The Intersection of Student Veteran Status and Disability: Rethinking Support Services
An Investigation of GI Bill Recipients with Disabilities of STEM as a Viable Career Option

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Study</th>
<th>Conduct an analysis of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) as a viable career option for GI Bill recipients with disabilities through an on-line survey disseminated to GI Bill Recipients enrolled at 2 and 4 year public institutions in Virginia.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding Source</td>
<td>National Science Foundation, Research in Disabilities Education Program (Grant No.1246492)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Period</td>
<td>September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSF Project Director</td>
<td>Dr. Mark Leddy</td>
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Post-9/11 GI Bill

• Benefits
  – Access to colleges, universities, trade schools, flight school
  – Tuition, fees, books
  – Transferable entitlements: spouse & dependents
Methodology

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Survey Development
- Online Survey
- Pilot Survey
- Analysis
- Follow-up Interviews
Factors Influencing the College Experience
Traditional

- Direct enrollment
- Attends full-time
- No work/part-time
- Financially dependent
- Unmarried
- College social sphere
- Traditional HS Diploma
Non-Traditional

- Delays enrollment
- Attends part-time
- Works 35+ hrs.
- Has dependents
- Financially independent
- Diploma alternatives
- Single parenthood
Undergraduate Student Veterans

On average, at the start of their postsecondary education, veterans are 25 years old.

- 21% are female
- 44% are married
- 52% have dependents

A large share of veterans work while in college.

- 42% work full-time while in college (excluding work study)

*From American Council on Education*
Compared to Non-Veteran GI Bill Recipients

Odds were...

- Older than 23yrs (370x)
- Technical or Associate degrees (~7x)
- Community college (4x)
- Part-time (~4x)
It’s About Time
Role Demand. Role Conflict.

School

- Stress
- Depression
- Adverse academic impact

Work or Family
Role Demand. Role Conflict.

- More role strain
- More time strain
- Less satisfaction with school, work, family
- Worse emotional stability
Disability Rating

• Veteran Affairs assigns 0-100% disability rating to cumulative conditions

• 95% of GI Bill recipients with disability rating were veterans

• Not very informative for non-veteran GI Bill Recipients
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism/ASD</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADD/ADHD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blindness/visual impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental health condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speech impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spinal cord injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orthopedic injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amputation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burn</td>
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43%
Additional Student Vet Experiences

Disability

- 22.5% single disability diagnosis
- 32% 2 or more concurrent disability diagnoses
- Increase in stress: rehabilitation
Perceptions of Disability

“[My] disability could affect STEM success, especially PTSD.”

“They [VA rep.] said that with the situation with my back and knees, they didn’t think that any degree would be good for me other than business.”
Strong Grade Point Average?

Significantly greater GPA
Fit with “as is” Student Supports

% Never Accessing Services in Past 12 Months

- Advising
- Career Services
- Military Services
- Tutoring
- Disability Services

Legend:
- Vdisability
- Vnodisability
- NoVnoDisability
It’s Time to Rethink How We Serve Students
What Works?

Tablets: 39%

Smartphones: 54%
When, Where, How?

• Later Hours
• Video Conference and Live Chat
Online Presence - Your Front Page

- Accessible
- Easy to navigate
- Clear, visible information
Non- Traditional Student Services

• Centralized hub or office
  – Facilities
  – Orientations
  – Scholarships
  – Advising
  – Newsletters
  – Contacts
Transparency and Visibility

“I don’t need that”

“Where is that?”

“What do they do?”

Don’t wait for students to come to you.
Specific Considerations for Student Veterans

- Hesitant to access DSS
- Navigating Benefits
- Sense of Community and Support
Questions & Contact

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