

# Introduction to the Student Veteran/Active Duty/ Guard/ Reserve serving student At-A-Glance

*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.—APSCU. Best Practices for military and Veteran Students. February 2013. [http://career.org/policy-and-issues/federal-issues/military-veterans-ed/upload/MVBP-Brochure\\_Feb2013.pdf](http://career.org/policy-and-issues/federal-issues/military-veterans-ed/upload/MVBP-Brochure_Feb2013.pdf)*



## Three top learning goals:

- 1) Develop a minimal functional landscape of terms, ideas, context and situations in the classroom and beyond, to communicate and apply, where military experience(s) play some role in the interplay, attitudes, issues, choices and behaviors related to academic role of student in your course(s);
- 2) Identify general areas of what you need to know about student veterans so you may pick and choose and prioritize areas of this sabbatical to use/apply, and apportion time spent in google searches and/or workshops for best teaching practices and solutions applicable to your CUSTOM, localized, teaching demands and collegiate responsibilities;
- 3) Understand the context of what distinguishes the student veteran (transitioning or awaiting activation/deployment) from other students, to validate 'accommodation but not exceptions' and value engaging in some basic professional development related to this student type.

## ABSTRACT:

In just a few minutes of reading, this section will provide an overview of important basics you need to know about student veterans, National Guard, Reserves, active duty at your college – from the point of view and framework of responsibilities of a faculty. It will make a case for basic faculty development instead of specialized cohort sections of courses just for student veterans. It will allow you to function better as instructor, ask questions as needed that you may not have known you needed to ask (of yourself, the college, or the student veteran), and google forward with terms that will yield what YOU need, just in time, towards better serving and understanding the military experienced student.

## BRIEFINGS:

I am faculty or instructor, a subject matter expert, not a counselor. I want to be helpful and accessible to all my students, but I don't have the time or resources to 'specialize' in serving any particular population above the others. Our college boasts 'military friendly' or some other kind of validation or certification. Why do I as faculty/teacher/instructor have to deal with this? So where do I start? And

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by the way, I have only a few minutes at a time, maybe just an hour or two across the entire semester to pick up any training -- and I don't really KNOW what it is I need to know. Again, where do I start?

Doesn't the VA or some other office provide some transitional training? (I think we have a veteran services on campus but have no idea what they do. Student veterans or veteran students? I called one a soldier and he corrected me scoldingly: Marine. What's the best terminology? In fact, what's some other lingo I should know? And why don't some student veterans self-identify? One just stopped coming to class with no response to my emails. Another has missed all their HW deadlines and is arguing they still deserve to pass – or at least can they submit all the HWs now, at the end of the semester. And this paper - obviously plagiarized. Where is the famous 'lead and adapt' attitude in my particular set of student veterans in class? Is this a myth? What does a truly 'clear assignment prompt' mean to a student veteran who hasn't been in school for a while and doesn't understand the common parlance of assignments, rubrics and school work? Why does the student vet in my class look perpetually irritated?

Not every student veteran is.... But I hear PTSD. I hear shootings. I can feel a change in the classroom atmosphere when a student identifies themselves as a veteran, or writes about (or refuses to write about) some of 'those topics.' I have even received some emails that were angry or confrontational. Especially nasty emails when I refuse to change deadlines or excuse rules that all my other students are required to follow from day ONE, and are on the syllabus.

Accommodate how? I'm flexible. But my neighbor faculty has a zero tolerance policy and will never grant an exception to a student based on good deeds or service in the military. This is MY – this is THE – classroom with equal applications of standards and demands. Not an 'exception' granted zone. What's expected of me with student veterans? Special treatment? We have plenty of adult learners who get no exceptions for their 'life situations.'

These are some of the questions, concerns and ideas about student veterans and active duty attending class, held by faculty (and many others). Read below for an overview. Otherwise follow your table of contents to get to the relevant chapter.

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### Finding your useful Student Veteran Statistics/the Demographic:

**FIND OUT** from your veterans services office (do you HAVE a vet services office at your college?) or administration, or financial aid office, or google the statistics for your state/your college [sample search terms: <state name> veteran statistics' ], for the numbers that will give you an understanding and context why this training for this demographic has both idealistic (serve all students) as well as pragmatic (run my courses better) value.

