

Veterans Task Force Report

Assessment of current services and long-term strategies to enhance and provide support for veterans throughout their collegiate career.

The University of Iowa

September 1, 2009



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Record numbers of military service members are expected to enroll in colleges and universities across the United States as Iraqi and Afghanistan service members return from deployment. As veterans shift from the military to collegiate setting, both veterans and the campus community must adjust to the changing community and differing value systems. *From Soldier to Student* (American Council on Education, 2003) records best practices that lead to veterans' success by creating veterans' offices, streamlining admissions and registration processes, expanding counseling center capacity, establishing mentoring programs, and training faculty and staff.

The passage of the Post 9-11 legislation significantly improved scholarship availability for tuition, books, and living expenses for veterans as well as increased demand for user friendly veteran services. The new GI Bill provides nearly 100 percent of the veterans' educational cost, making federally funded veterans an excellent revenue source for the University of Iowa campus. Currently, there are over 350 veterans and 35 active duty personnel attending Iowa. Increasing veteran enrollment by 100 students a year would result an additional \$800,000 tuition income annually, with a potential \$2 million additional revenue for the Iowa City community.

Since the university is already designated a military-friendly campus (www.gijobs.com) and is a Big Ten institution, Iowa has the potential to enroll 955 veterans per year (John Schupp, University of Cleveland/SERV report). In May 2009, the Veterans Task Force was established to assess the current University of Iowa veteran services, recommend strategies to enhance veteran support services and to increase veteran enrollment to 600 students by Fall 2012. The committee members were selected based on their roles as existing and potential providers of veteran services, including both internal university staff and external community members. The Veterans Task Force's primary recommendation is that the Office of the Provost assigns a stewardship role of this initiative to a provost-sponsored committee. This committee will implement the recommendations and strategies identified in this report.

After an analysis of the current status and compiling data to develop a plan for the future, the committee identified the following key strategies listed below. A description of the process and recommendations to implement the strategies is the content of the following report.

1. Integrate the role of recruitment and enrollment of veteran students (5-year enrollment management plan).
2. Commit to identify continuing funding and other resources to the departments to sustain their efforts (health, recruitment, retention, administrative, etc.).
3. Provide administrative and budget structure to maintain programs.
4. Educate faculty, staff, and community on the advantages and opportunities of bringing veterans into the university environment.
5. Ensure and provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for the veterans and their families consistent with the goals of the university.

If the university continues to experience budget shortfalls, it may not be able to provide some of the veteran friendly support advocated by this report. Without a coordinated, collaborative approach to provide an institutional navigational system for veterans from admission through graduation, there is a risk of that veterans may not be admitted, or may be admitted but may not progress towards graduation.

INTRODUCTION:

The Veterans Task Force was established in May 2009 by Marcella David, associate provost for diversity; Barbara Eckstein, associate provost for academic administration; and Beth Ingram, associate provost for undergraduate education and dean of the university college. Committee members were selected based on their roles as existing and potential providers of services to veterans (Appendix A).

The committee was charged to “Assess current services and develop a long-term strategy to enhance and provide support as veterans enter, matriculate through and graduate from The University of Iowa.” Over the course of the summer meetings, the committee members shared information about existing services, explored ways for more strategic collaborations, completed a SWOT analysis, and developed recommendations for institutionalizing veteran services across the University of Iowa.

The New GI Bill provides nearly 100 percent of the cost of education for these veterans. In addition, recent state legislation grants in-state tuition to every veteran and active duty serviceman currently residing in Iowa and pursuing an undergraduate degree. Dependents may also qualify for resident status in some situations. The University of Iowa is a member of the Veterans Administration Yellow Ribbon Program and committed to supporting any nonresident graduate student with up to \$2000 toward the veterans tuition costs per year matched by an equal amount from the Veterans Administration.

Currently, there are over 350 veterans and 35 active duty personnel attending Iowa. A data review indicates over 16,000 veterans, deployed guardsmen, and reservists living in the state of Iowa are eligible for the new GI Bill, with an additional 87,000 eligible veterans residing in the adjacent states. Of those eligible, 7500 veterans reside within 200 miles of Iowa City, including veterans in adjacent states. There are also over 2000 veterans currently attending community colleges within 125 miles of the University of Iowa.

According to John Schupp (University of Cleveland/SERV report), Iowa has the potential to enroll 955 veterans per year, given its status as a Big Ten institution. Increasing veteran enrollment by 100 students a year would result an additional \$800,000 tuition income annually, with a potential \$2 million additional revenue for the Iowa City community. This report contains strategies to ensure the University of Iowa meets a target of over 600 veterans attending Iowa by Fall 2012.

Even though Iowa has been designated as a veteran friendly campus, there is more that can be done to assist veterans enrolling in undergraduate programs and facilitating a successful transition from soldier to scholar. The Veterans Task Force designated three subcommittees to explore the ancillary issues that would be used to develop strategies and the recommendations to implement the strategic suggestions:

- Veterans Service Plan and Analysis – Charged to present the case for increasing efforts to recruit and graduate veterans and service members (Appendix B)
- Support Services – Charged to identify veteran-focused campus and community resources (Appendix C)
- Academic programs – Charged to assess and identify best practices for educating veterans and the family of veterans (Appendix D)

The subcommittee reports were used to conduct the SWOT analysis and to develop strategies for providing educational opportunities for both on-campus and off-campus veterans.

Nearly 40 percent of those discharged after serving in the War on Terror have service connected disabilities. One goal of this committee is that Iowa becomes a benchmark institution for providing educational services to

those with physical and/or psychological disabilities. Medical treatment and support is available at the VA Medical Center and University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Numerous support systems are also available on and off campus. The University of Iowa's commitment to veterans will be manifested in solid institutional policy and structure. The following action steps towards this goal were taken in preparation of the academic year 2009-2010:

- Webpage was enhanced to allow one-stop links to all campus and community resources
- Directory of services was created (see Appendix E)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for those who work with veterans is in development (see Appendix F)
- New veteran friendly brochure was created (see Appendix G)

BACKGROUND:

Record numbers of military service members are expected to enroll in colleges and universities across the United States as Iraqi and Afghanistan service members return from deployment. As veterans shift from the military to collegiate setting, both veterans and the campus community must adjust to the changing community and differing value systems. *From Soldier to Student* (American Council on Education, 2003) records best practices that lead to veterans' success by creating veterans' offices, streamlining admissions and registration processes, expanding counseling center capacity, establishing mentoring programs, and training faculty and staff. The passage of the Post 9-11 legislation significantly improved scholarship availability for tuition, books, and living expenses for veterans as well as increased demand for user friendly veteran services.

The Registrar's Office provides institutional leadership by creating and supporting a Veterans Service Team with a GI Bill certifying official, a veterans counselor, a cadre of student veteran peer liaisons, and a dedicated Veterans Services office space. Because of the team's outstanding efforts, the university already met criteria for a military friendly campus:

- Veterans are listened to by the university
- A veterans' group was organized and is part of a national network
- A place for veterans to gather was created
- Several individuals serve as points of institutional contact
- Partnerships with internal departments, external organizations and community engagement were established

The areas requiring more attention were the foundation for the work of the 2009 Veterans Task Force over the course of the summer months.

SWOT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

The Veterans Task Force SWOT analysis revealed pride in the existing services available, the capabilities of the campus, and community resources, as well as concern about capacity to serve an increasing number of veteran scholars.

