

Veteran Support Committee 01/22/2024

Present: Marty Adams, Trice Batson, Charles Heidelberg, Denise Lindsley, Russ Panico, Larry Sandt

1. Welcome! Meeting was called to order at 3:35. New member Larry Sandt was welcomed
2. VITAL Rep. Kalamazoo Valley welcomed a second VA employee to our campus on a weekly basis starting Fall 2023. Rebecca Mendoza is a VA VITAL (Veterans Integration To Academic Leadership) representative. She will alternate Monday and Tuesday mornings in our veterans lounge. Her focus will be on recently separated veterans transitioning onto campus. She will help anyone with any VA issues however.
3. Veteran Friendly School - 3rd year running. Current Veteran Numbers are approximately 235, compared to approximately 237 in Winter 2023.
4. After Action Review Veterans Day
 - a. Flag Raising - Huge Success. Russ Panico was thanked for his remarks. Comments were made that it would have been nice to have all school leadership in attendance. The hope is to move the event back to Texas Township for November 11, 2024. The TTC site provides an overhang for inclement weather and usually has better attendance than we saw at Anna Whitten Hall this month (attendance in the 30's at TTC versus 20's at AWH).
 - b. Student Veteran Round Table - Students were complimented by Trice Batson for their respectfulness and willingness to share their story. Having food at the event was a plus. Need more ways to advertise this for next year but definitely want to continue doing it.
 - c. High School veteran petting zoo - Only the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy expressed interest and the event was not held. Charles commented that it is probably too logistically complicated for area high school administrators to support.
5. Pot lucks? - Most of committee members were supportive of the idea of some sort of pot luck in the veterans lounge this semester possibly a kind of "mid-rats" for students during midterms and the transition week from 1st 7-week courses to 2d 7-week courses.
6. Veterans Wall
 - a. No new information. Nkenge has spoken to both Dannie Alexander and Dr. Washington about concerns. Russ P spoke to Dannie about it in 2023. We are told it will be addressed but no timeline given. Charles encouraged members who hear concerns to send inquiries either to him or directly to Facilities Management.
7. Meeting was adjourned at 4:17 PM