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# Making the Campus Part of the Mission: Training Faculty and Staff to Support Student Veteran Success

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*Selber, Benn, and Chavkin*

## Introduction

Since the passage of the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill in 2008, the overall enrollment in college by student veterans has steadily increased, with taxpayers paying more than \$75 billion in educational benefits to over 2.1 million beneficiaries as of 2017 (Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2017). The number of veterans in four-year and two-year community colleges continues to rise as this generation of veterans accesses their hard-fought-for educational benefits. As in World War II, when troops transitioned back and changed the face of educational institutions, this generation of veterans is also entering institutions of higher education in record numbers. Fueled over a decade by various factors such as changing job markets, drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a generous package of educational benefits, this enrollment will likely continue to rise in the near future.

This Post 9/11 GI Bill investment by the nation requires an understanding of the challenges and needs of veterans in order to support them as they move through their university degrees and back into the civilian workforce. Veterans bring with them impressive skills in team building, leadership, and mission readiness but also have a variety of needs and are not a monolithic group. However, although reports indicate that institutions have made progress in developing services to support student veterans (Schiafone & Gentry, 2014), there remains a significant portion of veterans who do not complete their degrees, jeopardizing this investment and most importantly their potential greater contribution to society. Research on graduation rates also indicates that there remains a gap in research regarding the cultural competency of faculty and staff on veterans' issues (Arminio et al., 2018; Bernal, 2019; Spencer, 2016). The literature on overall college student retention and graduation reflects a growing body of research that indicates that faculty and staff have a major impact on all student engagement and retention. However, less research has been done on training the university commu-

nity about veteran-related strengths and needs in order to adequately facilitate the campus assisting veterans (Arminio et al., 2018). At no time is this support from the university community for our student veterans more important than in a post-COVID university environment where social interaction among peers and access to services is limited.

Universities with their own budget and administrative challenges have initiated some basic programming to create the pathways needed by veterans to facilitate the transition to and through campus to graduate. However, to support student veteran success, universities must provide a coordinated and full range of supportive services for student veterans anchored in an understanding of the veteran population and existing literature on serving nontraditional and diverse populations (Coll, 2013; Coll & Weiss, 2013; DiRamio, 2011; Glover-Graf et al., 2010; Gwin et al., 2012; Minnis et al., 2013; O'Herrin, 2011). With only one percent of Americans serving in the military, it follows that most faculty and staff have little knowledge of veterans' military experiences and how these have impacted veterans and especially their transitions onto campus (Connelly, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Rumann & Hamrick, 2009). This understanding and awareness in the university community is essential for building a comprehensive approach for serving veterans. Establishing this cultural competence through training is the foundation to becoming a "veteran-supportive" campus and ultimately to sustaining veteran success. To fill this gap, this article reports on the development and implementation of a campus-wide training program for university faculty, staff, and students to raise visibility about student veteran capabilities and needs and how to help support them in their efforts to obtain their college degrees. The overall training program, curriculum content, lessons learned, and program outcomes will be examined. Implications for university administration and future research recommendations will also be discussed.

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### **Professional Development Training on Campus for Understanding Student Veterans and the Military Community**

Universities are at various stages of pursuing their goal of becoming more student veteran supportive. Although progress has been made over the past ten years, many campuses do not know how to create programs based on veterans' needs, programmatic evaluations remain anecdotal in nature, and much work remains to be done (Selber, 2014; O'Herrin, 2011). Experience shows that the support function for student veterans cannot be delegated to an office on campus where benefits are processed and then forgotten. A campus-wide approach is needed to accomplish a coordinated and comprehensive level of support that can be sustained. This strategy requires a professional development or training effort that enlists the faculty and staff as well as other campus students in building awareness and skills for supporting student veteran success (Griffin & Gilbert, 2012; Connelly, 2012; Elliott et al., 2011; O'Herrin, 2011). In 2012 the American Council on Education (ACE) conducted a national survey of campuses and their efforts to prepare for serving student veterans. Among the 690 responding universities, 28% stated they had training efforts focused on veteran issues, up from the 11% of their original 2009 survey. However, respondents also stated that the top two future priorities mentioned were enhancing services for student veterans and planning for the training of faculty and staff to work with student veterans. In fact, 63.3% of respondent universities in the study said they planned to engage in professional development activities with campus stakeholders in the future (American Council on Education, 2012). In addition, more recent literature indicates that faculty's understanding of military service impacts student veterans' perceived experiences in the university (Gonzalez & Elliott, 2016). This study suggested a lack of faculty understanding with about 72% of faculty indicating that they knew student veterans only a "little bit or moderately" (Gonzalez & Elliott, 2013, p. 6). Clearly, this is a recognition of how important this training activity is to providing not only a supportive environment for student veterans but also the knowledge and skills needed to help them in reaching their successful graduation.