Among the strengths are:

- Strong association with the VA Medical Center in both clinical services and service coordination and collaboration for physical as well as mental health
- Existing offices that provide veteran support resources (e.g., comprehensive support services through a Veterans Service Team funded by the Registrar's Office, informed and capable staff in

Student Disability Services)

- Strong presence of Army and Air Force ROTC
- A dedicated veteran service counselor in Admissions
- Physical and mental health support provided through University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, University Counseling Service and the VA Medical Center
- A pool of scholars provided by the Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation and Student Development to connect with local vocational rehabilitation projects that provide services for veterans
- Strong relationship with local and state community colleges, veterans' organizations, and Iowa Work Force Development
- Mental health resources available through the VA, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Distance learning
- Campus and community support services (Appendix C)

Among the weaknesses are:

- Issues of accessible physical facilities and space
- Fee structures which do not accommodate in-state tuition for active duty
- Limited personnel to support the increasing number of veterans admitted to the university
- Some negative attitude towards veterans
- How to provide guidance when veterans go on active duty or return from active duty

Key opportunities exist as:

- Continued commitment from the Registrar's Office to provide leadership and advocate for a coordinated and proactive approach to serve veterans from admissions through graduation
- A willingness and ability to market the image of the university as a military friendly school
- An opportunity to promote financial flexibility
- For the long term, the university has the capability to strengthen support services through institution wide peer training, increased services for advising and tutoring, and veteran-focused diversity programming
- An opportunity to institutionalize an academic vision that fosters student success through policy making extending ability to accept military experiences and/or coursework for credit, enhance curriculum projects, and provide course tracks so veterans can enroll as a cohort group in common curricular offerings
- The extensive community support and resource networks which includes relationships with community colleges
- An opportunity to create recruiting relationships with Military Service Education Officers
- The ongoing support of area veteran-focused agencies and support organizations

If the university continues to experience budget shortfalls, it may not be able to provide some of the veteran friendly support advocated by this report. Without a coordinated, collaborative approach to provide an institutional navigational system for veterans from admission through graduation, there is a risk of that veterans may not be admitted, or may be admitted but may not progress towards graduation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Integrate the role of recruitment and enrollment of veteran students (5-year Enrollment Management Plan is in progress)

Immediate:

Develop an admission process to accommodate veterans whose academic credentials do not reflect their current academic potential. Provide immediate admission as a returning adult student, even if it is as a conditional admittance, to provide educational opportunities to those who want to attend the University of Iowa.

Intermediate:

Develop formalized policies and procedures to assess previous academic credentials to use as a predictor for academic success.

Develop policies and procedures to assess the military service related learning experiences toward completing university degree requirements.

Long term:

Coordinate student-veteran peer volunteers to assist veterans with the Iowa admissions process.

Provide marketing communication and media to veterans and military personnel in conjunction with the colleges and the offices of Undergraduate Admissions and Student Financial Aid.

Create a detailed baseline data report to determine the demographics and academic history of current veteran students.

Create outreach admissions recruiting that targets discharged veterans, current military personnel, area national guard and reservist units, veterans with disabilities, and family members of veterans who were killed or disabled due to combat service.

Create outreach to national guard and reserve units in the adjacent states since veterans would attend as residents for undergraduate degrees.

Provide outreach at area debriefing periods when military personnel are transitioning back to civilian life by actively engaging the following target markets:

- Active duty and discharged active duty personnel (Chapters 30 and Chapter 33)
- Personnel who are currently on active duty, stationed either overseas or in the US (Chapters 30 and Chapter 33); work with Continuing Education for distance education eligible veterans
- Personnel who have been honorably discharged after serving on active duty (Chapters 30 and Chapter 33)
- Personnel in the national guard or reserve and have been called to active duty (Chapter 1607)

- Veterans with disabilities due to military service (Chapter 31)
- Spouses and dependents of disabled or deceased veterans (Chapter 35)
- National guard and reservist who have not been called to active duty (Chapter 1606)

Ongoing:

Develop a continual marketing strategy to include web, brochures, radio, and a presence at community colleges in Iowa and surrounding states.

Develop an introduction to campus video that demonstrates a welcoming environment.

Commit to identify continuing funding and other resources to the departments to sustain their efforts (health, recruitment, retention, administrative, etc.).

Immediate:

Provide sufficient resources for staff travel, support services, and informational/recruitment efforts.

Intermediate:

Review and suggest improvements to physical facilities.

Initiate programs for disabled veterans, including tutoring and preparing faculty and teaching assistants.

Assess and coordinate veteran-focused resources on and off campus to leverage existing services which mitigates university costs.

Long term:

Maintain, improve, and expand services for disabled veterans.

Provide administrative and budget structure to maintain programs.

Immediate:

Expand the University of Iowa Veterans Center to include a computer training area by increasing the current physical study space to accommodate large study groups, a military resource library, wireless computer access and informal meetings.

Intermediate:

Provide tutoring for nontraditional students (including student veterans).

Develop a comprehensive First-Year Program that supports the transition to the university and increases academic success for all student populations.

Develop a long range financial plan to support personnel and services to veterans.

Long term:

Work with the VA and University Counseling Service to insure sufficient expertise in working with nontraditional students and those with the combination of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Outreach and prevention programs may be targeted for veterans and their families to help them access prevention and treatment services.

Encourage the University Counseling Service to develop strong relationships with government programs designed to provide specialized treatment. The University Counseling Service may need to develop policies on when to treat non-student family members and prepare for additional consultation to faculty and others concerned about veterans, including risk of suicide and fears about violence related to PTSD.

Educate faculty, staff, and community on the advantages and opportunities of bringing veterans into the university environment.

Immediate:

Develop a short web-based directory of veteran-related services with individual contacts to be used primarily by faculty, staff, and community resources.

Intermediate:

Provide training to faculty and staff on the needs of nontraditional students (including student veterans).

Long term:

Collaborate with local units, educational areas, and service organizations to offer special programming and communication briefings that address veteran academic and social needs.

Ongoing:

Develop a continual program to educate the university and local community regarding Veteran Affairs including university publications, receptions, and targeted information to faculty, civic, and business leaders.

Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for the veterans and their families, consistent with the goals of the university.

Immediate:

Build a comprehensive veteran and military personnel website to provide information to current and potential student veterans. This web site will be maintained by the University of Iowa Veterans Center to ensure proper standards and policies are met. The new web site will:

- Promote the University of Iowa to military prospects

- Guide veterans through the admissions process
- Give information about military credit evaluation and applicability
- Describe all VA benefits by chapter and clearly explain the application process
- Provide links to the all required VA benefit forms
- Provide links to university academic programs
- Provide information regarding call-up to active duty and the effect it would have on currently enrolled students
- Provide information and appropriate office links for administrative support services, to include financial aid, counseling services, health services, and disability services
- Provide information about campus life including recreation center, housing, dining services, transportation, services for families, etc.
- Provide information about and links to community resources including the VA Medical Center, etc.

Intermediate:

Partner with the University Counseling Service and the Pomerantz Career Center to provide programs and services to student veterans.

Provide for a peer support group of student veterans for new student veterans. Maintain a welcoming and comfortable space for veterans to study and associate with one another.

Develop a Veteran's Orientation (Briefing) Program to be conducted during orientation or welcome week. This program would be supplemental to other orientation requirements, similar to Honors orientation sessions .

Long term:

Advocate for student veterans and military personnel needs.

Ongoing:

Encourage veterans to identify their needs and status while enrolled in the university to enhance their college experience.

Assist student veterans in relocating to the area, including providing information about schools, neighborhoods, and spouse employment and educational opportunities. Assist with identifying affordable living quarters for veterans and their families

CONCLUSIONS:

Anticipating an influx of service members returning from deployment in Iraqi and Afghanistan, the Registrar's Office created and supports a Veterans Service Team that coordinates the university's efforts to help veterans transition from soldier to student. Staff included a GI Bill certifying official, a veterans' counselor, and a cadre of student veteran peer liaisons with a dedicated Veterans Services office space. The University of Iowa is recognized as a military friendly campus and has generated interest as a result of this designation. Partnerships with internal departments and external organizations were formed and community engagement

has begun.

The Veterans Task Force was charged with assessing current services and developing a long-term strategy to enhance and provide support as veterans enter, matriculate through and graduate from Iowa. Findings of this report reaffirmed the need for an institutional approach to serving the needs of veterans and their families seeking an education at the University of Iowa. It is the recommendation of this task force that the Office of the Provost pursue the matter by assigning the role of stewardship of this initiative to a provost sponsored committee. The role of the committee will be to implement the recommendations as identified under the five key strategies identified by the summer, 2009 Veterans Task Force. Because the admission of increasing numbers of veterans will bring anticipated millions of dollars, the institution has an opportunity to improve fiscal stability while serving those who have served our nation so well.

