



From Soldier to Student:

Easing the Transition of
Service Members on Campus



AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
The Unifying Voice for Higher Education





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From Soldier to Student:

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Lumina Foundation for Education**

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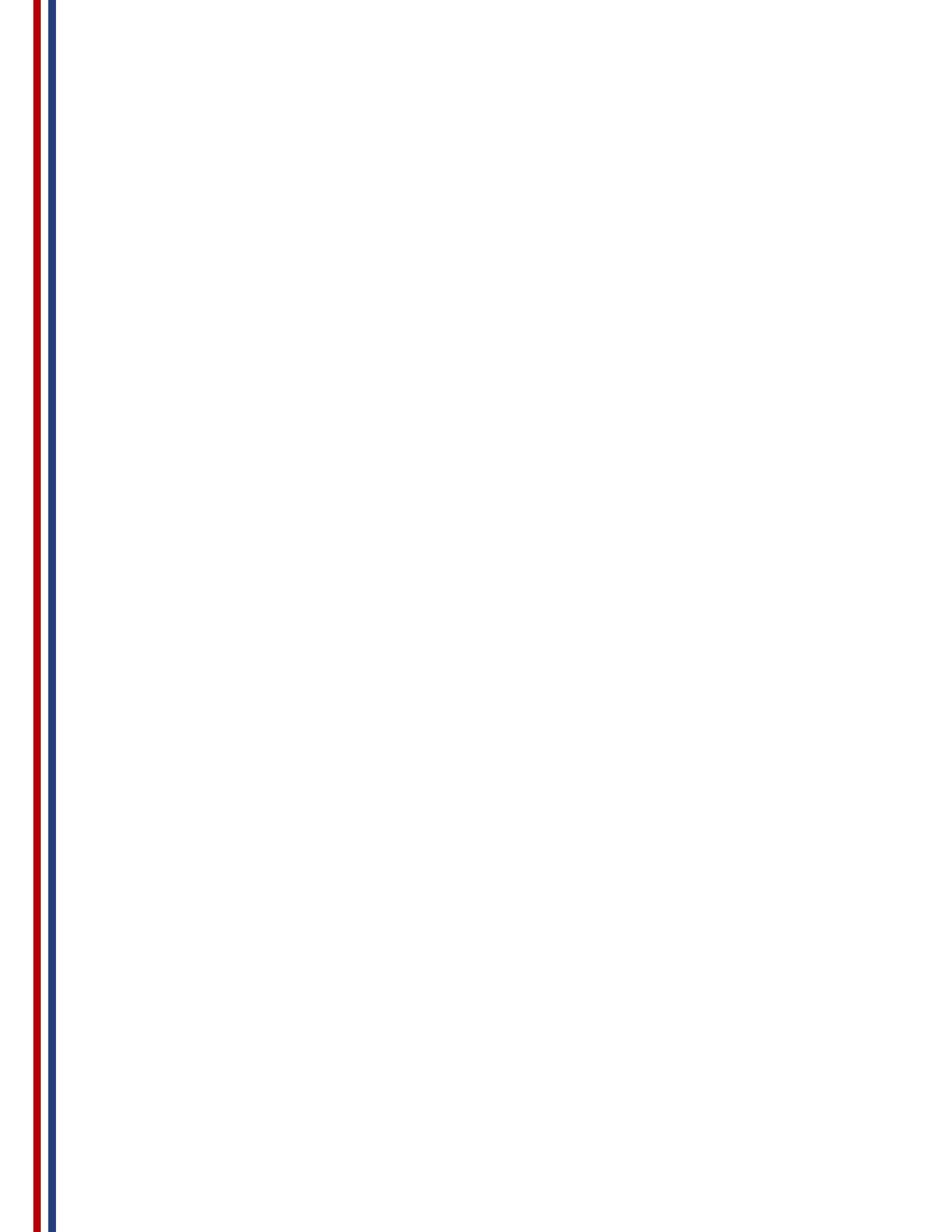
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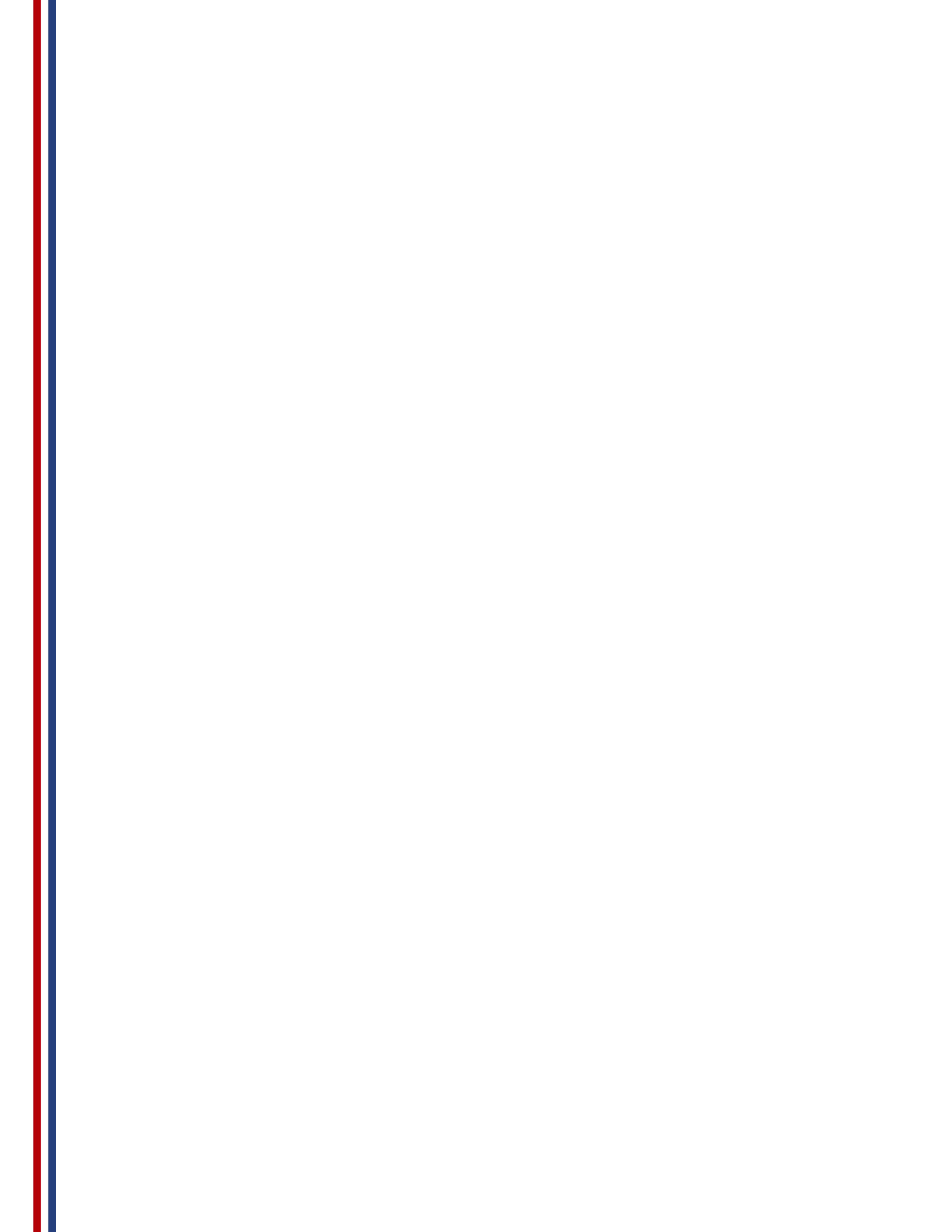
Preface

The enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 (also known as the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the new GI Bill) in June 2008 was one of the most significant events for active-duty and veteran students since the creation of the original GI Bill, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, in 1944. The Post-9/11 GI Bill offers the nearly 2 million service members who have served in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts generous support for educational expenses, and is expected to prompt a significant upturn in the number of veterans and military personnel enrolling in higher education.

Institutions have not faced such a significant influx of veteran students on campus since World War II. Military personnel and veterans will be a tremendous asset to higher education, as they have been in the past, but they have needs that are distinct from other students. As campuses prepare to welcome these students, it is important for administrators to take stock of their programs and services. California State University Chancellor Charlie Reed challenged campus leaders to assess their readiness at the 2008 American Council on Education (ACE) Annual Meeting:

"I'm going to give you an assignment. Go back to your institution. Do an assessment of how you're doing with programs and services for service members and veterans. You won't find a pretty picture. What you will find is that you need to reorganize and reprioritize."

This report offers a first-of-its-kind national snapshot of the programs, services, and policies that campuses have in place to serve veterans and military personnel. The partner organizations hope that it will prompt colleges and universities to follow Chancellor Reed's advice and take a close look at their own programs and services, benchmarking them against the national data presented here so that they will be ready to help those who have done so much to serve their country.

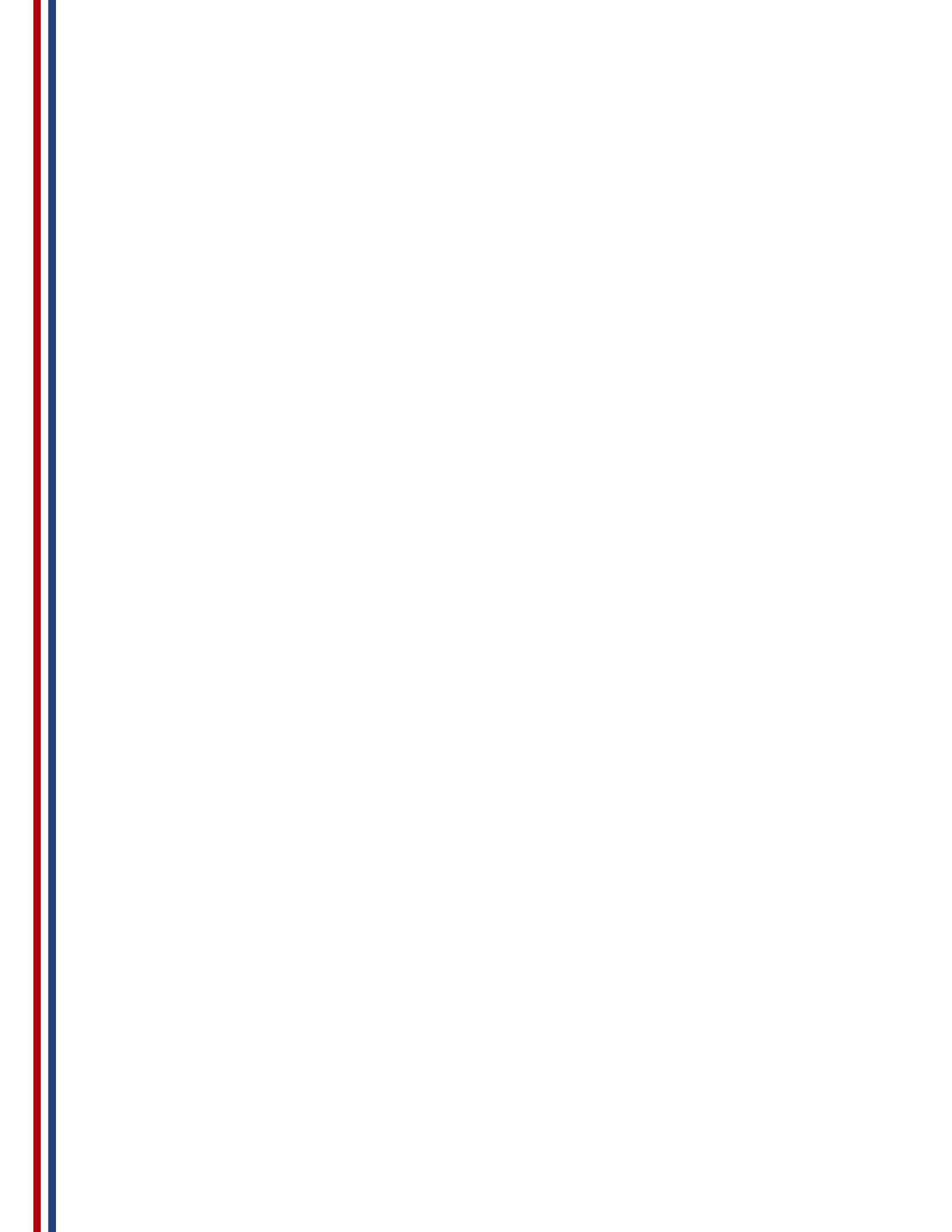


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Executive Summary

The United States is poised to welcome more than 2 million veterans as they return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

These veterans will be the beneficiaries of a new GI Bill that will remove most financial barriers to attending college. Because of the generous education benefits offered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill, many of these veterans—as well as those still serving in the active, reserve, and National Guard components of the armed forces—will enroll in higher education to enhance their job prospects, achieve career goals, expand their knowledge and skill sets for both personal and career enrichment, and facilitate their transition to civilian life.

How well prepared is higher education to serve these new students? Despite the long history of veterans' education benefits and presence of veteran students on campus, little research has been conducted about campus programs and services that aid veterans in their college transition. This report represents the first attempt to assess the current state of programs and services for veterans on campuses across the nation, based on survey results from 723 institutions. It will help campus leaders understand “the state of the art” among the most veteran-friendly campuses, recognize factors that appear to influence the level of service campuses provide, and identify gaps in their own offerings.

All Responding Institutions

- More than half of all responding institutions (57 percent) currently provide programs and services specifically designed for service members and veterans, and roughly 60 percent of all responding colleges and universities indicated that providing programs and services for military service members and veterans is a part of their long-term strategic plan. More than half of all responding colleges and universities reported engaging in recruiting efforts specifically designed to attract military service members and veterans.
- Public four-year (74 percent) and public two-year (66 percent) institutions are more likely to have programs specifically designed for military veterans than private not-for-profit colleges and universities (36 percent).
- Most responding campuses are considering veteran-friendly changes to their institutions in the next five years, the top two of which are providing professional development for faculty and staff on dealing with the issues facing many service members and veterans, and exploring state or federal funding sources or submitting grant proposals to fund campus programs. Survey results bolster the need to focus on professional development, as fewer than half of all schools with military/veterans programs offer opportunities for faculty and administrators to acquire infor-

mation about the unique needs of military student populations, existing campus resources, and promising practices to create a positive campus environment.