However, there are limited data on university

professional development and faculty training programs and their links to effective teaching and interactions (Steinert et al., 2006). Some training topics have been explored such as training to develop faculty and staff skills on the broader topic of diversity with specific populations such as students with disabilities and LGBTQ students (Leiper et al., 2008; Poynter & Tubbs, 2007). However, literature on campus training programs specifically on veterans' issues is incomplete with references mainly to the importance of engaging in training to be "veteran-friendly" (Cate & Albright, 2015; Ryan et al., 2011).

Although there is a dearth of literature on veteran-related campus training, the literature that exists does suggest the importance of building supportive programming in general that impacts the likelihood of graduation for veterans. Information on the prior military experiences of veterans can help campus personnel be prepared to assist student veterans in their transitions and in their learning (DiRamio et al., 2008; Livingston et al., 2011; Persky & Oliver, 2011; Rumann & Hamrick, 2009). Reports indicate that raising awareness of the leadership qualities and needs of student veterans is a first step in developing effective supportive services for student veterans and in helping them reach graduation (O'Herrin, 2011; Selber, 2014). Reports also indicate that overall, the roles of faculty and staff are key to both student learning and navigating administrative hurdles in the university. Thus, a campus partnership with faculty and staff must be elicited since they have a strong impact on student veterans (Griffin & Gilbert, 2012). Vincent Tinto (2000), writing for student affairs personnel, suggests that faculty interaction is a critical factor in college persistence and essential to student success. Faculty also need information on student veterans to be able to effectively engage them. The literature on student veterans also points to the need for coordination across services to help student veterans deal with the new bureaucracy of higher education that is mostly unknown to them (Center for American Progress, 2012; Vance et al., 2010). Coordination of services can be increased through more knowledge within the campus community for understanding resources that are available and how to access these. All of these factors are important in providing a network of informed partners on campus that know how to engage student veterans and can become topics

for training and building awareness of the campus community.

In fact, researchers have found that student veterans perceive that college professors (63%), administrators (63%), and non-veteran students (70%) have little to no understanding of the rare challenges veterans face when making the transition from military service to a college campus (Institute for Veterans and Military Families, 2012, 2017). Other studies of faculty members' perceptions of veterans as students seem to validate this divide. Even further, research highlights one of the most significant barriers to the pursuit of a college degree, which is the perception among transitioning military members that they would not be supported or valued as part of the campus community. This perception by student veterans of a lack of understanding on campus potentially impacts the engagement of student veterans on campus and their willingness to stay on campus and navigate the campus as a stranger.

As universities continue to develop programming for student veterans, model programs for training faculty and staff to improve student veteran success are needed. The present article attempts to fill some of this gap by providing a description and outcomes of the training model used at one university.

### **Background: The Campus Environment**

To respond to the increase in veteran enrollment, in 2008 a four-year university with over 38,000 students located in the southwest created a Veterans Advisory Council (VAC) of faculty and staff from key departments to address the needs of student veterans on campus. The mission of the advisory council is to support the transition of veterans into and through the university and out to their civilian careers by identifying needs of student veterans and supporting the development of services to help them succeed. The VAC members represent the following departments: Veterans Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion, Disability Services, Social Work, Advising, Academic Support Services, Admissions, Graduate College, Financial Aid, Career Services, Information Technology, Counseling Center, and the Student Veteran Organization. Meeting monthly over the past thirteen years, the university developed academic, health and behavioral health, disability, career, and leadership services for student veterans tailored to student veteran needs. The campus has a

long tradition of supporting the military with ROTC units on campus and a major military installation in the region.

