



APSCU®

ASSOCIATION OF
PRIVATE SECTOR COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

REPORT OF THE

***APSCU BLUE
RIBBON TASKFORCE***

FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN EDUCATION

FEBRUARY 2013



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Private sector colleges and universities have a long and important relationship with our nation's military and veteran students. We celebrate who they are and what they do. Our actions, as educators of hundreds of thousands of military and veteran students, must honor this partnership by providing our military and veteran students with the best possible education experience at our institutions. With that goal in mind, APSCU adopted its Five Tenets of Veteran Education on June 11, 2012. One important tenet was the creation of a Blue Ribbon Taskforce charged with identifying, collecting and documenting best practices in meeting the unique needs of military and veteran students. The mission of the Blue Ribbon Taskforce evolved beyond identifying ways in which institutions of higher education could better welcome, accommodate and support our military and veteran students in the pursuit and completion of their education goals, and is articulated in the Mission Statement below.

The Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities (APSCU) has established this "Blue Ribbon" Taskforce to ensure that every servicemember, veteran, and family member utilizing their earned, postsecondary education benefits are provided with the quality education to which they are entitled at every institution of higher education. The Taskforce is comprised of a broad group of individuals who share a common commitment towards the education of servicemembers and veterans representing a diverse range of institutions, including non-APSCU members, as well as representatives of nationally-recognized leadership organizations in the area of military and veteran postsecondary education. The Taskforce has been specifically charged with identifying, discussing, and documenting the very best postsecondary education practices and support services that meet the specific needs of military and veteran students. The primary objective of the Taskforce is to publish a set of recommended institutional best practices and associated operational practices that foster persistence, program completion, and measures of student performance that will enable the military and veteran student population to achieve its academic and professional goals. The final product will represent a condensed, practical set of suggested actions and policies for all institutions of higher education.

In reviewing issues of particular importance to military and veteran students, the Taskforce worked in subcommittees to consider (i) the unique circumstances facing military and veteran students; (ii) how to measure success; and (iii) best practices for institutions of higher education to adopt in serving military and veteran students.

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND OF THE MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT POPULATIONS

- I. Profile of Today's Postsecondary Education Students
- II. Military and Veteran Students in Postsecondary Education
- III. Characteristics and Demographics of Military and Veteran Students
- IV. Positive Impact of Military and Veteran Student Enrollment
- V. Challenges and Misconceptions About Military and Veteran Students by Civilians

ALTERNATIVE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS

- I. Overview
- II. Recommendations for Non-Traditional Student Outcome Measures

BEST PRACTICES FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS

- I. Consumer Information, Enrollment and Recruitment
- II. Institutional Commitment to Provide Military and Veteran Student Support
- III. Promising Practices for Ensuring Military and Veteran Student Success Through Student Services
- IV. Establish Institutional Research Guidelines for Tracking Veteran Student Success



MEMBERS OF THE APSCU BLUE RIBBON TASKFORCE FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN EDUCATION

The Taskforce has been led by **Jeff Cropsey**, *Vice President for Strategic Initiatives at Grantham University and Chair, Public Affairs, Council of College and Military Educators* and **James Hendrickson**, *Vice President of Military Relations at Colorado Technical University and Executive Director of the CTU Wounded Warrior and Spouse Scholarship Program*.

Other Members of the Taskforce include:

- **Jeff Arthur** - *CIO and Vice President of Financial Assistance, ECPI University*
- **Mike Betz** - *General Manager, Military Student Initiatives, Education Corporation of America*
- **Scott A. Kilgore** - *Senior Vice President of Military of Affairs, Kaplan University*
- **Russell Kitchner, Ph.D.** - *Vice President for Regulatory and Governmental Relations, American Public University System*
- **Scott D. Palumbo, LCDR. USNR** – *formerly National Director of Military Affairs, DeVry University*
- **James Shane, Jr., BG. USA (Ret.)** - *Director of Military and Veterans Affairs, Sullivan University*
- **Kathy Snead** - *Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Consortium President and Vice President for Military and Veteran Partnerships, American Association of State Colleges and Universities*
- **Dennis Trinkle, Ph.D.** - *Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Harrison College*
- **Joseph W. Wescott, Ph.D.** - *Executive Director, Veterans and Military Education Programs, North Carolina State Approving Agency and Vice President, National Association of State Approving Agencies*
- **Garland H. Williams, Ph.D., Col. USA (Ret.)** - *Associate Regional Vice President, Military Division, University of Phoenix*

Special Advisors:

- **Michael Dakduk** - *Executive Director, Student Veterans of America*
- **Ryan M. Gallucci** - *Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.*
- **Steve Gonzalez** - *Assistant Director, National Economic Division, American Legion*

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND OF THE MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT POPULATIONS

I PROFILE OF TODAY'S POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS

The 21st Century student enrolled in postsecondary education in the U.S. represents a dynamic shift in our classical definition of “traditional.” Today’s new normal is no longer the fresh-out-of-high school, first-time, full-time student living on campus and attending thanks to the generosity of family. College campuses have witnessed the gradual evolution of the non-traditional student or “the new traditional.” This means that college and universities are experiencing a new majority of non-traditional students who possess one or more of the following characteristics as first-time, first-year undergraduates, as outlined by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): delayed enrollment; attends part-time; works full-time while enrolled; financially independent for purposes of determining Title IV federal student aid; has a dependent(s); is a single parent; and completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate, or did not finish high school.

II MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Two million men and women enlisted following the attacks on September 11, 2001. As the nation continues to close the chapters on the ensuing wars, institutions of higher education should prepare for an influx of another type of non-traditional student: veterans eager to utilize their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), between August 1, 2009 and January 23, 2013, approximately 1,143,105 veterans attended institutions of higher education in the United States, and the number of veterans, spouses, and dependents using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits grew 84 percent from the first to the second year of the benefit. While the most recently available data indicate that the military and veteran populations represent one and three percent, respectively, of undergraduates at Title IV-eligible institutions, this data is reflective of the 2007-2008 academic year, which predates the first year of eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits for eligible veterans and their families. Institutions must be prepared for an inevitable second wave of over a million additional veterans, spouses, and dependents who will seek the programs of education that best meet their needs as “non-traditional” students.

III CHARACTERISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS OF MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS

Using the NCES definition for reference, military and veteran students clearly qualify as “non-traditional students.” Though many of the Post-9/11-era veteran students are under age 25, in 2007-2008 85 percent of servicemembers and veterans enrolled in undergraduate programs were aged 24 or older, and a preponderance of servicemember and veteran students displayed at least one or more other non-traditional characteristics. For example, veterans’ likely experience delayed entry into college, as they enlisted immediately after high school. From a demographic standpoint, 2007-2008 data identify the majority of military undergraduates (veterans and active duty military attending classes) as, “non-Hispanic white (60 percent), male (73 percent), and having a spouse, a child, or both (62 percent).” In fact, only 35 percent were both unmarried with no dependents. Additional data from 2010 reflects much of what has already been stated regarding the profile of veterans, but goes further to suggest that this student population was also part-time, transfer, and distance learners. These identifiers were most pervasive among combat veterans. Also, in comparison to one in ten of their civilian student peers who reported having a disability, one in five veteran students reported having a disability.

Demographics aside, the veteran student brings a unique life experience and perspective shaped by their military service to their campus and classroom environments, and provides invaluable enrichment opportunities to their civilian student peers. While the military experiences shared by veteran students can offer their civilian peers and faculty members an additional world-view and new insights, it can also act as a source of stress that decreases the likelihood of their persistence in postsecondary education. Similar to other non-traditional students, the characteristics that define military and veteran students as non-traditional are often risk factors to retention and degree or diploma attainment. However, there are additional, unique factors that have historically impacted military and veteran persistence rates, such as being deployed in the middle of a program or attending a program while deployed or the stress of transitioning from servicemember to civilian to student. Recent research has pointed to certain factors that may make the adjustment from the military to the classroom more difficult, including the timing gap between high school and college, lack of socialization with student peers, and insufficient institutional support.

IV POSITIVE IMPACT OF MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT ENROLLMENT

While some military and veteran students view higher education as a necessary step towards employment and establishing a stable civilian life after military service, others eagerly embrace the opportunity to submerge themselves in the traditional college experience. The entry of military and veteran students into institutions of higher education provides administrators, faculty, and peers with new opportunities to interact with and engage in enriching classroom discussions. Military and veteran students are grateful for the opportunity to utilize their educational benefits at a postsecondary institution, and many display their enthusiasm by participating regularly in classroom discussions and proactively engaging their professors for assistance. While not every student is comfortable with this degree of participation, those who do bring a wealth of knowledge to the classroom environment, such as experiences from living abroad, innovation, accountability, responsibility, maturity, and most important, a depth of personal experience. Military and veteran students are often seen as role models for their peers and leaders who embody the characteristics of discipline, integrity, ingenuity, respect and volunteerism. In essence, following in the footsteps of original GI Bill beneficiaries in 1944, the Post-9/11 generation of students brings a level of seriousness, perceptiveness, studiousness, energy and determination, along with many other undergraduate virtues that reflects qualities inherent within the best and brightest. Given these innumerable strengths, many institutions—ready and willing to help these students successfully transition back into civilian life—are enthusiastic and welcoming to military and veteran students.

“After almost ten years of war, our veterans are coming home and seeking out the tools they need to provide for their families and thrive in the post-military life. One of the greatest opportunities we can give them in return is access to postsecondary education in the field of their practice.”

– APSCU President and CEO Steve Gunderson

V CHALLENGES AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS BY CIVILIANS

As military and veteran students enter the postsecondary education environment, in addition to facing personal and academic challenges associated with readjustment, some students must also contend with “anti-military” sentiments or a culture that enables students to be marginalized because of their status. Whether these beliefs emanate from the faculty or administration, to avoid confrontational situations and being labeled and viewed by the institution and peers as a “military or veteran,” student some may avoid engaging their peers in the classroom or avoid social interaction. Others may simply conceal their status. Institutions of higher education need to be cognizant of this issue and be prepared to deal with such matters as soon as they are identified. Our military and veteran students represent the best of our nation’s human resources and are the very backbone of our infrastructure, and through the opportunity to attain a postsecondary education, two million Post-9/11 generation military and veteran students will become the business, commerce, industry, and agriculture leaders of tomorrow. Military and veteran students want to be treated with the same level of respect and dignity every student deserves, without any extraordinary efforts or admiration, and be given the opportunity to become the future leaders of the country.