Institutions that Provide Services for Veterans and Military Personnel

- The survey found great diversity in how institutions serve veterans, the variety of services and programs offered, and where services/programs are housed within the administrative infrastructure.
- Sixty-five percent of colleges and universities that offer services to veterans and military personnel have increased their emphasis on these services since September 11, 2001, including 70 percent of four-year public institutions, 65 percent of public community colleges, and 57 percent of private not-for-profit four-year colleges and universities. The top two areas of emphasis, regardless of sector, have been the establishment of new programs and services for service members and veterans, and the establishment of marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military personnel.
- Many institutions provide financial assistance in the form of discounts or scholarships specifically for veterans. The most common forms of financial assistance at public colleges and universities include eligibility for in-state tuition rates for both veterans and their family members. At private institutions, discounted tuition rates for both veterans and family members were the most frequently cited type of financial assistance.
- Nearly 80 percent of all colleges have an established policy regarding tuition refunds for military activations and deployments. Higher education as a whole has not responded as consistently in terms of re-enrollment policies and procedures when students who are called up to military service return to campus. Only 22 percent of institutions with programs and services for military personnel have developed an expedited re-enrollment process to help students restart their academic efforts; most (62 percent) require students who are returning from deployment to complete the standard re-enrollment process, and 16 percent require students to reapply and be readmitted in order to enroll.
- Almost all campuses that have services for veterans and service members offer some type of academic support or student service designed specifically for these students. Aside from Department of Veterans Administration (VA) education benefits counseling, the most frequently cited services were financial aid counseling (57 percent), employment assistance (49 percent), and academic advising (48 percent).
- More than 70 percent of public four-year institutions and more than 40 percent of private not-for-profit four-year and public two-year institutions that offer services for veterans and military personnel have counseling centers to assist these students with issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder or depression. Significantly fewer institutions have established programs or services specifically designed to assist veterans with physical disabilities and less visible disabilities such as brain injuries; only 33 percent and 23 percent of institutions reported having staff

trained to assist veterans with these two conditions, respectively.

- Almost three-fourths of all reporting colleges and universities with programs and services for veterans and military personnel award credit for military training and occupational experience.
- In focus groups and meetings, student veterans have expressed the need to connect with those who share similar experiences. Although student veterans perceive veteran clubs/organizations and vet-to-vet counseling as high priorities for aiding veterans in collegiate transitions, only 32 percent of institutions with services for veterans and military personnel have clubs or other organizations for these students. Establishing student veteran clubs and providing informal gathering places for student veterans to connect with one another may contribute significantly to their acculturation on campus.

Programs and Services by Level of Veteran/Military Enrollment

- Generally, colleges and universities that have larger service member and veteran populations are more likely to offer programs and services for these students than institutions with smaller military/veteran populations. However, the “tipping point” appears to be quite low; 62 percent of institutions where veterans represent just 1 to 3 percent of enrollment offer special services for this population. Services that appear to be especially sensitive to the size of the student veteran population are training staff specifically to work with veterans, establishing an office dedicated to working with veterans, and creating

targeted recruitment of military personnel and veterans.

- This study also revealed that postsecondary institutions that have smaller veteran and active-duty military populations are increasing their emphasis on serving these students, particularly since September 11, 2001. Much of the increased emphasis has been on new programs for veterans including counseling services, the appointment of committees to develop action plans to respond to veteran needs, and increasing marketing and outreach to veterans.

Programs and Services by Administrative Structure

- The presence of a dedicated office for veterans and military students is an indication of institutional commitment; 49 percent of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military personnel have such an office.
- Among colleges and universities that have a dedicated office that provides support for military students, 75 percent of institutions have increased their emphasis on services and programs specifically for service members and/or veterans since September 11, 2001. Fifty-six percent of institutions that do not have a dedicated office have increased their emphasis on veterans and military personnel since September 11.
- In general, institutions with a dedicated office were more likely to make programmatic changes after September 11, 2001, than institutions without a dedicated office. These changes included establishing new programs and services (71 percent of institutions with a dedicated office versus 52 percent of institutions

without such an office); establishing marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military student populations (62 percent versus 51 percent); increasing staff in existing programs and services for service members/veterans (42 percent versus 21 percent); and increasing counseling services and/or off-campus referral procedures to address their needs (59 percent versus 42 percent). Institutions with a dedicated office also were more likely than those without such an office to engage in recruitment efforts targeted to service members and veterans (61 percent versus 42 percent) and to offer training for faculty and staff regarding the transitional needs of these students (49 percent versus 36 percent).

- Institutions that have a dedicated office for veterans and military personnel are much more likely to tailor common services to these students, including financial aid/tuition assistance counseling, employment assistance, academic advising, campus events, and career services. Likewise, institutions with a dedicated office are much more likely to sponsor a student organization for veterans and military personnel (41 percent versus 23 percent).
- Campuses with a dedicated office are more likely than others to offer specialized counseling and support groups, and to refer students to support services offered by the VA, but still appear to underuse peer support groups.
- With regard to administrative policies on such matters as financial aid or awarding of credit, there were fewer differences between institutions that do and do not operate an office dedicated to military personnel

and veterans. This may be because these broad academic policies are outside the purview of an office of military/veterans services. However, institutions with a dedicated office for veterans and military personnel are much more likely than others to offer special tuition rates.

Focus Group Results

- The statistics in this publication provide a national measure of institutional efforts to serve military service members and veterans. To examine whether a disconnect exists between veteran needs and campus programs/services, ACE conducted focus groups in July 2008 with both veterans and enlisted service members to gain insight into their perceptions of postsecondary education.
- Veterans and service members in the focus groups mentioned several areas of concern about currently available campus services and programs, including a lack of flexibility of some campus programs with respect to military students' sometimes unpredictable deployment schedule in the armed forces; uncertainty about campus recognition of civilian courses taken while in the military and/or formal training obtained as a service member; and lack of strong guidance about navigating the maze of GI Bill education benefits.
- The frequency with which some of the focus groups' concerns surfaced suggests that college and university campuses could do more to improve their support services and programs for veterans and service members, and to publicize the services they already have in place.

Introduction & Methodology

The United States is poised to welcome nearly 2 million veterans as they return from Iraq and Afghanistan. Because of the generous education benefits offered by the Post-9/11 GI Bill, many of these veterans—as well as those still serving in the active, reserve, and National Guard components of the armed forces—will enroll in higher education to enhance their job prospects, achieve career goals, expand their knowledge and skill sets for both personal and career enrichment, and facilitate their transition to civilian life. In many ways, these military/veteran students will share many of the same characteristics as other adult learners that institutions have been serving for years. They will need to balance their academic pursuits with family and job responsibilities, and they will have a seriousness of purpose that comes with maturity and financial independence. As a subpopulation of adult learners, military and veteran students also often have unique challenges that other nontraditional students do not face. Veterans who served in combat may experience social and cognitive dissonance as they transition and assimilate to the civilian college environment. Some veterans will return from combat with physical or psychological readjustment challenges and will require academic and disability accommodations to successfully reintegrate. Although they are the beneficiaries of an expanded

new GI Bill that will address the financial burden of college attendance, some veterans will struggle to overcome bureaucratic, informational, or enrollment hurdles as they transition into the higher education community.

How well prepared is higher education to serve these new students? Despite the long history of veterans' education benefits and the presence of veteran students on campus, little research has been conducted on effective campus programs and services that successfully aid veterans in their college transition. This report represents the first attempt to assess the current state of programs and services for veterans on campuses across the nation, based on survey results from 723 institutions. It will help campus leaders understand “the state of the art” attributes of the most veteran-friendly campuses, recognize factors that appear to influence the level of service campuses provide, and identify gaps in their own offerings.

Authorities in higher education are still learning about the educational and personal needs of this newest generation of veterans and their families, but there are a number of programs and services that campuses can provide to ease veterans' transition and boost their chances of success. This knowledge is based on the experience of those campuses that have long specialized in serving the military community and on the perspectives of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and were in the vanguard

Programs and Services “Specifically for Veterans”

A few student services, such as VA benefits counseling or veteran enrollment certification, pertain only to veterans or military student populations at an institution. Most other services, such as academic advising, career counseling, or tutoring, are important to all students and are offered routinely by all colleges and universities. To determine whether institutions offer programs and services that have been tailored for veterans and military personnel, the survey on which this report is based asked about offerings “specifically for veterans.” Where survey respondents indicated that specialized services for veteran and military students were *not* offered, our underlying assumption is that these student issues/needs are being met through existing institutional services/programs that are provided for all students.

This report does not suggest that creating special programs for student veterans is always necessary or even desirable. During ACE’s 2008 summit “Serving Those Who Serve: Higher Education and America’s Veterans,” some student veterans stated that they preferred, whenever possible, to be integrated into mainstream campus life. They also expressed high regard for opportunities to interact with fellow student veterans and have access to campus staff who are trained and sensitized to the unique issues veterans face. Institutions will have to make their own determinations—ideally in close consultation with their veteran students—about which services merit a special focus on veterans, military personnel, and their families. To assist in that effort, this report suggests the range of ways in which campuses are customizing their programs and services to serve the veteran/military population.

of the expected wave of student veterans. The survey that formed the basis for this report was derived from this expert knowledge and student perspectives from several veteran organizations. It encompassed indicators of institutional commitment, administrative structures, academic support, financial aid and assistance with VA benefits, counseling, orientation, and other assistance with the transition to campus life. Although far from the last word on service to veterans (the survey asked about the presence of key services, for example, but did not attempt to assess the quality of those services), it does provide a guide for

campus leaders who seek to make their institutions welcoming and supportive environments for those who have done so much for our country.

Organization of the Report

The survey results are presented in different ways in the first three chapters: overall and by institution type; by level of veteran/military enrollment; and by the presence of an office dedicated to serving veterans and service members. Chapter Four presents qualitative information on student veterans’ perspectives, drawn from several national focus groups. Summarized results and tentative conclusions appear in Chapter Five. To ease the response burden on institutions that do not offer programs and services specifically for veterans, the survey asked only a few questions of these institutions, which are covered in the first section of Chapters One and Two. All subsequent sections summarize responses from institutions that offer any programs or services for veterans and service members.¹

Methodology

The survey instrument was designed collaboratively through a partnership among the American Council on Education (ACE), Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC), the American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU), NASPA–Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and National Association of Veterans’ Program Administrators (NAVPA) to assess the current availability of specialized services and programs for veterans and service members who are currently enlisted in the armed forces. In December 2007, a team of content and research experts

¹ Because all institutions that enroll veterans must certify enrollment for those receiving VA education benefits, all institutions that enroll veterans provide at least that service.

from the partnering organizations met in Washington, DC, to outline the key elements of the survey design. Broad institutional policy and implementation topics were identified and refined by the subject matter experts over three months in consultation with campus practitioners. The survey questions cover a range of topics, including institutional climate and support for military/veteran students; organizational structure and policies for military/veteran services; and campus practices supporting military/veteran student enrollment and success.

In September 2008, ACE sent an electronic invitation to 2,647 presidents of colleges and universities—representing a cross-section of the membership of the partner organizations—to participate in the online survey. The names and e-mail addresses for these presidents came from the *Higher Education Directory* (HEP, Inc.) and ACE’s membership database. From these lists, 2,582 e-mail invitations were delivered successfully. Because of the specific nature of the questions regarding institutional services and programs for military service members and veterans, presidents were instructed to forward the survey to staff members who were most qualified to answer the surveys. During three months in fall 2008, research staff in ACE’s Center for Policy Analysis (CPA) collected 723 useable responses, for an overall response rate of 28 percent. CPA research staff managed the data collection and analysis.

To generalize the 723 respondents to the population of colleges and universities, institutions that participated in the survey were compared with the distribution of four major sectors of higher education: public two-year, public four-year, private not-for-profit four-year, and private for-profit (see **Table 1**).

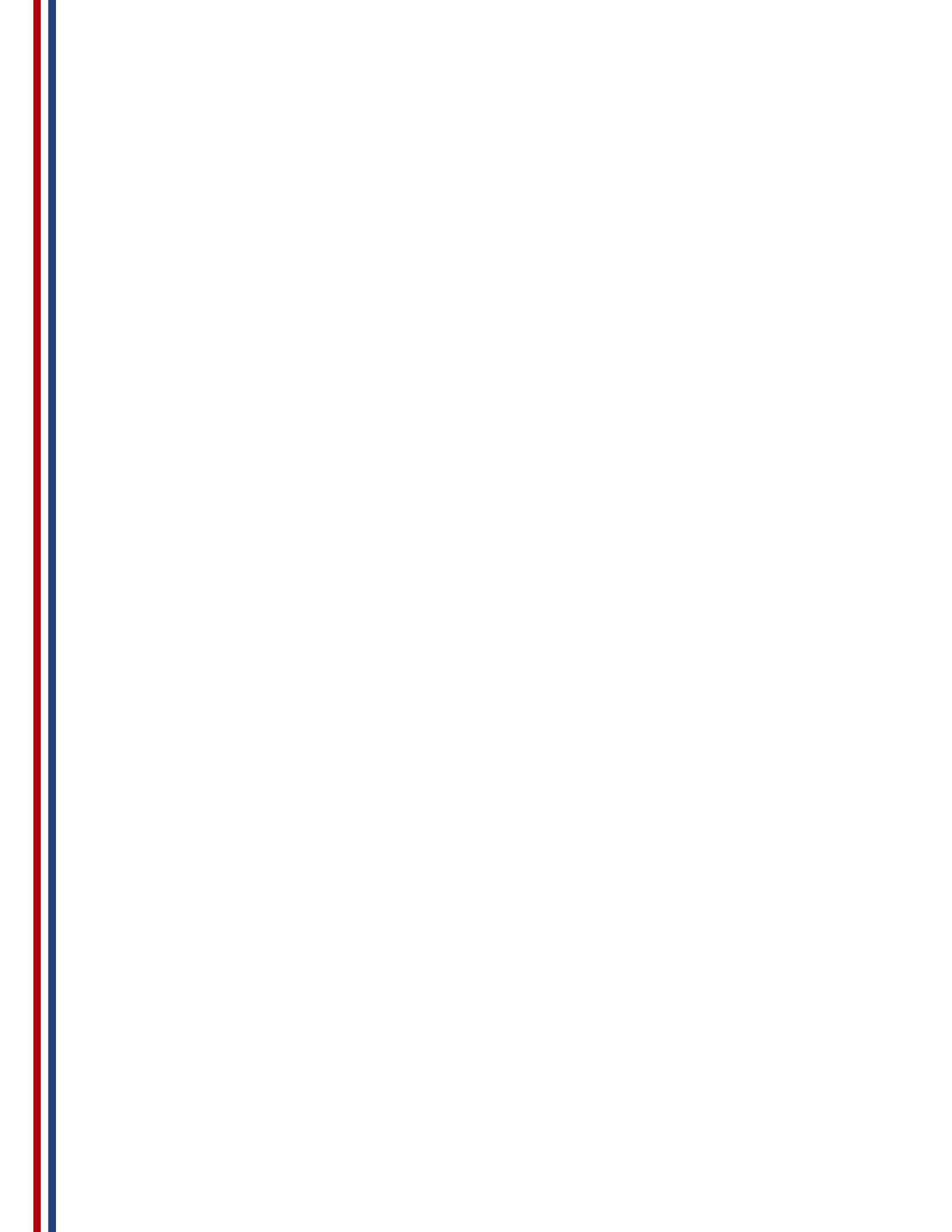
Table 1		Survey Respondents		All Institutions	
		N	%	N	%
Survey Respondents and IPEDS Degree-Granting Institutions	Public Two-Year	212	30	1,045	25
	Public Four-Year	233	33	643	15
	Private Not-for-Profit Four-Year	256	36	1,533	36
	Private For-Profit	15	2	986	23
	Total	716	100	4,207	100

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2007.
 NOTE: Responses from five private not-for-profit two-year institutions and two administrative units are excluded from Table 1 for basis of comparison. Inclusion of these two institutional types yields 723 responses.