APPENDICES:

- A. Veterans Task Force committee members
- B. Veterans Service Plan and Analysis
- C. Support Services
- D. Academic programs
- E. Services for Veterans Directory
- F. FAQ for Faculty and Staff
- G. Veteran friendly brochure

OTHER RESOURCES:

- A. Local, regional and state resources
 - a. Iowa DVA- <https://www.iowava.org/>
- B. University of Iowa Websites
 - 1) Admissions - <http://www.uiowa.edu/admissions/>
 - 2) Registrar/GI Bill - <http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/>
 - 3) ROTC
 - a. Army- <http://www.armyrotc.com/edu/univia/index.htm>
 - b. Air Force - <http://www.uiowa.edu/~afrotc/>
 - 4) University of Iowa Veterans Association - www.uiva.org
- C. University of Iowa Veteran Support Offices
 - 1) Student Disability Services - <http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/>
 - 2) Academic Advising - <http://www.uiowa.edu/~uaactr/>
 - 3) Admissions - <http://www.uiowa.edu/admissions/>
- D. Informational Webinar:
Veterans in the Classroom: What Faculty Need to Know – September 22, 2009
- E. Community Collaborations and Services
 - 1) VA Hospital - <http://www.iowacity.va.gov/>

- Peer Specialist Training - September 15-19, 2009

- 2) Iowa Workforce Development - <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/veterans/>
- 3) Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services - <http://www.ivrs.iowa.gov/>

Appendix A

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The University of Iowa

Veterans Services Plan and Analysis

Developed by Office of the Registrar

July 2009

Preface

Proposed University Goal: to increase the number of new enrollments of veterans, by 100% percent over a five year period, by enhancing the items that makes the University of Iowa a veteran-friendly campus. Focus on active duty and disabled veteran populations, as well as their dependents, as the University transitions to a military friendly campus. Recent GI BILL statistics are listed below.

	VA Chapter	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	men fall 2008	women fall 2008	men spring 2009	women spring 2009
Active Duty	30	101	110	91	10	223	10
Disabled	31	20	22	13	7	13	9
Dependents	35	24	27	10	14	11	16
Guard Reserve, not activated	1606	66	73	50	16	56	17
Active guard & reserve	1607	49	52	40	9	42	10
Total		261	284	205	56	223	62
Chapter 33 post 9/11 GI BILL data is not yet available but can be included in the figures above as some migrate from one type of GI BILL to another.							

Report and Recommendations for a Veteran Friendly Campus

Section I: Situational Analysis

Background

The number of students at the University of Iowa receiving veteran educational benefits since September 11, 2001 was at its lowest in the academic year 2004 with approximately 200 students receiving GI BILL. Those figures have risen steadily to approximately 300 for the 2008/2009 academic year and anticipate 350 veteran-students for the fall 2009 semester.

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In July 2009, the state of Iowa passed legislation granting veterans, military personnel and their dependents, in-state tuition rates if they reside in the state. As a result many veterans from neighboring states will want to attend the University of Iowa, a BIG TEN school.

Beginning August 1, 2009, the newly-authorized Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33), will provide a more complex system of educational benefits to veterans, including partial, or possibly full payment, of tuition plus a housing allowance and a book stipend. Veterans must be cautioned to carefully consider their options before choosing which benefit program is best for them, or risk losing up to a full year of eligibility for GI BILL benefits.

Many veterans who have exhausted their existing Chapter 30 or Chapter 1607 benefits could have access to additional months of Post 9/11 GI BILL but have no current contacts with military or GI Bill staff and could be unaware of this resource.

Some Guard/Reserve members who are eligible for chapter 1607 benefits will choose to forfeit their benefits by separating from the military. Some who make this choice will not be aware they have eligibility for the new chapter 33 benefit.

Virtually all Iowa Guard and Reserve units have been deployed at one time or another in support of the War on Terror. Nearly 40% of those discharged after serving in support of the War on Terror have service connected disabilities. Veterans do share characteristics with other non-traditional students. Some of the items listed below, if addressed appropriately, will aid the non-traditional student in addition to the military veteran segment of that population.

Issues affecting academic and social support services for reservists and veterans include:

- Managing their education from a distance and with many demands on their time
- Feeling different from other students
- Being simultaneously more mature but less independent (reflecting a high level of structure and provision of basic needs in military)
- Partners and families, including children
- Unpredictable disruptions because of deployments, and being less consistently in the campus environment
- Access to VA benefits for health care, with various eligibility rules
- Need for tutoring for some basic skills in writing, math, etc.
- Access to various government programs, upon discharge ...i.e. unemployment, medical, dental
- High rates of trauma leading to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), depression, and substance abuse -all of which typically are invisible conditions
- High rates of sexual assault against female service members

Veteran Enrollment Forecast

We expect veteran and military numbers to initially increase modestly based on the number of deployments and separations, more flexible rules on gaining resident status, and the high profile nature of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill;

This modest growth will continue for at least three years. In part, this may be attributed to the thirty-six (36) months of consecutive active-duty minimum requirement for receiving full education benefits. We predict that service members will separate from military service in higher numbers during these next three years and will enroll at area colleges and universities at the end of their three-year minimum enlistment. This forecast is dependent upon the global and American political, military, and economic situations over the next several years.

Conclusion: University of Iowa should take appropriate steps now to provide programs and services that will attract, enroll and retain student-veterans in greater numbers than the modest yield expected.

Advantageous Circumstances

- The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill (Chapter 33) is more generous in providing educational benefits for active duty veterans and military personnel and provides a stipend for tuition and books
- The large numbers of local deployments and separations from active duty, National Guard and reserve units are likely to continue
- Local guard and reserve units are willing to allow recruiting by colleges and universities and want access to educational services
- The Iowa Army National Guard pays one hundred percent (100%) of tuition to qualified personnel
- Non-traditional guard and reservists not attending college have unused benefits and may be willing to consider higher education in difficult economic times (Chapter 1606, Chapter 1607, chapter 30)
- University of Iowa's proximity to the VA Medical Center, Rock Island Arsenal, and various reserve/guard units may assist with marketing efforts)
- High profile of University of Iowa increases interest among military that are residents of the state, and increases likelihood of interest among non-residents who will move to the state

Identified Strengths

- Relationship with Iowa Community Colleges is positive
- Large number of programs at the bachelor, graduate, and professional levels and a top 20 institution
- Distance learning programs are very popular with veterans nationwide. University of Iowa Center For Credit Programs is robust and growing
- University of Iowa has both Army and Air Force ROTC as a recognized academic unit within the College of Liberal Arts. ROTC works with the Office of Admissions to facilitate transfer of military

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credit to University of Iowa credit. . Only two hundred seventy-three (273) universities in the nation have an Army ROTC department and only one hundred forty-four universities have an Air Force detachment on campus. There are approximately 150 ROTC students

- Student-Veteran Peer Counseling program is being developed in cooperation with VA Medical Center and Iowa Student Veterans Association
- University of Iowa has a Veterans Services Office from which veterans can obtain information about services available, even those that are not directly connected to University of Iowa function
- University of Iowa offers a \$500 per semester grant to qualified OIF/OEF veterans in undergraduate programs. This represents an additional \$4000 over an undergraduate career
- University of Iowa has a disabled veterans Committee that works with University Disability Services and the VA Medical Center and will be working with 1st Army medical release center and Iowa National Guard Medical Facility in counseling the disabled service personnel awaiting discharge
- University of Iowa is prepared to handle disabled veterans with links to support services

Identified Challenges

Potential student-veterans are attentive to the overall cost of attendance (i.e., tuition and fees, textbooks, housing, living and family expenses) involved in pursuing an education. Despite the financial benefits of the various G.I. Bill programs, student-veterans may require additional financial assistance and will select an institution in part based upon the financial support or incentives that institution makes available. They need access to a benefits counselor and academic advisors;

Current University of Iowa is only aware of student-veterans who have been certified for G.I. Bill. A procedure is being developed to identify individuals with a military connection during the admission process that will soon be a tool to identify students who are or were in the military. It is currently not possible to identify the number of students, staff or faculty with military experience at the University of Iowa.

The Office of Admissions does not maintain permanent recruitment contact with Reserve/Guard Units, VA medical facilities, or military bases.

University of Iowa is not a Veterans Upward Bound Program participating institution.

University of Iowa is not a SOC school that accepts most training in military MOS. (CONAP Only)

Veterans often cannot transfer military technical credit into existing programs; -only through departmental recommendation.