The framework used for developing these supportive services included an emphasis on coordinated transitional services that were veteran-centered, leaning heavily on a peer-to-peer model for developing outreach events and promoting self-care and access to services both on campus and in the community. Table 1 provides further detail on campus services for veterans.

The service model has expanded its services through a program development process that is driven by an online needs assessment of the student veteran population, tailoring services to the identified needs, and hiring veterans in key service units throughout the campus to consolidate the program development gains.

**Table 1: Highlights of Veterans Initiative Services for Student Veterans**

#### **Academic Support**

- Educational benefits assistance by expert veteran staff members.
- Open house for veterans.
- Veteran sections of a one-hour credit course (US 1100 Seminar) that orients them to campus and off campus services and trains them in self-care techniques.
- Orientation sessions for new student veterans by successful student veterans.
- Mentoring program with faculty and staff who are veterans.
- Low GPA calls.
- Tutoring and writing skills assistance by the SLAC lab on campus.
- Recognition at graduation ceremonies with special regalia-red, white, & blue cords.
- Resource Fairs.
- Writing assistance by the Writing Center on campus.

#### **Health and Behavioral Health**

- Mental health counseling, support groups, bio-feedback, and one hour workshops by Counseling Center staff and a partnership with a local Vet Center to provide on-campus counseling services to our vets.
- Case management by Social Work interns to

refer and link student veterans to campus and off campus services.

- An active student veteran organization – Veterans Alliance of Texas State (VATS).
- Establishing a Veteran Resource Center on campus.
- Pilot mobile actigraphy sleep study capability by the Respiratory Care Dept.
- Mediation skills group for veterans to improve stress management.
- Outreach to wounded warriors focusing on adaptive sports.
- An initiative to offer training on campus for vet-to-vet self-care skills.
- Partnerships in the community are developed to expand our services for veterans.
- Virtual Reality Lab training sessions for anxiety.

#### **Career and Employment Services**

- A Career Services unit that provides resources for career and job search with veteran staff members.
- Workshop series for veterans on resume writing, networking, business etiquette, and mock interviews.
- Partnerships with leading state/county service providers for job search assistance.
- Networking through golf. Golf skills clinics.

#### **Training, Research, and Technical Assistance**

- State of the art training each semester for campus faculty and staff on veterans' issues connected to a Veteran Friendly Office designated program.
- Federal grant (Health Resources and Services Administration) to pay Social Work Masters students to work with veterans and families.
- A Troop & Veteran Transition social work elective course taught each semester to social work students and other majors on how to work with this population.
- Needs assessments, focus groups, and veteran interviews for program development.
- Technical assistance has been provided to many state universities, community colleges, national university campuses, and educational associations.

#### **The Military Connected Supportive Office Program**

The professional training for faculty and staff is part of an overall Veteran Friendly Office (VFO) Program and is housed within the Student Diversity and Inclusion division. The VFO Program was created for offices interested in providing department-specific assistance to student veterans. Offices seeking this designation are encouraged to explore how some of their departmental functions could be customized to enhance services to student veterans. At the center of the program is the professional development training workshop called "Transition from Combat to Classroom: Helping Student Veterans Succeed," which is described in a section below.

