

# Butler Eagle

## BC3 welcomes veterans with student needs

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Many veterans returning home have a difficult transition to civilian life. That even may be more so if those returning veterans decide to go to school.

But Butler County Community College has enhanced efforts to help student veterans feel welcomed when they come to its campus by having veteran experts in financial aid help with their paperwork, having speakers talk about the transition from combat to campus and having the Student Veterans Association play a role in the improvements student veterans want.

The SVA, which had been inactive for five years, became active again last school year and has played a role giving student veterans a voice and a space at BC3.

A veterans lounge with chairs, a television and computer opened today at BC3's Student Success Center.

"They can get that quiet time they might need," said Adam Smith, SVA president, of the lounge. It also will become a veterans "communication hot spot."

Student veterans are of varying ages and life experiences as compared to more traditional younger students who are taking classes right out of high school. Some student veterans might feel isolated because of that, but the veterans association tries to alleviate that by befriending them on campus.

"Military camaraderie is a different animal," said Jason Brannon, an SVA officer and second year homeland security major. "We've done some of the same thing, shared some of the same struggles," and it is easy to make a connection with fellow veterans.

Brannon, 34, served in the Army for 11 years and was in Afghanistan.

Case Willoughby, vice president for Student Services, said veterans serving in every conflict from the Vietnam War on are represented at BC3.

"We're trying to raise awareness of the issues veterans face, but without stereotyping them," Willoughby said.

Another way BC3 will recognize student veterans is through a new scholarship. The Ross A. McGinnis "Pay a Good Deed Scholarship" will recognize veterans with a \$500 scholarship

awarded each fall.

McGinnis of Knox was 19 years old when he died in combat. His heroic efforts saved four lives.