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**PLANNING FOR STUDENT VETERAN AND MILITARY MEMBER
SUPPORT PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

By

Daniel D. Moseman

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

**For the Degree
Master of Community and Regional Planning
Community and Regional Planning Program
University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

**Project Advisory Committee:
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PLANNING FOR STUDENT VETERAN AND MILITARY MEMBER SUPPORT PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Daniel D. Moseman

University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: Gordon Scholz

This professional project was prepared in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Community and Regional Planning degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has recognized the importance of its student veteran and military member population and is undertaking a planning process to develop or improve its student veteran programs. The goal of this professional project is to present UNL with options and alternatives that could be used to develop these student veteran programs. The research associated with this project is timely and prudent, given the current reduction in military force size and the anticipated return of many thousand service members into post-secondary education. Returning service men and women are a unique subpopulation and have special needs and concerns which can only be addressed by creating new and modifying existing institutional programs and policies to meet these needs. UNL leadership understands that effecting positive change in its programs and policies can lead to increased educational success for the student veterans and military members (SVMM). UNL has created a Student Veterans Task Force, made up of professionals from key departments, designed to evaluate and implement improvements

to SVMM support programs at the university. The options and alternatives identified by this professional project will be presented to the UNL Student Veterans Task Force for evaluation and, hopefully, implementation. This professional project provides information on three topics. First, research from credible sources determines the typical needs of an SVMM population and the elements that should be present in well-designed university SVMM support programs to meet these needs. Second, this project surveys the main SVMM support program elements of major public universities, primarily those belonging to the Big Ten Conference. Third, this project estimates the projected SVMM population levels for UNL over the next five years, especially in the counties located closest to the UNL campus.

The educational challenges faced by student veterans and military members since World War II demonstrate the need for planning and preparation on the part of educational institutions. Program and policy changes implemented by UNL leadership based on information gathered from this professional project and evaluated by the UNL Student Veterans Task Force will promote educational success leading to graduation for UNL student veterans, military members and military dependents in the years to come.

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LIST ON ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	American Council on Education
A&M	Texas A&M University
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
DOD	Department of Defense
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
GWOT	The Global War on Terrorism
MAE	Military Advanced Education
NAVPA Specialists	Western Association of Veterans Education
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom: United States conflict in Afghanistan Oct 7, 2001 – Present (Romesser, et al, 2013, n.p.)
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom: United States conflict in Iraq Mar 20, 2003 – Aug 31, 2010 (Romesser, et al, 2013, n.p.)
OND	Operation New Dawn: United States military presence in Iraq Sept 1, 2010 – Present (Romesser, et al, 2013, n.p.)
OOD	Operation Odyssey Dawn: United States military presence in Libya Mar 18, 2011- Present (Romesser, et al, 2013, n.p.)
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
RSO	Registered Student Organization

SOC	Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges
SVO	Student Veteran Organization
SVMM	Student Veterans and Military Members
SVP	Student Veterans Webpage
SVTF	Student Veterans Task Force
TAP	Transition Assistance Program
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injuries
UNL	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
UNLSVO	University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Veteran Organization
UNO	University of Nebraska-Omaha
WAVES	Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists
YATS	U.S. Department of Defense's Youth Attitude Tracking Survey

GLOSSARY

G.I.:

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, also GI, 1936 as an adjective meaning “U.S. Army equipment,” American English, apparently an abbreviation of Government Issue, and applied to anything associated with servicemen. Transferred sense of “U.S. Army soldier” arose during World War II (first recorded 1943), apparently from the jocular notion that the men themselves were manufactured by the government (Online Etymology Dictionary).

DRAWDOWN:

A drawdown, according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* is defined simply as the act of reducing a supply of something that has been created over a period of time (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2013, n.p.)

VETERANS:

Veteran status is very important to the potential university student. It impacts many educational opportunities, such as financial aid, registration requirements, and even the credit evaluation process for previous courses completed. This definition can vary from institution to institution and thus is consequential to the veteran when choosing a university to attend. Penn State University recognizes the importance of this and dedicates an online page to this topic. They define a Veteran as follows:

To be considered as an independent student, based on veteran status, the Department of Education uses the following definition:

A veteran is a former member of the Armed Forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) who served on active duty and was discharged under conditions, which were other than dishonorable. There is no minimum number of days a student must have served on active duty to be considered a veteran. However, periods of active duty for training, pursuant to an enlistment in the National Guard or Reserves, do not qualify a student as a veteran. Thus former or current members of the National Guard or Reserves are not considered to be veterans unless they had prior or subsequent service with an active component of the Armed Forces. (Reservists called to active duty by Executive Order qualify as veterans.) Since the DD Form 214 is issued to those leaving the active military as well as to members of the National Guard and

Reserves completing their initial active duty for training, possession of this document does not necessarily mean the student is a veteran (Penn State 2013, n.p.).

WHO ARE VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS?

The United States Armed Forces consist of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard. Members of any of the branches may be referred to as “soldiers” or “service men/women,” but each branch also has its own name for its members (i.e., soldier, sailor, marine, air man/woman, respectively). There are also other distinctions such as “Reserve,” “National Guard,” or “Active Duty.” Simply put, “Active Duty” means the person is serving the military full-time, whereas “Reserve” and “National Guard” mean he/she is serving part-time usually while holding other civilian responsibilities (e.g., jobs, school). (Romesser, et al, 2013, n.p.)

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Social Planning as an Integral Part of Community and Regional Planning

The scope of the Community and Regional Planning field in the United States has expanded over the years to include a wide array of social and economic problems (Hoch 1994, 47). Charles Hoch's book (1994), entitled *What Planners Do: Power, Politics, and Persuasion*, used in the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Community and Regional Planning program curriculum, shows how planning methods and education have evolved to include many social services and governmental resources to help people. More often today, the wishes and opinions of the community are being considered. Stakeholder interests and other human factors influence the potential, preferences and policy decisions of many individuals and groups. The word “Community” in Community and Regional Planning is no longer thought of as just encompassing a physical space, but as the Oxford Dictionary defines it: “a group of people who share the same religion, race, job, etc.” This group might be a neighborhood or a village population. It could also be a more specialized group with common interest in development of parks, community education and community services. The student veteran sub-population at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is an example of a community. Members of this student veteran community share common backgrounds and interests, have their own unique language, and are united by a common goal: to succeed through education.

I have been a Planning Commission Member for three years and witnessed the value of community involvement in the decision making process. A simple re-zoning action requires a public hearing, where various individuals with common or varying

interests may have a stake in the outcome of decisions. Involvement by community and stakeholders often increases understanding and buy-in from the group when decision must be made or when plans are being developed.

As a Community and Regional Planning student at UNL, a Planning Commission Member and a twenty-year military veteran, I am convinced research and planning methodologies can be used to build quality student veteran/military member programs. Robert R. Mayer worked as a community organizer and social planner. In his book, *The Nature of Planning*, he said, “planning is a rational process used by governments, organizations and other social groups in arriving at actions to be taken to achieve some future state of affairs” (Mayer 1985, 1). The Community and Regional Planning courses at UNL have demonstrated how this definition holds true for neighborhood revitalization, such as the neighborhood revitalization research project accomplished on the Malone Neighborhood in Lincoln, Nebraska, for the NeighborWorks America Organization in 2011. It was also demonstrated by researching ideas on community groups, as occurred in the *Perceptions of Quality of Life and Sense of Community* study accomplished in Crete, Nebraska, in 2006. Planning is useful in many types of program design and policy making. Mayer elaborated that, by the terms planning and policy making, “we are referring to a formal activity engaged in by some organized group, by which that group determines the purposes to which resources will be devoted and the means by which those purposes are to be fulfilled” (Mayer 1985, 3). He explains that planning can take place by private or governmental organizations that need to decide how staff, money and activities of the group are to be utilized. He also indicates that planning can occur in task-oriented groups (Mayer 1985, 3). The UNL Student Veteran Task Force is a planning

group of this nature, with a purpose of improving educational opportunities for the student veteran population through the improvement of the university's support programs and policies. The research conducted in this project provides the UNL Student Veterans Task Force with needed information to move forward and implement meaningful changes to those programs and policies.

1.2 Need for Education Planning for Student Veterans and Military Members

Planning for the post-secondary educational needs of veterans, military members and their families has never been more important. According to President Obama's Address to the Nation on June 22, 2011, our country will soon witness thousands of our nation's military men and women returning home from deployments to war zones (U.S. President. 2011. Remarks by the President on the Way Forward in Afghanistan). In February 2013, according to the PBS Newshour blog, there were 66,000 troops still serving there, down from a peak of 100,000 in 2010 (Wooddruff, 2013, 1). United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki visited the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in June of 2013. One of the purposes of his visit, according to a newspaper article in the *Omaha World Herald*, was to support veterans' enrollment in higher education. Shinseki said, "President Barack Obama sees educating veterans and returning them to the workforce as a key to rebuilding the middle class and placing the U.S. economy on a stronger footing" (Reed, 2013, n.p.). A recent report from the American Council on Education (ACE), entitled *From Soldier to Student II*, identifies some of the challenges faced by student veterans and military members.

As a subgroup of adult learners, veteran and military students often have unique hurdles to overcome. Furthermore some believe veteran and military students sometimes face challenges other nontraditional students do not face in their educational pursuits and should be specifically addressed. Veterans who served in combat areas may experience social and cognitive dissonance as they merge into the student population. Combat veterans may also return with physical and psychological challenges requiring academic and disability accommodations to successfully reintegrate. Although many veterans and military have the new G.I. Bill to help with the financial burden of college, they struggle to overcome bureaucratic, information, or enrollment hurdles as they transition into higher education (McBain, et al 2012, 11).

The federal government has also noted the challenges faced by our potential student veterans in completing their education through graduation. A two-year investigation by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions demonstrated that federal taxpayers are investing billions of dollars per year, \$32 billion in the most recent year, in companies that operate for-profit colleges. Yet, more than half of the students who enrolled in those colleges in 2008-9 left without a degree or diploma within a median of four months (U.S. Senate 2012, 1).

Executive Order 13607 was signed by President Obama in April 2012. It was critical of some educational institutions' treatment of veterans and provided examples.

Section 1 of Executive Order 13607 included the following quote:

Some institutions have recruited veterans with serious brain injuries and emotional vulnerabilities without providing academic support and counseling; encouraged service members and veterans to take out costly institutional loans rather than encouraging them to apply for Federal student loans first; engaged in misleading recruiting practices on military installations; and failed to disclose meaningful information that allows potential students to determine whether the institution has a good record of graduating service members, veterans, and their families and positioning them for success in the workforce (U.S. President 2012, 25861).

A number of organizations have created guidelines to help identify practices identified as being beneficial if included in college and university veteran programs.

Examples of these types of organizations include Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC), which promotes the “SOC Military Bill of Rights” (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights, 2013), and the American Council on Education (ACE), which displays ideas to make an institution “Veteran Friendly” (Toolkit for Vet Friendly Institutions 2011). In spite of the outstanding efforts to establish guidelines, there is not a single set of recognized, established standards for establishing quality veterans’ programs. Many colleges and universities have recognized the importance of their student veteran/military member population and are undertaking planning processes to develop or improve their veteran student programs. Questions exist about the best planning approach, but, given time constraints, some colleges and universities have established groups of key staff members sometimes called “Veterans Task Forces” to determine the best ideas to incorporate into their veteran student programs. Determining the best course of action is a daunting task for these committees given the gamut of possible solutions and limited time.

The goal of this research is to present UNL leadership with options and alternatives which could be used to develop the university’s student veteran programs. These options and alternatives, which have proven to work in other places, are often referred to as “Best Practices” (SERC 2012). Best Practices of veteran/military member programs that other universities indicated have improved student recruitment, retention, and success have been included. The scope of this effort has involved primarily the universities of the Big 10 Conference but also includes examples from other private and public institutions when warranted.

1.3 Research Questions

Many colleges and universities have recognized the increased potential of attracting student veterans, military members, and their family members into their student populations. They have undertaken steps and developed strategies designed to enhance recruitment, integration, and retention of this group of potential students. University leaders recognize that their student support program content and quality have an influence on the educational success of their student body. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, like many universities, has committed to steps to improve its student veteran and military member (SVMM) support programs. As mentioned above, they have established a “Student Veterans Task Force” (SVTF) charged to oversee appropriate changes to the UNL student support programs.

This project has utilized a client/partnership arrangement with UNL’s SVTF to develop a plan for improving UNL’s SVMM support programs. This effort has included ongoing input from the task force and has gathered meaningful information from literature and subject matter experts in the field. Content contained in other existing major university SVMM support programs was gathered and included in the evaluation process. All materials were evaluated and formulated into alternatives and recommendations presented to the UNL SVTF. The SVTF will continue to evaluate these options/recommendations for UNL consideration.

The successful completion of this endeavor has involved answering four questions:

Question One

What are the typical needs of a veteran/military student population, and what elements should be present in a well-designed university SVMM support program to meet these needs? The answer to this question was learned from research of literature and from input from subject matter experts in this field.

Question two

What are the components of student veteran programs of major public universities, primarily those belonging to the Big Ten Conference? Answers to this question further refined the student veteran support program element list. A questionnaire was developed from the answers to question one and from ideas provided by the UNL SVTF committee. This step determined which elements highlighted from research question one are utilized by the majority of these universities and are recommended “to work” for them. These elements were deemed “Best Practices” (SERC, 2013).

Question Three

What are the projected student veteran and military member population levels for UNL over the next five years, especially in the counties located closest to the UNL campus, and where are the nearest military installations affecting this population? These answers helped define the anticipated concentrations and stability of the potential student veteran population.

Question Four

Which support program Best Practices should be incorporated into UNL's SVMM support programs? Involved members of the SVTF were provided the alternatives and recommendations researched by this professional project. They will provide the answer to question four as they make their evaluation of alternatives and move forward with their recommendations to UNL leadership.