There is a need for returning adult students to receive conditional admission to the University of Iowa

Section II: Student-Veteran Support Service Development Recommendations

1. Expand Iowa Veterans Students Center to include a student veteran's lounge and computer training area.

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2. Outreach admissions recruiting that targets discharged veterans, current military personnel, area National Guard and reservist units, veterans with disabilities, and family members of veterans who were killed or severely disabled due to combat service.
3. Provide immediate admission as a returning adult student, even as a conditional admittance to provide education to those who want to attend University of Iowa.
4. Coordinate student-veteran peer volunteers to assist veterans with the Iowa admissions process.
5. Assist student-veterans in relocating to the area, including providing information about schools, neighborhoods, and spouse employment educational opportunities. Assist as feasible in identifying affordable living quarters for veterans and their families.
6. Provide tutoring for non-traditional students (including student-veterans).
7. Partner with the University Counseling Service and the Pomerantz Career Center to provide programs and services to student-veterans.
8. Serve as an advocate for student-veterans and military personnel needs.
9. Provide for a peer support group of student veterans for new student-veterans.
10. Maintain a welcoming and comfortable space for veterans to study and associate with one another.
11. Suggest UI student organizations and local community groups based on the student-veteran's interests and hobbies in which the student-veteran may want to participate in so as to enhance the "college experience".
12. Build a Comprehensive Veteran and Military Personnel Website to be maintained by the Veteran's Center to ensure proper standards and policies are met. The new Web site will:
 - Promote University of Iowa to military prospects
 - Guide veterans through the admissions process
 - Give information about military credit evaluation and applicability
 - Describe all VA benefits by chapter and clearly explains the application process
 - Provide links to the all required VA benefit forms
 - Provide links to university academic programs
 - Provide information regarding call-up to active duty and how that would affect currently enrolled students
 - Provide information and appropriate office links for administrative support services, to include: financial aid, counseling services, health center, and disability services.
 - Provide information about campus life including recreation center, housing, dining services, transportation, services for families, etc.
 - Provide information about and links to community resources including the VA Medical Center, etc.
12. Conduct strategic marketing and promotion to veterans and military personnel that accomplishes the following:

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- Provides marketing communication and media to veterans and military personnel in conjunction with the colleges and the offices of Undergraduate Admissions and Student Financial Aid
 - Creates a detailed baseline data report to determine the specific characteristics of current veteran students
 - Outreaches to National Guard and reserve units in multiple states since veterans would attend as residents
 - Provides outreach at area debriefing periods when military personnel are transitioning back to civilian life
13. Actively engage the following target markets:
- Active duty and discharged active duty personnel (Chapters 30 and Chapter 33)
 - Personnel who are currently on active duty stationed either overseas or in US (Chapters 30 and Chapter 33); (work with Continuing Education for distance education eligible veterans)
 - Personnel who were on active duty and have been honorably discharged. (Chapters 30 and Chapter 33)
 - Personnel who are in National Guard or reserve and have been called to active duty (Chapter 1607)
 - Veterans with disabilities due to military service (Chapter 31)
 - Spouses and dependents of disabled or deceased veteran (Chapter 35)
 - National Guard and reservist who have not been called to active duty (Chapter 1606)
14. Provide training to faculty and staff on the needs of non-traditional students (including student-veterans).
15. Work with University of Iowa Counseling center to insure there is sufficient expertise in working with non-traditional students, including individuals with traumatic brain injuries, the combination of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Outreach and prevention programs may be targeted for veterans and their families to help them access prevention and treatment services. Encourage the Counseling Center to develop strong relationships with government programs designed to provide specialized treatment. The Counseling Center may need to develop policies on when to treat non-student family members and prepare for additional consultation to faculty and others concerned about veterans, including risk of suicide and fears about violence related to PTSD.

Section III: Academic Programming Analysis & Recommendations

Recommendations

The University of Iowa offers high quality degrees. Updating standards and procedures to assist veterans in connecting with these degree programs can be reviewed as follows:

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1. Explore Credit for Military Experience and Training to incorporate MOS training

Based on review of various websites geared toward educational opportunities and benefits for military service members [e.g., Service member Opportunities Colleges (SOCs) network, <http://www.dantes.doded.mil/Dantes.web/highered/soc/index.asp> , Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES), Military.com, etc.) and feedback received from our own student veterans, many military personnel are looking for degree programs where their previous training "counts" towards degree requirements. Applicability of credit and the ability to maximize credit for prior learning and military experience is vital to attracting and retaining veteran students. Credit must not only be acceptable, but it must count towards graduation requirements, reduce time-to-degree, and tuition and associated educational expenses.

Explore promoting top majors via online resources/catalogs referenced by many military personnel (i.e., DANTES catalog, GoArmyEd portal).

2. Academic Support for Returning Adults

A comprehensive First Year Program that supports the transition to the university increases academic success for all student populations. In particular to transition from military to academic life, vets must:

- Develop a sense of belonging at University of Iowa and overcome a sense of alienation often experienced by veterans;
- Develop a social and academic support network with other students who have similar backgrounds, achievements, and challenges related to military and academic life;
- Engage with university resources and opportunities effectively;
- Create a detailed plan of study to:
 - meet their educational goals
 - complete a degree program in a timely manner
 - incorporate their past military and educational experiences
 - incorporate requirements (and opportunities) imposed by benefits restrictions/conditions
- Learn requirements, rights, and responsibilities associated with accessing and maintaining veteran benefits
- Create documents/artifacts that demonstrate credentials and qualifications for:
 - Pre-graduation experiential learning positions and/or exemptions (e.g., co-op)
 - Evaluation of past coursework or experience for credit articulation
 - Demonstration of general education competencies
 - Post-graduation employment or further study

Strategies:

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Providing transition programming for veterans can be particularly challenging for adult students such as veterans who are often uninterested in participating in traditional first-year-experience offerings and strategies.

1. Veteran's Orientation (Briefing) Program
 - During orientation or welcome week timeframes
 - Supplements other orientation requirements much like Honors or other orientation sessions
2. Veteran's Student Organization
 - Collaborate with units/areas to offer special programming and communication briefings that address vets' academic and social needs.

Support Services

University of Iowa, Student Disability Services

The mission of Student Disability Services (SDS) is to assure access through reasonable accommodations to qualified students who currently demonstrate a condition producing significant functional limitations in one or more major life activities.

Equal access to education is achieved when barriers to learning are removed and students with disabilities are allowed to compete solely on the basis of their academic skills and abilities. SDS collaborates with and empowers students to identify and understand their strengths, thereby cultivating opportunities for self-advocacy and independence that allow students to benefit from their college experience and to be successful. Support for students who have disabilities as well as the education of the larger community about disability related concerns allows SDS to facilitate the elimination of attitudinal barriers regarding students with disabilities.

In providing academic accommodations to qualified students with disabilities, SDS seeks to promote equal opportunity within the context of a diverse university community through practices that reflect the mission and values of The University of Iowa. Student Disability Services at the University of Iowa is well funded and centrally located. Our professional staff of five full time individuals ensures that service recipients have individualized attention. Each SDS student is assigned to their own advisor who will help them navigate receiving academic accommodations for their disabilities.

Documentation guidelines for various disabilities and the Request for Services and Documentation Review form, necessary for registration with our office, are both available on line. Documentation is reviewed and decisions about eligibility are reached typically within a few working days. SDS maintains an onsite reformatting lab that process nearly 400,000 pages of text per year for students who need print materials converted into electronic text format. Our onsite testing service proctors over 1700 exams per year for students who need extended testing time and a reduced distraction testing environment.

Iowa Workforce Development Center

Under federal law, veterans may receive preferential assistance for job placement services, as well as other programs. In the Iowa City Workforce Development Center there is a Veterans Representative available to coordinate all services provided to veterans, including counseling, testing, and identifying training and employment opportunities. They also monitor job listings from federal agencies and federal contractors to ensure that veterans get priority of service in referral to these jobs, and work closely with clients of VA Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition, the veterans' representative conducts active outreach programs with employers, community and veterans' organizations, unions, and local counseling and social service agencies to make sure veterans know about and receive the services for which they are eligible. They also work with veterans to place them in federally funded employment and

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training programs, develop job interviewing and résumé writing skills, and help veterans conduct a productive job search and access job listings through electronic databases.

The Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER)

Located in the college of Education, The Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER) houses both a stationary and a mobile lab of assistive technology (AT) devices and software aimed at helping students with disabilities, ranging from physical to learning, access the curriculum. Tools include adapted keyboards and mouse options, speech recognition software, text reader programs, note taking aids, study tools, memory aids, screen readers, screen magnifiers and many others. ICATER will be a place where veterans with disabilities can come to view, learn about and sample different types of AT to see if it meets their needs. The stationary lab is part of the College of Education's Educational Technology Center and will be a place that veteran students can come to use AT in an integrated lab setting during computer lab hours. With the mobile lab, ICATER will allow veteran students to check out laptops with the desired AT for short term trial loans. The ICATER lab is staffed Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm, and someone is usually available to answer general and specific AT questions.

The University of Iowa Veterans Association

The University of Iowa Veterans Association is a group of former service members and support people who share a common goal of assisting other veterans in adjusting to student life, applying for and collecting their veterans benefits and generally integrating into student life. The group also supports active duty troops serving in the Persian Gulf area by sending care packages, holiday greetings and doing other support activities. The group is a non-political organization whose sole purpose is to assist veterans as well as active duty military personnel and their families in any way possible. The UI Veterans Association has even been instrumental in raising the bar for Iowa veterans' benefits by lobbying Iowa General Assembly members for the passage of SF 451, which allows veterans and active duty personnel stationed in Iowa and Rock Island Arsenal and their families the ability to pay in-state tuition for undergraduate tuition.