The process by which an office can receive this VFO designation requires that the interested department meet the following criteria: 25% or more of the office staff must register for and attend the professional development training workshop; name a designated point-person and one back-up as the primary contact for student veterans who have questions or need referrals; use a one-stop philosophy of assistance for student veterans, minimizing the potential stress experienced when a student is referred from one office to another multiple times in order to obtain assistance; an updated list of key offices that provide veteran resources must be maintained for making appropriate referrals for student veterans; a supply of "Veteran Friendly Office" business cards must be on hand for student veterans that have a short list of links to key veteran resources; and the "Veteran Friendly Office" placard must be placed in a high traffic area or place of prominent visibility within the office. All VFO materials are provided to the office at no cost. The program is promoted to all department/program heads, chairs, and deans via a letter from one of the Veterans Advisory Council cochairs. The letter specifies information about the VFO Program and extends an invitation for department personnel to attend the professional development training workshop.

The VFO program uses office placards to signify to student veterans and the campus community that the university and the VFO departments support student veterans. When an office joins the VFO Program, it becomes one of many offices dedicated to the success of student veterans. There are a total of 34 offices/units on campus

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that have reached the criteria. Those offices are listed in Table 2.

In addition to the regular training given for the campus in general, the training group offers shorter trainings that are tailored to a department's request. Such trainings are often requested for student groups, resident halls, and meetings with shorter training limits such as faculty meetings.

**Table 2: List of Units Participating in Veteran-Friendly Office Program**

Campus Activities and Student Organizations  
Career Services  
Center for International Studies  
College of Education Dean's Office  
College of Education Undergraduate Advising Center  
College of Fine Arts and Communication Advising Center  
College of Health Professions Advising Center  
College of Liberal Arts Advising Center  
College of Science and Engineering Advising Center  
Counseling Center  
Curriculum and Instruction  
Honors College  
Housing and Residential Life  
LBJ Student Center  
McCoy College of Business Advising Center  
Office of Disability Services  
One Stop Center - Texas State Round Rock  
PACE Advising Center  
Political Science  
Retention Management and Planning  
Off Campus Library Services (RRC Library Services)  
Rural Talent Search Program  
School of Health Administration  
School of Journalism & Mass Communication  
Student Business Services  
Student Diversity and Inclusion  
Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC)  
Student Support Services  
The Meadows Center - Aquarena Center  
University College Advising Center

University Police Department  
University Seminar  
Veterans Initiative  
VPSA Technology Office

### Training Considerations and Curriculum

Any campus training must be individualized to the university environment, so there is no "one size fits all model." Although our team has varied the content, the general areas of professional development training have included the following:

**Where Veterans Have Been.** Providing a brief overview of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), New Dawn, Resolute Support, and the impact serving in these wars has had on this generation of veterans provides the foundation for understanding the strengths and needs of our veterans. The focus is on the characteristics of these wars and their impact, the conditions of the war zones, the deployment pace and tempo of recent operations, and the sacrifices endured by service members and their families. This provides the context for the demands of service and duties in a war zone and how these create stress and challenges that have lasting impacts.

**Student Veterans and Their Unique Needs.** Faculty and staff are provided with a profile of the campus veteran population including service branch,; demographics, number of deployments, and major areas of study. This is based on a needs assessment coupled with data from the university's Office of Institutional Effectiveness. It is important to understand the unique needs of student veterans and to assist faculty in understanding and learning how to engage with this student population. Reports indicate that student veterans have similarities to first generation college students and nontraditional students. They also tend to be older, from families with fewer experiences in postsecondary institutions, and financially independent from their families of origin (Gwin et al., 2012; Wurster et al., 2013). Although the research is not conclusive, some reports indicate as many as one in five student veterans report a disability compared with one in ten nonveteran students (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2010; Wurster et al., 2013). In a recent campus survey of student veterans ( $N = 300$ ) one university reported approximately 39% being from a first-generation college family, 64% indicated having up to three deployments,

24% also indicated that their total deployment time had been between 2 to 4 years, and 30% reported being out of the military only five months or less before coming to campus. In addition, 40% of the respondents also reported being injured or wounded during their enlistment, 40% reported feeling high levels of stress on campus, and 58% reported sleep issues. In addition, 6% reported having experienced a concussive event at some time during their military experience (Gwin et al., 2012; Selber, 2014).