1.4 Methodology for Perusing Research Questions

The methodology used in this project progressed from initial study of general information to application of more specific ideas and strategies appropriate for UNL. Preliminary material which could be included in any college/university student veteran and military member support program was first gathered. Answering question two further refined the list of program elements which might be attractive and work in a public university setting. This portion was accomplished by examining the elements being utilized by other universities, primarily those of the Big Ten Conference. Information from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs was used to develop geographic informational maps to answer question three. Inputs from research and interaction with the UNL SVTF led to conclusions and final recommendations to the UNL SVTF for evaluation.

Question One Methodology

Determining the typical needs of a veteran/military student population and establishing what elements should be present in well-designed SVMM support programs to meet these needs was accomplished by reviewing the literature, including articles and websites, and gathering the input of subject matter experts in this field. Private and governmental sources provided outlines of items they feel should be included in SVMM support programs to make them useful or military/veteran friendly.

Public Sources Used

One source of information was the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE conducted a three-day online JAM session in May 2010 entitled *Ensuring Success for Returning Veterans*. “This JAM session culminated in the insights and ideas from nearly 3000 veterans and their families, service members, campus leaders, nonprofit organizations and government agencies.” The online report from this JAM session attempted to define the elements which should be included in a college/university student veteran support program to qualify it to be called “Veteran Friendly” (American Council on Education (ACE), 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, Title Page).

ACE also provided another key 2012 study entitled *From Soldier to Student II: Assessing Campus Programs for Veteran and Service Members* (McBain, et al 2012, 8). This seventy-page study contains input from 690 institutions, showing an overview of their student veteran support programs. ACE, with support from the Kresge Foundation, has produced the “Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions” (see Appendix 1 to view ACE’s student program elements). This Toolkit contains a list of program elements that,

according to ACE's research from the JAM session and 2012 study, should be included in SVMM support programs.

The G.I. Jobs.com website was also used in determining student program elements. This site is owned by Victory Media, a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business and has been in business since 2001. It operates a Military Friendly search engine that can search a database for colleges and universities based on elements often present in college/university student support programs and provide an on-line list of these elements, organized by college (see Appendix 2 for the Victory Media program content).

One other source of information on what it takes for a school to be military-friendly comes from the *Military Advanced Education's (MAE) 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Colleges and Universities* (Military Advanced Education (MAE) 2013, 2). (See Appendix 3 for an example of the MEA's evaluation criteria).

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) offered guidance as well. The SOC provided the *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights*, which includes a number of statements that SOC believes veteran and military member students should expect in a well-designed college or university veteran student support program (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights, 2013) (See appendix 4).

Governmental Sources Used

Misinformation and lack of clear and complete information provided to student veterans and military members by for-profit colleges and universities led to a government investigation by the U.S. Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. It produced a report, sometimes called the *Harkin Report*, which is critical of for-profit

institutions whose programs failed to help veterans and military members graduate from college (U.S. Senate 2012, 1).

Other federal government sources have recently given guidance by indicating what elements college and university programs should contain to provide student veterans and military members the best chance of successful college completion. Executive Order 13607, recently signed by President Obama, is titled *Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members* (U.S. President 2012, 25861). An explanation of this document provided by the United States Department of Education afforded further insight into the types of elements to include in student veteran support programs (U.S. Department of Education. Implementation of E.O. 13607 - Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and other Family Members, 2012) (see Appendix 5).

Question 2 Methodology

The methodology used to determine the elements present in existing SVMM programs of major public universities involved the development of a questionnaire. The purpose of this step and question was to establish the frequency of use for the typical SVMM support program elements identified in research question one. This instrument was built using information from the sources listed in the discussion of methodology for pursuing research question one as well as from ideas learned from discussions with UNL Veteran Task Force committee members. This questionnaire was distributed to veteran program coordinators at major public universities of the Big Ten Conference either electronically or in person where possible (see Appendix 6 for questionnaire sample and

Appendix 7 for the Institutional Review Board approval). The information learned from the questionnaire was placed in an Excel spreadsheet, which was used for a comparative analysis. This document visually shows the SVMM support program elements that are most often used by universities of the Big Ten.

Question Three Methodology

Potential student population numbers are a concern by university leadership when recommending changes to a university program. An estimate of the veteran population living in the vicinity of UNL was determined. This estimate was derived using Veteran Administration projection model data (see Appendix 8). Established population projections contained in an Excel spreadsheet were imported into geographic information system (GIS) software and further analyzed using buffering tools available in GIS. GIS illustrated the numbers of potential veteran and military students, by age grouping, within the state of Nebraska and within a fifty-mile commuting distance from the UNL campus. Military installation locations are graphically displayed. This projection model may be useful for recruitment planning purposes.

Question Four Methodology

One understood fact of the SVMM support program improvement process mentioned in the introduction is that there is not a “one-size-fits-all” set of standards for what should be included in a particular university’s programs (O’Herrin 2011, 3). The collaboration involved in this step will allow the UNL Veterans Task Force to evaluate the information acquired in this project and plan specifically for UNL’s SVMM support

program improvements for the future. The method for evaluation and recommendation will be a two-step process.

First, the Best Practices identified from the Big Ten universities are compared to existing UNL student veteran and military support programs. Individual department heads serving on the UNL Veteran Task Force have been consulted for evaluation of items for which they are responsible and most knowledgeable. Contact with UNL Student Veteran Task Force members has been documented (see Appendix 9).

The final aspect of this project was documentation and presentation of the final report conclusions and recommendations for making improvements to the specific UNL SVMM support programs.

CHAPTER TWO

History and Explanation of Student Veteran Programs and Student Special Needs

2.1 Introduction

Wars and conflicts reach a point when the mission is done and it is time to bring the troops home. These periods of returning countrymen are called military drawdowns. These are times for colleges and universities to plan for veteran and military member educational needs. These are times to think about our returning military men and women just as the lyrics of a previously well-known song indicate, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again Hurrah! Hurrah!* This song and words were said to have been composed by Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore in 1861 but still have some truth for today (Marwood 1911).

This chapter shows the rationale behind the development of the educational portion of first G.I. Bill Program and shows the adjustments made by educational institutions to their student veteran and military member educational support programs after World War II. This chapter further identifies a few of the many changes that have occurred in the G.I. Bill educational programs and distinguishes some of the special challenges facing student veterans and military members (SVMM) pursuing post-secondary education. This chapter and paper use the words “challenges” and “needs” synonymously.

2.2 Recognizing the Need to Educate Veterans after World War II

A drawdown, according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, is defined simply as “the act of reducing a supply of something that has been created over a period of time; the amount used: After the Cold War there was a drawdown of military forces” (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary 2013). World War II ended in 1945. Drawdowns took the Army from 8 million soldiers and 89 divisions in 1945 to 591,000 men and 10 divisions by 1950. This was a 93 percent reduction in manpower over five years (Feickert, 2012, 30). Prior to this drawdown, a planning effort was already underway. A White House agency called the National Resources Planning Board studied postwar manpower needs as early as 1942. They acknowledged the possibility of post-war depression and mass unemployment. To oppose this possibility they made a series of recommendations for education and training programs to be introduced. The American Legion took the lead in creating the main features of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act and pushed it through Congress. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944. This was just days after the D-day invasion of Normandy. American Legion publicist Jack Cejnar called it the G.I. Bill of Rights (U.S. National Archives & Records Administration 2012). According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, “GI” had a meaning of “U.S. Army equipment.” American English, apparently applied the meaning to anything associated with servicemen. This transferred sense of “U.S. Army soldier” arose during World War II (first recorded 1943), apparently from the jocular notion that the men themselves were manufactured by the government (Online Etymology Dictionary).

The Post-Vietnam drawdown was a difficult time period for the returning military men and women. The drafted Army of Vietnam had been made up of a disproportionate representation of lower-income and non-college-educated soldiers with middle and upper class men able to qualify for student deferments by attending college. After the Vietnam War the Army numbers were reduced from 1.57 million to 785,000 in 1974. The war was unpopular and many returning soldiers faced a hostile or indifferent public reception. The perceived unfairness of the draft and the lingering nature of this war were instrumental with helping to bring about the All-Volunteer Force we have in the United States today (Feickert 2013, 31).

By the end of the 1980s Cold War was coming to an end. The Warsaw Pact and Soviet Union began to unravel and this caused American politicians to consider the opportunity for a money savings called a “peace dividend”. This resulted in a 30 percent reduction in troops; about 250,000 troops were released back to society. In 1990 the United States Military was first called to conflict in Kuwait. The technological success at the end of the 100 Hour War energized the political debate about downsizing the military forces. In March 1994 two more divisions were released. (Feickert 2013, 32).

Today the drawdowns continue. According to General Ray Odierno, the current Army Chief of Staff, the Army intends to reduce its forces by 80,000 between 2013 and 2017. This reduction will be the largest reorganization since World War II (MOAA 2013). In February 2013 there were 66,000 troops still serving there, down from a peak of 100,000 in 2010. (Woodruff 2013) (Please see the Washington Post graphic, Figure 2.1) (Khim, Suzy, Sara Kliff, and Brad Plummer 2013)

Withdrawing 34,000 troops from Afghanistan. “Already, we have brought home 33,000 of our brave servicemen and women. This spring, our forces will move into a support role, while Afghan security forces take the lead. Tonight, I can announce that over the next year, another 34,000 American troops will come home from Afghanistan. This drawdown will continue. And by the end of next year, our war in Afghanistan will be over.” This Washington Post [graphic](#) looks at the state of the withdrawal so far.

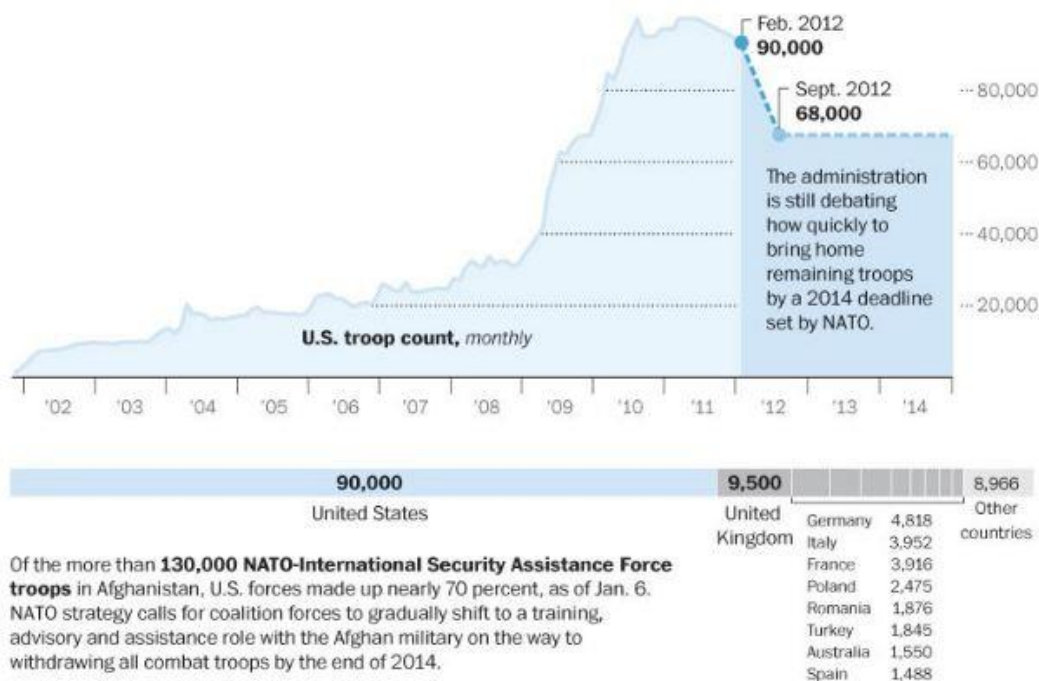


Figure 2.1. Withdrawing 34,000 troops from Afghanistan.
Source: (Khim, Suzy, Sara Kliff, and Brad Plummer 2013)

2.3 Development of Educational Support Programs after World War II

Many universities were struggling to adjust to the volume of servicemen and women returning to college campuses. The following quote, from the *Centennial History of the University of Nebraska* was written by Robert N. Manley and R. McLaran Sawyer in 1973. It depicts some of the events occurring in 1945 around the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Some universities were planning for the change in student population in 1945. Harvard University (HU) was one of the first universities to take the initiative to attract returning veterans who were talented yet unfamiliar with college life. In 1945 HU published a small attractive brochure with photographs of campus life. It was designed for fast reading and attempted to attract older, mature and capable men. The brochure was said to stress flexibility and how individual background, experience and promise of would be considered for each veteran. The public relations advertising of the campaign focused on the positive ways the university was reducing red tape that might get in the way of men who had been fighting instead of studying. The Harvard program was gender specific and targeted men. Elsewhere, however, men and women too were using G.I. Bill benefits to enroll in colleges and universities. Increasing student numbers brought increased tuition money to universities but also the need for more student housing, classrooms and professors. Veterans who brought their families to campus sometimes had to live in temporary quarters like military barracks and Military Quonset huts.

The rapid influx of veteran students and their families made it hard to adapt for many universities. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) was just one of many American Universities experiencing some of the difficulties. *The Daily Nebraskan* editorialized in January 1946. "GET ON THE BALL . . . The registration situation is inexcusable." Comments consisted of long lines and being turned down in the end. During the war years the registration process was difficult for students. Housing problems existed too. UNL had only women's dormitories prior to WWII. Men's dormitories were built after the war. The chancellor was forced to make a plea to house single men in community housing. Housing for married students was very difficult. UNL had not generally provided any housing for married students. Students who were married veterans believed that the university and local community had some responsibility for providing housing at a reasonable cost to the nation's veterans who sought to improve themselves studying under the G.I. Bill. UNL utilized the closed Lincoln Army Air Field hospital area for apartments for married students to help with the problem. It was designated Huskerville. Some Veterans were having trouble adapting to college life. Veterans returning from combat areas sometimes experienced difficulties with college life. A reporter for the UNL *Daily Nebraskan* found that: "They've

discovered it's kind of hard talking the 'civilian language' after being in service so long. They're a little self-conscious about the difference in their ages and those of the regular underclassmen whom they generally call 'teenagers.'" A veteran of the battle on the Rhine River in Germany explained his adjustment problem. "When I try to study I find my mind wondering. I tried to study in the library—it was too quiet. I tried the student union—it was too noisy." Most of the veteran students of this period met the academic challenges and were successful with university support (Manley 1973, 18).