For general statistics for Veterans: <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/>

For population info by state (w/breakdown by war, etc): [http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran\\_Population.asp](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp)

Statistics are useful in presentations and committee meetings, to showcase the importance of paying attention to the student veteran/active service member demographic, and for gathering allies on your campus (especially when budget and resources are concerned). Local organizations can provide statistics relevant to college administration, such as ages of student vets in your college demographic area and trends.

### LINGO for Faculty (introductory):

**1)TERMS: Student veterans is more recognizable (for ex. Student Veterans of America) than ‘veteran students.’**

**Neutral term** for anyone in military service: **troops or service members.**

Army service members are ‘soldiers’. Navy service members are ‘sailors’. Marine service members are ‘marines’. Air Force service members are ‘airmen’. Coast Guard service members are: ‘Coasties’ or Coast Guardsman. Remember, include on fliers, syllabi, etc **mention of student veterans and active service members** (active duty, reserves, guard) since some currently serving may NOT identify themselves as ‘veterans’ and bypass these sections, announcements.

**2)National Guard:** Air or Army national guard are primarily used in state service, but can be called to national unit deployment overseas. They get both Basic Training and Advanced Individual training.

**3)Reserves:** Each branch has reserve members of their regular standing troops. Reserves contract under the FEDERAL government for part time service (weekends & summer) unless/until activated (called to Active Duty). They go through boot camp and additional training based on branch, job (MOS), and unit, but then typically have civilian jobs and off base homes. They have some, but not all, of the benefits of active standing troops. Often reserves have family or job responsibilities as primary focus, and/or want educational benefits (‘Tuition Assistance’), but are willing/must deploy and serve if activated to fill a regular standing unit.

18: SAMPLE: 72 hr notice for a reserve call to deploy: can disrupt semesters of school or grad school or work

**4)Tuition Assistance:** monies for education for active service members (active in any branch, in reserves, or National Guard)

**5)GI Bill:** The most commonly used military educational benefit. See below for factors relevant to faculty.

FOR MORE Military terms: <http://www.militaryterms.net/b>



### Roles of Family

**13: Military members** move often (mostly active service, but sometimes separated from service as well). Family moves as well, in most cases. This is often an area of transition risks, sometimes crisis, conflict, adjustment and stress that ultimately affects student veteran behavior, goals, and grades. (See Chapter 4, Non-Visible Issues). Spouses: what about their jobs? “Military spouses pay [various] cost for their families' frequent moves.”<sup>1</sup> Kids: what about their school? Family needs typically trump education deadlines and requirements.

If your college has ways or community partnerships to support and connect to family members (campus tours, orientations, celebrations open to military families), you indirectly support the success and retention of your student veterans.

**An experiment:** One thing we are attempting in my college is an informal “**Toys for Tests**”. In summary, we make available inexpensive toys (‘Hot Wheels,’ dolls, play-do, etc) for student veterans around test and paper deadlines. The idea is that if [small] kids are distracted for 24-48 hrs during study, cram and work times, the student veteran has a better chance at success on exams, papers and other assessments.

<sup>1</sup> Clever, Molly and David R Segal. “The Demographics of Military Children and Families.” *Military Children and Families Journal*, Volume 23 Number 2 Fall 2013. <http://futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=80&articleid=588&sectionid=4089>

### Faculty's Top Five FAQ:

#### 1) Vets-only cohorts or continue with traditional sections of a course intermixed with general population?

I have taught both. There are pros and cons to both. First semester transition courses (don't call them DEVELOPMENTAL), or "boots to books" type class are excellent choices for vets-only cohorts. However, based on personal experience, **I recommend regular sections intermixed** with student veterans for three principle reasons:



**Reason 1): The goal is transition.** Veterans (and to some degree active personnel) are at different stages of adjustment and transition to civilian life and choices. School is an easier, friendlier, more supportive place to suffer 'culture shock.' It is good for any blind spots left behind by separation training from military and community organizations, and a good buffer before workplace or free roam activities. Student veterans also add 'diversity' to a classroom – something that doesn't necessarily make teaching easier, but makes the classroom experience of greater benefit to all.

