Easing the Transition: Veteran Success is the Mission

Lisa LaVigna, Executive Director of Outreach
Kate Looney, Director of the Veterans Success Center
Introduction
Example 1: Excelsior College
Example 2: Tidewater Community College
Best practices
Question & Answer
Our Veteran Population

There are 21.8 million veterans in the United States.

Male Veterans
20.2 million

Female Veterans
1.6 million

A veteran is more likely than the average American to have earned a high school diploma, but less likely to have completed a college degree.

92% of veterans 25 and older have at least a high school diploma compared with 86% of the total population

26% of veterans 25 and older have at least a bachelor’s degree compared with 28% of the total population
"I would show up on campus, talk to absolutely no one and go home," said Army veteran Ben Miller, 27, who did three tours in Iraq as a counterintelligence specialist. "I didn't feel like I really belonged."
The *transition* into the military was not an overnight process.

Educators should not expect the transition from the military to the classroom to be any quicker.
The Educational Journey of a Student Veteran

- HS - DIPLOMA
- U.S. NAVY
- COLLEGE 2 (37 SH) AA DEGREE
- COLLEGE 3 (3 SH)
- COLLEGE 4 (12 SH)
- COLLEGE 5 (3 SH)
- COLLEGE 6 (3 SH)
- COLLEGE 7 (3 SH)
- COLLEGE 8 (3 SH)
- COLLEGE 9 (39 SH) BS DEGREE
- COLLEGE 10 (30 SH)
- COLLEGE 11 (18 SH) MA DEGREE
- RETIRED MS DEGREE
- COLLEGE 12 (66 SH) EDD IN PROGRESS
Ten Things You Should Know

- Student veterans are a highly diverse group – as diverse as America itself.
- They will want to see their military skill set recognized.
- They can feel very alone on campus. Particularly female veterans.
- They may be unaware of mild traumatic brain injuries.
- There are things to always say and things to never say.
- They will expect you to be trying to recruit them.
- Most will put their commitment to military service above educational aspirations.
- They are used to structure and documentation.
- To succeed, veterans need your understanding, compassion, and respect.
- Employers want to hire Veterans. Veterans are one of America’s greatest untapped human resources.
Veterans and Military Affairs

SUNY Broome is approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a training facility for veterans and other eligible students. We currently coordinate services for more than 110 veterans who are attending classes and receiving veteran's benefits; tutorial assistance, referrals for counseling for financial, vocational and academic problems; veterans work-study job information; and important information about resources available to them at the college. This office acts as a direct liaison between SUNY Broome Community College and the Veterans Administration Regional Office in Buffalo regarding payment of benefits.

Apply for VA Education Benefits
Types of GI Bill - Application for Benefits
New Post-9/11 GI Bill
Major Changes to Post 9/11 GI Bill in 2011
FAQ (PDF file)
Veteran’s Educational Benefits Request Form (PDF file)
Prior Education Transcripts

Please note that the SUNY Broome Veterans and Military Affairs Office is responsible for certifying and monitoring enrollment, academic progress, and other academic information.
Unique Solutions
Evaluating Credit

Official Evaluation Requirements

CTC awards evaluated credit for military education and experience and other nontraditional learning. Refer to the eligibility requirements and list of required documents:

- **Active Duty Military**: Servicemembers are eligible to receive an official evaluation upon admission to CTC and upon receipt of all official college transcripts and the Joint Service Transcript (JST).

- **Non Active Duty/Civilian**: Students are required to complete six semester hours with a 2.0 (C or better) grade point average with CTC.

Required Documents:

1. **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS**: ALL students must have official transcripts from any and all previously attended colleges and universities must be sent directly to CTC before an official evaluation can be processed. Student's copies of transcripts are not acceptable. This requirement can't be eliminated or modified.

2. **ACTIVE DUTY**: Go to [https://jst.doded.mil](https://jst.doded.mil) and send your official transcript to Central Texas College in Killeen, Texas. Click here for the Army Commander Certification.