2.4 Understanding the Characteristics of Today's Military

Changes in military culture have led to the special needs of today's student veterans and military members seeking to use their earned educational benefits.

In 2013, our military young men and women have been fighting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) since our country was assaulted on our home soil in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Hundreds of thousands of Servicemembers have been deployed to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation New Dawn (OND), and Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD), and many more may be deployed and return home in the coming years. With shrinking active duty Army divisions, the United States National Guard and Reserve Units have become key elements in our military strategy. These people are now expected to deploy to a war zone for a period of time and then return home. Some will continue to serve as Reservists or National Guardsmen/ women and balance this with the responsibilities of returning to school" (Romesser, et al, 2013)

Our military has been an all-volunteer force since the discontinuation of the military draft system near the end of the Vietnam Conflict in 1973 (About.com 2013).

2.4.1 The Value of Educational Benefits to Veterans, Military Members, and Their Dependents

Questions exist why anyone would volunteer to live the life of a military member given the uncertain nature of the commitment. There are many reasons why people join the military. According to a blog article on the Military.com website, the top ten reasons include: educational benefits, money, medical coverage, career, travel, camaraderie,

direction, real world skills, honor, and just because (Howell 2011). According to reports from the U.S. Department of Defense's Youth Attitude Tracking Survey (YATS) published in *Called to Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education*, in 1999, 32 percent of males and 37 percent of females between 16 and 24 years of age indicated the top reason they joined the military was educational benefits (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 141).

2.4.2 Public Understanding of Today's Military

There are many misconceptions about our military population. Drawn from the images provided by the news media and action-filled movies, many inaccurate ideas exist about the military population and their capabilities. Some people believe our military members may leave the military at any time. Military service members commit to serving for a specific period of time. This commitment can vary greatly depending on a number of factors, such as personal choice, more time for increased benefits, and a chosen profession and the amount of training required to attain that position. Many people living outside military culture are unaware that military members can be prevented from leaving the military if they are needed during periods of war. One such military program was called "Stop Loss" and prevented people from leaving the military and returning to civilian life during periods of conflict (U.S. Congress 2009, 1). Military members who may have wanted to serve their country for a three or four year commitment can be released after serving much longer periods of time. A person may have entered the military after high school with the idea of using earned educational benefits 36 months later may be leaving the military at age 24 instead of 21 as was originally planned. Military members are returning to civilian life to use their hard-earned educational

benefits as students who are considerably older than traditional freshmen. At any given time in the past decade, less than one percent of the American population has been on active military duty, compared with nine percent of Americans who were in uniform in World War II. The understanding of military culture seems to be waning.

What we have is armed services that are at war and a public that's not very engaged, said Paul Taylor, executive vice president of the Pew Research Center. Typically when our nation is at war, it's a front-burner issue for the public. With these post-9/11 wars, which are now past the 10-year mark, the public has been paying less and less attention. Returning military members sometimes feel disconnected from the civilian population as well and experience problems with reintegration to civilian life. While veterans were away people have changed. Friends and family have carried on with their lives and some veterans feel isolated (Travernise 2011).

2.4.3 Characteristics of the Student Veteran and Military Member Population

It is important to understand the characteristics of student veterans to better serve their needs in post-secondary education. According to Elizabeth O'Herrin, former associate director of the American Council on Education, "Veterans are, by definition, nontraditional students. They are typically older and many are technically considered transfer students because they often bring with them credit earned through college courses they completed while in the military, or American Council on Education credit recommendations. While some veterans view college as an obligatory box to be checked to enhance prospects for gainful employment after military service, other veterans embrace the opportunity to immerse themselves in the traditional college experience" (O'Herrin 2013).

Jennifer Romesser wrote an article on the *brainlinemilitary* website entitled *From Combat to Classroom*. The following quote tells her thoughts on the makeup of today's military.

OEF/OIF/OND/OOD Servicemembers and Veterans are the men and women who have served in our United States Armed Forces during the United States Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), 2001-2009, and continuing Overseas Contingency Operations. The majority of deployments have been to Iraq and Afghanistan, although many Servicemembers have also been deployed to adjacent areas such as Kuwait. Nearly one-third of the Servicemembers involved in these conflicts have been deployed two or more times. Deployments typically last from three to fifteen months, partially depending on the branch of service and goal of the mission. Jobs and duties performed by each Servicemembers are so varied it is simply impossible to list them all here. Some jobs may require going into life-threatening combat zones and others may require staying on base providing supportive duties. Thus, depending on the locale of their deployment and the nature of Servicemembers duties, they may have been exposed to combat or other traumatic situations. Servicemembers not exposed directly to combat may have experienced other high-stress situations and hardships as a result of their deployment. It is important to note though, that to those serving in the military, deployments are not only categorized as hardships but many speak of the positive and meaningful experiences they had while deployed (Romesser, et al, 2013).

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides insights about the veteran population makeup on their website entitled the *VA Campus Toolkit*.

According to the *VA Campus Toolkit*, today's undergraduate student population consists of 660,000 student veterans, about three percent of all undergraduates. There are another 215,000 undergraduate students who are currently military Service Members on active duty or in the reserves. Approximately 73% of student veterans are male and 27% are female. With only 10-12% of military personnel being women, female student veterans are overrepresented in postsecondary education. (United States Department of Veterans Affairs 2012. Who are, Today's Student Veterans?).

According to VA statistics,

- Only 15% of student veterans are traditionally aged college students (18-23). 31.4% are between the ages of 24 and 29.
- 28.2% are between the ages of 30 and 39.
- 24.9% are 40 or older.

- 47% of student veterans have children.
- 47.3% of student veterans are married.
- Only 35.3% are unmarried and without dependents (United States Department Veterans Affairs 2012, *Who are Today's Student of Veterans*).

Called to Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education also characterizes the uniqueness of the general veteran student population by the challenges they often face (DeSawal 2013, 72):

- More challenged to meet academic expectations
- Establishing balance between academic and life responsibilities
- Relating to nonveteran students
- Less engaged with faculty
- Perceive that their campus environments are less supportive
- More likely than peers to work off campus
- More likely to care for dependents
- Less likely to engage in out-of-class activities (DeSawal, 2013, 72).

2.4.4 Added Value of Student Veteran and Military Members to Student Populations

Elizabeth O'Herrin, former associate director of the American Council on Education, speaks to the topic of the added value SVMs bring to their campuses:

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan draw down and ramp up respectively, institutions will continue to encounter the potential for a significant increase of veterans on campus for many years. Veterans can bring with them a wealth of knowledge about living abroad, as well as deep personal experience with innovation, accountability, and responsibility. The influx of veterans into our institutions provides new opportunities for the enrichment of classroom discussions and the enhancement of campus diversity (O'Herrin 2013, 2).

ACE also talks about the value of SVM students in post-secondary education saying:

Including veterans in your student population is certainly the right thing to do, but just as our returning veterans gain value from their higher education experience, your institution stands to benefit from their participation, as well. As with other adult learners who bring real world "work" experience to the campus and classroom, student veterans bring with them an unmatched real "world" experience. But they also bring a new level of diversity, unprecedented leadership, and untapped levels of motivation. When the appropriate programs and services are provided, many institutions find their student veteran population

outshines their general population in GPA, retention, and graduation rates (American Council on Education (ACE), 2011. About the Toolkit).

2.4.5 Desired Growth in Student Populations

Some colleges and universities are looking for opportunities for growth.

Chancellor Harvey Perlman of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) recently expressed interest in increasing UNL's student population. In his 2011 State of the University Address, Chancellor Perlman proposed that UNL make it a priority to increase enrollment from 25,000 to 30,000 by 2017 (Perlman 2011). Enrollment increases at colleges and universities can potentially come from a number of resident and nonresident sources. These may include: traditional freshman from high schools; non-traditional students going back to college; transfer students; and other sources, such as SVMMS.

2.4.6 Reasons Why Students Choose and Attend a Particular College or University

Generally, there are multiple reasons why students select and choose to attend a particular college. It is important for university administrators to consider students' expectations, needs, and challenges when designing programs to successfully attract and retain students (Garner 1983, 66).

A text entitled *Recruiting, Marketing, and Retention* lists several reasons why students chose to attend college:

- Improved economic opportunities with a college degree and credentials for a job
- Accepted reputation of capability to hold a job
- Social and family pressures

- Cultural capital: educational institutions provide those traits of language, knowledge, and style that indicate membership in the upper class
- Environment to cultivate important traits of adulthood, such as meeting new friends and learning how to get along
- Development of a means to learn and enhance oneself in areas of personal interest (Garner 1983, 64)

After a student has made the decision to attend college, he or she must make the determination of the best college or university to meet specific needs. According to *Recruiting, Marketing, and Retention*, there is no definitive evidence to accurately determine why students select a particular institution. However, a few generally accepted factors which contribute to their decisions listed below:

2.4.7 Rationale for Choosing a College: Typical College Freshman

- Geographic location: usually close but not too close
- Cost factor: usually select a less expensive institution unless they see a good reason that the increased cost is justified or they have special needs; usually look at annual cost rather than the whole degree
- Convenience: appropriate to student's needs, work study programs
- Low cost of transportation
- Able to meet admissions criteria
- Traditional relationship such as family legacy
- College reputation: academic, athletic, social, or religious
- Perceptions of getting a job afterwards
- Influence from teachers, coaches, and counselors
- What a peer group thinks is important (Garner 1983, 66)

2.4.8 Attracting Student Veterans and Military Members

Colleges and universities should be aware of the unique criteria SVMs often look for if these institutions wish to attract the SVM population. According to *Called To Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education*, veteran's institutional choices are influenced by a number of factors:

- Location of the institution
- Convenience
- Cost
- Support systems
- Means to build upon previous skills gained in the military
- Means to balance work, studies, and family commitments (Mikelson 2013, 141)

2.4.9 Changes to the G.I. Bill Educational Programs

The G.I. Bill educational benefits have also evolved since their beginnings during World War II. Understanding the educational benefits of today's many G.I. Bill educational programs can be a challenging task for student veterans, military members and those trying to help them navigate the use of these programs. Table 2.1 provides a brief glimpse of the complexity of these many scholarship and training benefit programs offered our veterans and military members today.

2.5 Research to Improve SVMM Post-Secondary Support Programs

The unique challenges mentioned in the introduction of this paper and the previous paragraphs that student veterans and military members may need to overcome to be successful in their educational endeavors can be formidable. The federal government and many well respected organizations have recently attempted to identify some of the challenges facing veteran and military member students and have developed guidelines and directives to address these needs.

2.5.1 Private Organizational Research

The American Council on Education (ACE) hosted a *Veteran Success JAM* in 2010. This national online dialogue and brainstorming event brought together thousands

Table 2.1. G.I. Bill Program Explanation and Limitations		
Program	Targeted Group(s)	Benefits
Chapter 30 MGIB Montgomery G.I. Bill	Active Duty G.I.	Benefits for veterans
Chapter 31 VA Rehabilitation	Veterans with 20% disability rating or greater	Benefits for veterans
Chapter 33 Post 9/11 G.I. Bill	Veterans with service after 9/11	Benefits for veterans
Chapter 33 TEB Transfer of Educational Benefits	Transfer of Educational Benefits to spouse/dependents	Benefits for spouses and dependents of veterans
Chapter 33 FRY John David Fry Scholarship	Available to dependents of a parent killed in the line of duty	Benefits for spouses and dependents of veterans
Yellow Ribbon	Chapter 33-100% eligible Jointly paid between school and VA	Benefits for veterans and dependents of veterans
Chapter 35	For spouse/children, parent is 100% disabled or killed in the line of duty	Benefits for spouses and dependents of veterans
Chapter 1606	Reserve and National Guard Not serving any Active Duty	Benefit for Reserves and National Guard
Chapter 1607	Reserve and National Guard With Active Duty support During OEF/OIF	Benefits for veterans
MYCAA A DOD program	Designed to assist the spouse of a deployed soldier	Benefits for spouse of deployed soldier

Source: (Romesser, et al, 2013)

of veterans and their families, service members, campus leaders, nonprofit organizations and government agencies in a conversation about the challenges and opportunities facing veterans in higher education. General topics that were discussed includes challenges concerning the flow and completeness of information from institution to student veterans

and back. Misunderstandings exist about receiving credit for military service. ACE said, “Lack of communication about resources and processes were identified by the veterans as the largest hurdles” (American Council on Education, 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 9). The challenges and complexity associated with financing the education of SVMMS were also examined. Participants identified concerns about how to launch their next careers and how to translate military soft-skill characteristics, such as leadership, motivation, work ethic and stress management into language all can understand (American Council on Education, 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 17). Another area examined during the *JAM* discussions centered on obstacles that keep veterans from higher education, specifically difficulties involved with discovering new interests outside the military (American Council on Education, 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 21). The difficulties of completing higher education with health challenges were included in the topics of discussion. Participants also exchanged ideas on the need for support networks for military family members. Some of the discussions centered on creating support services to help with the above-mentioned challenges facing many SVMMS. Some believe this is what makes an institution “Veteran Friendly” (American Council on Education, 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 5). Being “Veteran Friendly” or “Military Friendly” is often claimed by institutions that feel they are attempting to create programs to meet the needs of their student veteran and military member population. Several individuals at this *JAM* said “Veteran Friendly” has no established meaning and is often used as an advertising ploy for recruiting (American Council on Education, 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 5).

2.5.2 Public Governmental Research

According to an editorial published in The Opinion Pages of *The New York Times*, “Service members and veterans looking to learn more about their educational benefits under the G.I. Bill may be in trouble if they plunge unprepared into the wilds of the Internet. Many reputable private and public universities, trade schools and training programs are committed to helping veterans further their education and careers. There are also predators itching to pad their enrollments with veterans and get their hands on government billions” (The New York Times 2012).

A recently released congressional committee report called *For Profit Higher Education* was especially critical of for-profit colleges. Page one of the Executive Summary disclosed the following details.