**Reason 2): Available hours for school vary, and it's unfair to require student veterans to center choices for scheduling around their status.** Though the lack of choice may be familiar and very military or VA-like, it is frustrating to have given times when some student veterans will take a class. Most student (vet or not) will choose what fits their schedule, regardless of whether a 'vet friendly' cohort or section is offered. From a faculty point of view, vet-only cohorts sometimes means trouble 'making' class minimums as set by college rules. A secondary factor: running a class full of transitioning veterans and those in crisis/ with visible or non-visible issues can create much stress on the faculty member, countering the increased productivity of cohorts with the real risk of instructor burn out.

**Reason 3) If ALL Faculty receive some basic training in working with student veteran population, the benefit is wide-spread** and greater than cultivating a few specialists in various departments who may retire or change jobs, leaving holes in support for student veterans. Wide-spread baseline training also helps create consistency in experiences, expectations and consequences: an essential benefit to all.

**Despite the above, vet-only cohorts do have distinctive advantages** including building a sense of belonging, camaraderie on 'mission' (beat the class) with help shared class-wide, plus removing some of the general student population 'culture' issues that alienate some student veterans. If you can generate enough registration to have vet-only courses 'make,' good: but do NOT replace general faculty training to do so.

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For example, one big complaint is the immaturity of just-out-of-HS students: “*You hear people complaining about stupid things. You just want to say something but you don’t.*”<sup>2</sup> There is also prickliness over the level of disrespect in the classroom to the instructor (students texting, watching/using their phones, etc) . Cohorts also encourage familiarity and lessen the slope & shock of transition and its impact/risk of alienation: “*For some, for many, being in the military is the high point of their life [so far]. You just took away their cool time when they had stories, walked with purpose, new the rules of socializing and structure of success [here’s an E2, E9]*”<sup>2</sup>. However, if vet only cohorts mean less expected baseline training on working with student veterans among ALL faculty, **the trade-off is not worth it**. A few basics of faculty development (especially the syllabus section for student veterans – see Chapter 1: First day/ First Office Hour) for all, is in my opinion, the best choice.

### 2) Why don’t all veterans self-identify?

Because of choice, desire of some to dis-engage from the military identity, because of freedoms, because of wariness about giving out personal information. A few times in my undergraduate career, I was advised by well-meaning problem solvers that as a first generation Hispanic student from a poor background I should self identify and apply to this-or-that scholarship for Hispanic students, this-or-that program for developmental students (presumption that my background meant I pre-qualified as ‘developmental’). For some opportunities I just preferred not to be ‘flagged.’ *Vet students are sometimes very skeptical or careful about giving personal information out*<sup>3</sup>: from political beliefs, some from being told about needs for blackout periods when deployed, others cautious of what they reveal to civilians (no posting on FB!), from ‘need to know’ attitude, etc.

### 3) How do veterans spot each other?

Some behaviors are tell-tale of military background. How hats are worn; how boots are laced. Walking with purpose: “*Military walk on ‘the right side’ of paths on campus*”<sup>4</sup>. Hypervigilance on entry or exit of a location. Use of certain clothing; logos, physical builds, how certain items and accessories are worn. There’s even a few social media and websites devoted to spotting (some tongue-in-cheek) tell-tale signs of student veterans at work, gatherings, and even colleges who still carry the look of ‘operators’. Of note: many of these ‘spot a veteran signs’ do not include female veterans. Be aware that outreach to female veterans is harder and yet in many ways more important (isolation risk), and the SVO doesn’t necessarily spot-and-recruit female student veterans with the same ease as it’s male potential members.

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Bellafiore. “From Combat to Campus”. *Academe* (Journal of American Association of University Professors). Volume 98, Number 5 . September-October 2012

<sup>3</sup> - Marcia Conston, Central Piedmont Community College. “Establishing Student Veteran Centers in a Multi-Campus Environment”. League of Innovations 2014 Conference, Anaheim CA. Forum Session

<sup>4</sup> Eric Wheeler, Monroe Community College – SUNY; - Hamaria Crockett, Cedar Valley College. “Barriers in Higher Education: Supporting Transitioning and Returning Service Members.” League of Innovations 2014 Conference, Anaheim CA. Forum Session

### **4) Are student veterans prepared for this level of class, if prerequisite classes were years ago or granted from military credit or credit for experience?**

A good summary of 3 factors that determine student veteran preparedness (towards success) are:

*Cognitive and non-cognitive factors... [3 Factors]: skills/resources/time... each you don't have, is another 30% off chances of getting through school + aptitude/attitude/situation: motivation, worry, maturity, persistence, independence... Family plays role in each of these six<sup>5</sup>*