ALTERNATIVE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENTS

I OVERVIEW

College completion - whether it be by earning a degree, diploma, or certificate - is considered to be a key measurement of college success, supported by virtually every policymaker. However, U.S. institutions of higher education and policymakers have very little information about the rates of completion for students who are defined as or considered “non-traditional.” The official graduation rate is calculated only for first-time, full time students who started in the fall term and completed their program in the same institution within 150 percent of on-time, a cohort that represents a diminishing percent of the students enrolled in higher education institutions. There is no comparable completion measure to reflect the outcomes of non-traditional students, including military and veteran students.

Military and veteran student outcomes have recently garnered the interest of policymakers and others with an interest in how these students are faring in higher education using their tuition assistance or Post-9/11 GI Bill educational benefits. Relying on existing measures of student performance and outcomes with their concomitant flaws as specified above, presents a flawed picture of the nature of the experience of military and veteran students in our higher education institutions, particularly when this data is incorrectly contrasted with persistence and graduation rates of traditional students. The postsecondary success of military and veteran students is dependent on any number of external factors that need to be considered instead of applying traditional measures to this student population. Military and veteran students are non-traditional students. These students: are adult learners; bring transfer credits to their institution; frequently need to transfer to different institutions; often need to take breaks during their education; have families; and, can rarely commit to full-time status for the duration of their academic career. Additionally, academic success for the military or veteran student frequently does not fit neatly into a defined outcome definition. Military and veteran students may achieve education success by earning enough college credits to earn their next rank or learn a specific skill, but not earn a certificate or degree. The degree-seeking military or veteran student, attending part-time, may feel success is completing their degree in ten years. Currently, these successful outcomes would only be tracked and reported as dropouts or not counted at all.

The need for improved measures of non-traditional student success outcomes is widely acknowledged. Current outcome measurements not only disenfranchise military and veteran students, but other non-traditional students as well. These measures misrepresent actual student performance, which in turn, present a false picture of an institution’s record of success. Upon graduation, the non-traditional student who has attended multiple institutions, at varying times, will not be counted in any success metric, and more than likely is considered a dropout. Both the students and the institutions attended will be recorded as failures in these instances, while in truth these students and institutions, taken in a broader view, will be shown to have worked in concert to achieve academic success in the most challenging of academic environments.

Expecting military and veteran students to meet the same criteria of academic success as traditional full-time students, living on campus fails to recognize the success of our military and veteran students who have achieved success despite personal challenges while performing the country’s honorable and most difficult of tasks. Developing appropriate accurate measures of student performance and outcomes resonates deeply with institutions that serve large populations of military and veteran students and other nontraditional students, as well as with other organizations dedicated to more accurately capturing and measuring the gains of higher education.

“The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is proud to see leaders in the private sector education community coming to the table in an effort to ensure that veterans attending proprietary schools receive the kind of education to which they are entitled.”

– Ryan M. Gallucci, Deputy Director, National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

RECOMMENDATION FOR NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS

We propose adopting new student outcome measures that capture the complex enrollment behaviors of today's military and veteran students. We support outcome measures that incorporate both the student perspective and the institutional perspective for enhancing college completion rates. Such an approach will prevent misclassifying students as failures who persist or graduate at an institution different from their initial starting institution. Such an approach will credit institutions for serving the needs of students who transfer or enroll part-time, or only wish to complete a few classes. This balanced approach will also mean enacting public policies that recognize and support student persistence, regardless of the student's ultimate goal, anywhere in the postsecondary education system.

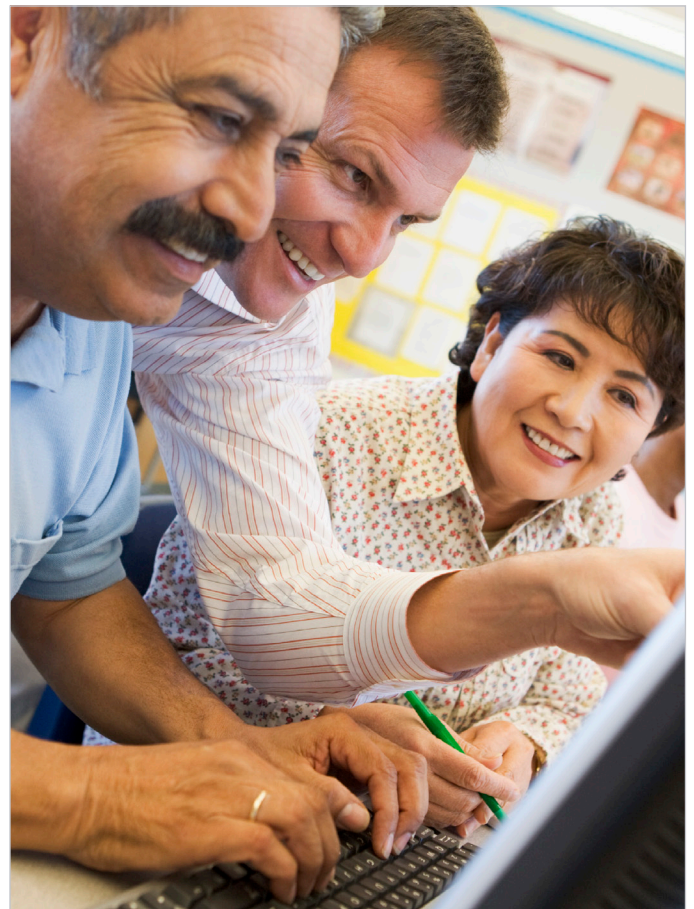
The limitations of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) methodology have been well documented and are universally recognized. More recent efforts by the Committee on Measures of Student Success and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center with the Project on Academic Success have adopted a student approach that tracks the student through their academic career, from institution to institution, across state lines and through different delivery modalities. This expanded approach should be encouraged.