Many for-profit colleges fail to make the necessary investments in student support services that have been shown to help students succeed in school and afterwards, a deficiency that undoubtedly contributes to high withdrawal rates. In 2010, the for-profit colleges examined employed 35,202 recruiters compared with 3,512 career services staff and 12,452 support services staff, more than two and a half recruiters for each support services employee. This may help to explain why more than half a million students who enrolled in 2008-9 left without a degree or Certificate by mid-2010. Among 2-year Associate degree-seekers, 63 percent of students departed without a degree. The vast majority of the students left with student loan debt that may follow them throughout their lives, and can create a financial burden that is extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to escape (U.S. Congress, Senate 2012, 1).

President Obama recently signed Executive Order 13607 titled *Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and other Family Members*. This order covers requirements for post-secondary institutions to provide its veteran/military students with information in the following areas: standardized cost form, federal aid information, aggressive and fraudulent

recruiting tactics, state authorization, misrepresentation, refund policies, individual educational plans, and academic and financial counseling points of contact (U.S. President 2012, 25861). The implications of E.O. 13607 on educational institutions will be explored further in chapter three of this paper.

2.6 Summary of Chapter Two

History has shown us the benefits of providing our returning veterans and military service members with a quality education. The desire to give them the means to achieve success through education was demonstrated with the creation of the original G.I. Bill during World War II. Veterans of World War II returned to our colleges with special abilities and needs, which proved to be challenging to the universities they attended. Special support programs and accommodations were needed to meet their needs. Since that time, our nation has been through many conflicts. With each drawdown in military numbers, educational institutions have responded to help our returning countrymen attend college and reintegrate back into the civilian population. Although we can learn much from the past, higher education must respond differently to the needs of today's student veterans. They are a diverse group of students of many backgrounds and races, as well as both genders. Women have become a significant part of the military and have special needs. The challenges facing today's SVMs are greater than ever. Representing less than one percent of our United States population, our SVMs must overcome misconceptions and misunderstandings about the military student characteristics. SVM challenges include: financial, informational, credit transfer, family support, and honesty and transparency of information. The *Veteran Success JAM* pointed out that consensus

was that each veteran is unique and has his or her own specific needs (American Council on Education, 2011. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010).

Elizabeth O'Herrin, formerly of the *Association of American Colleges and Universities* agreed with their finding, saying, "Because veterans are a diverse population with an incredibly wide range of experiences, it is impossible to take a one-size-fits-all approach to serving them. Thus, one of the most important steps that campus leadership can take is to gauge the specific needs of veterans at their institution before devoting resources to new initiatives" (O'Herrin 2011).

The introduction to this paper mentioned that colleges and universities across the United States are taking action and planning for change in their respective veteran and military member support programs to meet the needs and challenges of today's SVMM population. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is very interested in making meaningful change to its student veteran and military member support programs. Administrators understand that the content or elements that universities such as UNL include in veteran support programs can vary depending on a number of factors. These factors include such things as commitment to the effort, including financial and human capital; time availability; physical assets; university growth goals; and, primarily, student veteran needs.

Chapter three identifies and describes the typical student veteran support program elements that have been used by universities to meet SVMM needs.

CHAPTER THREE

Typical Student Veteran and Military Member Support Program Elements

3.1 Introduction

Educators, student affairs professionals, and program directors at educational institutions continually attempt to develop support programs to attract talented students, streamline admission procedures, and support student success in completing a quality education. Student populations often contain many subcultures with differing needs and expectations that are supported by these educational institution support programs. The student veteran and military member (SVMM) student population is one of these subcultures and is expected to be a growing part of many university undergraduate and graduate programs in the immediate future (Mikelson and Saunders 2013, 141).

This chapter explores the typical elements designed to serve the needs and challenges of student veterans and military members. Insights and ideas are presented from professionals in organizations that specialize in military culture and education, as well as guidance from government agencies.

3.2 Support Program Ideas from Private Professional Organizations

Colleges and universities that serve SVMM populations often have affiliations with professional organizations that cater to military student needs. These universities, like UNL, sometimes advertise their support for military service members by displaying these affiliations and memberships on webpages.

UNL participates in this practice and displays affiliation logos on its web site, (<http://online.unl.edu/Graduate/For-Military.aspx>), to include: G.I. Jobs – Military Friendly Schools; Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC); Military Advanced Education (MAE); and the American Council on Education (ACE). This project is designed to provide SVMM support program ideas that UNL may choose to implement, and it considers the ideas and recommendations from these listed affiliates in the analysis process.

3.2.1 Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges

An organization called Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) “was created in 1972 to provide educational opportunities to Servicemembers who, because they frequently moved from place to place, had trouble completing college degrees. Today, SOC functions in cooperation with 15 higher education associations, the Department of Defense, and Active and Reserve Components of the Military Services to expand and improve voluntary postsecondary education opportunities for Servicemembers worldwide” (Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges 2013).

SOC believes all military student populations have basic rights to satisfactory college marketing, admissions, and student services practices. This *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights* consists of ten specific “rights” that SOC believes military students should have as they explore, enroll, and work toward degrees or certificates at SOC Consortium colleges and universities (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights 2013).

SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights

- Accurate information about a school’s programs, requirements, accreditation, and its potential impact on course transferability.
- Access to basic college/university information and fees without disclosure of student personal information.

- Educational planning and career guidance without high-pressure registration and enrollment efforts from institutions.
- A clear and complete explanation of course/program enrollment procedures and all resulting financial obligations.
- Ability to explore, without coercion, all financial aid options before signing up for student loans or other financial assistance.
- Accurate scholarship information, free of misleading ‘scholarship’ offers based on military tuition assistance.
- Appropriate academic screening and course placement based on student readiness.
- Appropriate, accessible academic and student support services.
- Clearly defined institutional “drop/add” and withdrawal policies and procedures including information about the impact of military duties (e.g., mobilization, activation, temporary duty assignments) on their academic standing and financial responsibilities.
- Clearly defined grievance/appeals processes. (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights 2013)

3.2.2 American Council on Education

The American Council on Education (ACE), founded in 1918, sponsors a website called *The Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions*. According to this website, ACE is a major coordinating body for all of the nation’s higher education institutions. It receives support from the Kresge Foundation and the Wal-Mart Foundation. ACE strives to provide leadership on key higher education issues and influences public policy through advocacy (American Council on Education (ACE) 2011, Program Background & Sponsors).

3.2.3 Victory Media and G.I.-Jobs

Victory Media was founded by three Navy veterans in 2001. Their website indicates these veterans desired to create a company that could market the military community to corporate America in a long term, sustainable manner. They manage an online website and magazine called *G.I. Jobs* and in 2009 began publishing the *Guide to Military Friendly Schools* (G.I. Jobs 2013. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18). According to the G.I. Jobs website, the 2013 list includes more than 1,700 schools that represent the top tier of U.S. colleges, universities and trade schools doing the most to educate America's veterans, in their opinion (G.I. Jobs, 2013. Press Kit: About Military Friendly Schools).

3.2.4 KMI Media Group and Military Advanced Education

The Military Advanced Education's (MAE) *2013 Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities* is a guide that compares nearly 300 colleges and universities (Military Advanced Education (MAE) 2013, 2). According to MAE, its guide is based on a questionnaire that takes into consideration the military-friendly characteristics most relevant to the prospective student. This website and magazine is produced by the KMI Media Group. KMI identifies itself as "a dynamic publishing company driven to excellence by an experienced management team dedicated to delivering the highest quality defense-related publications and websites" (Military Advanced Education (MAE) 2013).

3.3 Support Program Ideas from Public Governmental Sources

3.3.1 Executive Order 13607

In addition to the ideas provided by the *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights*, President Obama signed Executive Order (E.O.) 13607 on April 27, 2012 *Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members*. Paragraph one of E.O. 13607 talks about the document's purpose or intent. It states, "By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to ensure that Federal military and veterans educational benefits programs are providing service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members with the information, support, and protections they deserve, it is hereby ordered as follows" (U.S. President 2012, 25861). Section three of this document is entitled *Implementation of the Principles of Excellence*. This section mentions the notification responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and educational institutions participating in the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill or the Tuition Assistance Program. Section three of this order says, "The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shall also notify all institutions participating in the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill program that they are strongly encouraged to comply with the Principles and shall post on the Department's website those that do" (U.S. President 2012, 25861).

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is posted on the VA website as section three of E.O.13607 suggests. Section two of E.O. 13607 contains the suggested Principles of Excellence criteria that will be made available to UNL for consideration (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2013, In Schools That Participate in the Principles of

Excellence Program). This project will utilize guidance provided by the United States Department of Education. This guidance, from section two, paragraphs (a) through (h) of Executive Order 13607 cover the following areas: (a) standard cost form, (b) federal aid information, (c) aggressive and fraudulent recruiting, state authorization, misrepresentation, and incentive compensation, (d) accreditation, (e) readmission, (f) refund, (g) individual education plans, and academic and financial counseling point(s) of contact (U.S. Department of Education, under “Implementation of E.O. 13607 - Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and other Family Members”. in Q&A. 2012).

3.3.2 The United States Department of Veterans Affairs

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs also offers “Tips for Showing Support” for student veterans and offers suggestions to college administrators, staff, and faculty included on their website entitled *VA Campus Toolkit Handout* (United States Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Campus Toolkit).

3.4 Creating “Military/Veteran Friendly” Programs for Student Veteran Needs

The introduction of this chapter stated that educators, student affairs professionals, and program directors at educational institutions continually attempt to develop support programs designed to attract talented students, streamline admission procedures, and support student success in completing a quality education. *A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education*, entitled *Called To Serve*, states this idea another way: “The investment that an institution puts into veteran-specific educational opportunities can have a significant impact on student veterans’ success in higher

education as well as improve the institution's ability to recruit and retain future student veterans" (Minnis, Bondi & Rumann 2013, 215). The American Council on Education (ACE) created and distributed a survey to colleges and universities across the United States in 2012. The results from 690 institutions were compared to similar information contained in a 2009 survey. Results showed the top two areas of increased activity have been the creation of marketing and outreach strategies to attract veterans and military personnel and the development of new programs and services for service members and veterans (McBain, et al 2012, 8).

3.4.1 Top-Down Support

ACE stresses the importance of "top-down support" in building student veteran programs (American Council on Education, Top-Down Support). The following quote taken from ACE's *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* provides the organization's views on the value of top-down support from an institution.

It's no secret that top-down support, particularly from the president's office, makes things happen more efficiently and effectively. One individual in the *ACE Veteran Success JAM* stated that action "must begin with a commitment and be translated into policies and procedures that are mandated by those in power" (American Council on Education. *Veteran Success JAM*, May 3-6, 2010, 6).

In another document ACE also notes:

Demonstrating high-level support for veterans and the policies aimed at helping them connect and succeed will encourage participation and trust from staff, faculty, and the veterans themselves SVMM Financial Challenges and Solutions (American Council on Education, Top-Down Support).

ACE suggests top-down support can be demonstrated, and change actualized, by creating a task force made up of members representing key offices for veterans. This

group might include: the school's certifying official, academic advisors, and representatives from student life, admissions, bursar, counseling, financial aid, housing, and disability services. ACE also indicates, "Critically important is to include current student veterans on the task force and not rely on published material or veterans' opinions from other institutions" (American Council on Education, Top-Down Support).

3.4.1.1 The Student Veteran Task Force

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has recognized the importance of its student veteran/military member population and is planning to develop or improve its student veteran/military member support programs. UNL has established a group of key staff members called the Student Veteran Task Force committee (SVTF) to determine the best ideas to incorporate into veteran student programs.

UNL's Student Veteran Task Force

Chair: Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Vice Chair: Assistant to the Chancellor -- Community Relations

Members of the Student Veteran Task Force include staff, faculty, and departmental representatives from:

- Student Engagement
- New Student Enrollment
- Office of Admissions
- Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)
- Student Involvement
- Academic Transfer Office
- Department of Education Administration
- Office of the Registrar
- University Libraries
- Counseling and Psychological Services,
- Distance Education
- Services for Students with Disabilities
- Career Services
- Student Veterans Organization (a Recognized Student Organization)

- AmeriCorps
- Veterans Administration

3.4.1.2 Funding

Funding to create or expand support programs for student veterans can also be a challenge for institutions wishing to implement change, according to ACE. They offer ideas that can help prepare an institution to be ready for funding opportunities (American Council on Education, Funding). ACE provides the following ideas to prepare for funding opportunities.

Track your student veterans' admissions, retention, grade point averages, graduation rates, etc. The statistics you keep will become important when making a case for funding and support with internal and external partners.

Keep current on state and national public and private grants for veterans programming and subscribe to updates from government entities with funding opportunities. Be sure community members, local veteran service organizations, as well as business and industry know you exist.

Business and industry will view you as a worthy partner when you demonstrate an understanding of the needs of their current and future work force. To the extent possible, get involved with local Chambers of Commerce, civic organizations, and small business development centers. You may find a direct correlation between your proactive networking/connections to the community and potential funding opportunities (American Council on Education, Funding)

3.4.1.3 Tracking Student Veterans, Military Members and Dependents Using Benefits

Tracking student veterans is important for determining how to best serve their needs. ACE points to an important consideration. "It is difficult to serve a veteran population's specific needs if you don't know which of your applicants or enrolled students are actually veterans." ACE provides the following ideas for how an institution

like UNL might track its SVMM population (American Council on Education, Tracking Veterans):

Including a question on all campus admissions forms (including graduate programs) can be very helpful in following up with veterans as they progress through school. The phrasing of the question, however, should be given careful consideration. Not all veterans of the armed forces identify themselves as “veterans” (particularly women, National Guard and Reserve members, and those who may not have experienced combat). Asking “Have you ever served in the United States Armed Forces?” rather than “Are you a veteran?” may have a large impact on the number and accuracy of responses you receive. In addition, many of today’s schools are also asking follow-up questions to include branch of service, current Reserve or National Guard status, and a question identifying military (American Council on Education, Tracking Veterans).