3. **WARRANT OFFICERS**: Certified True Copy of Officer Record Brief and Officer Evaluation Report

4. **NAVY/MARINES/COAST GUARD**: Go to [https://jst.doded.mil](https://jst.doded.mil) and send your official transcript to Central Texas College in Killeen, Texas. Click here for the Marine Commander Certification.


6. **PRIOR SERVICE**: Students must submit a copy of DD 214, copies of NCOERS and certificate or DA 1059 of military service schools completed. Military work experience can't be over 10 years old to be considered for credit.

7. **TESTING**: In order to have CLEPS, DANES, ASE or APP considered for college credit, students must take the CLEPS, DANES, ASE or APP at a CTC Testing Center or approved testing centers.
Excelsior College Resources

- Veterans Success Center
  - www.excelsior.edu/web/veterans-center
- Center for Military Education
- Military Experts
  - Military Admissions Counselors
  - Military Academic Advisors
  - Military Representatives (On-Base)
- Mentorship Program
- Webinar Series
  - http://www.excelsior.edu/web/veterans-center/webinar-series
- Career Services
  - http://www.excelsior.edu/web/career-center/home
Support & Services

- Military Experts
  - They ‘get’ the Military!
  - Military Academic Advisors
  - Military Consultants
- Excelsior College Units
  - Institutional Support Units
- Legal & Financial Help
- Scholarships & Grants
  - Educational Funding
  - Federal Aid
  - Grants
  - Loans
  - Military Programs
  - Scholarships
- World of Work
  - Resources to help you start ahead, get ahead, and stay ahead

www.excelsior.edu
MyHealtheVet

- One-Stop center for veterans, active duty service members, their dependents, and caregivers.

VA Mental Health Services

- If you’re struggling, there is help!
  - Give An Hour
  - WarWithin
  - The Pathway Home
  - The Brainline
  - Troops First Foundation
  - Higher Ground

Know your health.

www.excelsior.edu
Mentorship Program

Webinar Series
- Using Your Post 9/11 VA Education Benefits
- Demonstrate Your Value to the Civilian Job Market
- How to Improve Your Writing
- Get LinkedIn to Your Career Network

Success Stories
- Join the VFW
- Find Balance
- Don’t Lose Hope
- Finish What You Start
- Get Your Dream Job

"When life presents you with a challenge; you can either run away or deal with it. What you decide, it defines you as a person."
If you’re struggling, there is help!

- DVA Mental Health Help
- Suicide Prevention Center
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Nation Against Suicide
- National Suicide Hotline

DVA
- Healthcare
- Female Vet Benefits
- Benefits
- Adaptive Housing
- Survivor Benefits
- Burial

Defeating Homelessness
- DVA Home Loan Guaranty
- We Soldier On
- Our Home Transitional

No One Stands Alone
Veteran Education Partnerships

- Developed to support the educational needs of members and employees of veteran associations, groups and veteran friendly employers and community colleges.

Capacity Builder Partnerships

- Help transitioning service members in bringing communities together which collaborate and coordinate services to support employment, education, health and other issues to promote reintegration and success in civilian, family and community life.
Vision Statement

To be a national model for providing comprehensive, high-quality programs and services that meet the current and future needs of students associated with the United States military.

Mission Statement

The Center for Military and Veterans Education will provide timely, responsive, effective academics and support services to students associated with the United States military, facilitating their educational and employability success.
Center for Military & Veteran Education

- VA Offices (4 campuses)
- Military Academic Advising
- Base Representatives
- Counseling Services
- Career and Employment Services
- Support Resources

- Manages and coordinates credit academic programs for military-related students
- Liaison with Deans and faculty to assess credit for military training
- Professional Development for faculty and staff
- Manage TCC participation in Navy Partnership

- Supports military commands, and unit training activities worldwide
- Provide contract continuing education training
- Workforce Development (industry-certifications)
- ROTC
One day is the difference between an active duty student and a student veteran:

Changes source of college funding; but does not change academic or family needs.
Goal:

- Ease the transition: Military Life to Educational Success & Employability
Advise for Educational Success

- Prepare in advance for placement testing
- Use skills assessments and placement tests to help with degree selection
- Prepare for delays in military education benefits
- Promote education “Ladders”