Veterans Data in Context

An important question for any survey that asks about service to a specific student population is whether the results could be influenced by response bias. In other words, were institutions that serve veterans more likely to respond to the survey than those that do not enroll these students? Because of the relatively low response rate of 28 percent and the overrepresentation of public institutions (which enroll the majority of veterans and military personnel), it is possible that the results were influenced by response bias. However, because this survey is the first of its kind, it is not possible to compare these results with others to determine if they are typical. As a result, the findings in this report are best viewed as indicative of the kinds of programs and services offered by institutions that serve veterans, and do not present a reliable estimate of the percentage of institutions that serve veterans and military personnel.

Private not-for-profit four-year schools were proportionally represented (36 percent), public two-year and public four-year schools were overrepresented, and private for-profit institutions were underrepresented. Because only 15 for-profit institutions and five private not-for-profit two-year institutions responded, weighting techniques to make the data representative of all degree-granting institutions of higher education could not be applied. Because of the small number of respondents, detailed results for these institutions are not presented in the report; however, these institutions are included in all totals.

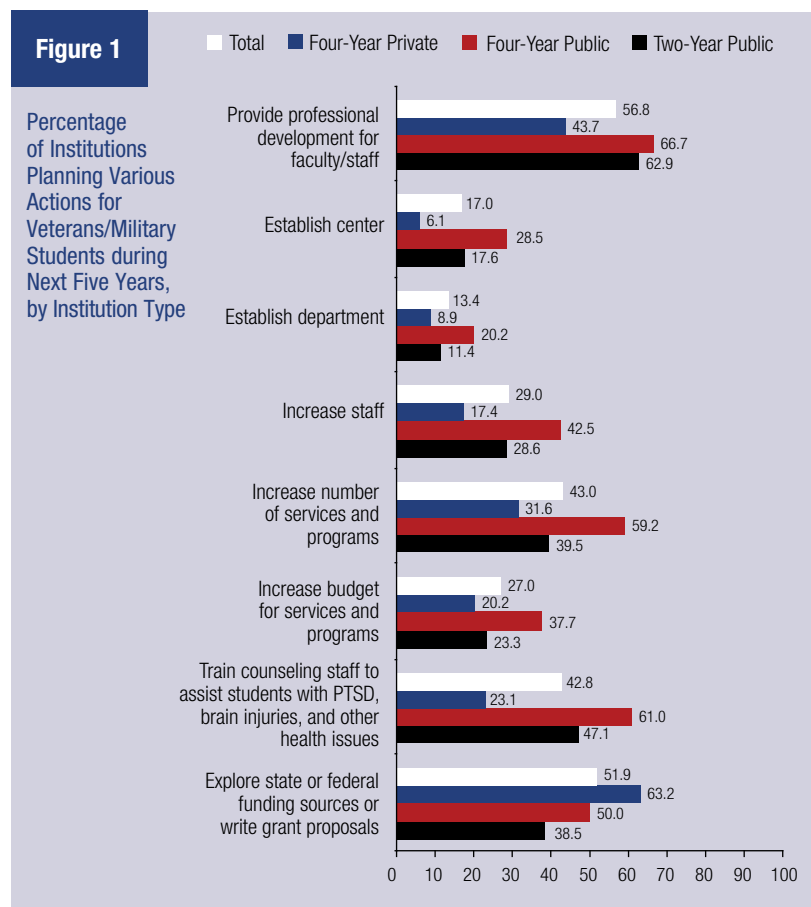


I. Overview of Institutional Programs and Services for Veterans

S ervice to Veterans and Military Personnel Among All Responding Institutions

More than half of all responding institutions (57 percent) currently provide programs and services specifically designed for service members and veterans, and roughly 59 percent of all responding college and universities indicated that providing programs and services for military service members and veterans is a part of their long-term strategic plan. A significantly greater share of public institutions, both four-year (72 percent) and two-year (68 percent), include programs for military veterans in their strategic plans than do private not-for-profit four-year institutions (41 percent). The presence of programs and services specifically designed for service members and veterans seems to correspond to whether military/veteran students are included in the strategic plan. Public four-year (74 percent) and public two-year (66 percent) institutions are more likely to have programs specifically designed for military veterans than private not-for-profit colleges and universities (36 percent).

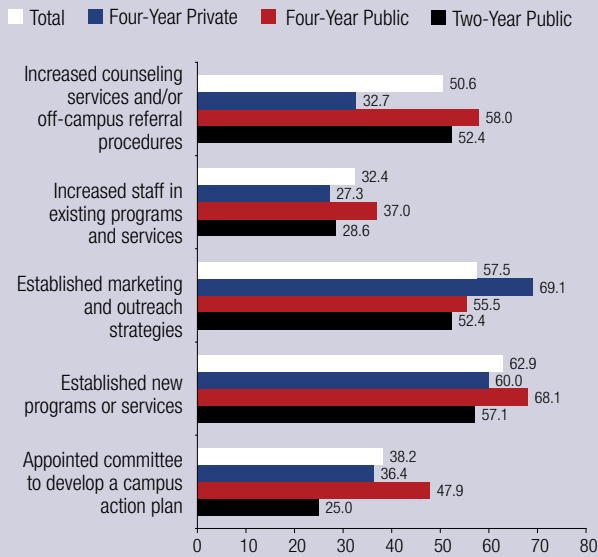
Most responding campuses are considering veteran-friendly changes to their institutions in the next five years as part of their long-term strategic plans. The top two changes all institutions are considering are providing professional development for faculty and staff on dealing with the issues facing



many service members and veterans, and exploring state or federal funding sources or private grant proposals to fund campus programs (see **Figure 1**). A third change for many public institutions involves increasing the number of veteran services and programs on campus. Given that most institutions do not currently provide information for faculty and staff on meeting the needs of military personnel and veterans, it is encouraging to see that this is the top priority for future activity.

Figure 2

Percentage of Institutions That Have Taken Various Actions Since September 11, 2001 to Better Serve Military/Veterans, by Institution Type



NOTE: This question was asked only of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students, and that have increased their emphasis on these students since September 11, 2001.

The increased commitment to military service members and veterans is not limited to those who are currently enrolled, but extends to efforts to recruit more veterans for enrollment in higher education. More than half of all responding colleges and universities reported engaging in recruiting efforts specifically designed to attract military service members and veterans. The most common methods of outreach varied among public four-year, public two-year, and private not-for-profit institutions, but they generally included targeted print and web-based advertising, participation in special events on military installations, and a focus on military/veterans programs in college catalogs.

Institutional Commitment

Since September 11, 2001, U.S. institutions of higher education have renewed their focus on serving military personnel and veterans. Sixty-five percent of colleges and universities that offer services to veterans and military personnel have increased their emphasis on serving the needs of these students since September 11, including 70 percent of four-year public institutions, 65 percent of public community colleges, and 57 percent of private not-for-profit four-year colleges and universities. The top two ways this emphasis has manifested itself on college and university campuses, regardless of sector, have been the establishment of new programs and services for service members and veterans, and the establishment of marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military personnel to enroll (see **Figure 2**). The third most common way colleges and universities have demonstrated an increased emphasis on service member and veteran needs differed between public and private institutions. Public institutions, both four-year and two-year, have increased counseling services and/or off-campus referral procedures to address the needs of military service members and veterans, and private not-for-profit schools have appointed committees to develop campus responsiveness plans.

With a majority of these campuses focusing on better serving military service members and veterans, it is somewhat surprising that fewer than half of all schools with military/veterans programs, regardless of type, offer professional development training opportunities for faculty and administrators to gain useful information about veteran student populations, their unique educational and transitional

needs, and promising practices for creating a positive campus environment to help meet those needs. Although less than half of institutions specifically train their personnel to work with military veterans, more than half of public institutions and more than 40 percent of private not-for-profit institutions reported that they employ staff specifically trained to assist veterans with their transition to college.

Institutional Structure

An important way for institutions to manifest their commitment to serving military personnel and veterans is through the establishment of an office or department dedicated exclusively to serving these students. The presence of such an office or department is much more common among public than private institutions. Nearly 60 percent of public four-year and two-year schools that offer services for veterans have a dedicated department, while just 26 percent of private not-for-profit institutions have such an office. Two-thirds of institutions that indicated they have a dedicated office or department to assist veterans and military personnel described that office primarily as an administrative unit focusing on VA benefits counseling, employment assistance, financial aid and tuition assistance, and/or registration and enrollment assistance. Respondents also indicated that these departments typically serve more than just veterans; 77 percent of institutions that have such a department also provide services for military personnel (active and reserve components) and the college-aged family members of military personnel and veterans.

For the 51 percent of institutions that do not have an office dedicated to serving military personnel and veterans, the

primary point of contact for these students for information about services and programs varies by institutional level. At four-year institutions, both public and private, the most common point of contact is the registrar's office, which also is the primary point of contact for veterans' benefits counseling. At community colleges, the office of student affairs/student services is the primary point of contact; however, the primary point of contact for veterans' benefits at community colleges is often in the financial aid office.

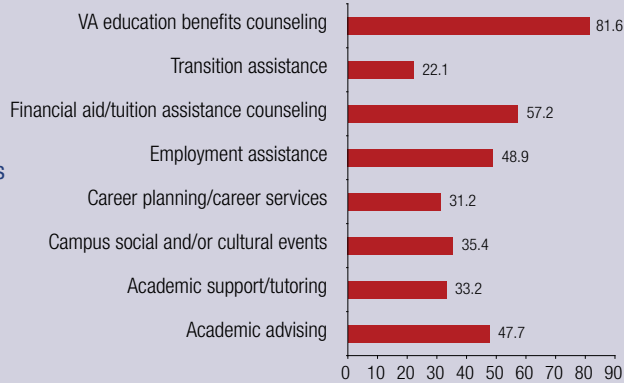
Academic/Co-curricular Support Services

It is well known that adult learners use numerous modes of instruction to accomplish their educational goals. As a subpopulation of nontraditional students, military service members' and veterans' access to educational opportunities is influenced by institutions' abilities to offer a variety of delivery modes and flexible scheduling. Accordingly, nearly 90 percent of all respondent institutions with services for veterans and military personnel reported offering some type of alternative curriculum delivery format. The two most common alternative delivery formats, regardless of sector, are online education and evening/weekend courses. In addition to providing alternative delivery formats, many colleges recognize that service members and veterans come to college with prior learning experiences from their time in the service. Consequently, nearly three-fourths of all reporting colleges and universities with programs and services for veterans and military personnel award credit for military training and occupational experience.

For institutions to respond appropriately to the needs of military students, it is important that they understand the

Figure 3

Percentage of Institutions with Various Campus Services for Veterans and Military Students



NOTE: This question was asked only of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students.

potential effect of institutional policies and are willing to streamline or modify existing enrollment procedures. One such policy issue centers around active-duty service members who may be called to duty during the academic year. When students are called to active duty, their academic progress is disrupted or put on hold temporarily. Shortly after September 11, 2001, a majority of institutions responded with policies that recognized the potential academic and financial hardships that military service created for service members, and across the higher educational community, institutions developed policies to refund tuition, provide for course completion at later dates, and otherwise show flexibility to ensure that no service member suffered a loss of funds or educational opportunity because he or she was called to serve our country. As evidenced in the survey results, nearly 80 percent of all colleges have an established policy regarding tuition refunds for military activations and deployments.

Higher education as a whole has not responded as consistently in terms of re-enrollment policies and procedures when students who are called to military service return to campus. Only 22 percent of institutions with programs

and services for military personnel have developed an expedited re-enrollment process to help them restart their academic efforts; most (62 percent) require students returning from deployment to complete the standard re-enrollment process, and 16 percent require military students to reapply and be readmitted in order to enroll. Student veterans have voiced frustration toward these administrative obstacles and hardships that seem to delay or thwart their return to normalcy on campus. Although these may seem like minor procedures to college administrators, these administrative hurdles speak volumes to returning veterans about the institution's veteran-friendly posture.

Almost all campuses that have services for veterans and service members offer some type of academic support or student services designed specifically for these students. Aside from VA education benefits counseling, the most frequently cited services were general financial aid counseling (57 percent), employment assistance (49 percent), and academic advising (48 percent) (see **Figure 3**). The least commonly offered services were veteran-specific orientation (4 percent), a veteran student lounge (12 percent), and assistance with the transition to college (22 percent). Among the minority of institutions that offered tutoring or academic assistance specifically for veterans, an overwhelming majority offered those services at no cost.

Several of the challenges that veterans face when returning to college campuses exist outside the classroom. According to a 2008 RAND study, "Invisible Wounds of War," as many as 18 percent of all Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans suffered or currently

are suffering from psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. More than 70 percent of public four-year institutions and more than 40 percent of private not-for-profit four-year and public two-year institutions that offer services for veterans and military personnel have counseling centers with staff who are prepared to assist these students with one or more of these issues. Significantly fewer institutions have established programs or services specifically designed to assist veterans with physical disabilities and invisible disabilities such as brain injuries; only 33 percent and 23 percent of institutions reported having staff who are trained to assist veterans with these two conditions, respectively. One possible explanation for this trend is that institutions have developed comprehensive campus plans for addressing and coordinating the unique needs for students with disabilities, and incorporate veterans with disabilities routinely in their existing disability programs and services. In recognizing that some of the challenges returning veterans face may be beyond the scope of what a campus counseling center is able to address, nearly 85 percent of colleges and universities offer coordination with and referral to off-campus support services.

In focus groups and veteran summits and conferences, student veterans and service members have emphasized the importance of connecting with other students who share similar military experiences. Only 32 percent of institutions with services for veterans and military personnel have clubs or other organizations for these students. These clubs are most prevalent at public four-year institutions (47 percent). Only 7 percent of community colleges

have a student organization for veterans and military personnel. Even less common were support groups for veterans with disabilities (7 percent), family members of students serving on active duty (5 percent), and dependents of deceased veterans (3 percent).

In addition to providing programs and services that serve veterans, many institutions provide financial assistance in the forms of discounts or scholarships specifically for veterans. The most common form of financial assistance at public colleges and universities is eligibility for in-state tuition rates for military personnel, veterans, and family members. More than 50 percent of public school respondents provided in-state tuition rates for military personnel and their family members. Roughly 13 percent offered discounted tuition rates for military personnel and/or veterans. At private institutions, discounted tuition rates for both veterans and family members was the most frequently cited type of financial assistance.

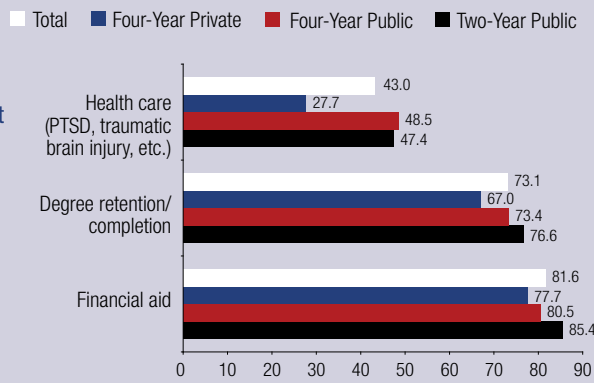
Challenges and Priorities

These data suggest that the majority of colleges and universities that completed the survey, by virtue of their policies and the programs and services offered, are committed to serving military personnel and veterans. From the development of marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military students to the addition of new programs and services, it is clear that college campuses are attempting to make their institutions more veteran friendly.