Those who have previously taken college credits (officers, reserve, colleges in the military, etc) typically are better ready for workload and demand. Student Veterans who enlisted come from all backgrounds, neighborhoods and levels of education. For enlisted, high school grades (as precursor predictor of readiness for introduction classes in math or composition, for example) do not play a role, except as impact on ASVAB score: *"DO HIGH SCHOOL GRADES MATTER WHEN ENLISTING? No. All that matters is that you graduate high school and that you pass your ASVAB [for your MOS]<sup>6</sup>.*

The question arises from faculty concerned over prerequisites coming from existing credit/military credit, and/or last time in school/previous level of the class being... years before. Placement exams are flawed – especially with the ability to prep for the exam (youtube videos, sample placement tests, cramming, etc) – which is different from knowledgeable of content or its application to the next level in a course-in-series.

Credit is given by some colleges for classes taken in the military, but not by all. Are military educational institutions and post-service Workforce training courses as rigorous as academic college classes?. Imagine foreign language courses in the military actually being put to use in deployment to foreign countries. Should life experience from a Special Forces medic get credit for nursing courses?

Admissions at your college is responsible for policy on credits accepted and equivalencies given based on the Joint Services Transcript (Marines, Navy, Coast Guard) or the ARTS (Army): *"JST (Joint Services Transcript) is an academically accepted document approved by the American Council on Education (ACE) to validate a service member's military occupational experience and training along with the corresponding ACE college credit recommendations"*<sup>7</sup>

If dual enrollment credit is given to High Schoolers and they are considered prepared for your course, you should consider those from Military School at least equivalent. Now for success? That is a different concern.

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Wheeler, Monroe Community College – SUNY; - Hamaria Crockett, Cedar Valley College. "Barriers in Higher Education: Supporting Transitioning and Returning Service Members." League of Innovations 2014 Conference, Anaheim CA. Forum Session

<sup>6</sup> "Future Jarheads: Where Future Marines Come to Learn." Website, 2014. <http://www.futurejarheads.org/yourquestionsanswered.htm>

<sup>7</sup> "Joint Services Transcript FAQ." Dec 2014. <https://jst.doded.mil/faq.html>

### **5) Are separate Veteran-student + Active duty [only] orientations worth it?**

Surveys from my college's SVO all pointed to a massive contrast between those student veterans who attended standard new student orientation (*dissatisfaction, feeling pampered, feeling treated like children entering the 13<sup>th</sup> grade, etc*) and our later implemented, student veteran specific, in-person orientation. When it's all student veterans in a group, it flashes back to in-processing, transfer into a new community, which is a familiar 'not knowing just like everybody else' feel for most, which helps.

To be effective, recommendations for student veteran orientations are:

**a) start at the veteran student services office or veteran's lounge** (if you have one). If possible, have SVO members there to meet-and-greet and initiate. If possible, set up 'induction' style: pick up agenda on table 1, pick up campus map on table 2, etc.

**b) Have the veteran services coordinator or the most common first contact person** (coordinator, work study, administrative assistant, etc) highly visible and give out checklists or flowcharts (with website address to re-find) of what to do every semester, from registration for next semester, paperwork due dates, close out procedures at the end of the semester.

**c) Faculty presence/segment is important:** provide a 'reality check' about class demands. Faculty should explain the syllabus as a 'contract'. They should give a few examples of typical assignments (within their discipline/courses, and if possible, beyond). Faculty should alert to class schedule combinations that can be devastating (too time consuming, all papers, etc). They should emphasize learning support services such as tutoring and writing centers as 'required recommendations.' A few minutes of faculty presence can help with buy-in that school is not a "foreign country out to take their money and spit them out."

**d) Campus tour, led by student veterans, at the end.** If possible, there should be no college 'officers': no faculty, administration, or such, so that SVO 'tour guides' can answer questions directly and honestly.

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## **6 Stereotypes of Student Veterans (relevant to faculty):**

This chapter will cover some common stereotypes about student veterans – both good and bad. Whether positive ("If nurtured, will become an in-class group leader") or negative ("will have some behavioral issue because of PTSD or its treatment,") stereotypes lead to presuppositions, but even pragmatically worse, leave blindspots for faculty. Stereotypes of student veterans can be a reality, but if you forget the 'every case' is unique approach to students, you create problems: problems live in the classroom, in interactions with student veterans, and down the line as a consequence or precedent that comes back to disrupt and distract from your teaching 'mission'. Every student veteran and active, reserve, guard, is at a different stage of transition. Needs and expectations will vary as such.

