



AHEAD – VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

FY 2016

“Having education as an outlet when you come home from a combat zone is one of the most grounding and focusing avenues a veteran has to his [her] advantage.”

Rick Scavetta, veteran of the Army Reserves
Chronicles of Higher Education – June 6, 2007

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TO OUR MEMBERS

To Our Members

The focus of this Special Interest Group (SIG) is Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education. As a SIG member, you are an essential component of the work we do to provide access and support to student veterans with disabilities in the post-secondary environment. Your engagement, participation, and contributions to the SIG are encouraged and valued.

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

Veterans with disabilities are recognized individuals with a great capacity to help others. Ensuring their unique life experiences are valued in higher education and societal environments demonstrates the vision of AHEAD to embody equality of opportunity. While veterans with disabilities may seem to be primarily an American phenomenon, the lessons on helping individuals with acquired brain injuries, mobility issues, and psychological challenges provide guidance from improved practices in moving all individuals with disabilities toward full participation in postsecondary education around the world.

The purpose of this SIG is to bring awareness of the unique skills and knowledge required to work effectively with veterans with disabilities in higher education. This SIG will provide a forum for discussion of current issues and a network/clearing house/liason for AHEAD members on veterans' issues. Also, this SIG will sponsor and promote scholarly research about student veterans with disabilities and conduct outreach activities to other professional organizations working with veterans with disabilities in higher education.

The SIG's commitment to research, dissemination of knowledge and discussion of issues and challenges of veterans with disabilities are in keeping with AHEAD's values. These values view disability as the interaction between the person and environment, promotes diversity, is equitable, demands inclusivity and provides an organization strength that sustains essential resources and supports growth.

LOOKING AHEAD

This report serves as a platform to provide the most up to date information, outline SIG initiatives and accomplishments, and provide insight on our current goals.

Co-Chair – Dan Standage (Student Veterans of America)

Co-Chair – Jorja Waybrant (University of North Carolina School of the Arts)

January 15, 2016

BRIEF HISTORY

Brief History

In 2010, the AHEAD – Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education Special Interest Group was proposed by researcher and veteran Wayne Miller, Ph.D. and subsequently approved by AHEAD. At that time, the SIG was led by Co-Chairs Wayne Miller and Jorja Waybrant.

Annual meetings have served as a connector for members and other interested attendees to learn more about our SIG and what we can do as a group and as disability service providers to assist student veterans on campus. Over the years, our membership base has grown and also transitioned as some past members have retired or moved on to other fields/positions.

Annual meetings have generally taken place during the AHEAD Conference held each July. Although new members are acquired at these meetings, attendance of the SIG meetings or of the conference is not a requirement for SIG membership; however AHEAD membership is a requirement. Other means of member participation have been via email and most recently via the creation of our personalized account through the online collaboration tool *Samepage*.

Annual reports of the SIG's goals and accomplishments are available for the following dates/periods:

- July 15, 2010
- July 14, 2011
- July 11, 2012
- July 2014
- Mid-year report 2015

Late 2015, founding member Dr. Wayne Miller, became *Advisor/Consultant* for the SIG and a search was subsequently initiated for Co-Chair. In order to gain student veteran voice and insight to the important work we do, the SIG sought the addition of a student veteran with a disability to our leadership. In January of 2016, disabled veteran and former student veteran Dan Standage, Director of Disability in Education for Student Veterans of America, was appointed as Co-Chair to the AHEAD – Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education Special Interest Group. The Co-Chair position is a minimum 2 year appointment.

The SIG reports to the Board of Directors' Liaison (BODL) for AHEAD. We are responsible for representation during the general Special Interest Group Chair meeting held during the AHEAD Conference each summer. We are also responsible for holding a separate meeting to provide information/outreach/best practices to our membership base.

AHEAD REQUIREMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

AHEAD Requirements and Opportunities

REQUIREMENTS

- Provide information and referral
- Organize professional development opportunities
- Network around a particular topic
- Have representation at the annual AHEAD Chair meeting
- Offer an annual meeting for SIG members and other interested individuals
- Provide annual reporting and updates to the AHEAD BODL

OPPORTUNITIES

- Involvement in JPED publication
- Submit 1-3 ALERT articles yearly
- Use website to build information and SIG/resources
- Representation as program reviewer for AHEAD conference
- Capability to establish a listserv through AHEAD to meet the needs of the SIG
- Assistance through AHEAD for SIG member research endeavors

INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Initiatives and Accomplishments

2010

- Two SIG meetings held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2010
- Establish a website through AHEAD
- Use the website and our group email as the primary means of regular communication between members.
- Develop two conference proposals
 - Panel discussion
 - Small descriptive study about the challenges of starting a veteran's service program

2011

- Conference proposal by SIG members submitted and accepted for the AHEAD Conference in July 2011. Presentation was designed in a roundtable discussion format. Presentation titled: *Sustainable Access: Incorporating Social, Environmental, and Economic Concepts when serving Student Veterans*. Goal was for conference participants to discover ways to integrate the core concepts (social responsibility, environmental impact, and economic efficiency) into the framework of what they do when working with student veterans (SV) and student veterans with disabilities (SVWD).
- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2011.
- Increase information/resources on the SIG's web page.
- Publication review.
- Member list updated.