Part of becoming more responsive to the needs of veterans is understanding their needs as well as recognizing what campuses do well and don't do well in serving them. According to more than

Figure 4

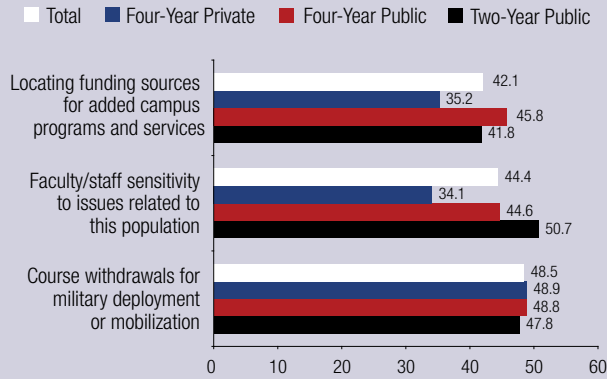
Three Most Prominent Student Issues Identified by Institutions, by Institution Type



NOTE: This question was asked only of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students.

Figure 5

Three Most Prominent Institutional Issues, by Institution Type



NOTE: This question was asked only of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students.

three-fourths of colleges and universities, financial aid and student retention/persistence toward degree completion are the two most pressing issues facing military/veteran students. A third issue recognized by nearly 45 percent of all postsecondary institutions involves veterans' health care needs. Other areas in which the survey results suggested campuses clearly have more work to do include training faculty and staff to understand the issues veterans and service members face, and taking better advantage of peer networks through student organizations and support groups. Campuses also identified course withdrawals because of military deployment (48 percent), locating funding sources for additional campus programs (42 percent), and raising faculty and staff sensitivity to issues related to this population (45 percent) as common priorities (see **Figures 4 and 5**).

II. Programs and Services by Level of Enrollment

The presence of programs and services for military veterans on campus undoubtedly is related to the proportion of veterans in the total student enrollment; that is, the greater the share of veterans in the student population, the more likely the institution is to offer various programs and services for military veterans. Of course, there is a “chicken-or-the-egg” problem inherent in this finding: Institutions may have established programs and services because they found themselves serving a significant number of veterans, or veterans may have been attracted to a particular institution because it had such services in place. This survey did not attempt to determine the causal link between services and enrollment. Regardless, the difference in level of service between institutions with larger shares of veterans and those with smaller shares of veterans is not always as great as one might expect.

This chapter describes the types of services and programs offered to military veterans at three types of institutions: those with low veteran enrollment (LVE), defined as having a military/veteran population less than or equal to 1 percent of total enrollment; those with moderate veteran enrollment (MVE), defined as having a military/veteran population

between 1 percent and 3 percent; and those with high veteran enrollment (HVE), defined as institutions with a military veteran population greater than 3 percent of total enrollment.² On average, low-enrollment institutions enrolled 44 military veterans, moderate-enrollment institutions enrolled 178 veterans, and high-enrollment institutions enrolled just over 320 veterans.

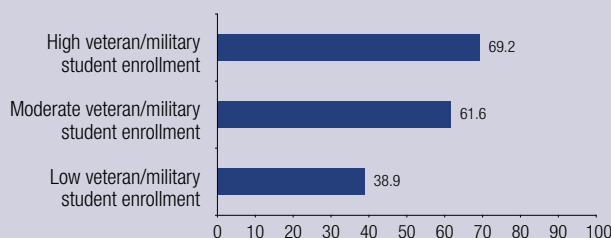
Service to Veterans and Military Personnel Among All Responding Institutions

As the proportion of students who are veterans and military personnel increases, the likelihood that an institution offers programs and services for these students also increases. However, the level of critical mass associated with the presence of services is lower than may be anticipated. Among LVE institutions, 39 percent offer programs or services specifically for veterans and service members. Sixty-two percent of MVE institutions (where veterans and military personnel represent 1 to 3 percent of enrollment) offer such services. At 69 percent, HVE institutions are not much more likely than MVE institutions to offer services. The “chicken-or-the-egg” problem notwithstanding, enrollment greater than 1 percent appears to be associated with a relatively high

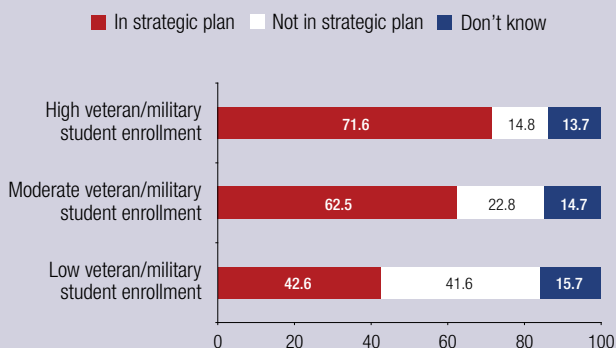
² The enrollment ranges used in this chapter were created by dividing responding institutions into equal thirds based on their number of enrolled veterans and service members. According to data from the Department of Education, in 2007–08 approximately 4 percent of students were military service members or veterans. Seventy-one percent of respondents in the HVE category have military enrollments that account for more than 4 percent of their student population.

Figure 6

Percentage of Institutions with Programs and Services for Veterans and Military Students, by Veteran/Military Student Enrollment

**Figure 7**

Percentage of Institutions with Programs/Services for Veterans/Military Students in Their Long-Term Strategic Plan, by Veteran/Military Student Enrollment

**Figure 8**

Percentage of Institutions That Have Taken Various Actions to Better Serve Veterans/Military Students Since September 11, 2001, by Veteran/Military Student Enrollment



NOTE: This question was asked only of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students, and that have increased their emphasis on these students since September 11, 2001.

likelihood of the availability of special services (see **Figure 6**).

As the share of military veterans at a campus increases, so does the likelihood that programs and services specifically developed for military service members and veterans will be a part of the institution's strategic plan. Seventy-one percent

of HVE institutions and 63 percent of MVE institutions reported that programs and services for military veterans were a part of their long-term strategic plans. In contrast, fewer than half (43 percent) of LVE institutions indicated that their long-term strategic plans included programming and services for military veterans (see **Figure 7**). Institutions with higher proportions of veterans and military personnel also were more likely to consider expanding their service to these students.

Institutional Commitment

For institutions that offer programs and services to veterans and military personnel, level of enrollment did not appear to influence whether they had increased their level of service to these students since September 11, 2001. More than 60 percent of these colleges and universities have increased their emphasis on serving the needs of U.S. service members and military veterans since September 11; however, the way in which this increased emphasis was manifested on campuses varied by level of enrollment. The most frequent ways the increased emphasis on military veterans was demonstrated on LVE campuses was the appointment of a committee to develop a campus responsiveness plan, and establishment of new programs and services for veterans. At HVE schools, the most common responses since September 11 were the creation of marketing and outreach strategies to attract more veterans, and increasing staff in existing programs and services for service members/veterans. All institutions, regardless of share of veterans enrolled, increased counseling services and/or off-campus referral procedures to address the needs of veterans (see **Figure 8**).

Surprisingly, fewer than half of HVE and MVE colleges and universities offer professional development training opportunities for faculty and administrators to learn more about this special adult learner subpopulation and how to better meet its needs. For these institutions, the lack of broad-based training for faculty and staff likely is related to the fact that more than half currently employ staff who are specifically trained and dedicated to assisting veterans with their transition to college. Additionally, more than 60 percent of HVE and MVE institutions plan to provide professional development for faculty and staff on service member and veteran issues within the next five years. A less surprising finding is that fewer than 40 percent of LVE institutions offer professional development for faculty staff on dealing with veteran issues; however, 40 percent of LVE institutions currently have staff trained to deal with veteran transition issues, and nearly half (47 percent) plan to provide professional development for faculty and staff on veteran issues within the next five years.

HVE institutions are more likely to engage in recruitment efforts to attract service members and/or veterans (62 percent) than MVE (47 percent) and LVE schools (39 percent). For HVE institutions, the most frequently reported way of recruiting veterans was through participating in special events at military bases and other facilities (e.g., armories, reserve centers, and depots). MVE and LVE institutions rely primarily on college catalogs and brochures to attract service members and veterans to their institutions.

Institutional Structure

HVE institutions are more likely (66 percent) than MVE (46 percent) and LVE (33 percent) institutions to have an office or department exclusively dedicated to serving service members and veterans. However, at least 68 percent of all schools, regardless of level of enrollment, that have a dedicated office or department for veterans also provide services to the family members of military personnel and veterans.

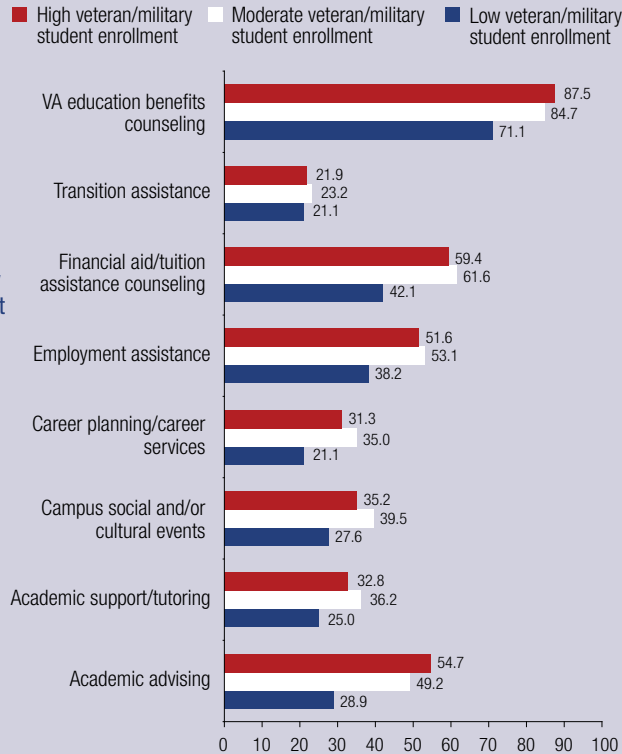
For institutions without a dedicated office, the primary point of contact for veterans and military personnel at LVE and MVE institutions is the registrar's office. At HVE schools, the primary point of contact is split between student affairs/student services and the registrar's office. At LVE institutions, the registrar also is the primary point of contact for information on veteran affairs education benefits counseling. At MVE and HVE institutions, benefits counseling primarily occurs in the financial aid office.

Academic/Co-curricular Support Services

Regardless of the percentage of military students in the student body, at least half of all colleges and universities offer some form of alternative curriculum delivery format. The three most common alternative delivery formats, regardless of the size of the military population, are online education, evening/night courses, and weekend courses. Although HVE and MVE schools are more likely to award credit for prior learning experiences, all institutions offer some type of assessment process for evaluating credit for prior learning. Beyond credit for coursework from other institutions, the most common types of prior learning credit awarded, regardless of veteran

Figure 9

Percentage of Institutions Offering Various Campus Services Specifically for Veterans and Military Students, by Veteran/Military Student Enrollment



NOTE: This question was asked only of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students.

enrollment, are credit for military training and occupational experience and nationally recognized testing programs.

Not surprisingly, more HVE institutions reported offering academic support and student service programs specifically for military service members and veterans than MVE or LVE colleges and universities. A few of the services that exist at approximately half or more of HVE institutions include academic advising (55 percent), financial aid/tuition counseling (59 percent), and employment assistance (48 percent). With the exception of VA benefits counseling, no single service or program specifically for veterans is available at more than 42 percent of LVE institutions (see **Figure 9**).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the challenges facing veterans who return to college are not limited to the

classroom. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and social adjustment are just a few of the noncurricular issues that many veterans face. More than half (57 percent) of all higher education institutions, regardless of veteran enrollment levels, provide counseling to address all the aforementioned issues. Surprisingly, more LVE institutions (73 percent) provide counseling for these issues than HVE (44 percent) or MVE (59 percent) institutions. Although all institutions have shown some level of commitment to providing staff who are able to aid veterans with transition issues, fewer schools have staff trained to work with veterans who suffer from PTSD, brain injuries, or physical disabilities. Less than 37 percent of all colleges and universities, regardless of enrollment level, have staff trained to deal specifically with veterans with disabilities; however, although less than one-third of LVE institutions plan to train counseling staff to deal with PTSD within the next five years, 46 percent of MVE institutions and 53 percent of HVE institutions plan to have staff in place to deal with PTSD within the next five years. Because LVE institutions serve fewer veterans, it is likely that their counseling services are offered through a general counseling office that is available to all students, and thus training staff to deal specifically with veterans' issues is less of a priority than for MVE and HVE institutions.

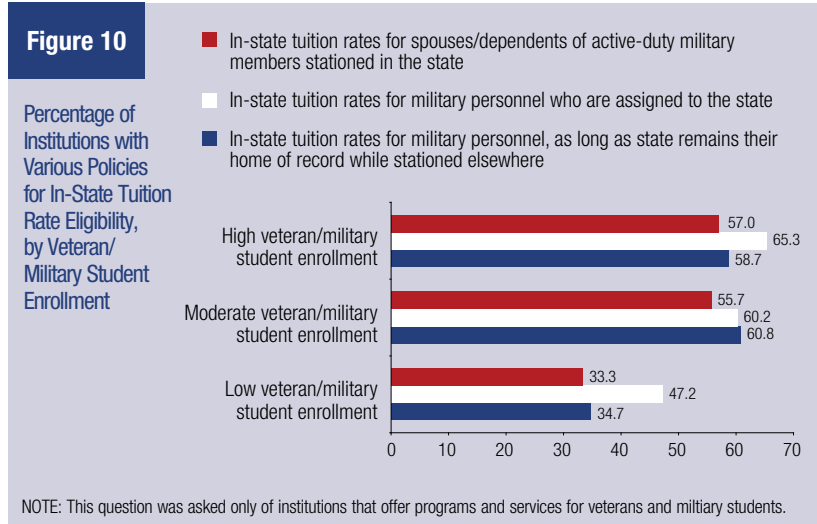
There also were surprising differences in the number of institutions with various types of peer networks for veterans, military personnel, and their families. LVE and MVE institutions are more likely to have a student organization for veterans and service members than HVE institutions. LVE institutions also are just as likely as HVE institutions to have staff

trained to assist veterans with general disabilities or brain injuries in particular.

The most frequently reported type of financial assistance offered to military personnel, veterans, and spouses and their dependents, regardless of the level of veteran/military enrollment, was eligibility for in-state tuition rates, which was much more prevalent at HVE and MVE institutions than at LVE institutions (see **Figure 10**). In recognizing that active-duty military may deploy at any time, at least 72 percent of schools, regardless of enrollment level, have an established policy on tuition refunds related to military activation/mobilization.