“The Taskforce represents the start of an ongoing conversation between military and veteran education stakeholders and the higher education community to ensure that every service member, veteran and family member is provided with the quality education to which they are entitled at every institution of higher education.”

– Jeffrey P. Cropsey Ed.D, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, Grantham University and Board Member, Council of College and Military Educators

“The Taskforce is fortunate to have insight and input from our nation's key veteran service organizations, institutional leaders with expertise in military and veteran education, and representatives from leading military and veteran organizations as we collectively work toward influencing the larger, national conversation about how to provide an exceptional education to our servicemembers and veterans.”

– James Hendrickson, Vice President of Military Education, Colorado Technical University, Lt. Col. USAFR



BEST PRACTICES IN MILITARY AND VETERAN EDUCATION

PREAMBLE

These Best Practices represent the collective efforts of the work of the Blue Ribbon Taskforce. The institutions represented on the Taskforce are incredibly diverse in size, ownership structures and academic programming and provide career-centered education ranging from skilled trades to post graduate degrees. However diverse, these Best Practices were created to encourage all institutions of higher education to aspire to high levels of service for this special group of students.

The Best Practices are organized under four subject areas:

- Full transparency and accuracy of information in the recruitment and enrollment process.
- Institutional commitment supporting the military and veteran students' academic needs.
- Appropriate student services reflecting the numbers and needs of their military and veteran student population.
- Pursuit of outcomes data related to retention, degree completion and other metrics for an institution's military and veteran students, enabling us to learn and improve our services in the future.

The Taskforce is mindful that the diversity of institutions – in size, number of veterans and/or military students, types of academic programming, and other factors – will result in implementation of many, but not necessarily all the Best Practices, in ways appropriate to the needs of each institution and its military and veteran students. We recognize and celebrate this diversity of service while being unified in our commitment to excellence in military and veteran education.

I CONSUMER INFORMATION, ENROLLMENT AND RECRUITMENT:

Prospective military and veteran students should receive appropriate, relevant information in order to make a sound, informed decision about their postsecondary education. Information should be provided in clear and understandable language. Prospective students looking to utilize their U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits should not be the subject of aggressive or misleading recruiting practices. Institutions should follow all federal and state laws and regulations to ensure that the recruitment of military and veteran students is appropriate.

A. Consumer Information

- i. Provide accurate and complete information to prospective students on:
 - Institutional and programmatic accreditation status for each offered program;
 - Whether program meets minimum requirements to qualify student for state licensure in relevant occupation(s);
 - Potential earnings and employment pathways of program completers;
 - Financial obligations and cost of educational program;
 - Institution participation in various military and veteran programs and partnerships; and
 - Institution transfer of credit policies.
- ii. Require prospective students to affirm receipt and understanding of the required disclosures.
- iii. In an effort to achieve complete transparency, include information in catalogs, websites, and other media outlets that adheres to the following minimums:
 - Clearly articulated and defined mission statement;
 - Clearly defined academic and financial information about program requirements; and
 - Total cost of admission, tuition, instructional materials, and all mandatory fees.
- iv. Provide in-depth financial counseling, so that prospective students fully understand their financial obligations upon enrolling in an educational program.
 - Explain the extent to which DoD Tuition Assistance and VA education benefits will pay for the cost of the education;

- Explain the ramifications of student loan debt, in terms of monthly repayment obligations when feasible;
- Explain long term financial obligations related to use of educational benefits as compared to borrowing under federal or private loan programs; and
- Always encourage responsible borrowing if a student needs or chooses to borrow to pay for education costs or other personal expenses which may be covered by federal loan funds.

B. Recruitment

- i. Develop and/or maintain enrollment and recruitment policies appropriate to higher education institutions and compliant with federal and accrediting agency regulations.
- ii. Use only promotional and recruitment materials and practices that do not have the capacity to mislead or coerce students into enrolling and are consistent with policies of the VA, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Department of Education (ED), and all applicable federal and state regulations.
- iii. Create reasonable internal policies for contacting potential students that do not exert high pressure to enroll through unsolicited follow-up calls or other forms of personal contact. For example:
 - Marketing and outreach systems, including third-party vendors, must have an opt-out feature for individuals who do not wish continued recruiting contact; and
 - Establish and enforce internal call limits on unsolicited recruiting calls, such as a “Three Calls then Stop” policy.
- iv. Employ appropriate sanctions, including termination of employment, on recruiters and managers found to have engaged in predatory recruitment practices.

C. Enrollment

- i. Ensure students are appropriately placed and prepared for the programs in which they enroll. Consider employing any of the following practices: (a) assess academic readiness prior to enrollment; (b) offer appropriate remediation if necessary; (c) offer limited course loads; (d) offer a reasonable “Trial Period” for enrollment; (e) offer penalty-free drop/add periods upon enrollment.
- ii. Offer military and veteran students a tailored orientation program, which would provide an overview of specific information regarding VA certification requirements, satisfactory academic progress, and additional tutorial assistance, as appropriate.

II INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT SUPPORT

Institutions should actively support and promote programs and services for military and veteran students. Institutions should employ an engaged faculty that understands the needs of military and veteran students and provides mentoring and advising to ensure the success of these students. Institutions should consider instituting the following, as applicable:

A. Personnel/Faculty

- i. Appoint a senior-level administrator to lead the institution’s military and veteran support programs (or Office of Military and Veteran Affairs).
- ii. Designate an employee, or team of employees (as student enrollment numbers dictate), to provide support/services tailored to the needs of the military and veteran students.
- iii. Appoint a Military and/or Veteran Student Ombudsman to escalate and resolve issues related, but not limited, to DoD or VA educational benefits, academic enrollment issues, and institutional policies and procedures.
- iv. Conduct regular roundtable discussions, focus groups, and/or interviews with service-member military and student veteran organizations, either on-campus or virtually, to establish a continual understanding about the needs of the military and veteran student population enrolled at the institution and how to meet those needs.
- v. Appoint an interdepartmental military and veteran education taskforce to evaluate the institution’s policies, practices and procedures relating to the military and veteran students.
- vi. Institute faculty development training to ensure that faculty members:
 - Receive the necessary tools and information regarding the unique qualities of the military and veteran learner;
 - Learn effective classroom instructional practices to better meet the needs of this non-traditional student population; and
 - Understand the various support services available to military and veteran students and the associated referral processes for accessing those services.
- vii. Institute campus wide training on the specific needs and resources available for military and veteran students and their families.

B. Administrative Policies and Practices

- i. If applicable, become a Yellow Ribbon Program participating institution, offsetting the unmet cost of an education for eligible VA education beneficiaries and consider the following:
 - Allow “all” or an unlimited number of eligible veteran students to enroll; and
 - Offer the maximum institution contribution allowed under the program.
- ii. Offer alternative grants to veterans and their spouses who may not be eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to cover any funding gaps not covered by other financial aid benefits, such as the Montgomery GI Bill.
- iii. Offer a reduced military tuition rate for active duty, National Guard, and reserve servicemembers and their spouses to minimize out-of-pocket student expenses beyond what DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) benefits cover.
- iv. Adopt a policy for evaluating and awarding credit for military training and experiences, maximizing the use of military training credit recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE).
- v. Comply with existing federal requirements related to the postsecondary education of military or veteran students, including:
 - Enter into the DoD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for participation in TA; and
 - Formally agree to accept the Principles of Excellence outlined in Executive Order 13607 – Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members.
- vi. Become a member of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium.
- vii. Establish Human Resources policies that exceed the standards set by the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act (USERRA). Institutions of higher education with employees currently serving in the military should exceed USERRA guidelines for employees during military training activities and deployment status.
- viii. Offer multiple learning formats for military and veteran students to access and interact with program curriculum and course materials, which allow students the freedom to pick the format that best suits their learning style. These formats may include

videos, text, a library of archived audio content of classroom instruction, problem-solving activities, and practice tests.

III PROMISING PRACTICES FOR ENSURING MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH STUDENT SERVICES

Recent studies and anecdotal information related to military and veteran student success reveal a growing trend toward centralized student services at institutions with significant populations of military and veteran students. Building on the success of existing programs, institutions of higher education should strive to provide the following services and programs tailored to the specific needs of their military and veteran students:

A. Centers

- i. When the number of students necessitates its creation, institutions should establish an Office of Military and Veterans Affairs with clearly articulated goals and expectations, which complement the mission of the institution, accompanied by the full support and resources from the institution’s leadership. The Office of Military and Veterans Affairs would typically administer and manage the following:
 - Military and veteran-specific Student Advisors in the areas of admissions, academics, and benefits;
 - Specific academic counselors for the military and veteran student population trained to address transfer credit and awards for prior academic or military credit (College Level Examination Program (CLEP), portfolio, military training);
 - Trained VA certification specialists to assist with the timely processing of educational benefits documentation to avoid benefit funding delays; and
 - A tailored orientation program for military and veteran students, developed to enable active-duty, Guard, or Reservist students or transitioning veterans to optimize the available institution resources and support programs.
- ii. Another approach is to establish a Military Student Center (MSC), which acts as a hub to guide military and veteran students throughout their postsecondary experience, beginning with recruitment and ending with job placement. The MSC functions as a clearinghouse of information for all military and veteran benefit programs and assists potential and current students with navigating the intricacies of the federal programs for which they may be eligible. More specifically, the MSC may function as follows:
 - Counsel prospective students who self-identify themselves as military- or veteran-affiliated on

the best way to access and maximize the benefits for which they are eligible;

- Staff the MSC with specialists who are either a military veteran or spouse who received specific training in DoD and VA benefits eligibility and processes; and
- Provide transfer of credit assistance, help with military and prior-college transcript requests upon application and acceptance to a program of study, training to Program Directors and Deans regarding ACE guidelines for the award of military credit, and recommendations for credit acceptance based on review of military transcripts and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).