ACE also emphasizes the importance of letting the SVMMs know why the information is being collected. This collected information can be used to inform students of events, updates to the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, and other benefits. This collected information can additionally be used to make initial contact by email, text message and/or a phone call. ACE said, “There can be a lack of interest from student veterans regarding activities and events, particularly at institutions with high commuter populations, transition and isolation were cited as two of the greatest barriers to success for veterans in the ACE *Veteran Success JAM* report.” This ongoing communication can show commitment from the institution (American Council on Education, Tracking Veterans):

Identifying and tracking veterans and establishing an open line of communication are the first steps to addressing these barriers – and in building strong communities on campus. Surveying student veterans before, during, and/or at the end of a semester will offer you timely information about what is working and what is not” (American Council on Education, Tracking Veterans).

3.4.1.4 The Veteran-Specific Space and Veterans Center

Another way of showing commitment and improving support programs for SVMMS is by creating what ACE called a “veteran-specific space” and/or “veterans center” which may include staff offices and a veteran lounge. MAE also agrees with this point. MAE’s *2013 Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities* uses an on-campus “veterans center” as one of the support services criteria for determining if an institution is considered “Military Friendly” (Military Advanced Education, 2013, 2). The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides suggestions for showing support as well. The VA suggests, “Maintain a highly visible office (e.g., Veterans Service Office) that is appropriately staffed with a person (e.g., Veteran Benefits Coordinator) who is knowledgeable about policies and procedures related to the military and veteran benefits” (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Tips for Showing Support).

There are often benefits associated with having a university veterans center. The University of Utah (the U) recently opened the doors to its newly established veterans center. Roger Perkins, director of the U Veterans Support Center talked about its configuration and many advantages the veteran center offers the student veteran population. Director Perkins wrote, “Various studies have shown that providing a ‘space’ for veterans enhances performance and retention, which is the ultimate goal next to graduation. Having someplace where student veterans can sit, drink some coffee, do some studying, or just talk with others of a like background is just as important for us as it is for any other underrepresented minority group” (Perkins). His paper indicated that one of the key elements of creating a successful center is providing as many services to

student veterans in one place as possible. The U Veterans Support Center works closely with many University of Utah staff to schedule the needed support for SVMMS. Director Perkins points out that the center is much more than an office for a certifying official, which many colleges have on staff. “The center and our staff can help with anything from finding a tutor for that pesky organic chemistry class, to helping find part-time employment, to arranging counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder,” Perkins explains (Perkins 2013).

The center is staffed with veterans who understand that the answer to any question they cannot answer is, “I don’t know but I’ll find out.” He continued, “I think the biggest service the office provides is camaraderie, the ability for Vets to come in and socialize with others of a like background. By providing a space where everyone ‘gets it’ our student Veterans can come in and vent or just talk with others who have a common background and related experiences.” Another service the center provides is a computer lab. The U Veterans Support Center has 2 computers with CAC card readers that Vets can use to do research, write a paper, check email, or print out that report they forgot to print the night before (Perkins).

ACE expresses the value of a “veteran-specific space” in the following quote.

This might include the creation of a veterans center, office or lounge that becomes a centralized location for the school certifying official, student veterans organizations, veterans recruiting and outreach activities, as well as other information or student services you choose to provide (e.g., tutoring, academic advising, career counseling, peer mentor programs, disability support services, etc.). A veteran lounge might provide a study area with computers and would offer student veterans one convenient location where they can spend time, interact with peers, find the answers to their questions, and feel comfortable. This space could also be the prime location for VA Work-Study students to be positioned. Natural peer mentorship tends to develop in these locations, which is a win-win for both students and administrators (American Council on Education, Veteran-Specific Space).

3.4.1.5 The Central Point of Contact

The ability of college or university representatives to adequately address questions about academic programs likely has an impact on veteran's enrollment decisions. These can include admission requirements, financial aid, and assistance in understanding the G.I. Bill. They may also include institutional policies regarding stop-out or drop-out due to military service. SVMM may be interested in career advising information. There can be issues with differing types of disabilities and health issues (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 143).

According to the *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* provided by ACE, "Many veterans who participated in the *ACE Veteran Success JAM* suggested that having a single point of contact would help them navigate their college experience. This reduces confusion and time spent searching for relevant information" (American Council on Education (ACE), 2011, Central Point of Contact). ACE believes the college's VA certifying official could be the best choice for a central point of contact. This person is considered a top priority for most student veterans since this person is usually responsible for processing student forms and communicating with the VA on the student's behalf. Other possible duties of the central point of contact include recruiting and outreach (American Council on Education, Central Point of Contact).

MAE lists, "Is there a full-time coordinator at the veterans' center?" as a criterion for determining the "Military Friendly" nature of an institution (Military Advanced Education 2013, 2).

Victory Media, on their G.I.-Jobs website, identifies the importance of a single point of contact for SVMMs. They evaluate the “Military Friendly” nature of a college or university asking, “Is there a full-time VA counselor on staff?” (G.I. Jobs. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18).

The VA has information available on its *VA Campus Toolkit Handout* website listing the skills and knowledge the veteran coordinator should possess.

Maintain a highly visible office (e.g., Veteran’s Service Office) that is appropriately staffed with a person (e.g., Veteran’s Benefits Coordinator) who is knowledgeable about policies and procedures related to the military and Veterans’ benefits. This person should be able to coordinate services, provide advice, advocate, and create programming for students with issues related to their military status. Further, this person should be able to communicate with the college about credit related to military training and experiences. If possible, this should be a stable point of contact that is not constantly rotating (United States Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Campus Toolkit).

“SOC believes all military student populations have basic rights to satisfactory college marketing, admissions, and student services practices. This *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights* consists of ten specific “rights” that SOC believes military students should have as they explore, enroll, and work toward degrees or certificates at SOC Consortium colleges and universities” (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights 2013, n.p.). The central point of contact described above may help with the flow of information to SVMMs at an institution that wishes to comply with the principles outlined in the *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights* listed earlier in this chapter.

The United States Department of Education has provided guidance to institutions for the implementation of section two of Executive Order (EO) 13607 in question and

answer format (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2013, In Schools That Participate in the Principles of Excellence Program).

Executive Order 13607 (EO 13607) directs institutions to designate a point of contact for academic and financial advising (including access to disability counseling) to assist service member and veteran students and their families with the successful completion of their studies and with their job searches. Question: Can the point of contact be a staff member who can refer service members and veterans to these services that are provided by other offices on campus (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Schools That Participate in the Principles of Excellence Program 2012)?

Answer: The institution fulfills the requirement by designating a person or office at the institution that will serve as a point of contact for service members, veterans, and family members seeking information about available, appropriate academic counseling, financial aid counseling, and student support services at the institution. The point of contact:

- Shall have a basic understanding of the military tuition assistance program, Department of Defense educational financial assistance for eligible spouses, veterans' educational benefits, and family members' assistance under Title IV, and a familiarity with institutional services available to assist service members, veterans, and family members.
- Does not need to be exclusively dedicated to providing these services and, as appropriate, may refer the service member, veterans, and family members to other individuals with an ability to provide these services, both on and off-campus (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Schools That Participate in the Principles of Excellence Program).

3.4.1.6 The Veterans Webpage

One common way colleges and universities have shown support for SVMMs is by establishing a webpage for military/veteran students. The survey conducted by ACE in 2012 and completed by 690 institutions indicated a webpage to be the third most common way colleges and universities show support for SVMMs. These pages often contain links to SVMM information and services available at the particular institution. They can also contain links to nonfederal webpages (e.g., ACE Military Programs, SOC, or Student Veterans of America) (McBain, et al 2012, 16). Principles identified in the *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights* and EO 13607 stress the value of providing clear and complete information to SVMMs. A web page can provide a much needed place for SVMM students to go for valuable and specific information which is often difficult to find, disseminated on multiple institutions' webpages. Director, Rod Davis of the Texas A&M Veteran Support Office provides the following ideas for these web pages.

- University website homepages should feature a prominent link to a veterans support page (e.g., "Veterans"), which should be actively maintained as a major point of contact for veterans seeking information about both university and veterans issues.
- Websites or other forms of communications regarding veterans should not be exploited for commercial promotional purposes, directly or indirectly.
- Veterans services offices should maintain updated contact information on all enrolled student veterans and develop reliable and effective means of communicating relevant information.
- Veterans services offices should participate in system wide informational forums including the military friendly listserv and the system's annual military friendly symposium.
- Veterans services offices staff should maintain professional links to veterans support organizations such as American Council on Education (ACE), National Association of Veterans Program Administrators (NAVPA), Western

Association of Veterans Education Specialists (WAIVES), and regional VA offices.

- In all endeavors, the communications mission is to actively share information and promote the success of enrolled veterans, dependents and the military community (Davis, 2012, 5-6).

G.I. Jobs (G.I. Jobs. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18) and MAE (Military Advanced Education 2013,2) both list a “veterans webpage” as an item of importance used to show support for SVMMs.

3.4.2 Institutional Policies and Incentives

The *ACE Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* specifies a number of policy issues that are related specifically to student veterans. ACE reports, “these include, but are not limited to: entrance exams, transcript review, deferral and readmission (most notably for National Guard and Reserve Members), transfer, residency, early registration, and withdrawal.” ACE suggests these policies should clearly articulate for students, faculty and staff how the particular policy affects student veterans in general. They should also include the parameters used to make decisions regarding those called up for National Guard and Reserve duties (American Council on Education. Policies).

3.4.3 Financial Concerns

SVMMs may face financial challenges that can interfere with or even preclude enrollment. *Called To Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education* says, “Students may have varying levels of financial aid awareness” (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 142). Some expect the G.I. Bill to pay all educational expenses and are surprised when faced with the need to pay tuition costs in advance of applied benefits. At

times students may be required to pay penalties associated with late tuition payments and delays in reimbursements. They may need to take out student loans. Clearly, financial considerations are a concern to most students. John D. Mikelson and Kevin P. Saunders, authors of *Called To Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education*, suggest, “Institutions may choose to adopt policies similar to the State of Minnesota Higher Education Fairness Statute in 2011, which prohibits the assessment of late fees or other charges for veterans who are eligible to receive, have applied for, and are waiting to receive federal assistance. It also prohibits institutions from preventing eligible students from registering for subsequent academic terms” (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 149).

The ACE 2012 *From Soldier to Student* survey reveals that, of services added to help SVMs, financial aid/tuition assistance counseling are the most often mentioned, with 67 percent of 690 institutions saying they provide the service (McBain, et al 2012, 8). For institutions wishing to abide by SOC suggestions, SOC includes two points from its *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights* that indicate the importance of providing assistance to SVMs in understanding financial issues:

- A clear and complete explanation of course/program enrollment procedures and all resulting financial obligations (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights, 2013).
- Explore, without coercion, all financial aid options before signing up for student loans or other financial assistance (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights, 2013).

EO 13607 also indicates the importance of providing federal military and veterans’ educational benefits with a personalized and standardized form, to be used to provide information to eligible SVMs. Paragraph (a) of section two of EO 13607

contains the following guidance. See Figure 3.1 for an example of the “Financial Aid Shopping Sheet” mentioned in the following paragraph:

Prior to enrollment, provide prospective students who are eligible to receive Federal military and veterans educational benefits with a personalized and standardized form, as developed in a manner set forth by the Secretary of Education, working with the Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs, to help those prospective students understand the total cost of the educational program, including tuition and fees; the amount of that cost that will be covered by Federal educational benefits; the type and amount of financial aid they may qualify for; their estimated student loan debt upon graduation; information about student outcomes; and other information to facilitate comparison of aid packages offered by different educational institutions (U.S. President 2012,25861, Section 2 (a)).

To counter SVMM financial challenges and concerns, some states and institutions offer financial assistance in the forms of discounts or scholarships specifically for SVMMs (McBain, et al 2012, 23).


3.4.3.1 The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

The HEOA of 2008 “requires public institutions to charge in-state tuition rates to service members on active duty for more than 30 days, as well as their spouses and dependent children. This provision also applies if the service member’s permanent duty station is changed to one in another location” (U.S. Department of Education. In-state tuition rates for members of the armed forces on active duty, spouses, and dependent children).

3.4.3.2 In-State Tuition

Some states have passed laws to provide tuition waivers or reduced tuition rates for some categories of SVMs (McBain, et al 2012, 23). The recent blog article written by Andrea Downing Peck provides some insights about in-state tuition:

While in uniform, service members are protected by the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which requires that active duty service members, their spouses and dependents receive in-state residency at public colleges and universities in states where they are stationed. That protection, however, does not extend to veterans who enroll at a public institution after leaving the military.



University of the United States (UUS)
Student Name, Identifier

MM / DD / YYYY

Costs in the 2013-14 year

Estimated Cost of Attendance		\$ X,XXX / yr
Tuition and fees	\$ X,XXX	
Housing and meals	X,XXX	
Books and supplies	X,XXX	
Transportation	X,XXX	
Other educational costs	X,XXX	

Grants and scholarships to pay for college

Total Grants and Scholarships ("Gift" Aid; no repayment needed)		\$ X,XXX / yr
Grants from your school	\$ X,XXX	
Federal Pell Grant	X,XXX	
Grants from your state	X,XXX	
Other scholarships you can use	X,XXX	

What will you pay for college

Net Costs (Cost of attendance minus total grants and scholarships)		\$ X,XXX / yr
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Options to pay net costs

Work options

Work-Study (Federal, state, or institutional)	\$ X,XXX
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Loan options*

Federal Perkins Loans	\$ X,XXX
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan	X,XXX
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan	X,XXX

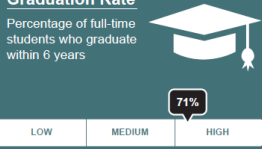
*Recommended amounts shown here. You may be eligible for a different amount. Contact your financial aid office.

Other options

Family Contribution (As calculated by the institution using information reported on the FAFSA or to your institution.)		\$ X,XXX / yr
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment plan offered by the institution • Parent PLUS Loan • Military and/or National Service benefits • Non-Federal private education loan 		

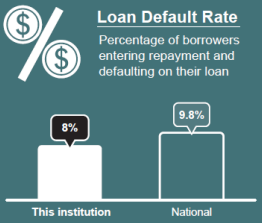
Graduation Rate

Percentage of full-time students who graduate within 6 years




Loan Default Rate

Percentage of borrowers entering repayment and defaulting on their loan



Median Borrowing

Students at UUS typically borrow \$X,XXX in Federal loans for their undergraduate study. The Federal loan payment over 10 years for this amount is approximately \$X.XXX per month. Your borrowing may be different.