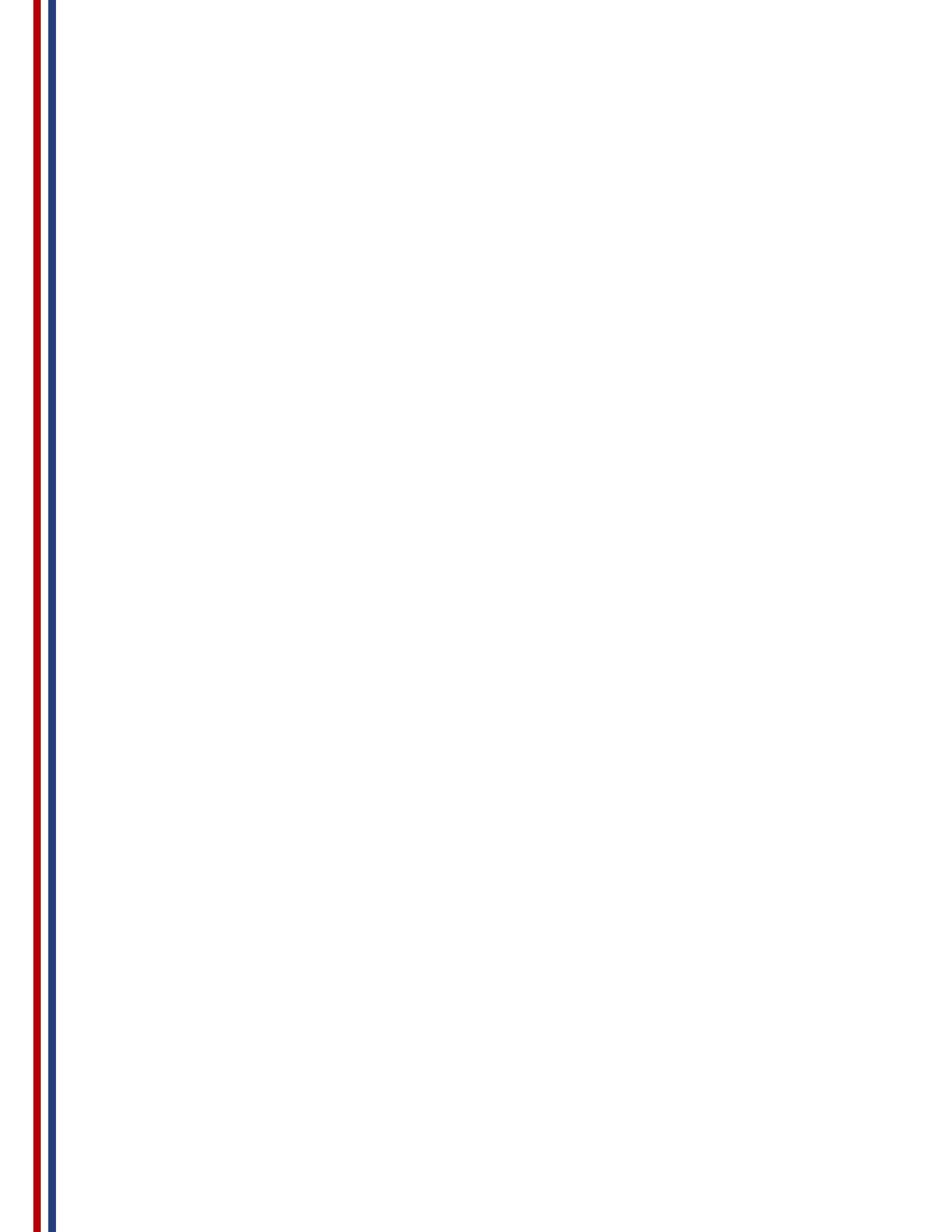
Challenges and Priorities

Generally, colleges and universities that have larger service member and veteran populations are more likely to offer programs and services for these students than institutions with smaller military/veteran populations. This is particularly true at institutions where staff are specifically trained to work with veterans, where offices are specifically dedicated to work with veterans, and where targeted recruitment of military personnel and veterans is used. However, this study revealed that postsecondary institutions that have smaller veteran populations are increasing their emphasis on serving veterans, particularly



since September 11, 2001. Much of the increased emphasis has been on new programs for veterans including counseling services, the appointment of committees to develop action plans to respond to veteran needs, and the increase in marketing and outreach to veterans.

Institutions also reported similar institutional challenges, although their prevalence did vary by enrollment level. The top five issues selected by all institutions included course withdrawals because of deployment or mobilization, faculty/staff sensitivity to issues related to the population, locating funding for added programs and services, and both sufficient numbers and adequate training of staff to meet student needs.



III. Programs and Services by Presence of a Dedicated Office for Veterans

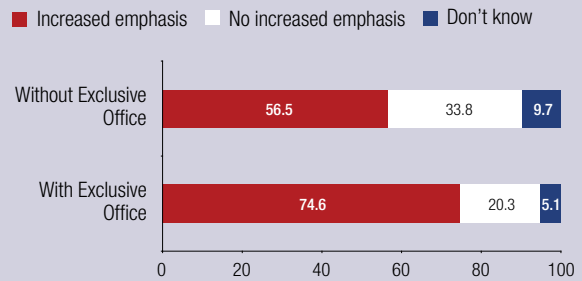
An office that exclusively serves veterans and service members centralizes the initial point of contact for this subpopulation. This centralized provision of student service promotes the development of a depth of veteran-related knowledge and campus resources that are accessible through a one-stop office. When individualized support or assistance is needed—whether academic, financial, or personal—a relationship built on trust can ease and facilitate access to campus services. With this in mind, this chapter discusses the extent to which having a dedicated office that serves veterans and service members makes any difference in the level and depth of campus-wide support to veteran/military students.³

Institutional Commitment

The presence of a dedicated office is an indication of institutional commitment; 49 percent of institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military personnel have an office dedicated to serving these students. Sixty-six percent of these institutions characterized their veterans/military department as an administrative office, 14 percent operated a student center, and 20 percent offered an alternate description. Three out of four of these offices also provided services to family members of veterans and military personnel.

Figure 11

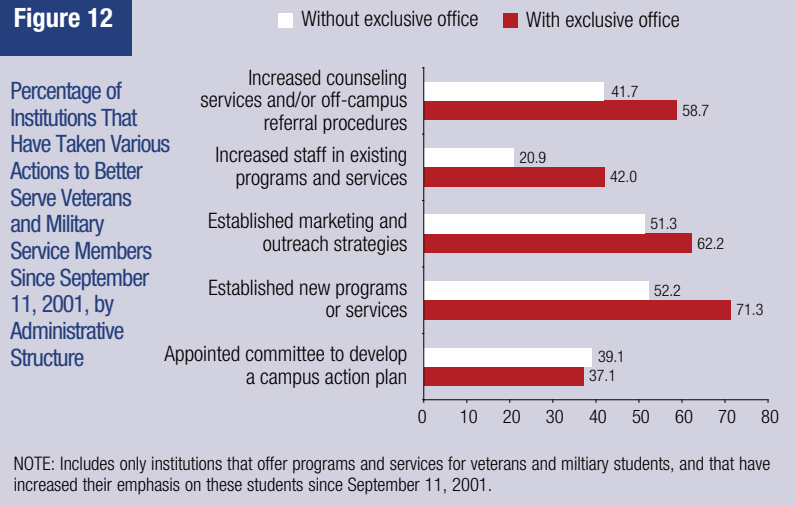
Percentage of Institutions That Have Increased Emphasis on Services Members and Veterans Since September 11, 2001, by Administrative Structure



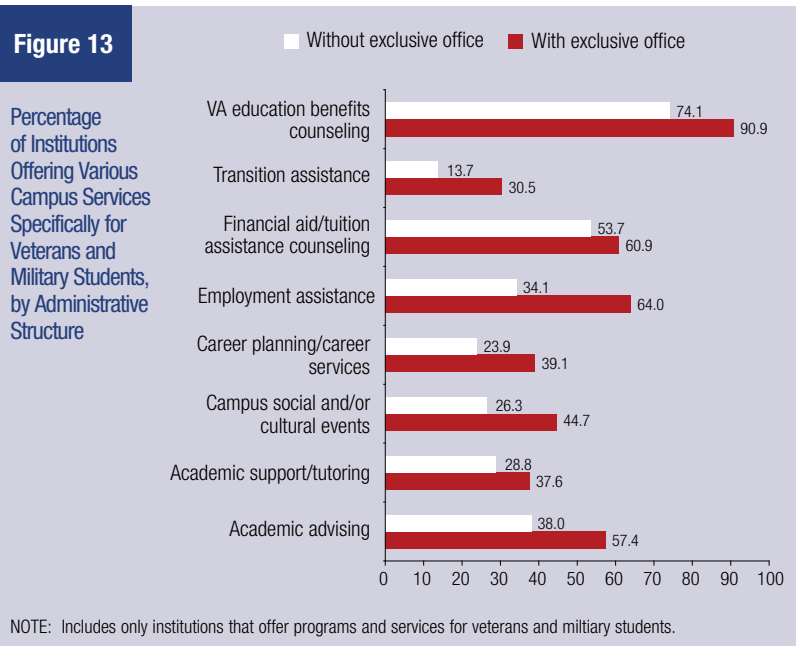
NOTE: Includes only institutions that offer programs and services for veterans and military students.

Striving to improve campus services for veterans and service members became more prominent in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. As a result, a number of institutions recognized the need to enhance their existing services and programs for military students. Among colleges and universities that have a dedicated office that provides support for military students, 75 percent have increased their emphasis on services and programs specifically for service members and/or veterans since September 11, 2001. Fifty-six percent of institutions that do not have a dedicated office increased their emphasis on veterans and military personnel after September 11 (see **Figure 11**). As shown in **Figure 12** (see page 18), institutions with a dedicated office were more likely to make programmatic changes than institutions without

³ This chapter excludes a section on service to military personnel and veterans among all participating institutions because the question about presence or absence of a dedicated office, upon which all analyses in this chapter were based, was asked only of the 57 percent of respondents who indicated that they have programs and services specifically for service members and veterans.

Figure 12

services and/or off-campus referral procedures to address their needs (59 percent versus 42 percent). Institutions with a dedicated office also were more likely than those without such an office to engage in recruitment efforts targeted at service members and veterans (61 percent versus 42 percent) and to offer training for faculty and staff regarding the transitional needs of these students (49 percent versus 36 percent).

Figure 13

Academic/Co-curricular Support Services

Institutions that have a dedicated office for veterans and military personnel are much more likely to tailor common student services to these students. Among those with a dedicated office, 61 percent have financial aid/tuition assistance counseling and 64 percent have employment assistance specifically for veterans and service members. Among those without a dedicated office, fewer institutions tailor these support services to veterans and service members (34 percent offer financial aid/tuition assistance counseling and 54 percent provide employment assistance). Likewise, institutions with a dedicated office are more likely than those without such an office to offer academic advising, campus events, and career services tailored to the needs of military personnel and veterans (see **Figure 13**).

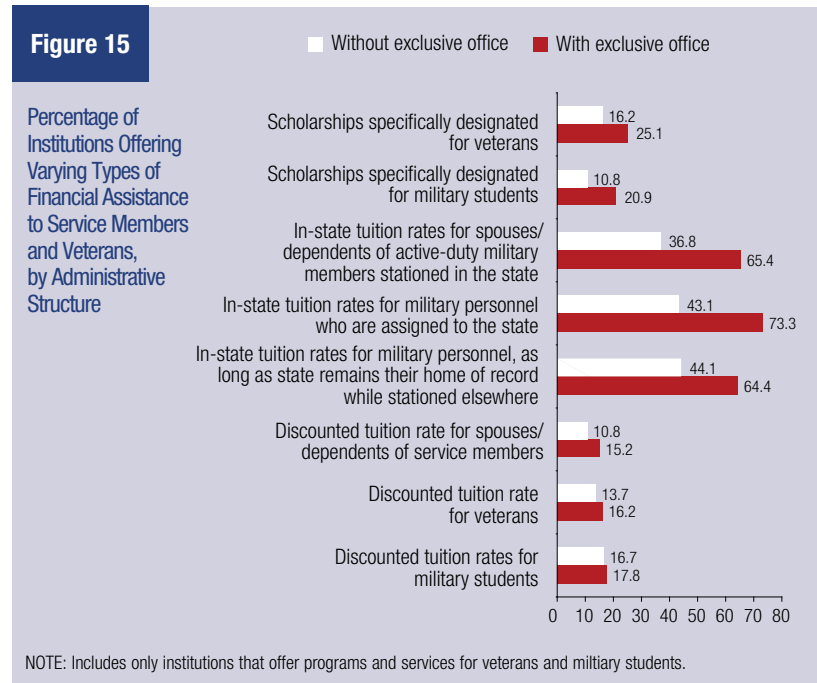
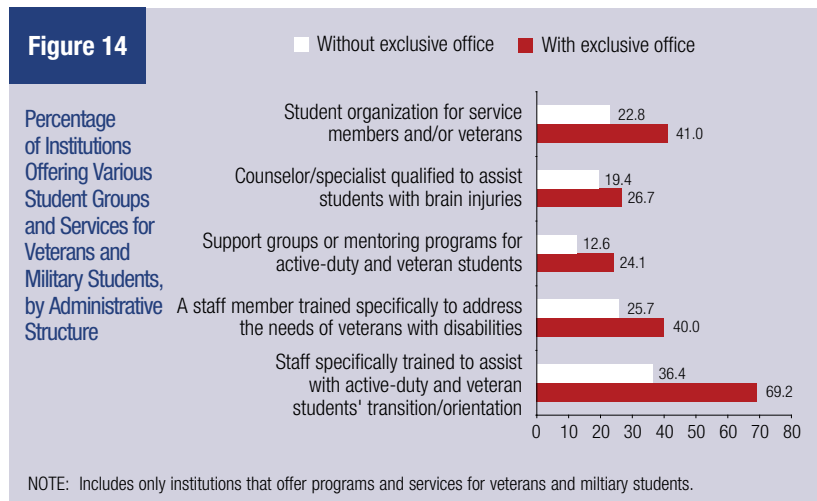
a dedicated office. These changes included establishing new programs and services (71 percent of institutions with a dedicated office versus 52 percent of institutions without such an office); establishing marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military student populations (62 percent versus 51 percent); increasing staff in existing programs and services for service members/veterans (42 percent versus 21 percent); and increasing counseling

With regard to academic programs and policies, there were fewer differences between institutions that do and do not operate an office dedicated to military personnel and veterans. This is most likely because these broad academic policies are outside the purview of an office of military/veterans services. Institutions with a dedicated office were more likely than others to offer weekend and accelerated courses (77 and 74 percent, respectively, versus 59 and

60 percent). They also were more likely than others to evaluate credit for military training courses or occupational specialty. Among the institutions with an exclusive office dedicated to serving military students, 72 percent evaluated credit awards for military occupational specialty and 87 percent evaluated credit awards for formal military training courses. Among the institutions without an exclusive office, these academic evaluation services occurred somewhat less frequently, but still at a substantially high rate (57 percent and 75 percent, respectively). There were no sizable differences in policies for readmission following deployment.

There were a few notable differences in the availability of specialized counseling and support services for veterans and military personnel. As shown in **Figure 14**, nearly 70 percent of institutions with a dedicated office had staff who were specifically trained to assist veterans and service members with transitional issues, compared with just 36 percent of other institutions. Likewise, institutions with a dedicated office were much more likely to sponsor a student organization for veterans and military personnel (41 percent versus 23 percent).

Veterans and service members sometimes need special assistance to cope with physical and psychological challenges. Campuses with a dedicated office are more likely than others to offer specialized counseling and support groups, and to refer students to support services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, but they still appear to underuse peer support groups. For example, although 40 percent of institutions with a dedicated office have staff members who are trained to address the needs of veterans with disabilities, only



10 percent of those same institutions have support groups for such students. Institutions with a dedicated office are twice as likely as those without such an office to sponsor support groups or mentoring programs for military personnel and veterans, but only one in four have created such programs. These figures indicate that although staff-to-student counseling is common, far fewer formal support groups are available on campus.

