Student Veterans: A Valuable Asset to Higher Education

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Overview

• Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)
• Institute for National Security and Counterterrorism (INSCT)

Post 9/11 Veteran Population Overview and Transition

Business Case for Colleges to Recruit Student Veterans

Discussion
OUR MISSION
To advance the post service lives of America’s service members, veterans, and military families

WHO WE SERVE
• Individuals
• Organizations
• Communities

WHAT WE DO
• Programs
• Services
• Research and evaluation

Provided programs and services to more than 90,000 veterans, service members, and their families since 2007

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

FOCUS AREAS
✓ Entrepreneurship and Small Business Training
✓ Career Preparation and Employment
✓ Community-Based Coordinated Care & Support

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

FOCUS AREAS
✓ Employment and Entrepreneurship
✓ Higher Education
✓ Community-based Services
✓ National Policy and Strategy
✓ Measurement and Evaluation
Post 9/11 Veteran Population Overview
U.S. Veteran Population Overview

**Period of Service**
- 39% WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam eras
- 40% Gulf War I and Other Service Periods
- 20% Post-9/11 Veterans (4.1 million)

**Age**
- 64% of all Veterans are 55 or older
- 46% of Post-9/11 veterans 18–34

### Period of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Service</th>
<th>Total Estimated Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Americans</td>
<td>246,006,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonveterans</td>
<td>225,619,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Veterans</td>
<td>20,387,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf War Era II (post-9/11)</td>
<td>4,116,000</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf War Era I</td>
<td>3,279,000</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans</td>
<td>8,052,000</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other service period veterans</td>
<td>4,941,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Estimated Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Estimated Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, 18 years and over</td>
<td>20,387,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,116,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24 years</td>
<td>231,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>231,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34 years</td>
<td>1,704,000</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1,678,000</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44 years</td>
<td>2,226,000</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1,189,000</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54 years</td>
<td>3,142,000</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>634,000</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64 years</td>
<td>3,647,000</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>305,000</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and over</td>
<td>9,437,000</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: BLS, Current Population Survey, 2017 annual averages, population 18 and over
U.S. Veteran Population Overview

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Gender
- Veterans are predominantly male
- Female post-9/11 veterans fastest (17% vs. 10% overall)

Race/Ethnicity
- On average, post-9/11 veterans have higher representation of African-Americans and Hispanic minorities.

Data Source: BLS, Current Population Survey, 2017 annual averages, population 18 and over
**Education**

- On average, post-9/11 veterans achieve higher educational attainment than earlier generations and the general U.S. population

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### U.S. Veteran Population Overview

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Attainment</th>
<th>All Veterans</th>
<th>Gulf War Era II (post-9/11)</th>
<th>Total US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimated Number</td>
<td>Estimated Number</td>
<td>Estimated Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,387,000</td>
<td>4,116,000</td>
<td>246,006,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than a high school diploma</td>
<td>891,000</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>26,441,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates, no college</td>
<td>6,006,000</td>
<td>915,000</td>
<td>71,283,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate degree</td>
<td>7,112,000</td>
<td>1,701,000</td>
<td>69,789,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduates (Bachelors or Higher)</td>
<td>6,378,000</td>
<td>1,436,000</td>
<td>78,493,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: BLS, Current Population Survey, 2017 annual averages, population 18 and over
Transition
Currently there are 4.1 million post-9/11 veterans. This number is growing as service members transition.

Every year nearly 180,000 people enlist/re-enlist in the armed forces. Nearly 200,000 veterans transition out of the military each year—and most eventually pursue civilian careers.
Business Case for Student Veteran College Recruitment
The idea that military veterans are not "college material" and will never succeed in college has been argued since the beginning of the GI Bill in 1944.

However, the notion of veterans being incapable of achieving academic standards quickly dissipated as student veterans not only met but often exceeded expectations.
**Perception Before 1944**

- Robert M. Hutchens, President of the University of Chicago - "Colleges and universities .... will find themselves converted into educational hobo jungles . . . Education is not a device for coping with mass unemployment."

- Harvard University's president, James B. Conant - lamented that the GI Bill failed "to distinguish between those who can profit most from advanced education and those who cannot" and expressed fear that "we may find the least capable among the war generation . . . flooding the facilities for advanced education."

**Perception After 1948**

- By 1948, a growing consensus among educators that the veterans were the hardest working, most serious, and best students that the campuses had ever seen. "The GI's," an education editor for The New York Times wrote late in 1947, "are hogging the honor rolls and the Dean's lists."

- President Conant of Harvard changed his mind "for seriousness, perceptiveness, steadiness, and all other undergraduate virtues," the former soldiers and sailors were "the best in Harvard's history."