### **1) All student veterans carry the burden of combat experience**

Issues veterans bring back VARY based on where deployed, their MOS, their status (combat, support, logistics)<sup>8</sup>, and their background. There are student veterans who may have worked with accounting reports 24/7 and those who were in direct line of fire much of the time. It's okay to ask a student veteran their branch, time of service: however, it's not polite to ask their MOS or what they did. Many will volunteer this. Some will not. Regardless of duties, **never ask or have an assignment ask about killing**. There may be criticism or joking between different positions served but a 'cook' or person serving a 'desk job' at a FOB (Forward Operating Base) may hear derision or judgment from mainstream students in class who consider the former lesser service than combat action. Rarely, but sometimes, there is discord when a student veteran or active member in class suspects a student of embellishing their military career or 'stolen valor'. This can sometimes become strife in the classroom (see chapter 3).

**2) Student veterans will instantly bond and form cohorts in a class.** In the military, cliques do form. These, like in the real world, can be based on interests, viewpoints, ethnicity, age, gender, region of origin, but can also extend to branches, duties in the military (combat, support, logistics; officers vs enlisted), deployments. Some veterans want to leave their military experience behind, while others live to share war stories and bond the way they did in the military. For some, the military represents everything that was righteous and family; others have lots more in common with civilian subcultures (for example, in personal experience, one mixed group of traditional/veteran students bonded thoroughly, based on shared opinions of Anime). Often, unfortunately, female vets remain outliers among the mostly male cohorts of student veterans/active service members. If you are running a cohort class or if you have several student veterans, don't be surprised if they bond/ help each other/ want to be in groups together...or if they segment and/or exclude some. Also don't be surprised if they bond against the non-veterans in a non-copacetic way, or possibly even bond together against the practices and demands of the instructor. A veteran cohort class does not stereotype into an 'everyone gets along' class.

### **3) Student veterans are ready to take over and lead group work and other classroom team activities.**

In service, there's always a 'team leader' or squad leader or NCO or inspection that makes sure veterans are on the ball, on the job, and not neglectful of any step or duty required of them for their unit and/or mission. Some student veterans will rise up to this role – especially if they actually led (squad or rank or duties/MOS with leadership training. Some will never be late and will harbor resentment of fellow students (especially in groups) that aren't as diligent. Some will not. Some can lose self sufficiency outside of the familiar regimented structure of the military<sup>9</sup>. Main take-away: those who had leadership roles, may be excellent

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<sup>8</sup> AZ Coalition for Military Families, 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium, April 2015, Phoenix, AZ.

<sup>9</sup> Brandon L. Moore. Baylor University "Enablers and Inhibitors to Completing College." 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Veteran Symposium for Higher Education. Feb 2014.

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leaders and organizers for group and collaboration work. Others will play their part. Others will resent leading, especially if they see it as a result of self-identifying as a veteran. Mileage may vary: hope, but don't presume, that student veterans can and will successfully lead, manage, student groups.

### **4) Veteran students do not cheat/honor codes vs plagiarism**

Most student veterans see integrity and taking responsibility as life long requirements. Some don't buy in to the value of college and see exams, papers, and other assessments as delays and bumps to navigate to get on with 'real life.' I have personally had student veterans engage in paper sharing, using free downloaded papers, plagiarism, and in one case, stealing a roommate's paper without their knowing [another veteran, paper taken from their computer without permission] that almost escalated into a fight because of violation of the latter's trust and honor. In other words, student veterans are students. General rules, honor codes, all apply to student veterans. Syllabus should make clear (and include in syllabus) definition of plagiarism and of one's own work, and what is considered cheating vs group work. A variant of a common plea:

b) Desperation: Occasionally as faculty you'll have a student veteran ask for exception privilege – they served, their schedule was disrupted because of government duty, can they have a break “after putting their heads on the line in service to the country who's academic freedoms we all enjoy”. Not common, but not rare. Here is where accommodation, not exception, makes all the difference. You **should** accommodate situations that happen regarding scheduling, VA appointments, deployments, PTSD or medical incidents (changes of medication, triggers, etc), anniversaries and intense or sudden events requiring their leave or absence or deadline re-negotiation request (for example, pending unit activation during exam week or the call about a casualty of a still active member during a 'no phones on' class). Your syllabus should cover the expectations for accommodation (See Chapter 1, First day/First Office hour). **If unsure of the legitimacy of an excuse, especially one full of military jargon that you may not know, contact the veteran services officer or SVO to verify details and language.**