The University of Iowa Veterans Association is a member in good standing and part of the original foundation of the national Student Veterans Association. Student Veterans of America (SVA) is a coalition of student veterans' groups from college campuses across the United States. Founded in January of 2008, SVA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that works to develop new student groups, coordinate between existing student groups, and advocate on behalf of student veterans at the local, state, and national level.

Here at the UI, the original student Veterans group was started by McKinley Bailey, then a senior at UI. Bailey became the groups' first President and founded the first University Veterans Center, originally located on the third floor of the Pomerantz Center on the UI Campus. The Center is now located on the second floor of the Communications Center, across from the Main Library.

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The group offers not only social activities for veterans from UI but also urges students from other local colleges to attend (Kirkwood Community College and Muscatine Community College among others) functions such as their annual picnic. The group is also now offering classes and one on one tutoring in such subjects as using the UI library system, Intro to Using software applications such as Word and Excel, Facebook, etc. The Veterans Association also regularly sponsors workshops on writing resumes and applying for VA home loans. The group is also working on providing special programs for Women Veterans as well as promoting awareness of women veterans with public showing of documentaries on women veterans and holding panel discussions on same.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services is an eligibility program and works with individuals with disabilities who are eligible for services by assisting them with vocational planning. This may involve providing vocational counseling to explore possible employment areas that fall within the individual's academic capacity, as well as giving necessary attention to disability issues. IVRS also assist its' clients with some financial assistance towards completing the vocational planning that was agreed on and entered into the individual's rehabilitation plan. IVRS counselors also assist clients with placement efforts and this may involve communicating with perspective employers, or clients can attend the IVRS job club to get assistance with creating resumes and other areas. IVRS realizes that Veterans in many cases have acquired valuable experiences while in the services. Every effort will be made to encourage them to explore their experiences to a level that will help them to reach their optimal level of employment.

Iowa City VA Medical Center (VAMC)

Clinical Services

1. Iowa City VA Medical Center (VAMC) is located near The University of Iowa campus. Its main hospital provides full medical, psychiatric and emergency services for veterans. Several Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) and Coralville Clinic, an annex clinic, are strategically placed to provide services to veterans in their communities. Coralville Clinic houses a primary care clinic, a women's clinic, and a mental health clinic. Shuttle services are available between Coralville Clinic and VAMC. A CBOC will soon operate on August 21, 2009 at Cedars Rapids for their residents.
2. Iowa City VAMC has two outpatient clinics that target veterans of recent wars. Transition Clinic provides primary care and mental health screening and referrals. Polytrauma Clinic houses a neuropsychologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, primary care physician, social worker and nurses offers screening appointments and follow up care for veterans with trauma brain injury.
3. Psychology Service of Iowa City VAMC has the highest concentration of doctoral level couple and family therapists in the VA. It is also known nationally for its research in military sexual trauma. There is a specific team of therapists trained to provide evidence-based treatment for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Service Coordination and Collaboration

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1. Iowa City VAMC has a strong Operation Iraq Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) program that includes an outreach coordinator, case managers, and a patient advocate. This program is established to promote and coordinate services for veterans who served during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Charles Lynch, OIF/OEF Outreach Coordinator, has established strong connection with The University of Iowa through its Veterans Association and Registrar's Office. Mr. Lynch is well connected with higher education institutes, such as Kirkwood Community College and Western Illinois University, who share students with The University of Iowa.
2. Iowa City VAMC is the only VA medical center where a VA vocational rehabilitation counselor is on-site to provide consultations, resources, and rehabilitation assistance to veterans with service-connected disabilities.
3. The Mental Health Service Line of Iowa City VAMC has staff in leadership positions that are well informed of university policies, procedures and services, and are committed to serving veteran students.
4. VAMC Staff is regularly involved in outreach. Further collaboration with the University is possible to enhance faculty and staff understanding about the issues of veterans and their families.

Growth Areas (Where Iowa City VAMC and other University offices can help)

Cultural Competency

Student service staff is in need of enhanced competency in veterans' related issues, specifically transition to and from deployment, readjustment to civilian life, combat related mental health issues, and disability accommodations. Iowa City VAMC has staff members, well versed with student services issues in general and veterans' health concerns in particular, who can provide assistance to cultural competency training.

Public Education

The community's unfamiliarity with veterans' issues, coupled with increasing publicity of veteran's mental health issues, generates misperception of veterans. A strength approach that highlights veterans' resilience, maturity, and their unique contributions to the university community needs to be incorporated as part of the staff and faculty education.

Coordinated Approach to Services

1. A coordinated, proactive approach to veteran's services that emphasize on academic success, wellness, camaraderie, and peer support is likely to achieve success in recruitment and retention than an illness management approach. Women Resource and Action Center's role for gender equity and academic programs serving underrepresented populations can serve as models for this proactive approach.
2. A community center for veteran students, similar to cultural houses for underrepresented students, can serve as a location for community events and a conduit for support, information and service referrals.
3. Trained student staff versed with University and VAMC resources can act as peers and liaison for services.

Access 2 Independence of the Eastern Iowa Corridor, Inc.

Access 2 Independence of the Eastern Iowa Corridor, Inc. is a Center of education and advocacy governed by and staffed by individuals with disabilities. Our mission is to promote the integration and self-determination of people with disabilities through community services, education, and opportunity development. We provide four core services to persons with disability; those being self and systems advocacy, peer counseling and support, information and referral, and independent living skills and assessment.

We assist returning veterans by providing them with peer support and counseling, information and referral regarding affordable and accessible housing, and provide them with opportunities to serve as social and educational advocates to the general community

Academic Programs related to student veterans

A subcommittee reviewing institutional academic needs of veterans and their families and UI academic programs:

- explored ways veterans were receiving credit for military experience and training
- identified strengths and needs for coordination and collaboration among academic units and advising offices on campus
- recommended aligning support for veterans with initiatives providing academic support for returning adults
- identified best practices to academically assist veterans with the transition from soldier to scholar

Recommendations include student, faculty and staff development and exploration of potential classroom issues and preparation of veterans for successful matriculation to graduation. Following are identified issues, existing resources and recommendations.

1. Issue

a) Advising

i) UI Resources/Contacts

- (1) *Academic Advising – Collaboration among campus units*
- (2) *Trio Support Services Programs - Center for Diversity & Enrichment*
- (3) *Military Transfer Credit/Transcript Evaluations Evaluator – Admissions*

ii) National Resources

- (1) American Council on Education. From Soldier to Student: easing the transition of service members on campus
- (2) American Council on Education. A Transfer Guide: Understanding your military transcript and ACE Credit Recommendations
- (3) *DO-IT Programs & Resources. (Disabilities Opportunities Internetworking Technology), The White House, 1997*
- (4) Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences while in the Armed Services.
<http://www.militaryguides.acenet.edu/FaqArmy.htm>

iii) Recommendations

- (1) Develop advising FAQs with institutional resources
- (2) Increase advising and transcript evaluators
- (3) Collaborations to develop resources for academic success; to support transition from military to college life

iv) Websites

- (1) Precollege Advising <http://www.veterans.pitt.edu/support/>
- (2) The Mentor <http://www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/080730me.htm>
- (3) Tips for Success <http://www.k-state.edu/nontrad/handbook/tipsforsuccess.htm>

b) Orientation

i) UI Resources/Contacts

- (1) Veteran Service Office/Registrar VST
- (2) Transition Course Available/Skip
- (3) Orientation Services www.uiowa.edu/admissions/undergrad/orientation/index.html
- (4) Graduate College Orientation <http://www.grad.uiowa.edu/news/2009-08-04/graduate-college-orientation>

ii) National Resources

- (1) Combat2College: Facilitating College Success for Combat Veterans
www.montgomerycollege.edu/combat2college/Combat2College-article.pdf
- (2) Operation Gateway: a veteran's transition to success (Orientation & workshop)
<http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/OperationGateway.php>
- (3) Recommendations
- (4) Enhance coordination and collaboration with orientation programs across the UI campus for first year students, adult students and transfer students.

