breaking the down the perceived barriers of study and developing the confidence within members that they can study. The first University Experience Day was held on Friday the 28th May 2021.

The day started with an engaging TED style talk given by Dr Dan Van Den Hoek, the talk orientated around 'socks' and how each day we put on a new pair of socks. This was a great metaphor with socks representing the different focuses in our life, the skills we develop, and the careers we have. Dr Dan highlighted that there is a misconception around the requirement of being 'smart' to study at university and that success is more a matter of perseverance – an emphasis was put on the fact that the members had already demonstrated this.

From there the Student Experience Panel was conducted. This panel was comprised of 5 current student veterans who were in their 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of study. This panel spoke on their experiences in defence and transition out. Panel members highlighted their concerns about coming into university and how many of these concerns were dispelled once started. Having the panel of student veterans speak on their experiences was invaluable as it showed that it can be done and being concerned about study is completely normal.

Members were given a guided tour of the campus with lunch provided at 'The Deck' overlooking the grass common area iconic to the Brisbane campus. This lunch gave an opportunity for members to speak more informally with the Student Experience Panel members about their individual experiences.

Finally to wrap up the day we held a Student Services Panel which included representatives from the first peoples directorate, career development services, academic skills unit, community engagement and several Ex-Service Organisations (ESO) including Soldier On, RSL Queensland and Open Arms

Through speaking with the Soldier Recovery Centre (SRC) at Gallipoli barracks we were given the opportunity to host members of the SRC and members of 8/9th Battalion. It was great to have the members on campus and the ACU staff felt truly grateful to meet them.





Thank you for reading

Thank you for your time and continued support. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please reply or email studentveteranservices@acu.edu.au – STOP.

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