B. Partnerships

- i. Support student veterans interested in organizing a campus-based, or online, student organization with necessary resources and use the Student Veterans of America (SVA) as a resource and guide. Institutional support for student veterans to create a student veteran organization or club is critical to fostering successful veteran student transition, peer support, and camaraderie, and providing needed opportunities for student veterans to network and make social connections with other student veterans who possess similar interests or experiences.
- ii. Establish a Campus Military and Veterans Lounge or Virtual Student Gathering Place, which allow military and veteran students to interact, access program-related resources and services, and provide peer-to-peer support.
- iii. Establish and maintain student chapters of professional organizations and academic honor societies to expose students to potential professional networks. Encourage student membership and participation in relevant local, regional or national professional societies while completing coursework.
- iv. Introduce and partner with established veteran service organizations, such as the American Legion or Veterans for Foreign Wars of the U.S. (VFW), within the geographical area of the campus to further connect veteran students to community resources and peers.
- v. Institutions with a sufficiently large military and veteran population should develop a specific career services strategy, including:
 - Establishing partnerships with employers who will work with students while enrolled and offer quality job opportunities upon graduation;
 - Establishing formal alumni networks for military and veteran graduates, allowing students who have completed programs of study to interact

with one another, building geographically based or industry-based professional networks; and

- Engaging with local Employer Support for Guard and Reserves (ESGR), professional associations such as Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM), or the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

IV ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH GUIDELINES FOR TRACKING MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT SUCCESS

Tracking data related to credit completion, degree completion, and student satisfaction is vital to understanding successful student outcomes. Accurate data collection is essential to understanding and addressing the needs of military and veteran students and their families. To the extent practicable, institutions should:

A. Collect/Use Data

- i. Identify and track military and veteran student populations with regard to retention, degree completion, persistence, and other valuable metrics.
- ii. Analyze and use data to identify areas in need of improvement and ways to better serve military and veteran students.
- iii. Use data to develop measures to evaluate program effectiveness.

B. National Student Clearinghouse

- i. Participate in the National Student Clearinghouse to help to provide meaningful data for military and veteran students across higher education (transfer, degree completion, and persistence).
- ii. Provide meaningful data to the VA and DoD for use in developing programs to better serve military and veteran students.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: INSTITUTION RESOURCES

- i. Supportive Education for the Returning Veteran (SERV)
- ii. Veteran-Civilian Dialogue
- iii. Veterans in Transition Course
- iv. Military to Civilian Transition Manual
- v. Mobile National Test Center (NTC) for CLEP and DSST exams
- vi. Transfer credit evaluation at no cost – awards transfer credit for ACE approved military training
- vii. Webinar series for veterans and employers of veterans
- viii. Institution Skills Translator
- ix. ACE Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions, March 2012

APPENDIX II: COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- i. Veteran Stand Down (KCMO) – volunteer annually
- ii. Toys for Tots – collect toys annually
- iii. Partners with Veterans Today Network to hire veteran employees
- iv. Teamed up with CCME Cares to send care packages to deployed troops over Valentine’s Day
- v. Fundraising for Wounded Warrior Project over Veterans Day
- vi. Annual sponsor of KC Association of the United States Army’s Army Birthday Ball

APPENDIX III: MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- i. SOC
- ii. CCME
- iii. Yellow Ribbon Program
- iv. DoD MOU
- v. Principles of Excellence

APPENDIX IV: PUBLICATIONS

- i. From Boots to Books: Applying Scholssberg’s Transition Model to the Transition of Today’s American Veterans to Higher Education
- ii. From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student-Veterans
- iii. A New Generation of Student Veterans: A Pilot Study
- iv. The Difficult Transition from Military to Civilian Life
- v. Veterans’ Post-Secondary Education: Keeping the Promise to Those Who Serve
- vi. Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium Publications/Forms/Resources (Principles and Criteria, Standards of Good Practice for

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, Pocket Guide for College Outreach to Military Students, Veteran and Military Family Programs and Services, and Military Student Bill of Rights)
- vii. Educational Attainment: Tracking the Academic Success of Servicemembers and Veterans, July 2012, Education Working Group convened by SOC
- viii. From Soldier to Student II Assessing Campus Programs for Veterans and Service Members, July 2012, prepared by American Council on Education (ACE), American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and National Association of Veteran’s Program Administrators (NAPVA)
- ix. Time is the enemy, September 2011, Complete College America
- x. Service Members in School: Military Veterans’ Experiences Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Pursuing Postsecondary Education, November 2010, prepared by the RAND Corporation, with support from Lumina Foundation for Education for the American Council on Education (ACE)
- xi. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Major Differences: Examining Student Engagement by Field of Study, Annual Results 2010, sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- xii. Military Service Members and Veterans in Higher Education: What the New GI Bill May Mean for Postsecondary Institutions, July 2009, prepared by Alexandria Walton Radford, MPR Associates, Inc. with support from the ACE Center for Policy Analysis Center for Lifelong Learning and the Lumina Foundation for Education
- xiii. From Soldier to Student: Easing the Transition of Service Members on Campus, July 2009, prepared by ACE, SOC, AASCU, NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, and NAPVA with support from the Lumina Foundation for Education

SINCERE THANKS TO THE PARTICIPATING TASKFORCE INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIAL ADVISORS



APUS was founded by a veteran for the purpose of “educating those who serve.” Its mission, culture, and steadfast commitment to military and veteran students remain at the heart of the institution’s purpose and are embodied in its policies and practices. The institution currently serves approximately 70,000 service members, veterans and their families and its policies concerning the education of service members and veterans are consistent with SOC’s Principles and Guidelines and Criteria. APUS maintains affordable tuition and comprehensive financial aid policies, and also provides individual student advising at nearly 100 military installations worldwide, provides a disability accommodations office, a chaplain for PTSD-impacted students, and has a chapter of the Student Veterans of America (SVA).