### **5) Veteran students lean mostly one way on political and philosophical issues**

Keeping with the idea that student veterans really do represent diversity, don't assume that student veteran status presupposes any set of attitudes, ideas, or politics. Conservative, right-leaning, pro-gun, pro-war, pro-military. Some faculty presuppose these views will be represented in debates, topics, requests, the same way that many student veterans presuppose faculty will be liberal, left-leaning, anti-gun, anti-war, anti-military. **Don't depend (or put on the spot) a student veteran to represent a side on issues** related to war, military, politics, violence, or philosophy. More important than this profiling on both sides is that faculty should accurately play devil's advocate on all issues, even if you believe that “*educators have the duty of NOT being neutral.*”<sup>10</sup> Any taking sides perceived as scolding or shaming against a viewpoint is an instant turn-off for student veterans, who view their life experience as informing opinions 'more informed' than just civilian viewpoints, sometimes even antagonistically so. A statement in the syllabus, debate etiquette touchstones of

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<sup>10</sup> Paulo Freire, “We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change.” Temple University Press, 1990.

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respect, or minimally on first day declaring the classroom a 'safe space' for viewpoints that WILL differ, followed by complexity, will bring to class participation, respect, and learning on all points.

### **Vets are not interested in 'learning' – they want the credit and to move on.**

Some student veterans have ambitions that a college degree or certificate can empower into reality. Some know only that they don't want to work on their current post service job for the rest of their lives. Whether through peer, marketing, education officer, or pie-in-the-sky, College might be the route to something better. Some are displaced from existing jobs<sup>11</sup> and college as a transition until regrouping or as promise of a sunrise ahead makes sense (especially if they have GI Bill or other educational benefits 'banked').

Some want to be back among their units, but were medically retired.

Some are using benefits for living/housing allowances (*"Vets know how to play games for funds"*<sup>12</sup>) and or fulfilling promises to family to 'go civilian for your family's sake,' or otherwise biding time until they 'can redeploy to pay bills.'<sup>13</sup>

Some see college as part of a "Veteran's Industry," out "to get their money first; then second, 'implant' their faculty-held ideologies, scold opposing opinions, and proceed with academic agendas; then third if at all, actually teach<sup>14</sup>," therefore not meriting more than a label of bureaucracy to get a paper or rank.

Some attend for, with, the same issues as remedial or adult returning learners, as shown by the "Life gets in the way" presentation, Arkansas State University, Dr. Martha Shull, Dr Allen Mooneyhan, Ms Stacy Mooneyhan – League of Innovations Conference 2014]: [paraphrased] "to better themselves, improve job option, set example for siblings/family, feel equal to others in age group or family, complete parent or family's 'dream', 'tired of seeing less qualified' getting promotions because of degree or certification, or to face up to challenge."

Bottomline: there are several reasons (mostly reactions) that this stereotype exists. The stereotype of 'not interested in learning' or going to college for pragmatic reasons is further spread among faculty by the fact that GI Bill will NOT typically pay to explore elective courses. This is not a choice for student veterans. Some faculty interpret this as racing through a degree or certificate program.

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<sup>11</sup> - Marcia Conston, Central Piedmont Community College. "Establishing Student Veteran Centers in a Multi-Campus Environment." League of Innovations 2014 Conference, Anaheim CA. Forum Session.

<sup>12</sup> From a conversation with a student veteran, during an open office hour for student veterans (anonymous).

<sup>13</sup> Eric Wheeler, Monroe Community College – SUNY; - Hamaria Crockett, Cedar Valley College. "Barriers in Higher Education: Supporting Transitioning and Returning Service Members." League of Innovations 2014 Conference, Anaheim CA. Forum Session.

<sup>14</sup> Conversation during SVO meeting, Fall 2014 (anonymous student veteran).