Institutions with a dedicated office for veterans and military personnel are much more likely than others to offer special tuition rates (see **Figure 15** on page 19). When asked about financial assistance specifically available for veterans and service members, the top three policies reported by colleges and universities with a dedicated office included in-state tuition rates for military personnel who are residents of the state (64 percent); in-state tuition rates for military personnel who are assigned to the state (73 percent); and in-state tuition rates for spouses/dependents of active-duty members stationed in the state (65 percent). Although these three financial aid policies are also among the top three at institutions without a dedicated office, they are offered much less frequently at such institutions.

Challenges and Priorities

Regardless of whether institutions have an office for student veterans and service members, they generally identified the same challenges and priorities. Both institutions with and without offices identified financial aid and

student retention/degree completion as their top veteran/military student challenges. Institutions with a dedicated office were more likely than others to offer health care for conditions such as PTSD (53 percent versus 34 percent) and social acculturation of veterans and military personnel (40 percent versus 27 percent). The same five institutional priorities were identified by institutions with and without a dedicated office, although the order of prevalence varied. Not surprisingly, securing funding for added programs and services is a major concern, especially among those institutions that have not yet created a special office for veterans. Three of the remaining four top issues relate to staffing: faculty/staff sensitivity to the needs and concerns of military students; staffing levels; and having qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs. These findings suggest that institutions are becoming increasingly aware of the complex needs of current and past veterans and military personnel who are pursuing postsecondary education programs and are concerned with how best to meet those needs.

IV. Results from Focus Groups of Military Students

The statistics in this publication provide a national measure of institutional efforts to serve military service members and veterans. However, comments from veterans who attended the June 2008 ACE presidential summit, “Serving Those Who Serve: Higher Education and America’s Veterans,” revealed an occasional disconnect between the programs and services that campuses create to assist veterans in their transition to the college environment and what veterans actually need or want. To examine whether such a disconnect exists between veteran needs and campus programs/services, ACE contracted with the Winston Group, an opinion research company, in July 2008 to conduct six focus groups with veterans and enlisted service members about their perceptions of postsecondary education. The purpose of these focus groups was to hear directly from veterans what they believe to be their biggest challenges to pursuing a postsecondary education and what programs and services would be of greatest benefit to them. The focus group evaluations took place in three cities with a high concentration of military personnel: Columbia, South Carolina; San Antonio, Texas; and San Diego, California.

Education as a Priority

In general, education is highly valued by both veterans and currently enlisted service members. Currently enlisted service members have the intention to pursue further education after military service, if they have not already taken concrete measures to do so. They view postsecondary education as a necessary step to improving their lives as civilians after military service.

“I am taking classes. I don’t see myself ever stopping. There is so much to learn out there. I want to go as far as I can.”

—**Currently enlisted respondent, San Antonio, Texas**

However, a major problem facing active-duty military personnel is that they can receive a task or detail on very short notice that may prevent them from completing their school work. This often makes it hard for enlisted service members to commit to education.

“You can get this [education], but the mission comes first.”

—**Veteran, Columbia, South Carolina**

“Before the ops tempo with the military got turned up, we used to have at the armories there on Bluff Road, we had Limestone [inaudible] University. They would come out and you could attend classes there at the armory. But as I stated, once the world changed, all of that went away. As they stated, it is an issue because like with us when we have

to go or we're having an exercise and they want you there, school is secondary."

—**Currently enlisted respondent, Columbia, South Carolina**

Veterans and many currently enlisted military personnel face challenges similar to other adult students such as balancing family situations and full-time employment with their educational pursuits.

"I started making excuses. Then I got married and have a couple of kids and have a couple toddlers. I will go back, but I have a lot of excuses until I get to that point."

—**Currently enlisted respondent, San Antonio, Texas**

"I guess it [education] was on my mind, but at times you never had time. You make time. Sometimes you wouldn't finish your work or it would be late. But at that time I didn't worry about it."

—**Veteran, San Antonio, Texas**

Barriers to Education

Focus group participants emphasized that military students face unique challenges that colleges and universities must understand in order to better serve them, such as the process of transitioning from military to civilian life. Many service members and veterans felt they were not properly prepared for this transition, and education can easily fall off their list of priorities.

"In the military we get institutionalized, right out of high school. If I were to leave right now, I have no idea what to do. I would be lost."

—**Currently enlisted respondent, San Antonio, Texas**

Most participants felt that colleges and universities generally did not understand those challenges and they did not "know the military."

"Like I said, somebody just came from Afghanistan and they come back home, they're not trying to be like, oh well, you put it in blue ink, you know, it should have been in black ink. You don't qualify for this. But if you do this, you qualify. They don't want to deal with that. They want it to be: 'Soldier, we understand what you're going through, you want to get this great plan, this is the steps you go through.' You don't necessarily have to walk them through all the way, but give them the baseline information to try to figure out everything."

—**Veteran, San Antonio, Texas**

"Well I don't think college is set up for the military. I mean they have night classes, but it is not really functional for the military. It is kind of difficult."

—**Currently enlisted respondent, San Antonio, Texas**

Although the general sense among the focus group participants was that colleges did not understand military needs, several of them had or knew someone who had positive experiences in their educational pursuits, and certain institutions did receive high praise. Many service members discussed among themselves college and university programs they know provide supportive environments for military students. Through word of mouth, a few colleges and universities have become well recognized for their system-wide efforts to accommodate the unique needs of

military students, including accepting transfer credits for training obtained in the armed forces; accepting transfer credits earned at a different college or university; or minimizing financial burden on military students to enroll.

“There are certain colleges that work well with military service and you’re only in that place for an average for two to three years. Like I know [institution], I had a couple of soldiers try to go there and they got such a hard time from their professors about not being able to make it to a class or something that they just dropped out and had to pay the Army their money back. So specific colleges—I know [institution] has been great to me. They take care of me. I’ve taken classes with them on four continents. Local ones just right outside the gate just never really worked out.”

—**Currently enlisted respondent, Columbia, South Carolina**

Focus group participants believed that the institutions that will be the most successful are those that reach out to service members and veterans and let them know that as an institution they understand the unique issues facing military students.

“If they get that knowledge out there and soldiers and military personnel start to know these guys take care of the military—they don’t pave the way for you, but they understand. If they develop that partnership, they’ll get service members.”

—**Currently enlisted respondent, Columbia, South Carolina**

What service members and veterans reported as most desirable from colleges and universities was information about the transferability of certain programs and whether the degree or certificate they wish to pursue is a meaningful credential. Military students also desired some type of seal of approval for colleges and universities so they know from which colleges and universities they should be choosing.

“But I know another co-worker, he got a degree online but he was using tuition assistance. He got a bachelor’s degree in three years. But I don’t even know the name of the school. How are they going to treat that degree? It was nothing but online courses. Are you going to show up and say, I have this degree, and they are going to say, you are crazy for spending money on that. Do you know what I am saying? There is nobody to tell me.”

—**Currently enlisted respondent, San Antonio, Texas**

“The whole thing is, this world is full of scams, you know, and that’s what really hurts you. You know, education or anything that you deal with now, you’ve always got to be leery of what they want.”

—**Veteran, San Antonio, Texas**

Service members also cited difficulty finding colleges and universities that recognize training obtained while serving in the military. Even with institutions that receive AARTS and SMART transcripts,⁴ some service members believed that credit acceptance is based largely on the attitudes of colleges

⁴ The AARTS/SMART programs provide active-duty personnel or veterans of the Army (AARTS) or Navy and Marine Corps (SMART) with an official transcript of military training or courses evaluated by the American Council on Education. More than 2,300 colleges and universities recognize these ACE-endorsed transcripts as official documentation of military experiences and accurate records of applicable ACE credit recommendations.

and universities toward the military. Although these service members have support systems available on their military bases, they sometimes are confused about finding institutions that accept credits for military training and/or credits they earn while serving in the military.

“I don’t think it’s universally accepted. It depends on the military friendliness of different colleges and universities. Some of them will take it without question. Others will look over it with a fine-tooth comb. So it’s kind of a mixed benefit.”

—**Currently enlisted respondent, San Antonio, Texas**

Guidance on Educational Benefits

Members of the focus groups were not well versed about what GI Bill benefits were available to them, and several were not aware that they might be eligible for additional educational benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill or that new legislation had been enacted. Generally, the individuals in the focus groups felt that information about exact educational benefits available to veterans or how to access their GI Bill benefits is not widely available or known by most veterans.

“I think most people know they have benefits. I just think the majority of the people don’t know exactly what the benefits are that they can use. There is so much stuff out there that you could use, but you don’t even know what’s there and you don’t know if that can apply to you because the only thing you realize is you can get a GI Bill, but you don’t hear that you can use it for this and that or that there are other different programs out there that you can get scholarships for. I just don’t think

they publicize it enough. This is exactly what you can use and this is what you can use it for. We just kind of know the generalization of okay, yeah, we get educational benefits.”

—**Veteran, Columbia, South Carolina**

In particular, the participants cited the lack of a central information source from which to learn about the details of the education benefits, and several focus group participants cited military education centers as being valuable sources for educational information, but that appear to vary from one location to another.

“You ask them questions and it’s yeah, you should go to college. That is all they know. They are just there to push you to go to college. I couldn’t sit there and ask him hey, what are all the things that I can get to help me out with tuition assistance and this and that. He would be, ‘I have no idea. Here are some pamphlets.’”

—**Veteran, Columbia, South Carolina**

Since many service members and veterans lack good information on pursuing postsecondary education, they often turn to web sites and college literature that contain information relevant to the military community. Likewise, they explore commercial web sites that are promoting selected institutions or programs without the advantage of enrollment counselors or educators who can guide veterans through the myriad of college enrollment decisions and optimal education options for their particular area of interest. Some of these web sites are hard to navigate or contain incomplete or inaccurate information. Frustration with the lack of easily accessible, accurate information ultimately

can dissuade military students from enrolling.

“Because they’ve changed it and now it’s—damn, you have to have a degree just to figure out how to sign up for a class. They use that People Soft engine and you have to know exactly what to press to get to search for the right parameters and it only opens up 60 days out so you can’t enroll early. Because like when you go enroll, your college will have the, the course number will be HM100, humanities 100. Well on that site instead of being HM, it’s HUMN100. But if you don’t know that, you know, it doesn’t give you anything. Whenever I go, I just have to hit the search button and scroll page after page to find the class I want.”

—Currently enlisted respondent, Columbia, South Carolina

After retiring from the armed forces, veterans no longer have a connection to the military services and education offices on military bases that can facilitate much of their personal and academic needs. These veterans leave behind support systems that provide valuable information for current service members.

“Well I think the whole thing is, the military tells you you’ve got this and you’ve got that. But then once you get out, they don’t tell you how to go about getting this stuff. They may say you have this or you have got this, but they don’t tell you how to go about getting it.”

—Veteran, San Antonio, Texas

Some participants in the focus groups opined that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not yet fulfill its mission as a point of contact for information about educational benefits. There was a sense that if the VA proactively informed veterans about their benefits, more veterans would likely take advantage of them.⁵

“It would help a lot of people who got out of the military who are VA qualified, whatever you want to call it, VA approved, I don’t know what you want to call it. It would help them a lot if, you know, the representatives from the VA would say, ‘Hey, do you want to go to school? Let me help you out. Let me help you out here.’ A lot of these guys that come home don’t know anything about it. They don’t even know to ask questions. There’s just not enough information.”

—Veteran, San Antonio, Texas

Some students cited experiencing red tape issues, where a delay in receiving veteran education benefits because of bureaucracy caused financial burden.

“It’s just if you’ve never used it or if you’ve been with somebody who is using it, it is a hassle to get through VA to get them to approve it, to get the college to approve it, and then it goes back to the VA. It goes to like 80 different people before they send you your money. So if your class starts before you get that money, you have to pay out of pocket.”

—Currently enlisted respondent, Columbia, South Carolina

⁵ Once the Post-9/11 GI Bill regulations were finalized in spring 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs posted pamphlets, guidelines, procedures, and supporting documents to the VA web site. VA also communicated by mail directly with each potentially eligible veteran in the United States to apprise them of the education benefits and eligibility requirements of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. A copy of the outreach letter to veterans is posted at www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/benefits.htm.

Uncertainty about how GI Bill education benefits will be handled may discourage some military personnel and veterans from pursuing further education, despite the expansion of those benefits under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill.

Conclusion

Veterans and service members in the focus groups mentioned several areas of concern about currently available campus services and programs: a lack of flexibility of some campus programs with respect to military students' sometimes unpredictable deployment schedule in the armed forces; uncertainty about campus recognition of civilian courses taken while in the military and/

or formal training obtained as a service member; uncertainty about earned college credits that are not recognized by other higher education institutions; and lack of strong guidance for navigating the maze of GI Bill education benefits. These issues and others raise questions about how the implementation of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill will affect current and future military students. The frequency with which some of the focus group's concerns surfaced underscores that college and university campuses could do more to improve their support services and programs for veterans and service members, and to publicize the services they already have in place.

V. Conclusion

The Post-9/11 GI Bill is expected to increase the participation of military service members and veterans in postsecondary education. This report set out to identify the types of programs and services that exist on college campuses for military students in order to learn more about higher education's readiness to serve a greater number of these students. The findings from this report reveal many things that higher education is doing well in addition to several areas for improvement.

Among the areas where higher education is meeting the needs of military students:

- Acknowledging the importance of serving military service members and veterans in strategic plans. Nearly 60 percent of institutions have service for military students in their long-term strategic plans.
- Offering programs and services for veterans. More than 55 percent of campuses have programs that are specifically designed for military veterans. Sixty-five percent of colleges and universities have increased their emphasis on military students since September 11, 2001.

- Recognizing prior military experience. Eighty-one and 64 percent of institutions with services for military personnel and veterans award college credit for military training and military occupational training, respectively.
- Assisting military students with finding appropriate counseling services. Eighty-five percent of campus counseling centers at institutions with services for military students coordinate and refer students to off-campus services when necessary.
- Providing financial accommodations for military students who are called to active duty. Seventy-nine percent of colleges and universities with military services have an established policy for refunding tuition for military activations and deployments.
- Assisting military veterans with their education benefits. Eighty-two percent of postsecondary institutions provide VA education benefits counseling for military students.

The areas in which higher education can improve in serving military students:

- Assisting military students with their transition to the college environment. Only 22 percent of postsecondary institutions with services for military students and veterans provide transition assistance.

- Providing professional development for faculty and staff on the transitional needs of military students. Approximately two out of five schools that service military students and veterans provide training opportunities for faculty and staff to be better able to assist these students with their transitional issues.
- Training staff to meet the needs of military students with brain injuries and other disabilities. Twenty-three and 33 percent of colleges and universities that service military students and veterans have staff who are trained to assist veterans with brain injuries and other physical disabilities, respectively.
- Streamlining campus administrative procedures for veterans returning from military deployments. Only 22 percent of institutions with programs and services for military personnel have developed an expedited re-enrollment process to help students restart their academic efforts.
- Providing opportunities for veterans to connect with their peers. Only 32 percent of institutions with services for veterans and military personnel have a club or other organization for these students.