Repaying your loans

To learn about loan repayment choices and work out your Federal Loan monthly payment, go to: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/understand/plans>

For more information and next steps:

University of the United States (UUS)
Financial Aid Office
123 Main Street
Anytown, ST 12345
Telephone: (123) 456-7890
E-mail: financialaid@uus.edu

Customized information from UUS

Figure 3.1. Financial Aid Shopping Sheet.
Source: (U.S. Department of Education 2013, n.p.).

Your military duty station is determined by the military, but your state of residence is often determined by your home of record or where you happen to buy a home or anything like that,” says Army veteran Ryan Gallucci, deputy legislative director for the VFW. “Recently separated student veterans cannot responsibly satisfy in-state tuition requirements because of circumstances outside their control. This means schools need to provide an accommodation for recently separated Post-9/11 G.I. Bill recipients” (Irby 2013) According to Student Veterans of America, only 16 states have passed legislation granting immediate in-state tuition to all veterans. In six other states the state public university system offers a waiver or the residency requirement is eliminated for some veterans. Veterans who get out of the military and attend college in states other than their home of record typically face a one-year waiting period to qualify for in-state tuition. Student veteran organizations, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion are among the groups rallying support at the state and federal level for legislation that would make veterans using the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill immediately eligible for in-state rates at public institutions (Irby 2013). While some institutions and states continue to put roadblocks before veterans seeking residency for tuition purposes, others have ushered in programs to attract ex-service members. In 2008, Ohio made itself one of the most veteran-friendly states in the nation for higher education by enacting the Ohio G.I. Promise, guaranteeing in-state tuition to veterans and dependents domiciled in the state as of their first day of enrollment (Irby 2013). Jeff Robinson, Ohio Board of Regents’ acting director of communications, calls the initiative a “win-win” for the state since veterans who relocate to Ohio to attend college find it is a “great place to live, a great place to raise a family, and there are a lot of job opportunities here (Irby 2013).

These states offer in-state tuition rates to all veterans at public institutions (Irby 2013).

Alaska	Alabama	Arizona
Colorado	Idaho	Indiana
Louisiana	Maryland	Minnesota
Missouri	New Mexico	North Dakota
Ohio	South Dakota	Utah
Virginia		

As of July 2013, 13 additional states were considering legislation granting in-state tuition rates to all veterans at state schools (Peck, Andrea Downing, The State of Military Education, in G.I. Jobs Blog. Comment and picture posted (n.d.)).

Public institutions in the following states offer a waiver or eliminate the residency requirement for some veterans: (Peck, Andrea Downing, The State of Military Education. In G.I. Jobs Blog. Comment and picture posted (n.d.))

Delaware
Mississippi

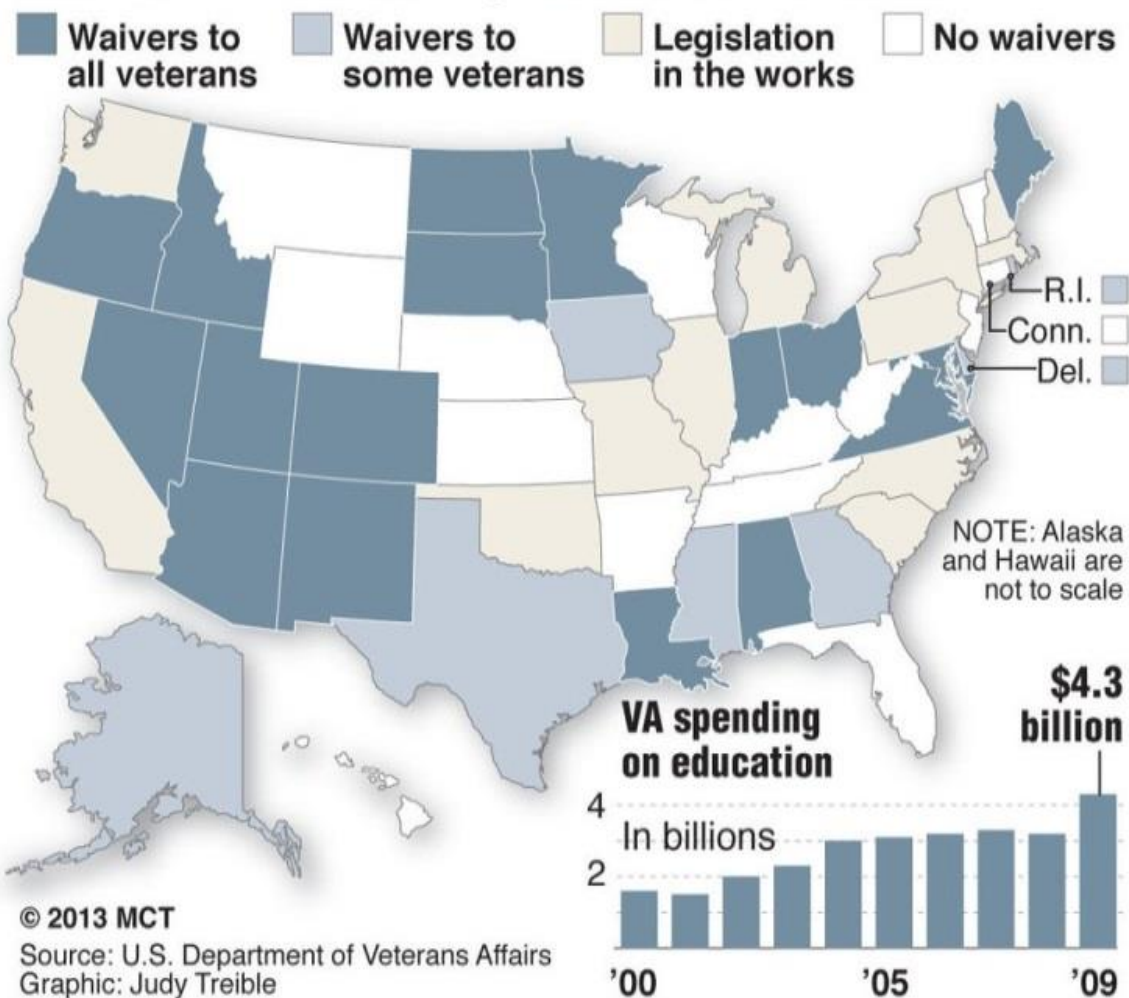
Georgia
Rhode Island

Iowa
Texas

Figure 3.2. Tuition waivers for veterans
Source: (Irby 2013)

Tuition waivers for veterans

How state laws vary on granting in-state tuition waivers to veterans stationed in the U.S. but living outside of their home states:



ACE, G-I Jobs (G.I. Jobs, 2013. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18) and MAE (Military Advanced Education (MAE) 2013,2) all list “in-state tuition ” as an item

of importance used to evaluate institutional veteran/military friendliness (American Council on Education (ACE), 2011, Participating Institutions).

3.4.3.3 The Yellow Ribbon Program

The VA provides the following explanation to the Yellow Ribbon Program from their website:

The Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program (Yellow Ribbon Program) is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. This program allows institutions of higher learning (degree granting institutions) in the United States to voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed either the annual maximum cap for private institutions or the resident tuition and fees for a public institution. The institution can contribute up to 50% of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The Yellow Ribbon Program).

The Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) must agree to:

- Provide contributions to eligible individuals who apply for the Yellow Ribbon Program on a first-come first-served basis, regardless of the rate at which the individual is pursuing training in any given academic year;
- Provide contributions during the current academic year and all subsequent academic years in which the IHL is participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program and the student maintains satisfactory progress, conduct, and attendance;
- Make contributions toward the program on behalf of the individual in the form of a grant, scholarship, etc.;
- State the dollar amount that will be contributed for each participant during the academic year;
- State the maximum number of individuals for whom contributions will be made in any given academic year (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The Yellow Ribbon Program).

ACE, G-I Jobs (G.I. Jobs. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18) and MAE (Military Advanced Education 2013,2) all list the “Yellow Ribbon Program ” as an item

of importance used to evaluate institutional veteran/military friendliness (American Council on Education. Participating Institutions).

3.4.3.4 Scholarships for SVMMs and Their Dependents

According to ACE, the overall availability of scholarships for military and veteran students has increased at public institutions since 2009. In 2009, 16 percent of survey respondents offered scholarships for active duty versus 26 percent in 2012. Scholarships for spouses and dependents for active and reserve components increased from 5 to 14 percent in 2012. ACE also said some states have passed laws to offer tuition waivers for veterans and services members, such as Purple Heart recipients and dependents and spouses of deceased service members (McBain, et al 2012, 23).

3.4.3.5 Other Fees and Incentives for SVMMs

The ACE 2012 survey, *From Soldier To Student II*, revealed that a number of institutions waived certain fees for SVMMs, (e.g., waiving parking fees for disabled veterans) (McBain, et al 2012, 23).

3.4.4 Admission Challenges

3.4.4.1 Entrance Exams

Called To Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education provides ideas about SVMMs' status as traditional students or transfer students and how that affects admission. It says that many SVMMs are considered transfer students because of the number of transfer credits earned during military service. Also, many veterans and military members are entering their educational endeavors later in life than

their college/university student peers who are recent high school graduates (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 148-149). SVMs may not have recent SAT/ACT scores; hence, these entrance exam scores may not be the best indicators of their readiness for college. The *Veteran Success JAM* pointed out that SVMs can be blocked from enrollment by some institutions that are freezing transfer admissions, which results in an almost automatic barrier presented to SVMs (American Council on Education. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 9). ACE points out another important aspect of this problem. The designation a student receives can also have an impact on campus housing eligibility, placement, and class standing. John D. Mikelson and Kevin P. Saunders, authors in *Called to Serve*, share that, “It is important to consider students as individuals as well as the unique issues that surround their lives and affect their abilities to attend college” (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 150). ACE adds, “Institutions should review their policies to help SVMs get the most out of their education” (American Council on Education (ACE), 2011, Entrance Exams).

3.4.4.2 Early Registration

Early registration opportunities can often be of interest to SVMs. ACE’s *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* discloses that many veteran educational benefits are time-bound (American Council on Education. Early Registration). The Post 9/11 G.I. Bill program, for instance, has a maximum number of months for benefit eligibility, currently at 36 months (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Benefit Comparison Chart). Frustration can be a factor if SVM cannot enroll in certain courses they need to complete their degrees in the allotted time. An SVM early enrollment policy could help.

3.4.4.3 Withdrawal and Readmission Policies

Another issue of great concern to members of the Reserve and National Guard are policies for withdrawal and readmission for SVMs when called to duty. They can be called to service for short periods of time. They are also a major part of the United States Armed Forces and are subject to year-long deployments. When the student veterans return, they can be forced to complete the standard reenrollment process or even be required to reapply and be readmitted in order to reenroll (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 143). According to Able, Bright and Cooper in *Called To Serve*, student service members can be faced with mid-semester academic withdrawals and subsequent reenrollments due to non-negotiable military obligations (Able, Bright, and Cooper 2013, 176). This can create a substantial burden because under the current provisions of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, the VA pays 100 percent of the educational benefit only if the SVM was on active duty for 36 months. An individual with less active duty time will pay the difference between their earned benefit and the total cost. The VA will not pay tuition for someone who withdraws from an institution, and thus, if the institution does not waive the VA's portion of the tuition, the SVM is forced to pay the VA back the difference (Able, Bright, and Cooper 2013, 176).

ACE's *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* makes the following recommendation in regard to policies to help with admission and readmission (American Council on Education. Withdrawal & Readmission):

Many schools have created policies to support a service member's commitment by allowing them to rejoin classes when they return without penalty or additional costs, eliminating the reapplication process regardless of length of time away from school, and/or deciding to credit unused portions of campus service

expenses (e.g., dining hall costs) until such time as the service member returns to school following active duty. It is important to understand the institutions' responsibilities regarding readmission requirements for service members as outlined by the Higher Education Opportunity Act.

For those with training weekends that conflict with tests or other assignments, simply creating a policy that allows these students to reschedule tests, without penalty, can be a great relief for students and provide clear guidance for faculty. By eliminating concerns that service conflicts with class, you can allow these students to remain in and return to school while fulfilling their military duties.

Institutions should also consider their withdrawal policies. If a student is withdrawing due to military mobilization (or hospitalization for combat injuries), clearly delineate the forms they need to complete and timelines for doing so. Veterans are used to following orders and completing forms—when information is communicated effectively. Be sure to clearly convey the roles and responsibilities of the student in the admission/readmission, registration, and withdrawal processes pertaining to your institution.

Creating an easy to find student veteran or military page on your institution's website is one way to be sure you are providing this information—and that it can be referred to easily by the veteran, family members, and admissions personnel (American Council on Education. Withdrawal & Readmission).

SOC provides some criteria to institutions wishing to establish drop/add and withdrawal policies for the SVMM population in its *SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights* (SOC Consortium Military Bill of Rights, 2013).

Clearly defined institutional “drop/add” and withdrawal policies and procedures including information about the impact of military duties (e.g., mobilization, activation, temporary duty assignments) on their academic standing and financial responsibilities.

Withdrawal & readmission recommendations were included in EO 13607 (U.S. President 2012, 25861, (e)).

Allow service members and reservists to be readmitted to a program if they are temporarily unable to attend class or have to suspend their studies due to service requirements, and take additional steps to accommodate short absences due to service obligations, provided that satisfactory academic progress is being made by

the service members and reservists prior to suspending their studies; (U.S. President 2012, 25861, (e)).