**Transition Issues.** The stress levels and injuries reported by student veterans can temporarily impede their academic performance. Helping faculty and staff understand how stress levels, exposure to warzones and training and other trauma, and physical injuries resulting from concussive events can negatively affect memory, concentration, and other learning functions can help provide more effective academic support.

**Campus Services for Student Veterans.** Providing information on the campus-wide efforts to provide services is important in order to educate the community about what is currently available on campus for helping student veterans. Details about the Veterans Advisory Council, the campus team designated to address veteran support, gives the audience a sense of the history of services and their structure. This information should also be tied to a list of campus resources and points of contact that can be used by participants after the training is concluded. This can be helpful in providing the information for referrals by faculty and staff when student veterans need services. This topic also helps with coordination and streamlining of services, two issues that are crucial to student veterans actually accessing services.

**Ways of Helping Student Veterans Succeed.** Providing basic tips for working with student veterans that are easy to implement is most helpful to faculty and staff. For example, understanding that a student veteran that stands in the back of class periodically can be related to injuries from deployments can lead to prevention of a negative faculty-student interaction from faculty misperceptions of this event. Likewise, providing faculty with handouts to give to their student veterans on how to best access professor office hours and time for questions can help faculty reach out to student veterans and establish a productive relationship.

**Hearing the Voice of Student Veterans.** It is important that faculty and staff be provided with the opportunity to hear directly from student veterans about not only their past military experiences but their needs in the campus environment. A student veteran panel can accomplish this, and time can be set aside for questions from participants. What emerges is a profile of student veterans as the leaders they are and not as social media often portrays them as the “ticking time bomb.” Video clips, online resources, and letters from student veterans have all been used to accomplish this when student veterans are not available to participate in a live panel. Table 3 shows a sample outline of the training agenda used by the training team.

**Table 3: Sample Training Outline**

Overview	Workshop Goals
	Introductions
Today's Student Veteran	Who Served?
	Impact in State
	Who are our Student Veterans on our Campus?
	What They Bring to Campus
Transitioning Home After Deployment	The War Zone Experience
	Coming Home
	Video Clip
	Families Serve Too
	Transitioning to Campus: Challenges
	Break
Student Veteran Needs	Recent Campus Needs Assessment Data
	Academic, Health & Behavioral Health, Career Concerns
Campus-wide Veterans Initiative at Texas State	Framework of Support through Transitions
	Office of Veterans Affairs
	Veterans Advisory Council
	Academic, Health & Behavioral Health, Career & Leadership Services
	Student Veteran Organization
Student Veteran Panel	Introduction
	Questions & Answers
How You Can Help: Tips for Working with Student Veterans	

Table Discussions & Report  
 Questions & Answers  
 Closing  
 Evaluations

**Training Outcomes: Results from the Campus Workshops**

The workshop, “Transitioning from Combat to Classroom: Helping Student Veterans Succeed on Campus,” was started in 2009. Generally, the training was offered twice a year. The workshop is a 2½ hour training that used speaker presentations, PowerPoints, videos, exercises, team brainstorming, student panel presentations, and discussion. Handouts were provided on tips for working with veterans, resources on and off campus, and copies of the presentation material. There are usually three to four speakers—both family members and veterans. The student veteran panel contained an average of three to four student veterans. The size of the workshop varied and ranged between 27 and 82 participants. Attendees were faculty, staff, or student workers on campus. Registration was conducted online.

We conducted an evaluation at the end of each training. Topics covered included the extent the workshop met its objective, the workshop’s utility to participants in their job and/or personal lives, overall impression, and presenter knowledge. Table 4 shows the mean ratings for the 7 workshops that were given between 2009-2013. Ratings were on a 4.0 Likert-type scale with 4 being Excellent, 3 is Good, 2 is Fair, and 1 is Poor. One item asked if the workshop offered content that could help the participant do the job differently and shows a percentage response for “yes” and “no.” A total of 471 trainees signed in and attended the 12 trainings across 7 years. Of these, 397 completed the evaluation instrument for a 84.2% response rate, a very high completion rate.