iii) Recommendations

iv) Websites

c) Educate Students

i) UI Resources/Contacts

- (1) Veterans – Veteran Student Organization VA Peer Specialists
- (2) Campus Students
- (3) Tutoring - UI Writing Center www.uiowa.edu/~writingc
- (4) Tutoring – College of Engineering
www.engineering.uiowa.edu/~engreg/tutoring/tutorapplication.php
- (5) VA Workstudy

ii) National Resources

- (1) Veterans – University of Michigan/Flint website for the Returning War Veteran website
- (2) Milwaukee Area Technical College Veterans in the Classroom website
- (3) Campus Students GI JOBS www.GIJOBS.COM
- (4) Student Workstudy Allowance Program www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/wkstud.htm

Appendix D

iii) Recommendations

- (1) Collaborate with Center for Teaching and Learning to create transition curriculum for returning service members; to increase memory, strengthen problem solving, build social support networking
- (2) Collaborate with campus organizations to enhance communications and understanding across student body

iv) Websites

- (1) Student Veterans <http://studentveterans.org/>
- (2) A Transfer Guide: Understanding Your Military Transcript and ACE Credit Recommendations www.acenet.edu
- (3) Tips for Success
<http://www.uiowa.edu/web/advisingcenter/academicsupporttutoring.htm>
- (4) VA Workstudy <http://www.omveb.wayne.edu/work-study.php>
- (5) For Veterans Returning from War:
<http://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/Resources/veterans.html>

d) Educate Faculty

i) UI Resources/Contacts

- (1) Veterans in the Classroom: What Faculty need to know – Webinar - 1:00 PM 9/22/09 EOD
- (2) Curricular Offerings – Summer 2009 Course
- (3) Deployment Expectation Information

ii) National Resources

Journal of Postsecondary Education & Disability – excerpt from abstract *“The concurrent return of veterans with disabilities from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) of 2008, and the passage of the Post-9/11 Veterans Assistance Act of 2008 places America’s colleges and universities in the path of a “perfect storm” — a series of crises resulting from a failure to recognize what is unique to the needs of veterans with disabilities”*
www.ahead.org/uploads/docs/jped/journals/JPED%2022_1_Special%20Edition.doc

iii) Recommendations

- (1) Encourage cohort classes for some general education classes to help transition into college life and keep in close contact similar to active duty
- (2) Explore promoting top majors via online resources/catalogs referenced by many military personnel (i.e. DAN TES catalog, GoAnnyEd portal...)
- (3) Develop a comprehensive first-year program that supports transition to the university very similar to Student Success
- (4) Create document that explores academic challenges before deployment, during deployment and challenges following deployment

iv) Websites

- (1) SOC Web site: <http://www.soc.aascu.org>
- (2) Returning Veterans Website Veterans Affairs www.oefoif.va.gov
- (3) From Combat to College War Veterans on Campus
http://www.vfw.org/resources/levelxmagazine/0609_Veterans%20on%20Campus.pdf

e) Educate Staff

i) UI Resources/Contacts

- (1) Front line staff – UI Veteran’s Day Reception – November 08
- (2) Administrator Insight – Returning Veterans: Implications for higher education; video online – 7/15/08

ii) National Resources

- (1) Dartmouth College Severely Injured Military Veterans Initiative
- (2) Service Members Opportunity Colleges (SOC)
- (3) C2C (Combat2College) www.nrhrehab.org
- (4) ACE: Injured Military Veterans: Fulfilling Their Dreams. 2007
<http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=HENA&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=22292>
- (5) Swords 2 Plowshares <http://swords-to-plowshares.org/category/iraq-veteran-project/>
- (6) Counseling
 - http://onestop.umn.edu/staff/supporting_student_veterans/index.html
 - <http://www.counseling.txstate.edu/parfacstaf/fac/veteran.html>
 - <http://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/resources/veterans.html>

iii) Recommendations

iv) Websites

f) Military Connections

i) UI Resource/Contact

(1) ROTC

- (a) 85 Army Cadets
- (b) 60 Air Force Cadets

(2) Military on TDY at UI

- (a) Undergraduate #
- (b) Graduate # (Nursing)

(3) AFIT #5 Pediatrics

(4) Graduate Schools

ii) National Resources

(1) Airman Education & Commissioning Program (AECP) and Nursing ECP. AECP is a way for an airman (if selected) to finish the second half of their undergraduate degree and the commission as an officer. The student would attend a school of their choice. The AECP student remains on active duty, receiving full pay and benefits while attending school. The student is provided a scholarship (maximum \$15,000) to pay for tuition and fees and a \$600 book allowance. None of these students from the AF are at UI and probably never will be unless the UI provides additional incentives. This is the same dilemma working with the Financial Aid/scholarships folks on campus. Current scholarships are provided to the general student population without targeting a specific group i.e. vets, ROTC cadets, or active duty military.

(2) CCAF Catalog is on-line at: <http://www.au.af.mil/au/catalogs.asp>

iii) Recommendations

- (1) Broaden advertising UI to include military education offices? Since the Education Offices, at least in the AF, have gone virtual, UI may want to get on the page that lists military friendly schools. To do that, UI needs to provide the incentive these students would need. For example, charge in-state tuition and offer additional scholarships to reduce the tuition to the \$15,000 maximum or accept Community College of the AF (CCAF and transfer credits). Refer to the web link <http://www.au.af.mil/au/holmcenter/AFROTC/EnlistedComm/Enlistedfriendly.asp> to see some of the support provided by “Enlisted Friendly Schools.”
- (2) Develop print advertisement and marketing strategy to contact each education office individually and provide material. Offutt AFB is ready and willing to display whatever material UI might provide.
- (3) Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of College and Schools. Perhaps UI could recognize and allow credits to transfer as much as possible.

iv) Websites

g) Publications, Websites, Videos

i) UI Resources/Contacts

- (1) Veteran Service Team, Registrar Brochure explains UI Benefits
- (2) Directory – Veteran Service Team
- (3) Updated Website – VST

ii) National Resources

iii) Recommendations

- (1) Veterans Strategic Plan to encourage a recruitment video which would extol the benefits of a UI academic experience.

iv) Websites

- (1) Women Veterans <http://militarywoman.org/>
- (2) Congressional and Legislative Veterans Affairs <http://www.va.gov/oca/index.asp>
- (3) Department of Veterans Affairs Education Information <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>
- (4) Wounded Warrior Resources - Combat2College
<http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/combat2college/contactus.html>
- (5) Tips for Academic Success <http://www.k-state.edu/nontrad/handbook/tipsforsuccess.htm>
- (6) Academic Success Video <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/videos/index.html>
- (7) American Council on Education Military Programs www.acenet.edu

Appendix E

Services for Veterans Directory

- Admissions- Admissions Visitor Center-Dave Malott 335-1565/ Tom Paulsen 5-1559
 - Admission Guidelines
 - Applications
 - Course Catalog
 - Academic Advising 3-5700
 - Enrollment
 - Residency- Diane Graber 5-0223
 - Military transcripts- Deb Miller 5-1549
- Disability Services
 - How to file for Service-connected claims- VA1010EZ- Larry Lockwood 5-0217/John Mikelson 4-2020/ Charles Lynch 338-0581
 - VSO referrals- John Mikelson 4-2020
 - Student Disability Services – Mark Harris 5-1462
 - Access to Independence (Center for Independent Living) Scott Gill 338-3870
- Employment Opportunities
 - Department of Labor VETS program -John Mikelson 4-2020/Tony Smithhart 515-281-9062
 - Available Internships- Pomerantz Career Center 5-1023
 - Local Opportunities- Greg Clark, IWD/DVOP 351-1035 or the Pomerantz Career Center 5-1023
 - University Openings- Lyra Dickerson 5-2721
 - Veteran Job Search Engines- Vetjobs.com
 - Work Study Openings – Larry Lockwood 5-0217
- Family Assistance John Mikelson 4-2020/Jane Holland 5-1371
 - Champus/ChampVA/TriCare
 - Operation HomeFront 888-331-0988
 - MyCAA
 - Child Care Jane Holland 5-1371
 - Other State Services
- Financial Aid- Skip Kempnich 5-0217
 - Student Loans- Kelly Carrell 5-3962
 - Scholarships (general and veteran specific) John Mikelson 4-2020
 - VA Educational Benefits- Skip Kempnich 5-0217
 1. Chapter 30 (Active-Duty GI Bill)
 2. Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation)
 3. Chapter 35 (Survivors and Dependents GI Bill)
 4. Chapter 33 (Post 9/11 GI Bill)
 5. 1606 (Reserve GI Bill)
 6. 1607 (REAP)
 - Tutoring Services