3.4.4.4 Transferring and Applying Earned Credits

One issue that seems to draw a lot of attention from the SVMM population is the transfer of credits from military schools to colleges and universities and between colleges and universities. ACE names this process the “Transcript Review” in their *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions*. ACE references veteran comments from its *ACE Veteran Success JAM*, which indicates, that veterans are often dissatisfied with the type and amount of credit awarded in the enrollment process. ACE points out that some of this dissatisfaction stems from unrealistic expectations brought on by a number of causes. It was noted that credit transfer of all or most of an individual’s military training is not always a good policy for veteran success since it results in their “rushing toward the finish line” of a diploma (American Council on Education. Transcript Review). The *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* goes on to suggest that when SVMMs have a clear understanding of military transcripts and institution transfer policies, they will be better prepared for the credit transfer process.

Called To Serve, A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education also provides the following ideas related to transcript review:

Accepting and applying earned credits will vary depending on factors such as institutional policies and students’ academic majors. The process varies by individual as appropriate to degree requirements. Depending upon institutional policy and practice credit transfer decisions may be based on the judgment of academic department representatives. The goal of the decision process is to find the “best fit” without devaluing the degree. It is also pointed out, however, that it is important to give credit to where credit is due (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 150).

John D. Mikelson and Kevin P. Saunders, authors in *Called to Serve*, explain, that individual advisors and institutions should be familiar with the publication, *A Transfer Guide: Understanding Your Military Transcripts and ACE Credit Recommendation*. This publication is directed toward service members and veterans and is designed to make the application and transfer process more understandable. In Minnesota, state policies have been passed requiring institutions to recognize coursework and award educational credit for a veteran's military training and service if the courses or training meet ACE standards. Mikelson and Saunders also add the following caveat: "It is important to note, however, that recognition of coursework and provision of credits does not necessarily mean that credits align with students' intended certificate of degree program."

John D. Mikelson, and Kevin P. Saunders also make the following recommendations for improving SVMM understanding of the credit transfer process:

- The transcript review process should be clearly stated in outreach materials, on your institution's website and in briefings delivered at college fairs. Because if it is difficult for the service member to find complete information about credit transfer policies, it is likely that the student veteran may look elsewhere for their educational pursuits (American Council on Education. Transcript Review).
- The *ACE Veteran Success Jam* identified a helpful strategy for serving veteran applicants and enrollees—appointing a dedicated academic adviser to work with military students. This individual, serving as an ombudsman, is able to devote the time necessary to help the student learn about the transcript transfer review process (American Council on Education. *Veteran Success JAM*, 2010, 11).
- Institutions should clearly articulate academic credit transfer policies, and place policies where veterans and service members can easily find them (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 151).
- Admissions staff and academic advisor can also help veterans and service members better understand their military transcripts and ACE credit recommendations (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 151).

- Dedicated advisors are better able to address the needs of the growing student veteran population, make appropriate recommendations to deans and department chairs (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 151).

One idea seems to be prevalent among all others. “The process is not, nor should it be, a one-size-fits-all model. There must be an individualized approach to evaluating military credit and transcripts” (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 150-151).

3.4.5 Accreditation

Victory Media and their website/online magazine G.I.- Jobs (G.I. Jobs. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 19) and the Military Advanced Education website (Military Advanced Education 2013,2) previously mentioned in this chapter both identify institutional accreditation as an item for veterans and military members to consider when choosing the best college for themselves. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) provides the following definition for understanding accreditation:

“Accreditation” is a process of external quality review used by higher education to scrutinize colleges, universities and educational programs for quality assurance and quality improvement. In the United States, accreditation is carried out by private, non-profit organizations designed for this specific purpose. Institutions and educational programs seek accredited status as a means of demonstrating their academic quality to students and the public and to become eligible for federal funds (Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) 2013).

Veterans and military members are often eager to use their earned educational benefits, and may see a college diploma as only a means of getting a job. The uninformed and those eager to complete a diploma can be drawn toward an unaccredited institution (American Council on Education. Transcript Review).

CHEA identifies a potential trap for students in the following quotation from their website:

In their quest for higher education and training, students and the public in the United States sometimes encounter “degree mills” – dubious providers of educational offerings or operations that offer certificates and degrees that may be considered bogus. They may also encounter “accreditation mills” – dubious providers of accreditation and quality assurance that may offer a certification of quality of institutions without a proper basis (Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) 2013).

This is not a new problem for SVMMs. “The G.I. Bill for Korean War Veterans included a provision that required higher education institutions or other providers to meet certain standards of quality as defined by accreditation organizations. The requirement that institutions must be accredited in order for their students to receive federal financial aid still exists today” (Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), 2013) Degree Mills: An Old Problem and A New Threat 2013). CHEA offers the following recommendations from their website: “Because often no simple ‘litmus test’ is available to gauge whether an accreditor, school or program is legitimate, members of the public act prudently who consult resources such as those CHEA and government bodies cite, and who conduct further inquiries. In this area, not to ‘look before you leap’ can be a costly, painful, and consequential mistake” (Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Degree Mills: An Old Problem and a New Threat).

3.4.6 Academic Services

3.4.6.1 Staff and Faculty Training

The ACE 2012 survey, *From Soldier to Student II*, reveals that staff and faculty training efforts have improved among the 690 respondents to the 2012 survey; however, it is surprising that still less than half the institutions offered professional development training related to SVMMs (McBain, et al 2012, 16).

Several sources have indicated the importance of clear communication in SVMM educational success. The *VA Campus Toolkit Handout*, referenced above, highlights the importance of staff and faculty training (United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) 2012, 2. Tips for Showing Support). *Called To Serve: A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education* provides an example of staff and faculty training. The New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities developed training modules including community resources, G.I. Bill benefits, national trends, health issues and others (Mikelson and Saunders, 2013, 153). Responses in the ACE Veteran Success JAM in 2010, indicated faculty training was one of the best ways to reduce stigma and confusion around the student veteran population. ACE stated that training for staff and faculty improves their understanding of military culture and the educational needs of SVMMs and their dependents. For example, it can be used to show the importance of SVMMs being able to attend military and VA appointments which may have taken six months to arrange. This opportunity can also point to the needs of transfer students, such as tending to families, holding jobs, and commuting. This training can not only identify needs of the SVMM population, but also educate those involved about the many assets these SVMMs bring to class. They are often trained to work in groups and with differing cultures. Many of these students offer leadership qualities and a breadth of knowledge acquired from their life experiences and travels (American Council on Education. Staff & Faculty Training). The following quote taken from the *ACE Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions*, points out specific suggestions for university professional development training and establishing open lines of communication with SVMMs:

- Encourage veteran students to contact you if they encounter circumstances that may impact their performance in a particular course. This can be accomplished by simply adding a statement to your course syllabus.
- Veteran students may request seating preferences (back of the room, for example). Do not misunderstand this request – just understand that they are often more comfortable facing a group.
- Understand that some veterans may be initially hesitant to actively participate in class discussions. Allow each to build his/her own level of trust with you and other students.
- Expect the same classroom responsibilities and performance, but accommodate absences related to VA appointments or Reserve-duty commitments. Take the time to explain course assignments and institutional policies to all students (and do not single out student veterans). Military students will be used to following orders and directions.
- Learn about combat-related disabilities, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) but do not assume that all student veterans deal with the symptoms of these injuries.
- Structure your course with the spirit of universal design and teach using multiple methods to account for students who have different experiences, learning preferences and capabilities.
- Most importantly, avoid expressing personal sentiments related to war or military personnel that could alienate or embarrass student veterans. All veterans deserve recognition and appreciation for their service regardless of our personal opinions (American Council on Education. Staff & Faculty Training).

MAE also uses the question, “Is faculty trained in veteran reintegration?” in their institutional evaluation process (Military Advanced Education 2013, 2).

The VA values education for faculty and administrators in their *VA Campus Toolkit Handout*. They say training should include veteran educational issues, potential issues from military deployments, and strengths gained from military service (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Tips for Showing Support).

3.4.6.2 Tutoring and Academic Readiness

SVMMs, like all students, have differing academic abilities. Tutoring and educational support may be needed by some SVMMs, and these programs can come in different forms. ACE talks about the good success rate with peer-to-peer groups. ACE also suggests utilizing the VA work-study students as tutors to minimize costs. Priority registration has been offered to student veterans willing to sign up for weekly tutoring sessions. ACE continues, “While most institutions offer free tutoring services, students using educational benefits (including dependents) and in need of more intensive tutoring services may be eligible to receive additional assistance from the VA to defray tutoring expenses ” (American Council on Education. Academic Preparation and Tutoring).

The *ACE Toolkit* says there are many institutions that are developing courses specifically for veteran students. These courses have included topics such as the transition process, how to get the most advantage from military benefits, and disability issues. Courses can also cover general requirements, e.g. math, English, history or government (American Council on Education. Veteran-Specific Courses).

Texas A&M University recommends a possible “one-hour, for credit veterans’ transition class amplifying the initial orientation” (Davis, 2012, 4).

MAE also asks institutions if they offer free tutoring for veteran students.

Participants of the *ACE Veteran Success JAM* made a very important point that getting the word out about these programs to SVMMs is crucial. Information about tutoring can be the difference between continuation and dropping out (American Council on Education. Academic Preparation and Tutoring).

3.4.7 Student Services: Disability, Health, and Mental Health

3.4.7.1 Disability Services

Called To Serve: A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education talks about the changes in the student veterans' disability experiences. Many more veterans today are surviving their war injuries. The Vietnam War had an injury-to-casualty rate of three to one whereas the rate for veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was sixteen to one (Kraus and Rattray, 2013, 117). According to Kraus and Rattray, two million veterans are expected to return from war and enroll in higher education. Of these men and women, one quarter are expected to have some type of disability, and they are twice as likely as nonveteran student to have at least one disability (Kraus and Rattray 2013, 118). Disabilities can come in many forms. They can include highly visible injuries, such as loss of limbs, but can also include hidden and invisible injuries. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are among the more talked about and often missed and under-diagnosed disabilities today (Kraus and Rattray 2013, 117). A wide variety of symptoms from these health conditions include: hearing loss, chronic pain, disrupted sleep, insomnia, nightmares, anger, depression, flashbacks, difficulty focusing, loneliness and hyper vigilance. Some of these can have an impact on students' education (Kraus and Rattray 2013, 117).

The "Disability Services" section of the *ACE Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* indicates that some veterans who have disabilities or who were wounded during their military service often do not identify with the word "disabled" and this could

possibly interfere with their potential in school. ACE points out that there can be differing reasons for this lack of acknowledgment and reluctance to seek help. Some injuries received are noncombat related, and many can be reluctant to talk about them because of perceived shame. Some SVMMs have a limited understanding of academic support programs in areas concerning disability. Others may not have received a disability rating from the VA and believe this disqualifies them from institutional help (American Council on Education. Disability Services). Still other SVMMs are concerned about financial obligations associated with using institutional services.

3.4.7.2 Institutional Health Services

Amanda Kraus and Nicholas A. Rattray, authors of *Called To Serve*, emphasize the importance that higher education professionals be aware of these potential health issues (Kraus and Rattray 2013, 119).

The *ACE Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* provides the following guidance for reaching student veterans about health care services and making sure the campus health care center is “veteran friendly” (American Council on Education. Health Services):

- Display materials in your office about the campus and community health services available to veterans, including material from the VA. Some Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom combat veterans are unaware that they can receive cost-free medical care for any condition related to their service in the Iraq/Afghanistan Theater for five years after the date of their discharge or release.
- Invite veterans’ health care providers to campus for a “meet and greet.” Inquire about staff training on military cultural competence for health care providers. When you consider that less than one percent of the population has served in the Armed Forces since 9/11, being able to understand, respect, and

appreciate military service, especially with a health care lens, is very important.

- Communicate regularly with VA representatives to be sure center staffs are up-to-date on potential emergency and non-emergency referrals to a local VA hospital.
- Download and use the Military Health-History pocket card, which details unique health risks, issues of concern, and general questions to help staff help a veteran feel at ease (American Council on Education. Health Services).
- The *ACE Toolkit* also offers some suggestions to consider when developing institutional programs concerning mental health issues (American Council on Education. Mental Health Services).

3.4.7.3 Mental Health Services

Mental health services are also very critical for returning student veterans who may experience difficulties adjusting, focusing and sleeping. ACE suggests:

- Offer a variety of options, methods and services to SVMMs. Some veterans will find support groups useful where others dislike group events and prefer private settings.
- It may be useful to provide education to counselors on military terminology and culture.
- Some institutions rely on Masters of Social Work Students to provide help.
- The VA will often have resources available and can be partnered with to ensure the right options are available for SVMMs (American Council on Education. Mental Health Services).

The *VA Campus Toolkit Handout* proposes that intuitions' health and counseling services should provide information on counseling, advising and health care, to include, training in how staff and faculty can refer SVMMs to available services (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Tips for Showing Support).

Texas A&M University recommends the following suggestions for its health and counseling services (Davis, 2012, 4).

- Universities should designate a veteran-oriented mental health counselor in the campus counseling or health center to respond to student veterans in need.

- Oriented mental health counselor in the campus counseling or health center to respond to student veterans as needed.
- Crisis hotline numbers for veterans should be clearly and prominently posted in campus facilities and online.
- Campus clinic should create and maintain active contacts with external counseling services available to veterans, to specifically include crisis, family and marital counseling.
- Where possible, clinics should provide restricted access private, on-campus counseling rooms for veterans and family members on an appointment basis.
- Student veterans should be informed of veteran health care services during orientation.
- The A&M System's "TexVet" program is recommended as a primary reference for assistance for clinic staff and students. Its database provides a connection to an extensive network of agencies and service providers ranging from health to jobs to housing (Davis 2012, 4).

From Soldier to Student II demonstrates the importance of offering counseling services to veterans and military members. It reports, "Eighty-four percent of institutions offering services to veterans and military members provided counseling to assist these students with PTSD. Few offered staff specifically trained for SVMMS with physical disabilities at 55 percent and 35 percent for conditions like brain injuries" (McBain, et al 2012, 8).

3.4.8 Career Services

The ACE *Veteran Success JAM* participants identified the important contributions institutional career services plays in the educational success of SVMMS. Services provided, such as resume writing assistance, interviewing skills training, and job search assistance can be valuable, as is translating military acquired skills and leadership abilities into language human resource representatives will recognize. ACE points out that the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is designed to fill this need for departing military members, but SVMMS often question the effectiveness of the class due to issues

with timing, methodology and limited access to class (American Council on Education. Career Services). Career services personnel also provide needed help in seeking out mentors, applying for internships, and knowing how to interact at career fairs. ACE's *Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions* advances the following ideas (American Council on Education. Career Services).