**Table 4: Training Workshop Evaluation (n = 397)**

	Ratings (on a 4.0 scale)
1. Extent training objective met	$\bar{X} = 3.78$
2. Overall impression	$\bar{X} = 3.83$
3. Presenters’ knowledge	$\bar{X} = 3.84$
4. Provided information to do job differently	Yes = 92.7% No = 7.3%

Scale: Excellent=4; Good=3; Fair=2; Poor=0

Mean ratings were all above a 3.7 on the 4.0 scale and reflected a positive experience across all of the key domains. Participants rated the training information helpful as seen in the overall impression ( $\bar{X} = 3.83$ ) and that it met its objective ( $\bar{X} = 3.78$ ). Also, presenters were given high marks for content knowledge ( $\bar{X} = 3.84$ ). Overall, the workshop seemed to be helpful and worthwhile for the participants and had very high ratings. It was usually a waitlisted event with slots taken very quickly once registration opens.

An open-ended question asked the participants to identify things in the workshop that provided information or motivation to help them do something differently in their jobs. This question provided a link to anticipating what impact the workshop might have on their jobs after the training is over. Table 5 shows the rankings of content by their usefulness in helping them do their jobs differently. Participants ranked the theme of resources on and off campus as being most useful to them in doing their jobs differently. For example,



one participant stated, “I need to make student veterans fully aware of campus resources available to them (counseling, veteran group, veteran’s office, etc.).”

**Table 5: Ranking of Training Content (n = 292)**

Theme
1 <sup>st</sup> Resources on Campus and the Community
2 <sup>nd</sup> How to Provide Support to Veterans
3 <sup>rd</sup> Awareness and General Information on Veteran Issues
4 <sup>th</sup> Improving Campus and Coordination
5 <sup>th</sup> Teaching and Advising
6 <sup>th</sup> Training Others in their Units
7 <sup>th</sup> Families of Veterans

The next item of importance was how to provide support to student veterans. This category covered statements about how the workshop helped them understand and be more empathic to student veteran needs. One participant stated, “Be a little more patient in helping them through the processes/systems.” Third in rank was the category of raising awareness about veterans and providing general information. This category included comments about content that provided information about the impact of war and its conditions and general needs of veterans. For example, one participant said, “In my job I have seen an increased number of vets and this workshop really helped me see where they are coming from and how I can better assist them.” The fourth ranking was for content related to how to improve campus services and collaboration. One trainee stated, “Put up placard of Veteran Friendly Office and work more closely with Veterans Affairs.”

The fifth category was content that helped teaching and advising of student veterans. For example, one trainee stated, “Assume I have veterans as students in class and understand they have different needs.” Another faculty member said, “Identify student veterans at the beginning of the semester and reach out to discover if there

are special needs to be met.” The sixth category was content that would be shared with others in their unit and the need to train others. One participant said, “Encourage other staff members to attend workshop and encourage advisors to increase the number of distance learning options.” Lastly, participants mentioned the importance of understanding about military families. For example, a trainee stated, “Making sure to inquire or be in tune to not just military status but their families as well.”

These data point to the usefulness of the training for participants in their jobs on campus. The comments and rankings appear to reflect that the training goes beyond just the knowledge of the elements of the diverse student veteran background and culture but also the implications of this content to their job activities. This indicates a higher level of value for participants from understanding to usefulness. After the workshops the data and comments were reviewed by the Veterans Advisory Council for the purpose of suggesting changes both in the training and in programming of services on campus.

**Program Outcomes: Lessons Learned in the Training Environment**

After four years of implementing the training and 366 participants, some valuable lessons have been learned.

**Creating a Unifying Framework and Perspective.** The training program must have guiding frameworks. In this case example, the role transition framework is used and leads the campus to focus on issues of transition including helping build a positive campus environment to support student veterans as they move into, through, and out of the university. In addition, the person-in-environment perspective helps the campus view individual student veterans holistically and within the context of a university environment that impacts their success. Thus, focusing on closing the gaps between need and services in the bureaucracy is important. Lastly, a strengths-based perspective encourages the campus to focus on the student veteran’s leadership qualities as well as needs and helps decrease the possible stigma that comes with focusing too narrowly on a veteran’s deficits. All of these perspectives provide a balanced approach and steer clear of pitfalls such as political issues inherent in discus-

sions about the impact of war. Veterans are a very diverse group, and it is crucial that political biases not be included in discussion items.