2012

- SIG participation in Silent Auction basket donation for the AHEAD scholarship fund – providing resources, books, other information re student veterans with disabilities.
- SIG member presentation - *The Veterans Are Coming Home! What Are Current Postsecondary Best Practices?* – AHEAD, New Orleans, July 2012.
- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference July 2012.
- Proposal to draft and collaborate on a brochure offered by via the SIG webpage.
- Support/encouragement provided for presenting on our SIG topic to audiences beyond AHEAD.
- Information/resources added to the SIG's web page.
- Member list updated.

INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2013

- *Student Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Ed* brochure drafted by SIG members, continue work needed.
- SIG member presentation - *Access to College for Student Veterans with Disabilities* at the Arizona Summit on Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education, April 2013.
- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference July 2013.
- Information/resources added to the SIG's web page.
- Member list updated.
- SIG member presentation - *Fostering Student Success: Comparative Models of Best Practices when Working with Military Affiliated Students, including Student Veterans with Disabilities* - NACADA, Salt Lake City, Utah (2013)

2014

- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2014
- Information/resources added to the SIG's web page.
- Member list updated.
- SIG member presentation - *Essential Practices for Serving Student Veterans in the California Community College System* at the California Veterans Summit, December 2014.

2015

- SIG member published research findings for the California Community College System – *Essential Practices for Serving Student Veterans in the California Community College System* (Revised) Jan. 2015.
- Member outreach for additional Co-Chair.
- Exploration among members for better networking via a listserv or other platform.
- Exploration for future presentation proposals.
- Updates to the SIG's web page.

CURRENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Current Goals and Objectives

Short Term Goals:

- Develop a collaboration tool to be used by SIG members to increase input and participation
 - Set up Samepage.io
 - Provide SIG history, and updated information
 - Set the base for online meetings
 - Invite SIG members to join and participate via Samepage.io
- Increase engagement and participation by members in the AHEAD – Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education SIG
 - Provide professional development opportunities with the SIG
 - Increase leadership roles and opportunities for SIG members
 - Develop sub-committees within the SIG to effectuate our short and long term goals

Long Term Goals:

- Develop a *Disability in Education* series
 - 6 modules
 - 2-year rollout
 - Intent is to bridge the knowledge gap in several areas
 - Covers veterans, disability services, veteran resources, VA providers, general public/caregiver, and service animals
 - Offers best practices for web-based instruction
- Build a disability *point of contact* database as a tool to assist student veterans
 - Similar to WEAMS (the VA institution search tool)
 - Determine where this database will be based
 - Determine best avenues for obtaining this information (DSSHE listserv, individual universities, AHEAD)
 - If the POC is an individual, determine how the database be maintained and updated when the POC changes
- Assist post-secondary ed campuses in developing a peer mentoring program in disability service office
 - Uses VA work-study benefit to pay student veterans as peer mentors
 - Provides practical experience and knowledge about the field of disability services
 - SIG will conduct outreach to PSE institutes to see if we can assist them in creation of program
 - Peer mentor can serve as the liaison between disability services and veterans' services

CURRENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Extend collaborative outreach to other organizations that focus on student veterans in the educational space
 - Higher-ed organizations (NACADA, NASPA and their special interest groups or communities that focus on veteran issues)
 - The VA (to provide information about disability services in higher-ed)
 - Student Veterans of America
- Expand realm of what we do as a SIG to include all postsecondary institutions where veterans also access the GI Bill
 - Conduct research to learn more about the provision of disability services to veterans at vocational/trade/and other PSE campuses
 - What are the needs?
 - What information and support/resources can the AHEAD SIG provide to assist veterans with educational access and success?
- Broaden our scope to include *employment* as a goal of education as it relates to veterans with disabilities
 - Conduct research to learn more
 - What do employers seek (compliance, diversity, etc.)?
 - What do employers lack for successful transition?
 - What can be provided to veterans while in school that bridge gaps?
 - Why is this important?

***Address structural challenges for SIG**

- How are we measuring everything we do?
- How are we communicating what we do (so we're not just preaching to the choir)?

Pipeline (to be accomplished by)

- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5

CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Information

Web: <https://www.ahead.org/SIGs/veterans>

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