

Faculty & Staff Spotlight: Dr. Katherine Selber

Dr. Katherine Selber has accepted the role of interim director of Social Work with an



unwavering dedication to serve the school and advocate for United States veterans. Her research interests include organizational effectiveness in delivering services and building capacity to respond to the needs of veterans and military connected students. Every day, Dr. Selber learns from our veterans and is tremendously proud to be a devoted supporter to our military population.

In 2004, Dr. Selber's son entered the Air Force and for the next 20 years was deployed six times for over 1,500 days to Iraq and Afghanistan, which ignited her

passion to promote the well-being of service members. She saw first-hand her son's journey from deployments back to civilian life and the hardships of military service, which led her to focus on veteran treatment on a national level. As universities experienced an influx of veterans around 2008, her shift focused close to home. People who have served gain leadership experience, learn essential special skills, and are able to assess and overcome oftentimes strenuous situations – making them invaluable assets as strong leaders and dutiful contributors in the workplace and in the community. Texas State strives to provide resources to accommodate those experiencing the transition from military life to academia.

The [Texas State Veterans Advisory Council \(VAC\)](#) was established in 2008 and is a collective of various representatives from different units across campus. The Veterans Alliance of Texas State (VATS) (*pictured right*) is the student veteran organization and official members of VAC. Melissa Hyatt is the



Associate University Registrar and the current chair of VAC who oversees council operations and coordinates with faculty and staff from admissions, counseling, student success, housing, disability services office, financial aid, and more. Members provide diverse perspectives – some are former service members, family members, and veteran advocates. VAC has met monthly for 14 years to focus on academic support and overall well-being for TXST [veterans and military connected students](#). VAC administers a needs assessment survey to identify priorities, where to expend program resources, and how to administer the services of each unit effectively. Academic support has been strengthened through the peer tutoring program offered in the [Veterans Academic Success Center \(VASC\)](#). This is an effort to provide military-connected students with resources and a mentor assistance program to support academic success.



The VAC collaborative efforts identify supplemental services, such as mental health assistance and recreational adventure groups. VAC understands the importance of individual efforts to give people in this community a welcoming and diversified

network. Housing initiative efforts strive to have accommodations for student veterans to retain their community. VAC has built a long-standing community partnership with the Hays County Veteran Service Office to guide veterans through transitional processes. Ross Wood, the Associate Director of Career Services and a former service member, assists veterans with resumés and interview skills. VAC welcomes those interested in joining and recommends attending social events that are offered on campus. The [TXST Veterans Day Event](#) will have Lieutenant Colonel William B. Selber as the featured TXST alumni speaker. The event will be held on Tuesday, November 7th in the LBJ ballroom and is open to all.

Dr. Kelly Clary as Principal Investigator and Dr. Selber as Co-PI have collaborated on an internally funded study called “Conceptualizing Student Veteran Well-Being Through the Lens of the Camera: A Photovoice Project.” This project was a community-based participatory action research that aimed to collaborate and empower student veterans. Participants were asked to take pictures that represent many aspects of their well-being, and these images and narratives will be analyzed and shared with the public to enrich military-connected student networking at Texas State. This project aims to understand the following questions: What does it mean to transition from active duty to civilian life? How does the campus support their well-being? What negatively impacts their well-being? One of the goals is to analyze the data from the project for appropriate methods

for application into program development through VAC.

James Lambert, a Texas State graduate and veteran, is an active guest speaker and mentor in Hays and Travis Counties. He earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in the Social Work program and now works for a local veteran service organization. James had arrived at TXST experiencing many hardships that veterans face when they leave service. His interactions with social workers during his transition to civilian life inspired his decision to explore the social work program and to pay forward the help he was given. He gained hands-on experience building peer-to-peer support services during his internships. James has earned his license in social work and is now an incredibly successful practitioner. His notable work spreads to community work for the Samaritan Center in Austin. He truly is an inspiration because of his academic achievements, for building a valuable network at Texas State, and being an active role model for fellow veterans.

Dr. Selber's focus over the next 5 – 10 years is to bridge the divide between military and civilian populations. This will require an immensely long-standing commitment from all institutional efforts – including both the private and public sector and educational institutions – to identify the essential needs of the veteran population in real time. As a nation, it is imperative to follow through the commitment of life and liberty by honoring and protecting our service members.



For more information about resources for veterans and military connected students, please visit:

[TXST Veterans Day Commemoration - Tuesday, November 7th 2023](#)

[San Marcos Veterans Day Parade](#)

[Texas State Veterans and Military Connected Students](#)

[Office of Veterans Affairs](#)

[Veteran Academic Success Center](#)

[Veterans Advisory Council](#)