**Developing a Team of Faculty, Staff, and Student Trainers.** It is important that the training team be a mix of both student affairs staff and faculty. This ensures that major constituents of campus are represented in the training endeavor. Since the training is open to both faculty and staff, having trainers from both groups is a helpful approach. The student veteran perspective is also an added value to the panel. It is also important to have representation of family members. This recognizes the importance of family members' needs and their contributions to the well-being and success of the student veteran.

**Building A Strong Student Veteran Perspective in the Training.** Having a student veteran perspective is central to a successful training. This can be accomplished in several ways including getting veteran input on the agenda and training materials. Also, a student veteran panel is an excellent way of providing the participants with a direct view of how student veterans view the campus. Video clips of interviews with student veterans have also been used with success when a panel is not possible due to student schedules.

**Embracing Interdisciplinary Training.** Universities are filled with opportunities to work with multiple disciplines to support student veterans. Psychologists, student development specialists, counselors, allied health professionals, and many academic majors are potential partners on campus. This represents a rich learning environment and a dynamic opportunity to train. Since many disciplines will be represented in the participant group it is helpful to have different disciplines within the training team as well. An interdisciplinary perspective in training helps ensure that the content is well-developed, and research suggests it is a creative approach that builds critical thinking skills.

**Developing Other Training Resources.** Diversifying training materials is helpful. Adding handouts, websites, and exercises for applying what they have learned back in their own units have been helpful for the training. There are numerous websites now that can provide more information beyond the training for participants.

Future research is needed in the area of training the campus community, and much work remains to be done. Priorities include examining

models of training curricula, evaluating the impact of the training experience including follow up, methods to make the training experience more tailored to a specific campus, and the use of new technologies for training. This future research is needed across multiple universities in order to continue to examine best practices and to provide for the different models needed for diverse campuses.

### Implications

After over two decades at war, the nation's veterans are continuing to return home and choosing to enter the university in increased numbers using their educational benefits. This is a familiar challenge to universities who have long partnered with the military to help veterans transition back into civilian life such as after World War II. The challenges universities face now are even more pronounced as only one percent (1%) of Americans have served in the all-volunteer force, making faculty and staff less likely to understand the military experiences that student veterans bring to campus. This challenge provides universities with an opportunity to create and enhance supportive services that can help veterans succeed. Although many universities have made strides in developing programming for their student veterans, there is still much to be done. An important part of this is laying the foundation for a campus-wide awareness of how to help our veterans transition.

The limited reporting of campus training projects indicates the importance of these efforts to the sense of engagement and success of student veterans on campus. However, there is a gap in research and practice regarding training curriculum, its delivery, and its evaluation. Most of the literature that exists is anecdotal and incomplete. In addition, much of this work is conceptual and not empirical. Research on what faculty and staff skills might be needed, how to structure the curriculum to train in this environment, and how to track outcomes from this needs to be explored. In addition, research on the cultural climate of campus and veterans' perception of being an integral and appreciated part of campus might also yield some understanding of future needed training content.

Further research in the area of student affairs staff, especially advisors, on the success of campus students seems particularly promising. Thus,

training of these key stakeholders seems most important for student veterans who bring with them many leadership skills and yet also profile as older, first-generation college students with substantial at-risk factors.

Training campus faculty and staff on who are our student veterans are and how to help them transition into and through the university is central to the mission of creating a supportive campus environment. Navigating the campus and degree pathway can be less daunting when the entire campus community is part of the mission. Providing this training to the campus community is at the heart of becoming more “student veteran supportive” and truly serving our student veterans. These student veterans have already served on one battlefield. Our mission in universities should be to help them navigate the university environment so it does not become another one.

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