The CTU Department of Military Education (DOME) has a team of student advisors who are specially trained to work with the military and veteran population and are familiar with the unique challenges and obstacles faced by military and veteran students in a postsecondary education setting. Advisors help service member and veteran students adapt to the academic world, as they transition to the postsecondary environment for the first time or have not been in an academic setting in a number of years. CTU participates in the Principles of Excellence program, as established by Executive Order 13607, has signed a DoD MOU, and participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program by providing the maximum contribution and allowing an unlimited number of eligible students. CTU is also a SOC Consortium member and SOC Degree Network System (DNS) school, among other key, military partnerships. CTU also offers extensive military education benefits, including a military tuition rate and the University’s Wounded Warrior and Spouse Scholarship Program.



DeVry University was one of the first institutions of higher education approved to accept the original GI Bill after World War II. Today, we are the nation’s second largest provider of education to students under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Approximately 13 percent of degree-seeking students are active-duty military members or veterans. We offer special tuition rates for service members, veterans and their families, as well as opportunities to transfer eligible military coursework toward our degree programs, and grants for veterans. Many of our locations are participants in the Yellow Ribbon Program. As a member of the SOC Consortium, we provide flexible policies to allow service members and their families to complete degrees. Under our agreement with the Fallen Heroes Survivors Foundation, we offer special tuition rates for the spouses and children of deceased veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. DeVry participates in the Principles of Excellence program, and has signed a DoD MOU.



ECA continually strives to make advances in meeting the unique educational and transitional needs of service members, veterans, and their families. To best meet these unique needs, ECA—which operates Virginia College, Golf Academy of America, Ecotech Institute and New England College of Business and Finance (NECB)—launched the Military Student Center (MSC) in 2009 as a clearinghouse of information for all military benefit programs. Staffed by military veterans and spouses trained in TA and VA benefits, the MSC assists potential and current students in understanding federal programs for which they may be eligible. The program provides a menu of support services to enrollees throughout the student life cycle. ECA proudly participates in the Principles of Excellence, as established by Executive Order 13607, has signed a DoD MOU, and participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program by providing the maximum contribution and allowing an unlimited number of eligible students.



ECPI University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees and diploma programs. With campuses in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, ECPI, a private university established in 1966, offers convenient classes during the day, evening, and online. Graduate employment services are provided. Continuing education certification classes and testing are also available. ECPI participates in the Principles of Excellence program and participates in the Yellow Ribbon Program, providing the maximum contribution and allowing an unlimited number of eligible students. ECPI is also a member of the SOC Consortium, as well as participates as a SOC (DNS) school, supporting the Army, Navy, and Marines, and the Air Force CCAF and GEM. The University also proudly offers several military and DoD scholarships to service members, veterans, and their families.



Established more than 60 years ago, Grantham University is one of the oldest accredited, private, degree-granting distance education universities in the United States. We have an extraordinary purpose: to serve those who serve and those who want to make a difference. The University does so by establishing a level playing field in postsecondary education for adult learners, including service members, veterans, and their families, as well as other non-traditional students. Grantham has also long offered reduced tuition rate for service members, veterans, and their families, full scholarships for service members wounded in combat, and participated in the Imagine American Foundation Military Award Program (MAP), which awards 15, \$1,000 tuition scholarships annually to service members and veterans. The University is proud that our undergraduate tuition rate has not increased in over 10 years and that we were able to award \$5.5 million in scholarships in 2011. Grantham University is a long-time SOC Consortium member, has signed a MOU with the DoD, and participates in the Principles of Excellence program.



Harrison College is a career-focused institution of higher education serving more than 5,000 students throughout the U.S. and Internationally, and is engaged in a variety of initiatives that benefit service members, veterans, and their families, including. The College participates in the Principles of Excellence program, has signed a DoD MOU, and participates in the Yellow Ribbon by providing the maximum contribution and allowing an unlimited number of eligible students. Additionally, the College is a SOC Consortium member, Concurrent Admissions Program for Army Enlistees (ConAP) participant, and offers Military Experience Credit granted based on American Council on Education's (ACE) recommendations. We have also formed a Military Advisory Board, and our staff includes benefits specialists who are fluent in military and veteran education benefits and Military Task Force members who are assigned to each campus. We also have a flexible military withdrawal policy for service members who are deployed, offer spouse and dependent scholarships, and participate in Imagine America Foundation MAP scholarships.



Kaplan University takes tremendous pride in being the choice of over 9,000 service members, veterans, and their families. Recognizing the often daunting challenges of military life and work, the University offers significantly reduced tuition and special policies to support military students with deployments or permanent duty changes. Dedicated staff in our Military Student Support Center, many of whom served in the military, undergo a special military and veteran certification process to better serve the needs of our military and veteran students. Not only does Kaplan University recognize the value of military training and prior coursework many military members have completed, it offers the innovative Kaplan Commitment program that enables students to enroll in real classes and assess whether the coursework meets their educational needs before making a financial commitment. Kaplan University is a proud member of the SOC Consortium, has signed a MoU with the DoD, and participates in the Principles of Excellence program.