Educational Success
Military Life to Educational Success

- Students can spend years working on a degree to enter:
  - A low-paying career field
  - A career field that does not match aptitudes & lifestyles
  - A low-demand, high-unemployment career field

- This can be avoided !!!
  - Test for aptitude and career readiness
  - Research high-wage, high-demand degrees and certifications
  - Take advantage of academic advising and career counseling
  - Avoid advising into failure
Establish Employer Partnerships

“Reach-out” to military friendly employers

Identify areas of employment need

Determine opportunities for mutual benefit

Collaborate with college faculty and identify resources
Veterans may need to be “re-tuned”
  - They have changed jobs throughout their military career – “re-tuned” between front line (deployed job) and home station job

Example of good company sites
  - [http://www.microsoft-careers.com/content/military/we-still-serve/?utm_campaign=WeStillServeURL](http://www.microsoft-careers.com/content/military/we-still-serve/?utm_campaign=WeStillServeURL)
Transition: Goals, Plans, Success (GPS)

- **Pre-Separation Assessment and Individual Counseling:**
  - Individual counseling to discuss their career goals and start their transition process
  - Counseling session about benefits, resources, and available assistance
  - Develop an Individual Transition Plan

- **5-Day Core Curriculum:**
  - Includes a financial planning seminar
  - A workshop offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and services
  - Employment workshop offered by the Department of Labor
  - Military Occupational Code Crosswalk to translate their military skills, training, and experience into:
    - Civilian occupations, credentials, and employment.
    - Individual Transition Plan session will allow Members to seek guidance from subject matter experts, identify career goals, and develop a roadmap for their transition.
2-Day Optional Career-Specific Curriculum: have the option of participating in a series of two-day tracks within the Transition GPS curriculum:
- Education track - for those pursuing a higher education degree
- Technical and Skills Training track - for those seeking job-ready skills and industry-recognized credentials in shorter-term training programs
- Entrepreneurship track - for those wanting to start a business

A CAPSTONE Event: Before their separation from military service:
- Service members will participate in a CAPSTONE event
- Verifies that transitioning service members completed the Transition GPS curriculum
- Achieved Career Readiness Standards
8 Keys To Success
White House Guidelines to Help Veterans

1. Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for Veterans.

2. Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.

3. Implement an early alert system to ensure all Veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.

4. Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all Veterans, together with the creation of a designated space (even if limited in size).

5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for Veterans.

6. Use a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on Veterans, including demographics, retention and degree completion.

7. Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to Veterans.

8. Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for Veterans.

What Can We Do?

- Designate experts who are well-versed in all chapters of military as well as non-military funding options
- Treat this population with respect. Actively listen to their needs
- Early intervention processes
- Participate in student veteran groups
- Create partnerships
- Bridge the gap – ease the transition
- Know institutions internal resources and direct students to appropriate point of contact (TBI, PTSD, Transition, Disability Services)
What Makes You A Veteran Friendly Institution?

- Top-down support within the institution
- Central point of contact and programs within the institution that help students navigate the college experience and assist with the transition
- Dedicated staff with strong, expert knowledge of military matters
- Welcoming environment that supports retention and academic success
- Providing institutional training focused on improving campus knowledge of student veterans
- Streamlined processes
Awards, Partnerships, and Recognitions

- Voted a “Best For Vets” college by the *Military Times*
- Recognized as a “Military Friendly” institution by *Military Advanced Education*
- Consortium Member and Degree Network System (SOCAD, SOCNAV, SOCMAR, and SOCCOAST)
- School with Servicemember Opportunity Colleges (SOC)
- Air University - Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative (AU-ABC) program partner
- Ranked a Military Friendly institution and recognized in *G.I. Jobs*
- Supporter of the Yellow Ribbon Program’s events nationwide
- Council of College and Military Educators member
- Navy College Program Distance Learning Partnership institution
- Marine Corps Distance Learning Partnership
- Army Letter of Instruction (LOI) school
- College of the American Soldier (CAS)
- Enlisted Education Program (EEP)
Questions & Brainstorming