

## **Columbus State University named 'military friendly' school by G.I. Jobs magazine**

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**By LARRY GIERER**

Columbus State University is a “military friendly” school. That’s according to G.I. Jobs magazine. The school’s Director of Military Affairs, Lt. Col. Mark Ridley, agrees but says the institution has “got to get better at it.”

“We’re military friendly, but we’re working to do even more for our soldiers and veterans,” Ridley said. “We’re not going to be passive and say we’re military friendly.”

He said getting more military friendly is the reason his position was recently created.

The list published by G.I. Jobs honors the top 15 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools which are doing the most to embrace America’s veterans as students.

More than 7,000 schools across the country were polled. The common bond among the military friendly schools is the shared priority of recruiting students with military experience.

“Columbus State University is so very proud to have received this very special designation,” Columbus State University President Tim Mescon stated in a press release, “Our proximity to Fort Benning and the Maneuver Center for Excellence is most valued. We are committed to developing and delivering academic programs that meets the needs of our men and women serving our country and their dependents in a manner that respects the academic integrity of our curriculum and addresses the special requirements of those in military service.”

There are several ways the university shows its eagerness to help the military.

For those stationed at Fort Benning, the application fee is waived as are nonresident fees. There are online classes and some classes taught on post.

“We just have one classroom out at Fort Benning now,” Ridley said. The school hopes to get more.

CSU is accepting more credits from other accredited schools as soldiers take classes elsewhere and is giving credits for experience. For example, someone working with the military police might earn some school credits in criminology.

“We want to start a chapter of Student Veterans of America,” Ridley said.

SVA chapters on campus coordinate campus activities, provide pre-professional networking and help in other ways.