The presence of staff with some level of training in meeting the needs of military students as well as basic familiarity with the military can be a critical factor in the success of military service members and veterans. As a veteran participant in the ACE “Serving Those Who Serve” summit commented in relation to this issue, “In order to help students, you need to help the faculty and administration.” At campuses in close proximity to military bases, all faculty and staff—not only the veterans’ affairs

office staff—may have more opportunities to learn about the needs of military personnel and veterans. At campuses not located near a base, more effort may be needed to educate members of the campus community on how to best help veterans acclimate to the campus environment. Some campuses have created special staff positions or departments to serve the needs of veterans, as demonstrated in this report. These offices appear to raise the overall level of activity on behalf of service members and veterans, but it is also important that their presence not deter a campus from making sure that all faculty and staff are sensitive to the needs of this population.

Although just more than half of campuses have programs specifically for veterans, there are many key administrative and student support areas in which very few campuses provide services specifically for these students, such as academic advising/tutoring, career planning, or campus social events. However, services are offered most often to all students through central academic affairs offices or within a particular college at a large university, rather than divided out by veteran/civilian student status. Additionally, according to a veteran participant in ACE’s “Serving Those Who Serve” summit:

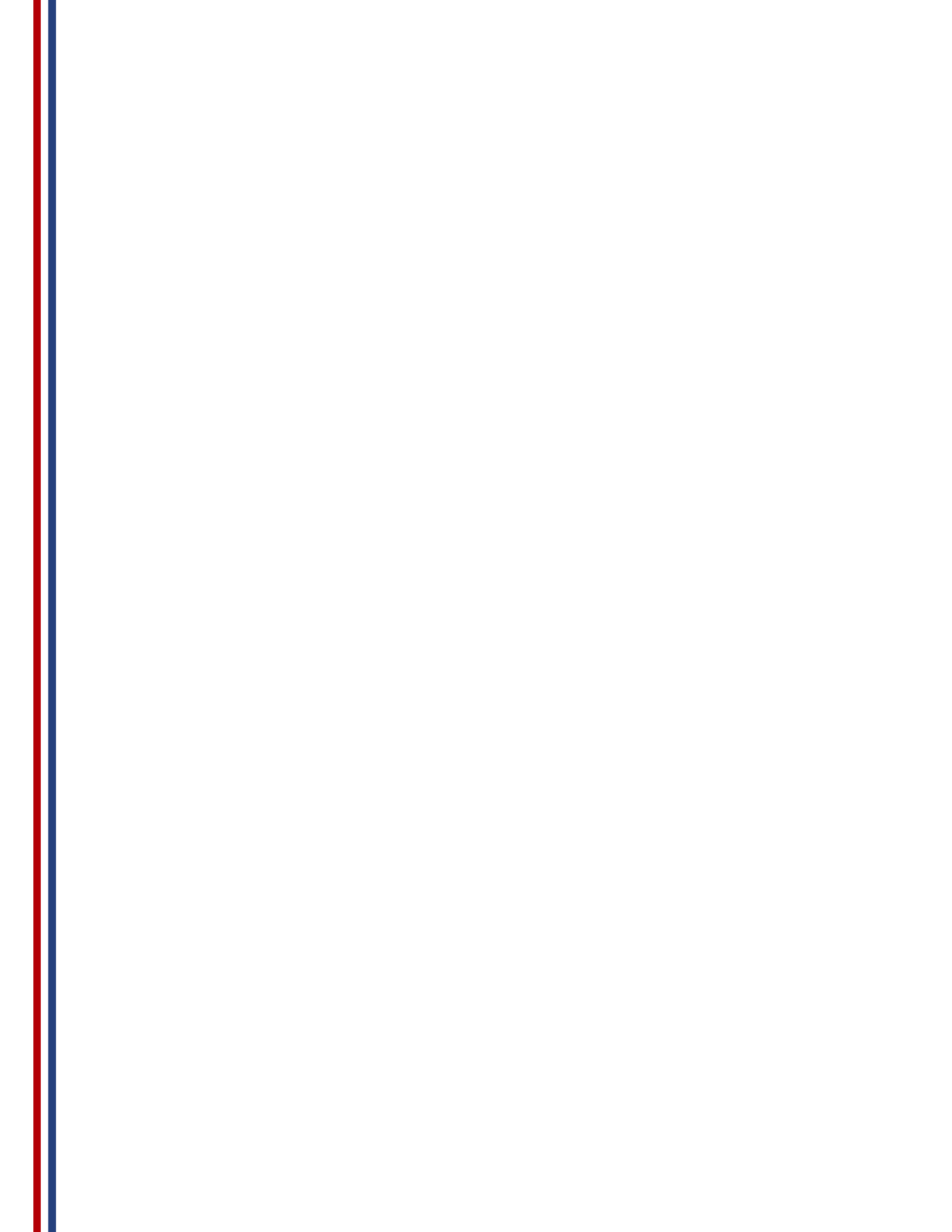
“What veteran-friendly colleges don’t do is coddle veterans. Instead, they create environments in which vets have the tools to engage in debate and make use of resources.”

**—Army combat veteran and
Georgetown University student**

Veterans are not necessarily looking to be isolated or have special programs created on their behalf. More than anything, they are looking for an educational environment that provides the tools and resources that allow them to succeed.

This report provides a first look at the kinds of environments that institutions are providing for military students. As the Post-9/11 GI Bill is implemented, and the number of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan increases, it will be important for institutions to revisit

their level of service. This survey provides a benchmark for institutions to measure their progress to date; institutions and organizations alike may wish to use the data as part of their own ongoing efforts to evaluate and improve the types of services they provide to active-duty and veteran students. Further research will be necessary to ensure that our service members and veterans are receiving no less than the best efforts they deserve from higher education.



Appendices

Veterans Survey Data Summary (By Institution Type)

Please provide estimated institutional enrollment of the following:

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
Military students				
N	178	192	219	597
Average	389.8	168.2	71.0	201.4
Veteran students				
N	199	213	236	659
Average	198.9	200.6	68.2	155.7
Dependents				
N	193	203	225	629
Average	50.7	65.8	8.3	41.4

Are programs/services for military service members and/or veterans part of your institution's long-term strategic plan?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	209	229	264	713
Yes (%)	67.9	71.6	41.3	58.6
No (%)	17.2	18.8	38.6	26.2
Don't know (%)	14.8	9.6	20.1	15.1
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: The four-year private category includes a very small number of for-profit institutions.

Which of the following is your institution considering in the next five years? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	210	228	247	696
Explore state or federal funding sources or write grant proposals to fund campus programs (%)	38.5	50.0	63.2	51.9
Train counseling staff to assist students with PTSD, brain injuries, and other health issues related to combat duty (%)	47.1	61.0	23.1	42.8
Increase budget for veterans services and programs (%)	23.3	37.7	20.2	27.0
Increase number of veterans services and programs (%)	39.5	59.2	31.6	43.0
Increase staff for service members and veterans programs and services (%)	28.6	42.5	17.4	29.0
Establish department for service members and veterans programs (%)	11.4	20.2	8.9	13.4
Establish center for service members, veterans, and their families (%)	17.6	28.5	6.1	17.0
Provide professional development for faculty/staff on service members and veterans issues (%)	62.9	66.7	43.7	56.8
None of the above (%)	11.4	9.2	34.8	19.5
Other (please specify) (%)	11.9	14.9	10.9	12.5

Does your institution currently have programs and services specifically designed for service members and veterans?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	212	233	267	723
Yes (%)	65.6	73.4	36.3	56.6
No (%)	34.4	26.6	63.7	43.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Are your admissions/financial aid staff aware of the passage of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill? (in percentages)

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	209	227	254	701
Yes (%)	90.9	90.3	79.1	85.9
No (%)	4.3	3.5	2.8	3.6
Don't know (%)	4.8	6.2	18.1	10.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

What issues related to service members and/or veteran students have been identified by your institution as priorities?
Please select the top three under each heading.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
Student issues				
N	137	169	94	402
Financial aid (%)	85.4	80.5	77.7	81.6
Degree retention/completion (%)	76.6	73.4	67.0	73.1
Health care (PTSD, traumatic brain injury, etc.) (%)	47.4	48.5	27.7	43.0
Social acculturation (%)	28.5	43.8	19.1	33.1
Student protests (%)	0.0	1.2	1.1	0.7
No issues related to service members or veteran students (%)	5.8	5.3	13.8	7.5
Other (please specify) (%)	9.5	8.9	9.6	9.2
Institutional issues				
N	134	168	88	392
Campus accessibility (%)	11.2	11.3	25.0	14.3
Course withdrawals as a result of military deployment or mobilization (%)	47.8	48.8	48.9	48.5
Faculty/staff sensitivity to issues related to this population (%)	50.7	44.6	34.1	44.4
Locating funding sources for added campus programs and services (%)	41.8	45.8	35.2	42.1
Sufficient staffing for military services and/or programs (%)	27.6	32.1	21.6	28.1
Qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs (%)	35.8	33.9	23.9	32.4
Security needs for campus war protests (%)	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.3
Montgomery GI Bill does not adequately cover college tuition and living expenses (%)	4.5	11.3	12.5	9.2
Pressure to enroll service members/veterans who do not meet entrance requirements (%)	0.0	1.8	1.1	1.0
No issues related to service members or veteran students (%)	9.0	7.7	12.5	9.2
Other (please specify) (%)	3.0	2.4	3.4	2.8

Since September 11, 2001, has your institution increased its emphasis on services and programs specifically for service members and/or veterans?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	139	171	97	409
Yes (%)	64.7	70.2	56.7	65.0
No (%)	30.9	22.2	33.0	27.6
Don't know (%)	4.3	7.6	10.3	7.3
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

What campus services or programmatic changes demonstrate this increased emphasis? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	84	119	55	259
Appointed committee to develop a campus responsiveness action plan (%)	25.0	47.9	36.4	38.2
Established new programs or services for service members/veterans (%)	57.1	68.1	60.0	62.9
Established marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military student populations (%)	52.4	55.5	69.1	57.5
Increased staff in existing programs and services for service members/veterans (%)	28.6	37.0	27.3	32.4
Increased counseling services and/or off-campus referral procedures to address their needs (%)	52.4	58.0	32.7	50.6
Other (please specify) (%)	17.9	17.6	12.7	16.6

Please indicate which of the following services and/or programs specifically for service members and/or veteran students exist at your institution. Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	139	169	97	407
Academic advising (%)	57.6	40.2	45.4	47.7
Academic support/tutoring (%)	38.8	29.6	29.9	33.2
Campus social and/or cultural events (%)	33.8	44.4	21.6	35.4
Career planning/career services (%)	38.8	27.2	26.8	31.2
Employment assistance (%)	54.0	58.0	25.8	48.9
Financial aid/tuition assistance counseling (%)	56.1	58.6	55.7	57.2
Transition assistance (%)	19.4	30.2	11.3	22.1
VA education benefits counseling (%)	86.3	89.3	61.9	81.6
Veteran student lounge or designated gathering place (%)	11.5	16.6	5.2	12.0
None of the above (%)	1.4	1.2	11.3	3.7
Other (please specify) (%)	10.1	10.7	9.3	10.1

Does your institution offer tutorial services or academic assistance specifically for service members and/or veterans beyond what is available to other enrolled students? If so, are there costs for the services?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	132	168	96	398
Yes; services are offered at no cost (%)	21.2	19.6	18.8	20.1
Yes; services are offered at a reduced rate (%)				
Yes; services are offered at a standard student rate (%)	0.8	4.2	0.0	2.0
No tutorial services or academic assistance specifically for service members and/or veterans is offered (%)	78.0	76.2	81.3	77.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

For what types of prior learning does your institution award college credit? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	132	170	95	399
College coursework at another institution (%)	97.7	94.1	96.8	96.0
Evaluated credit awards for military training (%)	87.9	78.2	73.7	80.5
Evaluated credit awards for military occupational training (%)	68.2	62.4	60.0	63.9
National testing programs (%)	87.9	90.0	89.5	89.2
Evaluated credit for corporate training programs, as recommended by the <i>ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Corporate Training</i> (%)	32.6	28.8	37.9	32.3
Portfolio review or assessment (%)	33.3	23.5	38.9	30.3
Challenge examinations or test-out procedures (%)	66.7	54.1	47.4	56.6
None of the above (%)	0.8	2.9	1.1	1.8
Other (please specify) (%)	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.3

Does your campus offer any alternative curriculum delivery formats? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	96	401
Online education (%)	97.7	90.0	74.0	88.8
Evening/night courses (%)	99.2	86.5	79.2	89.0
Weekend courses (%)	77.4	68.8	52.1	67.8
Accelerated courses (%)	77.4	61.2	62.5	66.8
None of the above (%)	0.8	4.7	11.5	5.0
Other (please specify) (%)	4.5	2.4	5.2	3.7

Does your institution offer professional development training opportunities for faculty and administrators regarding the transitional needs of service members, veterans, and/or disabled veterans?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	129	170	95	396
Yes (%)	45.0	44.1	36.8	42.7
No (%)	55.0	55.9	63.2	57.3
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Does your institution have any of the following? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	95	400
Staff specifically trained to assist with active-duty and veteran students' transition/ orientation to college (%)	53.4	57.1	42.1	52.3
A staff member, such as a licensed counselor or psychologist, trained specifically to address the needs of veterans with disabilities (%)	34.6	40.0	17.9	32.8
Support groups or mentoring programs specifically for active-duty and veteran students (%)	17.3	25.9	6.3	18.3
Support groups specifically for veteran students with disabilities (%)	3.8	10.6	5.3	7.0
Support groups specifically for family members of students serving on active duty (%)	3.8	5.3	4.2	4.5
Support groups specifically for dependents of deceased veterans (%)	3.0	3.5	1.1	2.8
Counselor/specialist qualified to support/assist students with brain injuries	29.3	25.9	9.5	23.0
Student organization for service members and/or veterans (excluding ROTC programs) (%)	29.3	47.1	7.4	31.8
ROTC program (%)	12.8	66.5	47.4	43.8
Veterans Upward Bound program (%)	7.5	4.7	1.1	4.8
None of the above (%)	20.3	6.5	21.1	14.8
Other (please specify) (%)	6.0	8.2	4.2	6.5

Does your campus provide counseling to assist students who are combat veterans with the following issues? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	132	169	89	392
Post-traumatic stress disorder (%)	16.7	22.5	4.5	16.3
Depression (%)	25.0	27.2	16.9	24.0
Social adjustment (%)	28.0	27.8	16.9	25.3
Stress/anxiety management (%)	29.5	30.2	20.2	27.6
All of the above (%)	40.9	71.6	44.9	55.1
None of the above (%)	37.1	14.2	37.1	27.3

Does your counseling center offer the following? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	92	397
Access to psychiatrist (%)	10.5	69.4	40.2	42.8
Coordination and referral to support services off-campus (%)	81.2	91.2	78.3	84.6
Coordination and referral to support services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (%)	49.6	65.9	43.5	54.9
None of the above (%)	12.8	5.9	17.4	11.1
Other (please specify) (%)	6.0	3.5	4.3	4.8