- At Columbia University in '47, none of the 7,826 veterans in attendance was in serious academic difficulty. Such performances were the norm on campuses across the country.
This generation of veterans included:

- 14 Nobel Prize winners
- Three Supreme Court justices, three presidents, 12 senators
- 24 Pulitzer Prize winners
- 238,000 teachers, 91,000 scientists, 67,000 doctors, 450,000 engineers,
- 240,000 accountants, 17,000 journalists, 22,000 dentists
- Millions of lawyers, nurses, artists, actors, writers, pilots and entrepreneurs
Similar to previous generations, current generation of student veterans are highly motivated to excel in college and view a post-secondary certificate or degree essential to their future.

Military service promotes higher education throughout the service member's time in the military.

However, many in higher education today still have doubts about actively recruiting student veterans on their campus.
Developed a business case to address these myths and provide colleges and universities with simple and evidence based reasons to focus their student recruitment on student veterans.

The "Business Case for Student Veteran College Recruitment" provides empirical research on why student veterans are assets to colleges and universities.

This presentation will go in-depth into the five key points of the "Business Case for Student Veteran College Recruitment":

- Financial Aid
- Diversity
- Academic Performance
- Post Education Outcomes
- Post Education Commitments
The Financial Aid aspects describe the economic benefits student veterans bring to colleges and universities.

As of May 2017, the Post-9/11 GI Bill has paid $75 billion for veterans’ tuition, fees, book stipends, and housing allowance.

The Yellow Ribbon Program provides matching funds for schools and programs that cost more than the in-state public tuition rate.

Action Item

- Higher education institutions should consider developing a student veteran-specific recruitment and financial aid strategy with financial aid and admissions offices in order to inform decision making on recruitment and enrollment of student veteran applicants.
The Diversity aspect covers the ethnic, social, experiential, and thought diversity student veterans bring to campuses and the classroom.
The **Academic Performance** aspect provides evidence on student veterans' academic achievement and ability to handle the rigors of college coursework.

### Student Veterans' Academic Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student veteran completion rate</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National completion rate:</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult learners (first enrolled at 25 years or older):</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average student veteran GPA</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average traditional student GPA</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Using Post-9/11 GI Bill to Earn High-Level Degrees, Certificates:
- 10.3%; Associate Degrees: 26.7%; Bachelor Degrees: 43.0%; Graduate Degrees: 20.0%

### Student Veterans Earning a Degree in High-Demand, High-Growth Fields:
- Business Degrees: 27.0% ; STEM Degrees: 14.4% ; Health Degrees: 10.4%

### Action Item
- Offer tailored, culturally competent academic advising, career services, and campus counseling supports to student veterans without perpetuating stigmas or stereotypes.
The Post Education Outcomes aspect highlights the latest empirical research on student veterans' post-secondary academic outcomes and entry into the civilian workforce.
The Post Education Commitment aspect shows how student veterans remain connected to their school often become active and loyal alumni.
Higher Education Experiences and Helpful Resources on Campus
Q: Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?

Majority (79%) said they feel comfortable sharing their experience as a service member at school.

Top reasons were:
- proud of service (83%)
- part of identity (81%)
- expect to be well received by peers (30%)
- expect to be well received by faculty/staff (29%)
Q: Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?

The majority (79%) said they feel comfortable BUT one in five (or 21%) do not feel comfortable

Top reasons why were:
- Other’s naivety or lack of familiarity with military service (63%)
- Different maturity levels & worldliness of students on campus (61%)
- Stigma/prejudice/bias (53%)
- Age differences (51%)

Q. Why do you not feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?

- Other’s naivety or lack of familiarity: 63%
- Different maturity levels and worldliness: 61%
- Stigma/prejudice/bias: 53%
- Age differences: 51%
- Mismatch between military and...: 49%
- Conflicting political ideology or...: 45%
- Different standards of professional...: 31%
- Fear of judgments and repercussions: 29%
- Internal feelings and concerns about...: 25%
- Fresh start/new identity: 21%
- Other: 12%
Q: Have you encountered any problems at your school while pursuing your education? Select all that apply.
Q: Rate how helpful these resources are for your education success. Rate only those that are relevant.

Helpful resources and assets for veteran success include:
- Having a military/veteran friendly campus and environment (including policies, resources, faculty/staff, etc.)
- Dedicated academic advising/counseling and peer or professional tutoring for student veterans
- Dedicated veterans office & administrators on campus
- Flexible class schedules
- Veterans orientation program and academic preparation courses & remediation for those that need
Discussion/Questions?
For more information contact:

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Thank You