

Friday, Apr 21, 2017

Career Services, Veterans Support Services collaborate on veteran employment efforts

A new partnership between Oakland University's offices of Career Services and Veterans Support Services is helping to connect the university's student veterans with employers looking to hire them. A work-study position, funded by the Veterans Administration, was recently created to facilitate these connections and help student veterans find career and internship opportunities.

Jeffrey Schuett, Veteran Resource Representative at OU, said the partnership with Career Services helped the Veterans Support Services office overcome space limitations and better serve the university's more than 300 student veterans.

"We are afforded a number of VA-funded work-study positions, but we just didn't have a place for them to actually work," Schuett explained. "Because Career Services agreed to host this position, it is now possible to entertain the demand from employers seeking out veterans, as well as meet the needs and goals of our student veterans pursuing a new career path."

Justin Nabarrette, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force, has been hired for the position and is working with both offices to reach out to veteran-friendly employers at the local, state and national level. The Waterford native served nine years of active duty and is now a member of the Air National Guard at Selfridge Air Force Base. He works closely with OU Career Consultant Denise McConkey to build relationships with veteran-friendly employers and keep student veterans informed of resources available to them.

In addition, Nabarrette is responsible for creating a monthly newsletter highlighting career, internship, networking and professional development opportunities for veterans, along with expanding online, career-related resources specific to veterans and veteran alumni.

According to Wayne Thibodeau, senior director of Career Services at Oakland, having a work-study student with military experience on campus strengthens Oakland's ability to connect veterans with job opportunities.

"Our veterans have served all over the world," Thibodeau said. "Their knowledge and skills are adaptable to many different occupations and work settings. It helps us tremendously to have someone in this work-study position who, having served in the military himself, understands the value that veterans bring to the marketplace and the roles they can play for employers in a variety of fields."

One of Nabarrette's first assignments was coordinating with Veterans Support Services, Career Services and the Student Veterans of OU (SVOU) to plan the annual Veterans Professional Networking Dinner, which took place in March on OU's campus.



Justin Nabarrette, a marketing major and nine-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, recently hired as a work-study employee to help build connections between OU's student veteran population and veteran-friendly employers.



Pictured from left: Wayne Thibodeau, Justin Nabarrette, Denise McConkey and Jeffrey Schuett.

including Quicken Loans, Flagstar Bank, Verizon, Blue Cross Blue Shield and the State of Michigan.

Attendees networked with employer representatives over dinner and heard from three guest speakers, who offered advice on the job search process, interviewing, resources for veterans, and transitioning from active duty to civilian life, among other topics. SVOU President Ivan Rose served as master of ceremonies for the event.

“We had a great turnout on both sides – veterans and employers,” said Nabarrette, a junior majoring in marketing at OU. “These career-oriented events are a win-win. Not only do they give our veterans an edge in the job hunt, but the employers get a sense of what veterans can offer in terms of the unique skill sets and experiences they gained while serving our country.”

The Veterans Support Services and Career Services offices are both located in North Foundation Hall, in room 116 and room 154 respectively.

Learn more about Veteran Support Services at oakland.edu/veterans.

Visit the Career Services website at oakland.edu/careerservices.



OU veterans networked with employers from a variety of fields during the annual Veterans Professional Networking Dinner.



Ivan Rose, president of Student Veterans of Oakland University, served as master of ceremonies for the Veterans Professional Networking Dinner.