Does your institution have an office or department exclusively dedicated to serving service members and/or veterans?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	134	171	96	403
Yes (%)	56.0	55.6	26.0	48.6
No (%)	44.0	44.4	74.0	51.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Does this same office or department provide services for family members of service members and veterans?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	74	93	25	193
Yes (%)	79.7	74.2	80.0	77.2
No (%)	20.3	25.8	20.0	22.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Which of the following descriptions most accurately describes your campus structure for offering service member and/or veteran student services and programs?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	74	94	25	194
Veterans center (%)	14.9	16.0	8.0	14.4
Veterans administrative office (%)	64.9	63.8	80.0	66.0
Other (please specify) (%)	20.3	20.2	12.0	19.6
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Which office is the primary point of contact for enrolled students to receive information about institutional services and programs for service members and/or veterans?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	59	76	71	207
Academic affairs office (%)	0.0	2.6	4.2	2.4
Admissions office (%)	22.0	9.2	16.9	15.5
Counseling office (%)	11.9	0.0	0.0	3.4
Registrar's office (%)	10.2	51.3	38.0	35.3
Student affairs/student services (%)	30.5	18.4	21.1	22.7
No primary point of contact (%)	1.7	1.3	8.5	3.9
Other (please specify) (%)	23.7	17.1	11.3	16.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Which campus unit(s) administers veterans' education benefits counseling? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	59	76	68	203
Admissions (%)	22.0	17.1	19.1	19.2
Bursar (%)	1.7	5.3	1.5	3.0
Business office (%)	1.7	2.6	11.8	5.4
Financial aid (%)	66.1	44.7	55.9	54.7
Registrar (%)	15.3	63.2	58.8	47.8
Student affairs/student services (%)	32.2	17.1	8.8	18.7
None of the above (%)				
Other (please specify) (%)	3.4	6.6	7.4	5.9

Does your institution have an established policy regarding tuition refunds for military activations and deployments?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	95	400
Yes (%)	84.2	85.3	60.0	79.0
No (%)	0.8	1.8	4.2	2.0
No set policy (handled on a case-by-case basis) (%)	15.0	12.9	35.8	19.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

What re-enrollment process must military students complete to enroll in classes following a military activation or deployment? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	95	400
Reapply to the institution and be readmitted (%)	15.0	17.6	13.7	15.8
Complete a standard re-enrollment process for all returning students (%)	68.4	50.6	72.6	61.8
Complete an expedited re-enrollment process to accommodate military students (%)	10.5	34.7	17.9	22.5
None of the above (%)	11.3	2.4	4.2	6.0
Other (please specify) (%)	6.0	9.4	5.3	7.3

Which of the following sources of financial assistance does your institution offer service members and/or veteran students? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	167	92	394
Discounted tuition rates for military students (%)	15.8	13.2	23.9	17.0
Discounted tuition rates for veterans (%)	13.5	12.6	19.6	15.0
Discounted tuition rates for spouses/dependents of service members (%)	7.5	12.6	19.6	12.9
Eligibility for in-state tuition rates for military personnel, as long as state remains their home of record while stationed elsewhere (%)	67.7	68.3	8.7	53.8
Eligibility for in-state tuition rates for military personnel who are assigned to the state (%)	70.7	73.7	10.9	57.6
Eligibility for in-state tuition rates for spouses/dependents of active-duty military members stationed in the state (%)	63.2	64.1	8.7	50.5
Scholarships specifically designated for military students (%)	14.3	15.6	17.4	15.5
Scholarships specifically designated for veterans (%)	21.8	20.4	18.5	20.6
Scholarships specifically designated for spouses/dependents of active-duty and reserve service members (%)	12.8	5.4	13.0	9.9
Scholarships specifically designated for spouses/children of deceased veterans (%)	10.5	10.8	4.3	9.1
None of the above (%)	7.5	8.4	41.3	15.7
Other (please specify) (%)	13.5	13.2	15.2	13.7

What communication methods does your institution employ to inform currently enrolled service members, veterans, and their families about existing programs and services designed specifically for them? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	95	400
College catalog (%)	81.2	72.9	61.1	73.0
On-campus advisers (%)	72.9	64.7	41.1	61.8
Targeted print advertising (%)	26.3	28.8	25.3	27.0
Targeted web-based advertising (%)	29.3	46.5	25.3	35.5
Targeted postal mailings (%)	24.8	21.2	16.8	21.3
Targeted e-mail (%)	37.6	56.5	35.8	45.0
None of the above (%)	6.0	2.4	16.8	7.0
Other (%)	3.8	9.4	5.3	6.5

Does your institution engage in admissions or recruitment efforts specifically designed to attract service members and/or veteran students?

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	133	170	96	401
Yes (%)	49.6	51.8	53.1	51.4
No (%)	42.9	41.2	36.5	40.6
Don't know (%)	7.5	7.1	10.4	8.0
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

What outreach methods to potential students does your institution employ? Please select all that apply.

	Two-Year Public	Four-Year Public	Four-Year Private	Total
N	67	88	51	207
College catalog (%)	83.6	80.7	68.6	78.7
Targeted print advertising (%)	62.7	61.4	76.5	65.7
Targeted web-based advertising (%)	55.2	63.6	70.6	62.8
Targeted on-campus admissions events (%)	50.7	51.1	47.1	50.2
Partnerships with local National Guard and/or Reservist units (%)	46.3	45.5	47.1	46.4
Participation in special events on military installations (%)	68.7	71.6	70.6	70.5
None of the above (%)	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.5
Other (%)	11.9	15.9	3.9	11.6

Survey Instrument

Campus Characteristics

1. Institution Name
2. Institution Code
3. Please provide estimated institutional enrollment of the following:
 - a. Military students (includes active-duty military personnel, Air and Army National Guard, and Reserve components from all service branches; excludes Reserve Officer Training Corps [ROTC])
 - b. Veteran students
 - c. Dependents of veterans receiving benefits (i.e., family members receiving Chapter 35 Veterans Affairs benefits)
4. Are programs/services for military service members and/or veterans a part of your institution's long-term strategic plan?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
5. Which of the following is your institution considering in the next five years? Please select all that apply.
 - a. Explore state or federal funding sources or write grant proposals to fund campus programs
 - b. Train counseling staff to assist students with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), brain injuries, and other health issues related to combat duty
 - c. Increase budget for veterans services and programs
 - d. Increase number of veterans services and programs
 - e. Increase staff for service members and veterans programs and services
 - f. Establish department for service members and veterans programs
 - g. Establish center for service members, veterans, and their families
 - h. Provide professional development for faculty/staff on service members and veterans issues
 - i. None of the above
 - j. Other (please specify below)
6. Does your institution currently have programs and services specifically designed for service members and veterans? (If no, please skip to question number 32.)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

7. Is your admissions/financial aid staff aware of passage of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

Institutional Climate: Priority of Veterans and Military Student Services/Programs

8. What issues related to service members and/or veteran students have been identified by your institution as priorities? Please select the top three under each heading.

Student Issues

- a. Financial aid
- b. Degree retention/completion
- c. Health care (PTSD, traumatic brain injury [TBI], etc.)
- d. Social acculturation
- e. Student protests
- f. No issues related to service members or veteran students
- g. Other (please specify below)

Institutional Issues

- a. Campus accessibility
- b. Course withdrawals as a result of military deployment or mobilization
- c. Faculty/staff sensitivity to issues related to this population
- d. Locating funding sources for added campus programs and services
- e. Sufficient staffing for military services and/or programs
- f. Qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs
- g. Security needs for campus war protests
- h. Montgomery GI Bill does not adequately cover college tuition and living expenses
- i. Pressure to enroll service members/veterans who do not meet entrance requirements
- j. No issues related to service members or veteran students
- k. Other (please specify below)

9. Since September 11, 2001, has your institution increased its emphasis on services and programs specifically for service members and/or veterans? (If no, please skip to question number 11.)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

10. What campus services or programmatic changes demonstrate this increased emphasis? Please select all that apply.
- a. Appointed committee to develop a campus responsiveness action plan
 - b. Established new programs or services for service members/veterans
 - c. Established marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military student populations
 - d. Increased staff in existing programs and services for service members/veterans
 - e. Increased counseling services and/or off-campus referral procedures to address their needs
 - f. Other (please specify below)

Academic Support Services

11. Please indicate which of the following services and/or programs specifically for service members and/or veteran students exist at your institution. Please select all that apply.
- a. Academic advising
 - b. Academic support/tutoring
 - c. Campus social and/or cultural events
 - d. Career planning/career services
 - e. Employment assistance (VA work study, student work study, on-campus employment, off-campus job placement)
 - f. Financial aid/tuition assistance counseling
 - g. Transition assistance (housing, personal counseling, social adjustment referrals)
 - h. VA education benefits counseling
 - i. Veteran student lounge or designated gathering space
 - j. Orientation (i.e., campus orientation sections specifically for adult learner populations or veterans)
 - k. None of the above
 - l. Other (please specify below)
12. Does your institution offer tutorial services or academic assistance specifically for service members and/or veterans beyond what is available to other enrolled students? If so, are there costs for the services?
- a. Yes; services are offered at no cost
 - b. Yes; services are offered at a reduced rate
 - c. Yes; services are offered at a standard student rate
 - d. No tutorial services or academic assistance specifically for service members and/or veterans is offered

13. For what types of prior learning does your institution award college credit? Please select all that apply.
- College coursework at another institution
 - Evaluated credit awards for military training (e.g., basic training and military training schools, as recommended by the ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services)
 - Evaluated credit awards for military occupational training (e.g., MOS and rate/rating experiences, as recommended by the ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services)
 - National testing programs (e.g., Advanced Placement, CLEP, DANTES)
 - Evaluated credit for corporate training programs, as recommended by the *ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Corporate Training*
 - Portfolio review or assessment
 - Challenge examinations or test-out procedures
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify below)
14. Does your campus offer any alternative curriculum delivery formats? Please select all that apply.
- Online education
 - Evening/night courses
 - Weekend courses
 - Accelerated courses (i.e., 6–8 week course completion time)
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify below)
15. Does your institution offer professional development training opportunities for faculty and administrators regarding the transitional needs of service members, veterans, and/or disabled veterans?
- Yes
 - No

Student Support Services

16. Does your institution have any of the following? Please select all that apply.
- Staff specifically trained to assist with active-duty and veteran students' transition/ orientation to college
 - A staff member, such as a licensed counselor or psychologist, trained specifically to address the needs of veterans with disabilities
 - Support groups or mentoring programs specifically for active-duty and veteran students
 - Support groups specifically for veteran students with disabilities
 - Support groups specifically for family members of students serving on active duty
 - Support groups specifically for dependents of deceased veterans
 - Counselor/specialist qualified to support/assist students with brain injuries
 - Student organization for service members and/or veterans? [excluding ROTC programs]
 - ROTC program
 - Veterans Upward Bound program
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify below)

17. Does your campus provide counseling to assist students who are combat veterans with the following issues? Please select all that apply.
- a. Post-traumatic stress disorder
 - b. Depression
 - c. Social adjustment
 - d. Stress/anxiety management
 - e. All of the above
 - f. None of the above
18. Does your counseling center offer the following? Please select all that apply.
- a. Access to psychiatrist
 - b. Coordination and referral to off-campus support services
 - c. Coordination and referral to support services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
 - d. None of the above
 - e. Other (please specify below)
19. Does your institution have an office or department exclusively dedicated to serving service members and/or veterans? (If no, please skip to question number 22. If yes, please skip questions 22 and 23.)
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Administrative and Physical Infrastructure

20. Does this same office or department provide services for family members of service members and veterans?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
21. Which of the following descriptions most accurately describes your campus structure for offering service member and/or veteran student services and programs?
- a. Student center (defined as dedicated campus space for veterans, active and reserve component service members, typically including lounge or meeting space and centralized office, with trained college employee[s] to facilitate administrative and/or campus services for veteran and military students)
 - b. Administrative office (defined as an independent department, with college employee[s] to facilitate administrative and/or campus services for veteran students)
 - c. Other (please specify below)

22. Which office is the primary point of contact for enrolled students to receive information about institutional services and programs for service members and/or veterans?
- Academic affairs
 - Admissions office
 - Counseling office
 - Registrar's office
 - Student affairs/student services
 - No primary point of contact
 - Other (please specify below)
23. Which campus unit(s) administers veterans' education benefits counseling?
Please select all that apply.
- Admissions
 - Bursar
 - Business office
 - Financial Aid
 - Registrar
 - Student affairs/student services
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify below)

Enrollment Management/Financial Assistance

24. Does your institution have an established policy regarding tuition refunds for military activations and deployments?
- Yes
 - No
 - No set policy (handled on a case-by-case basis)
25. What re-enrollment process must military students complete to enroll in classes following a military activation or deployment? Please select all that apply.
- Reapply to the institution and be readmitted
 - Complete a standard re-enrollment process for all returning students
 - Complete an expedited re-enrollment process to accommodate military students
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify below)

26. Which of the following sources of financial assistance does your institution offer service members and/or veteran students? Please select all that apply.
- a. Discounted tuition rates for military students (active-duty and Reserve components)
 - b. Discounted tuition rates for veterans
 - c. Discounted tuition rates for spouses/dependents of service members
 - d. Eligibility for in-state tuition rates for military personnel, as long as state remains their home of record while stationed elsewhere
 - e. Eligibility for in-state tuition rates for military personnel who are assigned to the state
 - f. Eligibility for in-state tuition rates for spouses/dependents of active-duty military members stationed in the state
 - g. Scholarships specifically designated for military students (active-duty and Reserve components)
 - h. Scholarships specifically designated for veterans
 - i. Scholarships specifically designated for spouses/dependents of active-duty and Reserve service members
 - j. Scholarships specifically designated for spouses/children of deceased veterans
 - k. None of the above
 - l. Other (please specify below)
27. What communication methods does your institution employ to inform currently enrolled service members, veterans, and their families about existing programs and services designed specifically for them? Please select all that apply.
- a. College catalog
 - b. On-campus advisers
 - c. Targeted print advertising
 - d. Targeted web-based advertising
 - e. Targeted postal mailings
 - f. Targeted e-mail
 - g. None of the above
 - h. Other (please specify)
28. Does your institution engage in admissions or recruitment efforts specifically designed to attract service member and/or veteran students? (If no or don't know, please skip to question number 30.)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

29. What outreach methods to potential students does your institution employ? Please select all that apply.
- a. College catalog
 - b. Targeted print advertising
 - c. Targeted web-based advertising
 - d. Targeted on-campus admissions events (i.e., open houses or special tours specifically for military and/or veteran students)
 - e. Partnerships with local National Guard and/or Reservist units
 - f. Participation in special events on military installations (i.e., education fairs, transition assistance counseling, community meetings)
 - g. None of the above
 - h. Other (please specify below)

Comments

30. Would you like your institution to be included on a web site profiling programs and services for military veterans?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
31. NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education plans to develop a web-based compendium of veterans and military support programs and services to aid college-bound veterans in their postsecondary education selection process. Please list all programs or services that your institution provides for service members, veterans, and/or military family members that have not previously been identified in this survey. Please limit program description to a maximum of one paragraph, 30 words or less, per specialized campus program.

Contact Information

32. Please provide your contact information so we may follow up with you if additional information is needed about your military programs:
- a. Name
 - b. Phone number
 - c. E-mail

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