

American Public Univ. opens local vets' center

May 1, 2016

By Mary Stortstrom (mstortstrom@journal-news.net) , Journal News

Save |      

CHARLES TOWN-American Public University System, which includes American Military University, is continuing its outreach to local veterans with the grand opening of the university's new Veterans Center, which will provide veterans with a place to study, prepare for careers and meet other veterans.

George Vukovich, director of veterans outreach at APUS, said the university administration created the Veterans Center with a goal of increasing the university's outreach to the veteran community in the Eastern Panhandle.

"We want to help veterans succeed in the college classroom, particularly at community colleges because there are a lot of vets right now on the post-9/11 G.I. Bill who are running out of entitlements," Vukovich said. "They have a 15-year window and a lot of them have let time lapse. We think we can get them back into the college classroom."

Article Photos



Journal photo by Mary Stortstrom

Vukovich said the Veterans Center, located at 300 S. George St. in Charles Town, has hosted academic boot camps, which are weekend-long refresher courses in reading, writing and mathematics. The academic boot camp consists of two eight-and-a-half hour sessions, with writing and reading courses on Saturday and math courses on Sunday.

In addition to the academic boot camp, the Veterans Center will also host workshops for resume writing and preparation to help unemployed veterans get into the workforce.

"It's not just for students, it's for the local veteran community," John P. Aldrich, vice president of military, veterans and community college relations. "George (Vukovich) has been working with the VA Medical Center in Martinsburg and veterans who are patients there can come here for resume writing workshop, career workshops and our academic boot camp."

Vukovich, who is himself a veteran, said reading comprehension, writing and mathematics are all perishable skills. If these skills are not put to use for a long period of time, he said, they begin to deteriorate.

Charles Palocy, president of the Student Veterans of America chapter at APUS, said the university's Veterans Center will provide a place for veterans to meet.

"With American Military University being an online school, we have people all across the country. One of the best ways to get people interacting is with veterans centers like this. When they tour APUS, they know there's a place just for (veterans)," Palocy said. "One of the things a lot of veterans have is once you separate from the military, you're used to being around the same type of people, and when you're not, you feel lost."

Palocy said since the Student Veterans of America chapter was founded at APUS in 2012, the group has grown to more than 3,200 students and alumni.

According to Vukovich, the building that houses the Veterans Center was formerly the university's information technology building. Once the university's new IT building was completed, the building at 300 S. George Street was converted into the Eastern Panhandle Technology and Innovation Center (EPTIC). Vukovich said it "only makes sense" that the Veterans Center be co-located with EPTIC, which encourages entrepreneurship.

-Staff writer Mary Stortstrom can be reached at 304-725-6581 or www.twitter.com/mstortstromJN.