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1. Chapter 31- Skip Kempnich 5-0219
 2. Referrals – Veteran Center 4-2020
- Financial Assistance, Other- John Mikelson 4-2020
 - American Red Cross 319-393-3500
 - Operation HomeFront 888-331-0988
 - Salvation Army
 - Housing Assistance
 - On Campus 5-3009
 - Off Campus John Mikelson 4-2020
 - VA Home Loans-John Mikelson 4-2020
 - Mental Health Assistance-Dau Shen Ju-VA 338-0581 or John Mikelson 4-2020
 - Available University Counseling- Scott Liu 5-7294
 - Combat Stress
 - PTSD
 - Peer to peer program
 - Crisis Intervention
 - VA Medical Benefits John Mikelson 4-2020
 - Local VA Hospitals-338-0581
 - Local VA Clinics
 - OEF/OIF Program Managers JanAnn Anderson /Charles Lynch 338-0581
 - Veterans Service Organizations John Mikelson 4-2020
 - Student Veterans of America
 - American Legion
 - Disabled American Veterans
 - Veterans of Foreign Wars
 - Wounded Warrior Project- John Mikelson 4-2020

Faculty and Staff FAQ and Information

Working with Student Veterans at The University of Iowa

***this document is under development**

Q. How do I know if a student in my class or an advisee is a veteran?

A. **we need to come up with the answer to this

Q. Where do I refer a student veteran who needs to discuss their VA or GI Bill benefits?

A. Skip Kempnich in the Registrar's Office – 335-0217, 1 Jessup Hall

Q. Where do I refer a student veteran who may benefit from connecting with other students veterans?

A. The Student Veteran Center, 203 Communications Center, 384-2020

Q. What if I suspect a student veteran is having some transition issues but I am not sure?

A. Mention the Student Veteran Center and that it provides support for student veterans such as a Veteran Advisor, a counselor and a chance to connect with other student veterans. For brochures, please contact John Mikelson at 384-2020.

Q. Where do I refer a student who is called to active duty during the semester?

A. Have them contact the Registrar's Office, 1 Jessup Hall, 335-?

It is the belief of the Veterans Task Force that The University of Iowa should continue our efforts to recruit, admit and retain student veterans. In order to accomplish this, it is imperative that faculty and staff understand the unique needs of this student population. The information below is intended to provide some background for faculty and staff working with student veterans.

Resources to help us better understand the challenges of student veterans:

- *Veterans in College: What Advisers Should Expect*, The Mentor, An Academic Advising Journal

<http://www.psu.edu/dus/mentor/080730me.htm>

From the University of Michigan-Flint website:

Normal Feelings about an Abnormal Experience

As a result of the acute traumas and general stress that characterize life in a war zone, soldiers frequently experience an array of symptoms and reactions during the transition back to their homes and civilian life. Caused by psychobiological reactions to extreme stress, these are normal, expected responses to soldiers' experience of highly abnormal war-time events and are in no way a sign of personal weakness or inadequacy. Further, with the passage time and the opportunity to live in a more tranquil environment, these symptoms and reactions typically diminish. Common symptoms and reactions experienced by returning war veterans include:

- Insomnia
- Difficulty concentrating
- Recurring thoughts and memories of war experiences
- Hyper-alertness (i.e., difficulty relaxing or feeling safe even in an unthreatening environment) and startle reactions
- Grief and sadness over losses
- Guilt (e.g., over actions and/or inactions, surviving when others died)
- Anger (e.g., over command decisions, not being adequately trained, not having necessary equipment, acts committed by the enemy)
- Impatience and low tolerance for frustrations (e.g., civilian rules may seem irrelevant or meaningless)
- Difficulty connecting with and trusting others, especially those without war-zone experience
- Anxiety about being redeployed

Again, the bulleted items above are all normal responses to the very abnormal events and conditions experience in war, and they usually diminish over time.

Challenges Transitioning to Civilian Life

The U.S. military spends enormous amounts of time and money preparing soldiers for war but correspondingly very little of these resources preparing them to return to civilian life. When military personnel finish their tour of duty and return home, among the transitions that they must negotiate include:

- Soldier to civilian
- Danger to safety

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- Discomfort to comfort
- Camaraderie to solitude
- Mistrust to trust
- Chaos to order
- Lawlessness to law

As much as soldiers eagerly anticipate this transformation, negotiating the change is not always easy. The sheer number of transitions from war to peace makes the hope of quickly reassuming a normal lifestyle somewhat unrealistic, and for many, a successful change in role takes considerable effort and time. A particular challenge facing a returning war veteran is the need to put aside the 'survival mode' which was critical in the war zone and may have become a central feature of the soldier's identity. Among the perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors that are highly valued in combat are:

- Heightened arousal
- Being on constant alert for danger
- Narrowed attention and focus
- A hostile appraisal of events
- Not trusting people
- Making quick, unilateral decisions
- Expecting others to obey directives without question
- Sticking to a "mission" no matter what
- Reacting quickly and asking questions later
- Keeping emotions sealed off

While having obvious survival value in combat, this 'battle-mind' style is typically highly maladaptive and self-defeating when applied to civilian life. For example, aggressive, split-second decision-making and action are vital in a firefight, but similar actions back home can easily fall under the categories of disorderly conduct, assault, and domestic abuse. At the same time, war veterans have a hard time letting go of these habits that once served to keep them alive and unharmed.

Moving from War to Academic Zones

The transition of a veteran from combat to a college environment produces a unique set of challenges and stresses. Some of these are observable and apparent: a 'ruck-sac' is exchanged for a book bag, a 'mess-tent' is replaced by a dining hall, and camouflage gives way to school colors. Most transitional issues, however, are far more subtle and complex. The challenges faced by veterans who transition to academic settings include:

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- Developing a primary identity other than as a soldier.
- Difficulty relating to and connecting with traditional college students. Age differences and the experience of combat (e.g., bullets whizzing by, mortar attacks, roadside bombs) frequently cause veterans to feel different than, and alienated from, traditional college students. Typical student concerns like grades, parties, and joining organizations seldom have the same significance to veterans, who often voice a sense of greater maturity and seriousness than traditional students. The feeling of alienation can be exacerbated on politically charged campuses where antiwar protests occur.
- Finding importance and meaning in experiences and ideas that are not life-or-death. Campus life and concerns may seem trivial compared to those found in combat.
- Negotiating the structural and procedural differences between the military and higher education bureaucracies (e.g., knowing the rules and mores of the campus, where to go to get things done, how to address professors and others in positions of authority).
- Making a much greater number of decisions in a far more complex world. While the potential consequences of a combat soldier's decisions are staggering, the total number of autonomous daily decisions is quite small when compared to college life.
- Developing a sense of safety on campus (e.g., choosing classroom seats that allow for monitoring of others and rapid escape, such as sitting with their back to the wall and near a door).
- Boredom (e.g., missing the adrenaline rush experienced in the 'high' of battle)
- Having difficulty returning to their role as children of their parents. The maturing process of serving in combat may cause younger veterans to be less accommodating to parental expectations and demands.

These issues, when coupled with the challenges related to returning to general civilian life, place returning veteran students at a significantly higher risk of dropping out.

Suggestions for a Successful Transition

Fortunately, there are a number of steps that veterans can take to put their military experience into perspective and regain a sense of control and normalcy. Among the recommendations to facilitate a successful transition to civilian and academic lives are:

- ***Establish and maintain relationships with fellow students and college faculty/staff.*** Combat experiences often leave veterans feeling alienated from others, and they must make intentional, active efforts to connect with others on campus. Getting involved with clubs and organized activities can break down walls and connect the veteran with others having similar interests.