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Keeping with the above, faculty will find student veterans are very similarly motivated as many adult learners, who may also show this stereotype to apparently be true, through behavior and attitude of student veterans in classes. Faculty will also discover that when their experiences are good, when teaching is genuine, many student veterans will 'buy in' to the value of learning and fit into another category: the "life long learner".

### **GI BILL & classroom relevance:**

**GI BILL:** One of the educational benefits available to active and separated service members. In general, 36 months of tuition maximum paid to the school (requires paperwork and sign-off by a certifying officer, usually in the financial aid or veteran services department of the college), and includes a Housing/living stipend and payment of books and supplies.

Student Veterans should apply for all other forms of student aid: scholarships, FAFSA/grants. GI Bill can then be saved for use on later degrees/ full semesters.

### **OF Faculty/classroom relevance:**

1)Must be used **within 15 years** from last day of active duty.

2)Pays for courses required (core, mandated by placement, orientation or 'skills' courses but only if...)required by the college or for a degree or certificate program – **may NOT pay for off-major electives, for example creative writing courses or 'vet finds interesting' courses.** A **change of major** can impact GI Bill monies usage/running out.

3)**Students who fail ( F grade) a course** paid by GI BILL can retake a course ONCE without payment. **If they are DROPPED/ W grade,** student is responsible for repayment/loses any remaining housing/living stipend. This is why student veterans prefer a F than a W for a course. See CHAPTER 1, first day/first office hour, for more.

4)A variation of GI Bill benefits are available **to survivors and dependents** of disabled or killed on duty veterans.

**5)A student veteran may ask faculty about full time vs part time student status and/or using up GI Bill for summer classes.** These questions and related issues should be addressed by veteran student services and/or the certifying officer at the college. Faculty should refer to such, with the understanding that summer does cost a semester of GI Bil.

**6)Students on GI Bill should still apply for scholarships and FAFSA Grants.** Why? Current GI Bill (there are different versions depending on when a student served) covers 36 months of tuition (regardless of community, state or private college) and books, and living/housing allowance. Scholarships and financial aid grants can allow a student veteran to save monies for later education, including graduate school. Student veterans should also be applying to scholarships to boost resume and gather letter of recommendations from professors along their educational path.

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\*The GI Bill is basically 'no default' funding straight from the government. This makes serving student veterans a 'self interest' budget consideration

\*GI Bill usage/certifying is a major way that student veteran numbers are tracked on campus. There may be veterans not using, not qualified, or with expired benefits, so GI Bill tracked numbers may be less than accurate than the actual number of student veterans at the college.

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### Deeper Look: LINKS & Keywords for

### INTRODUCTION: Student Veteran At-a-Glance:

From Combat to Classroom available as a PDF at:

<http://www.navpa.org/img/2013%20Park%20City/Book-From%20Combat%20to%20Classroom%20copy.pdf>

Model for Vet Success (Presentation from SUNY) (PDF)

[http://old.suny.edu/provost/university\\_life/pdf/VetsConference-Session5-Model-for-Vet-Success.pdf](http://old.suny.edu/provost/university_life/pdf/VetsConference-Session5-Model-for-Vet-Success.pdf)

"An Ethical Obligation": Promising Practices for Student Veterans in College Writing Classrooms

<http://www.ncte.org/library/nctefiles/groups/cccc/anethicalobligation.pdf>

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**Briefest LOOK:** There are many great resources for working with student veterans; there are far fewer for faculty. Cited 3 times throughout this toolkit, one of the **briefest but best starter guides for faculty (in my opinion)** comes from UW-La Crosse.

[http://www.uwlax.edu/uploadedFiles/Offices-Services/Veteran\\_Services/Staff%20and%20Faculty%20Handout.pdf](http://www.uwlax.edu/uploadedFiles/Offices-Services/Veteran_Services/Staff%20and%20Faculty%20Handout.pdf)

A story to give **context on some of the specific issues for female vets** (who slowly are making up an increasing amount of student veteran population): <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/28/us/female-veterans-face-limbo-in-lives-on-the-street.html?pagewanted=all>

### Also:

1)Current blogs For general news related to active duty issues: <http://taskandpurpose.com/>

2)<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/> like a blog, Department of Defense-funded program providing comprehensive information on every aspect of military life including family rights (divorced spouse, etc)

3)Future of Children Website/Journal issue on Military Families and Issues:

<http://futureofchildren.org/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=80&articleid=588&sectionid=4089>