

Dear Incoming MTSU students,

Welcome. My name is Dr. Hilary Miller and I have the good fortune to be the Director of MTSU's new Veteran and Military Family Center (VMFC or Center). While the physical Center is a relatively recent addition to campus, MTSU's **Commitment** to the military and veterans is longstanding. During WWII, we trained pilots to fly. The runways actually went right by where the Keathley University Center is now. After the war, we then welcomed service members back to the University, creating a "Vet Village" for veteran and their families to live while completing their degrees.

This same level of **Commitment** can currently be seen in the space allocation, staffing, and budgeting provided for the VMFC, which, is the largest and most comprehensive educational veterans center in Tennessee. The 2,600-square foot space is located in the heart of campus, 124 Keathley, and provides for the needs of our roughly 1,000 student-veterans and family members.

The work we do in the Center can generally be categorized into a five-point mission, further demonstrating MTSU's Commitment, as we are focused beyond recruitment to the entire academic career. The VMFC seeks to:

• **Enroll** student-veterans and family members • **Encourage** them while at MTSU • **Employ** our students in careers • **Educate** the University community on student-veteran needs • **Expand** the veteran-education knowledge base.

Needless to say, when you have a detailed mission, something is always going on. Below are just a few of the ways having a long **Commitment** to veterans has made us different:

- Leadership. MTSU cares enough about our student-veterans to ensure that there are people working on their behalf. In addition to the VMFC staff, MTSU hired Lt. Gen. Keith Huber, an Army veteran with over 38-years of military service, as the Senior Advisor for Veterans and Leadership Initiatives. Also, MTSU has a dedicated group of faculty and staff who have made extensive contributions to veteran education. This group forms the Military and Veteran Affairs Committee and reports to the executive level. In a time when most universities have allocated few resources to veterans, this level of **Commitment** is extremely rare.
- Relationship with the VA. We were the first school in Tennessee, and only the 12th in the nation, to host a VA's VetSuccess on-Campus program. Moreover, we have a VA mental-health counselor housed in the Center and a VA representative is on site every Wednesday.
- Strong Student-Veteran Voice. We have a designated veteran's position within the Student Government Association and an active student organization, Blue Raiders American Veterans Organization (BRAVO).
- Information Provided. We offer a specialized veterans orientation to complement the traditional student orientation sessions and the expert GI Bill assistance provided through the VMFC is second to none. Too, veterans and their families are encourage to spend time in the lounge, where the coffee, snacks, and printing are always free, and more information than expected is passed along informally peer-to-peer and through our sponsorship program.
- Specialized Services. Our philosophy is that we must address life needs, if we want to support our veterans' academic needs. This is why we partner so tightly with the VA, why we offer legal clinics, career counseling, and include the entire family in the services provided.

Perhaps the best way to share with you the Center is to actually share it. So, I leave you with this invitation: whether you are currently military, a veteran, a military family member, or civilian, come visit MTSU's Veterans and Military Family Center. You are welcome at any of the events that we host regularly, such as the 9/11 Remembrance, the Salute to the Armed Forces football weekend, and the Veterans Stole Ceremonies before each graduation.

In closing, MTSU has consistently been recognized as one of the most veteran-oriented intuitions in higher education. We have done that by staying true to our long history of **Commitment** to veterans and their families. Thank you, MTSU. I am so proud to say: I am [Red, White] and True Blue!

Very Respectfully,

Dr. Hilary Miller, Director