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- **Work to reestablish relationships and renegotiate roles with family members.** Deployment causes a void within the family system that is typically filled by others adopting new roles and taking on new responsibilities. While both returning veterans and family members eagerly anticipate their reunion, changes in the family structure that have occurred during the deployment period often lead to unanticipated stresses and challenges. Veterans and family members must reexamine how responsibilities will now be divided and communicate openly about roles they want or do not want to play.
- **Understand that emotional control requires both holding in and expressing emotions.** Contrary to norms on the battlefield, articulating and showing emotions does not indicate weakness and is critical to sustaining meaningful personal relationships in civilian life.
- **Reestablish or find a meaning and purpose in life apart from military service.** The clear meaning and purpose that characterize a war zone is lost in civilian life. Make an effort to identify important values and passions and consider how they might guide daily choices and commitments. Seek spiritual fulfillment through prayer, meditation, religious practice, volunteer work, etc. Faith practices are often an important source of strength and resilience.
- **Develop good academic habits.** Start with a manageable course load and set reasonable goals. Go to class and take comprehensive notes to improve focus on course materials and lectures. Establish a daily schedule to maximize organization.
- **Take advantage of academic and personal services available on campus.** Among the departments that provide services related to the common needs of veteran students are:
 - Student Veteran Center, 202 Communication Center, 384-2020
 - Student Disability Service, Burge Hall, 335-1462
 - Student Health Service, 4189 Westlawn, 335-8370
- **Pay attention to physical well-being.** Eat well-balanced meals, get plenty of rest, and build physical activity into daily life.
- **Seek balance in life.** The experience of combat can make veterans jaded and pessimistic. Balance that viewpoint by focusing on people and events which are meaningful, comforting, and encouraging.
- **Limit use of alcohol and illegal substances.** Use of these substances increases the likelihood of depression, insomnia, relationship problems, academic difficulties, legal troubles and a host of other negative issues.
- **Appreciate a sense of humor in yourself and others.** Humor relieves stress, produces body chemicals that improve mood, and helps us to gain a more balanced perspective. Do not postpone joy and laughter should they come your way.

- **Limit exposure to war-related news reports (e.g., news channels, newspapers, Web sites, etc.).** While keeping informed of developments is important, the 24/7 media machine typically ignores stories of heroism, resilience, and sacrifice and instead focuses on the most horrific images and troubling accounts.
- **Prepare an answer to questions about your war experience.** Most veterans have some difficulty sharing what happened in combat and the toll that those experiences had on them. Prepare a brief response for acquaintances and a lengthier answer for close family members and friends.
- **Connect with other veterans.** Veterans often report that the friendship and support of other veterans is critical to effectively transitioning to civilian life. Other veterans have an intuitive understanding of the experience and impact of being in combat and of the additional challenges that veteran students face on college campuses.
- **Grieve for and honor those who did not make it back.** It is important for veterans to grieve the loss of friends and to experience and work through the emotions that are understandably attached to these losses. Work to live a life worthy of the ultimate sacrifice made by fallen comrades.

Signs That Counseling Might Be Helpful

While many returning soldiers will make a successful return to civilian life, research suggests that as many as 1 in 3 returning veterans experience a serious psychological problem related to their war zone experience. Combat and its associated horrors can traumatize and devastate soldiers physically, emotionally, spiritually, and morally. Further, there is reason to believe that the nature of the war zones in Afghanistan and Iraq may be fertile breeding grounds for the mental health problems most commonly experienced by soldiers. Among the factors that may elevate the risk of psychological problems for returning veterans are:

- Close-quarters, confusing battle environments with no front lines and no clear sense of who is friend or foe.
- Greater sense of unpredictability and helplessness.
- Soldiers remaining with their units throughout training and deployment. This familiarity develops close bonds and cohesiveness among the personnel in the unit, and the sudden loss of dear, devoted friends is more likely to occur and to negatively impact survivors.
- The tasks required for survival in the war zone taking precedence over acknowledging and grieving the loss of friends.
- Exposure to significant numbers of civilian casualties.
- The existence of psychological problems present before the experience of combat.

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The psychobiological reactions to the extreme stress of the war zone environment frequently cause an array of symptoms and reactions in returning veterans. With the passage time and the opportunity to live in a civilian environment, these typically diminish. However, when symptoms and reactions last for more than a month or interfere with daily life and functioning, professional assessment and treatment may be required. Among the signs that a returning veteran is experiencing a significant problem that may require professional counseling assistance are:

- Recurring and intrusive memories and/or dreams of combat.
- Acting or feeling as if a past traumatic event was happening in the moment.
- Intense distress in response to cues that symbolize or resemble some aspect of combat.
- Avoidance of anything associated with war-zone experiences.
- Diminished interest to participate in important or previously enjoyed activities.
- Feeling emotionally distant, detached, and/or estranged from others.
- Difficulty having or expressing a full range of emotions.
- Sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., not expecting to live to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span).
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
- Suicidal thoughts, feelings, or behavior.
- Frequent experiences of irritability, anger, and/or rage.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Hypervigilance and being easily startled by noises and movements.
- Abuse of alcohol and drugs.
- Persistent difficulties with authority.
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.
- Guilt or anger at oneself for being unable to prevent the death of others or committing a perceived error that resulted in harm or death.
- Feelings of paranoia without any real evidence that others have bad motives.

The experience of one or more of the above signs of distress can significantly interfere with academic performance, daily functioning, motivation, relationships, and general enjoyment of life. During the period of their service, soldiers are often reluctant to utilize mental health services for fear of appearing 'weak' and/or negatively impacting their military career (e.g., potential loss of promotions, security clearances, etc.), especially because their confidentiality is not assured. While returning veterans often feel the continued need to appear resilient and unaffected by their experiences, the earlier they seek

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professional counseling, the greater the likelihood that their issues will be resolved and that their academic and personal goals will be achieved. Help is available to student veterans through the University Counseling Service as well as the VA Medical Center.

The Office of Veterans Services, located in the Office of the Registrar, coordinates services to more than 350 veterans attending classes and receiving benefits.

- certification of enrollment
- tutorial assistance
- referrals for counseling for financial, vocational and academic problems
- updates on legislative regulations which affect veterans
- explaining UI procedures and available community services



Helping you succeed on the University of Iowa campus



THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Office of the Registrar

Veterans Benefits

1 Jessup Hall

Iowa City IA 52242-1316

Phone: (319) 335—0219

FAX: (319) 335—1999

E-mail: herald-kempnich@uiowa.edu

www.registrar.uiowa.edu/veterans/



**Information
for
Students
going to
College on
the GI Bill**

The University of Iowa

The University of Iowa is approved as a training facility for G I BILL.

Related programs and services available to veterans include Army and Air Force ROTC programs; Army and Navy Reserve; and Army National Guard units.

Additionally, the Iowa City Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center is a comprehensive tertiary health care center, teaching hospital, and research facility. Referrals are accepted from VA Medical Centers throughout the nation for complex diagnostic and treatment modalities. The Medical Center operates 93 beds.



How to Proceed

Veterans expecting to enroll under the educational benefits administered by the VA may obtain application forms from the Office of Veterans Services if they have not previously established their eligibility with the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Veterans can also apply online at:

www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/How_to_Apply.htm

Transfer students and returning students need only notify the Office of Veterans Services to re-enroll.

A certified copy of your separation papers, DD-214, should be submitted with an application for benefits. All forms should be sent to the Office of Veterans Services.

The first benefit check will normally be received about six weeks after the start of classes.

GI Bill Programs

Eligibility for GI Bill educational benefits can be extended to veterans, members of the Selected Reserves or National Guard; and the children or spouses of service-connected deceased or totally and permanently disabled veterans under the programs listed below. Specific questions on eligibility should be directed to the Veterans Administration Regional Office, PO Box 66830, St. Louis MO 63166-6830.

There are six general categories of G.I. Bill:

- Montgomery GI Bill—Chapter 30
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program—Chapter 31
- Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) - Chapter 32
- GI Bill for Dependents—Chapter 35
- Montgomery GI Bill for Reservists—Chapter 1606
- Post 9/11 G I Bill—Chapter 33

Benefits Change!

Veterans benefit allowances, VA programs and policies and UI services and procedures frequently change. UI students who intend to receive VA benefits should contact the Office of Veterans Services in 1 Jessup Hall (telephone: 319-335-0238).

To ask the VA a question:

Department of Veterans Affairs Toll-free Number
1-888- 442-4551 or www.gibill.va.gov

(links on the left for e-mail inquiries and to search for information)

Mandatory verification

All students who are receiving either the Montgomery GI Bill Active duty or Selected Reserve must now verify their enrollments monthly to receive payments. This verification can be done either by using the Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE) or by using an automated telephone system (IVR) at 1-877-823-2378 (follow the prompts).

To verify your remaining GI Bill benefits

Call 1-888-442-4551

When message begins, press 1.

When message begins again, press 1.

Enter vet's SSN, system will verify, press 1 if ok.

Enter vet's DOB (MMDDYYYY), system will verify, press 1 if ok.

There are now 4 options:

Option 1—date/amount of last payment

Option 2-date last monthly (self-) certification sent

Option 3—date last certification processed

Option 4—general info (current award amount, certification period, attendance status, remaining entitlement period, ending time for benefits)

To arrange Direct Deposit for your benefits

Call 1-877-838-2778 and provide your financial institution's routing number, your account number and the type of account (checking or savings).

All GI Bill processing for Iowa colleges and universities is done by:

VA Regional Office

PO Box 66830

St Louis MO 63166-6830