CWU has received a Partners for Veterans Supportive Campuses certificate from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA). CWU is one of just 14 educational institutions in Washington to earn the WDVA designation, which recognizes the importance the university places on serving America’s veterans.

With an average class size of 25 students, CWU offers active duty and military veterans the individual attention and academic support they need to be successful in their civilian careers and lives.

Veterans can choose from more than 150 programs offered face-to-face, online, or a combination of the two. With campus facilities in nine locations and a robust online curriculum, CWU is easy for veterans to reach, regardless of where they live and work.

Of course, all CWU classes—regardless of how they’re offered—come with a commitment to serve veterans first. Student-military members receive priority when registering for classes. Additionally, veterans and their family members may qualify for lower state tuition regardless of their state of origin.

In 2009, after veterans expressed an interest in having a place to go for assistance, CWU opened a full-service Veterans Center, one of the first such centers established on a college campus in Washington. The center provides services specifically for veterans including assistance with complicated Department of Defense forms and help in sorting out paperwork from other schools. Additionally, the center is a space for military students to relax.

Center staff, who are veterans themselves, can also connect students with health care options and provide a single point of contact for a wide variety of other services. Staff travels throughout the year to military bases and CWU’s campuses to assist veterans and their families.

“Our goal is to make the transition from military to student life as easy as possible for veterans.”

Ruben Cardenas, director, Veterans Center

More than 600 active-duty, National Guard, reservist, and retired military personnel, along with their family members, are now studying and earning degrees through CWU. They are doing so at the university’s main campus in Ellensburg, at eight CWU satellite campuses statewide, and through courses that are now offered on Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

“Veterans Services at Central Washington University

“We’re always seeking new opportunities to create or reinforce the relationships we have with veterans and veterans’ groups. We want them to know they are welcome and valued here.”

CWU President James L. Gaudino, US Air Force veteran, Turkey and Germany.
CWU is also home to SALUTE (Service, Academics, Leadership, Unity, Tribute, and Excellence) Veterans National Honor Society. CWU’s chapter was the first established in the Pacific Northwest, and is one of only 81 national chapters at colleges and universities. Members include retirees, disabled veterans, active duty military, National Guard, and reservists returning to higher education, starting second careers, or helping fund their college careers with military service.

To be inducted into the CWU chapter, students must have an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 for undergraduate students or a GPA of 3.5 for graduate students. They also must either have an honorable discharge from the armed forces or be currently serving on active duty or in the National Guard or reserves.

CWU partners with Kittitas County Veterans Coalition (KCVC) to provide direct services to veterans and their dependents. It is comprised of veteran volunteers of the four locally active, nationally chartered veteran services organizations, Reserve Officers’ Training Corps cadets, and non-veteran volunteers. KCVC identifies services that fill the unmet needs of veterans, as well as improving stability and quality of life. KCVC is part of the state’s County Veterans Coalition, an association of people in the county who coordinate services for veterans and their families. WDVA has recognized also KCVC for its outstanding work in veterans’ services.

CWU is also home to nationally rated Air Force and Army ROTC programs.

“These teachers at Central had armed me for life in ways that my rifle could not.”

Four-star General James N. Mattis (Ret.), Class of ’71, BA, History
11th Commander of United States Central Command