National Association of State Approving Agencies (NASAA)
"Advocates for quality education and training programs for our nation's veterans."

Through its 57 member agencies across the country, NASAA works in cooperation with its partners to: facilitate the efforts of state approving agencies (SAAs) to promote and safeguard quality education and training programs for all veterans and other eligible persons; ensure greater education and training opportunities that meet the changing needs of veterans and; protect Post-9/11 GI Bill resources available for those programs. Since the establishment immediately after World War II, SAAs have evolved into the gatekeepers and guardians of quality in education and training, while remaining the "face of the GI Bill" in their respective states. Since its formation in 1948, NASAA and its individual agencies have devoted themselves to protecting the integrity of the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit, ensuring that veterans and their families have access to well-managed, ethically-run, and educationally sound programs that help them succeed in meeting their goals.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Consortium

SOC was created in 1972 to provide educational opportunities to service members who, because they frequently moved from place to place, had trouble completing college degrees and functions to expand and improve voluntary postsecondary education opportunities for service members worldwide. SOC is funded by the DoD through a contract with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and established by civilian and military educators to help strengthen and coordinate voluntary college-level educational opportunities for service members. SOC does this by: seeking to help the higher education community understand and respond to the unique needs of service members; advocating the flexibility needed to improve access to and availability of educational programs for service members; helping the military services understand the resources, limits, and requirements of higher education; and seeking to strengthen liaison and working relationships among military and higher education communities.



The SUS has a long and distinguished record of serving our service members, veterans, and their families. The University has been operating continuously on Ft. Knox since 1982, serving thousands of soldiers and their families. We also offer our military significant tuition discounts. There is a very active student Veterans of America Chapter (227) that works closely with the veterans and their families to ensure their needs are met. We have a veteran Certified Social Worker (CSW) who offers free counseling services to our veterans on campus. The SUS also has a Military and Veteran Board of Advisors. The combination of these factors ensures that service members, veterans, and their families are treated with the respect and honor befitting their service. The University makes every effort to provide the resources and support necessary for every service member, veteran, and family member to feel confident that their decision to attend our institution was best one.



University of Phoenix Military Division is a 1,000 person organization dedicated to advising military and veteran students on proper enrollment, effective academic counseling in pursuit of graduation, and financial counseling concerning responsible methods of education payment. Its first dedicated military and veteran teams were created in 2001 and greatly expanded in 2004 into a divisional structure. The division consists of internal and external operations enabling service members, veterans and their families the opportunity to carefully review the University's programmatic offerings to determine if University of Phoenix is the right fit for the student. As a best practice, all military enrollment advisors are required to have prior military service or are a military spouse. This allows the first student conversation to quickly move past the initial service member trepidation of whether or not the university understands military life and move quickly into an academic discussion intended to help the student pursue his/her higher education goals.

SPECIAL ADVISORS

The American Legion

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veteran's organization. Focusing on service to veterans, service members and communities, the Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. Today, membership stands at over 2.4 million in 14,000 posts worldwide. The posts are organized into 55 departments: one each for the 50 states, along with the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines. The birth of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known informally as the GI Bill of Rights, was a law that included several key parts: educational opportunity; on-the-job training; unemployment benefits; home, farm and business loans; review of discharges; health care; disability claims and veteran employment services. Today, the American Legion continues to work with all stakeholders in protecting and creating meaningful veterans education benefits that truly meet the needs of our 21st century veterans.

Student Veterans of America

The mission of SVA is to provide military veterans with the resources, support, and advocacy needed to succeed in higher education and following graduation. Today's veterans face numerous obstacles in their path to attaining a college degree. These challenges range from a missing sense of camaraderie to feeling like an outsider amongst 18 year old traditional students to a lack of understanding by university faculty. When coupled with the visible and invisible wounds of war, a college degree can be an elusive goal for men and women returning from military service. SVA makes that goal a reality. SVA is a coalition of student veterans groups on college campuses around the globe. These member chapters are the "boots on the ground" that help veterans reintegrate into campus life and succeed academically. Each chapter must be an officially recognized student group by their university or college and provide a peer-to-peer network for veterans who are attending the school. Additionally, chapters often coordinate campus activities, provide pre-professional networking, and generally provide a touchstone for student veterans in higher education.

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

Since 1899, the VFW has continued to be a leading voice in veterans' advocacy, helping to enact nearly every major Quality of Life initiative for the benefit of every generation of veteran, military service member and their families. Composed of 2 million VFW and Auxiliary members in 7,200 VFW Posts across the country and around the world, the VFW creates, protects and enhances these benefits and programs by actively engaging with Congress and the White House. From the passage of the original World War II GI Bill of Rights in 1944 to the Montgomery GI Bill and now Post-9/11 GI Bill, the VFW will continue to advocate for student-veterans to improve their earned educational benefits and the consumer product information they deserve to receive.



APSCU[®]

ASSOCIATION OF
PRIVATE SECTOR COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

1101 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW
SUITE 900
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
(202) 336-6700
WWW.APSCU.ORG