- Consider offering networking/interviewing workshops, which can help SVMMs connect with resources in the local community. This can provide access to mentors and internship opportunities.
- Stress the reasons why SVMMs make exceptional employees when interacting with local businesses. Keep track of student veteran job placement statistics and success stories.
- Connect with the local One-Stop Career Center, local Department of Labor veteran employment representatives, and disabled veterans outreach program professionals to let them know you work with student veterans and let them know of the numbers of SVMMs enrolling and graduating.
- Request to be on recruitment notification lists for student veterans.
- Consider forming partnerships with local TAP training professionals. Providing briefings at local TAP seminars could be a good institution outreach event. TAP instructors could also be utilized to provide training to institution staff and faculty (American Council on Education. Career Services).

3.4.9 Campus Life and Ideas to Engage Student Veterans

It is generally understood that post-secondary education is made up of more than just classroom activities. ACE states that SVMMs want to be successful in their educational pursuits and feel at home academically, socially, and with campus life, but that they sometimes do not find a sense of belonging (American Council on Education. Engaging Student Veterans). Daniel M. DeSawal, author in *Called To Serve*, states that there are differences in social expectations between military and contemporary college environments. Military organizations have a clear vertical alignment for both authority and social orders. DeSawal says, "There is a clear distinction of those who belong to a

group and those who are outside the group. There are also norms and expectations which clearly communicate how individuals are to spend their personal and work time” (DeSawal 2013, 76). This is in contrast to modern college activities. “Contemporary college learning outcomes focus on cognitive maturity, integrated identity and mature relationships. Although it is expected that students within collegiate environments will work toward these goals, the outcomes may not be directly communicated as expectations” (DeSawal 2013, 76). DeSawal goes on to say, “Research indicates that veterans are less likely than nonveterans to talk with faculty members or participate in out of class activities, which may make sense given the differences in cultures” (DeSawal 2013, 76). Mr. DeSawal makes a good point in light of these differences in culture. “Campus administrators need to be cognizant of the transitions that student veterans and service members face when moving from military culture to the campus culture and acknowledge they may be experiencing both at the same time” (DeSawal 2013, 75).

3.4.9.1 Veteran Specific Orientations

Many sources have alluded to the idea that it is important to make SVMMs feel welcome and that this can aid in their transition and future success in education. Many of those who responded in ACE’s *Veteran Success JAM* felt that specific orientations, often called breakout sessions, were a good sign that the college or university understood about some SVMM needs and challenges. These breakout sessions can be a good way of making SVMMs aware of existing institutional programs designed specifically for them, such as mentorship and work study opportunities and even unique housing options. These SVMM orientations can highlight key points of contact, important locations, and ways to become engaged socially with the general student population. ACE also identified that

some schools were offering pre-advising for students who had not received educational advisement exiting the military. Differing types of online orientations are being used as well, according to ACE (American Council on Education. Student Veteran Orientations).

Engagement of SVMs is promoted by Texas A&M University. They assert, “Success of student veterans is heavily influenced by their sense of well-being, involvement, vet-to-vet camaraderie, and also inclusion, acceptance, and participation in general university life” (Davis 2012, 2-3). They add the following ideas for attracting and engaging student veterans and military members.

- To that end, each campus will sponsor and actively nurture a campus Student Veterans Organization, and support other activities consistent with veteran success goals.
- Each campus will provide a representative to the system Student Veteran Advisory Committee.
- Peer-to-peer counseling networks are highly recommended.
- Student veteran-community-building initiatives may include social activities such as informal receptions and get-togethers, dinners or luncheons for guest speakers or campus awards, fund-raising events or community service projects, and vet-community social media engagement.
- The SALUTE academic honors program is adaptable to any campus (Davis 2012, 2-3).

The *VA Campus Toolkit Handout* also encourages faculty to urge SVMs to become involved in campus groups and activities (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. VA Campus Toolkit).

3.4.9.2 Student Veteran Organizations

Victory Media/G.I.-Jobs (G.I. Jobs. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18) and MAE (Military Advanced Education 2013, 2) both survey their institutional participants to determine if a veteran’s organization is sponsored at their schools. Many

of the ideas provided above to encourage SVMM engagement involve members of a university-supported student veteran organization. *The ACE Veteran Success JAM* found that veterans on campus are often interested in connecting with other student veterans and military members on campus. Some indicated the value they placed on the peer-to-peer interaction an SVO can bring (American Council on Education. Student Veteran Organizations).

3.4.9.3 Mentoring Programs

Mentoring programs have been listed as a great contributing factor to SVMMs being welcomed to institutions, transitioning well, staying in college, and succeeding in education. Mentoring programs can be made a way of engaging new SVMMs with those who are more senior in the educational system and community (Mikelson and Saunders 2013, 153). John D. Mikelson and Kevin P. Saunder, authors in *Called to Serve* point out that a veteran meeting space can bring SVMMs together for gatherings, sponsorships of student clubs, and networking (Mikelson and Saunders 2013, 153).

MAE identifies Vet-to-Vet mentoring as being valuable in its Support Services section (Military Advanced Education 2013, 2).

ACE emphasizes that peer-to-peer mentoring has been very successful in places for SVMMs. If it occurs in a central veteran meeting area, mentioned above, it can be done on a walk-in basis with no appointment needed and very little cost (American Council on Education. Academic Preparation and Tutoring). Mentoring programs can also take place between SVMMs and faculty and staff volunteers from an institution. In this case, students are made aware of a mentorship pool of individuals who may be

contacted for various types of assistance. In some instances individual mentors may initiate the first step and contact students in the form of an introduction and welcome.

The VA is also very interested in the success that mentorship and sponsor programs have attained. The author of this paper was provided an opportunity to talk briefly with U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. The Secretary's concern for veterans' educational success was very apparent as he spoke. He said that in spite of having our VA educational benefits, he could not attend our lectures, find suitable housing, be on time to class, take our tests and many other efforts we must go through to reach graduation and educational success. He seemed to believe strongly in the teamwork concept and gave the example of how military men and women run in formation at the pace of the slowest individual and how no one is left behind. He suggested we apply this behavior in helping our fellow student veterans succeed and graduate. He pointed out how comrades often support each other when faced with challenging issues and pull each other through. Things as simple as getting a friend out of bed to make it to class or a meeting are important. He provided a further example that in the military system, service members are provided a sponsor when they move and arrive at a new duty assignment. This sponsor answers questions and assists the service member until he or she is accustomed to the new system or way of doing things. I believe the Secretary felt that this teamwork approach could be applied to greeting UNL's new student veterans and ensuring that they are acquainted with their new surroundings. He acknowledged how the first year can be the most difficult time when getting accustomed to a new system. He mentioned the importance of students taking care of other students, one on one, and that we should make the effort to take care of each other's needs (Shinseki 2013).

3.4.9.4 VA Work-Study Program

One VA Work Study program is called *Earn While You Learn*. This program is available to students pursuing higher education on three-quarter to full-time status and is covered under participation in the VA Benefit Program. Work Study students can work at a variety of VA-related duties listed below (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Work Study Program):

- The preparation and processing of necessary papers and other documents at educational institutions
- Any activity at a VA facility
- Any activity at Department of Defense, Coast Guard, or National Guard facilities relating to the administration of Chapters 1606 or 1607 of Title 10 U.S.C.
- Any activity of a State Veterans agency related to providing assistance to Veterans in obtaining any benefit under Title 38, U.S.C. or the laws of the State
- A position working in a Center for Excellence for Veteran Student Success, as established under 20 U.S.C. 1161t, which purpose is to support and coordinate academic, financial, physical, and social needs of Veteran students
- A position working in a cooperative program carried out jointly by the VA and an Institution of Higher Learning
- Any veterans-related position in an Institution of Higher Learning, such as:
 - Assisting with dissemination of general information regarding Veteran benefits and/or services
 - Providing assistance to Veteran students with general inquiries about Veteran benefits via phone, email, or in person
 - Maintaining and organizing veteran-related files (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Work Study Program).

3.4.9.5 Housing Policies

Housing specifications for SVMs are often much different than typical incoming students at a college or university. As previously mentioned, student veterans and students associated with military service are often older, sometimes have families, and frequently have vastly different life experiences and expectations, which make typical residence hall life unappealing. Institutions wishing to attract SVMs to their

population often try to accommodate SVMM wishes by adding targeted housing policies. Some institutions have opened up their graduate housing to SVMMs. There are colleges that have allocated a residence hall floor to veteran students only. Many institutions waive any on-campus living requirements for veterans (American Council on Education. Housing Policies).

3.4.10 Types of Courses Offered

Student veterans and military members show interest in varying types of course delivery. Distance learning, alternative, online, and hybrid courses can be appealing to SVMMs if they are subject to deployments and frequently drawn away from college by military duties. In addition, Danielle M. DeSawal, author from *Called To Serve*, believes the appeal of distance learning to veterans could be connected to their perception that these types of distance programs are more structured and have a clearer path to completion. They are also appealing to veteran students who do not wish to be around the inappropriate questions related to military experiences which can accompany campus environments (DeSawal 2013, 76-78). SVMMs living near military installations can be interested in night courses taught by college faculty due to daily work requirements. Victory Media/G.I. Jobs (G.I. Jobs. 2013 Guide to Military Friendly Schools, 18) and MAE (Military Advanced Education (MAE) 2013, 2) determine the rating of their member schools based on this flexibility of class delivery methods.

3.5 Chapter Three Summary

This chapter has identified many potential challenges faced by SVMMS seeking to use their earned VA educational benefits in post-secondary education. Typical institutional student support program ideas and elements have also been identified in this chapter. If they were implemented, these support program ideas could help SVMMS attending to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln achieve educational success. As previously mentioned, there is not a generic SVMMS support program complement that will work at every institution. Finding the best blend of support program elements to meet UNL's needs requires targeted internal research and review. Chapter four and specifically, Table 4.1, provides a listing of key elements which were used in this project to develop a questionnaire for gathering information from other members of the Big Ten Conference. Summaries of responses received from the schools surveyed are also included in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Comparison of Elements Used in Big Ten University Student Veteran Support Programs

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on information gathered from student veteran support programs that are members of the Big Ten Conference. The surveyed universities include all of the Big Ten universities as follows: Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Penn State University, Purdue University, Rutgers University, the University of Illinois, Indiana University, the University of Iowa, the University of Minnesota, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, the University of Maryland, and the University of Wisconsin.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha has also been included in this process due to the many good examples its program provides.

Many of these universities have well established student veteran support programs. Given the many items which could be included in plan to improve UNL's SVMM support programs, it is prudent to identify support program elements and ideas that are being used at other universities. A questionnaire was developed from the ideas put forth in chapter three. This questionnaire was distributed to veteran program coordinators and staff at universities, primarily those belonging to the Big Ten Conference. The answers provided by this effort were used to determine which ideas and program elements identified in chapter three of this paper are utilized by the majority of these universities and are recommended "to work" for them. These elements will be

deemed “Best Practices” (State Education Resource Center, Best practices in education).

These elements and ideas that are used by other Big Ten universities and UNL are displayed in tables that comparatively illustrate differences and similarities among the Big Ten Universities. Table 4.1 provides a listing of key elements, discovered by the research of the previous chapter, some of which were used to develop the Big Ten Conference questionnaire. See appendix G for the questionnaire used to collect information about the Big Ten university programs.

4.2 Typical Elements Included in SVMM Educational Institution Support Programs

Table 4.1 Typical Elements Included in SVMM Educational Institution Support Programs	
Top Down Support	Staff and Faculty Training
Veteran Task Force	Academic Preparation and Tutoring
Funding	Disability Services
Identification and Tracking SVMMs	Health Services
Veteran Specific Space	Mental Health Services
Central Point of Contact	Career Services
Veteran Web Page	Student Engagement Programs
Policies	Veteran Specific Orientation
In State Tuition Rates	Supported Student Veteran Organization
Yellow Ribbon Program	Mentoring Programs
Scholarships for SVMM and Dependents	VA Work Study Program
Admission / Readmission Policies	Housing Options
Entrance Exam Policies	Transfer of Earned Credit Policies
Early Registration	Institution Accreditation

Source: Chapter Three: ideas provided by ACE, MAE, GI-Jobs, SOC, VA, E.O. 13607, and other literary sources identified in chapter three.

4.3 Responses to Questionnaire from Big Ten Universities

Tables 4.2 through 4.29 displays the information gathered from the Big Ten universities through the use of the questionnaire mentioned above, personal interviews, and exploration of their websites. The University of Nebraska at Omaha has also been included in this study due to its close proximity to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. These tables contain a column indicating whether or not a particular university participates in a practice mentioned in a question. “Y” indicates the institution uses this item in their student veteran and military member support programs. “N” indicates the institution did not utilize this item and “U” indicates the institution did not respond. Table 4.29 displays additional ideas mentioned by universities during questioning.

Table 4.2 What is your undergraduate/ graduate student veteran/ military member student population?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	<u>412 student veterans</u> using GI Bill, Fall 2012	Y		
Michigan State University	<u>560 students veterans, graduate and professional and dependents</u> , Fall 2012	Y		
Northwestern University	<u>250-275 students veterans</u> currently using VA benefits	Y		
Ohio State University	<u>800 veterans, over 2,200 receiving benefits</u>	Y		
Penn State University	<u>952 student veterans</u> using GI Bill: <u>3800 on all campus</u> in the state	Y		
Purdue University	<u>501 student veterans</u> not including ROTC	Y		
Rutgers University	<u>1,600 student veterans</u> , using benefits, 2100 total; fall 2013	Y		
University of Iowa	<u>520 student veterans</u> , Fall 2012	Y		
University of Illinois	<u>387 student veterans, 52 dependents</u> ,	Y		
University of Maryland	No Response			U
University of Michigan	<u>248 student veterans</u> :	Y		
University of Minnesota	<u>733 using VA benefits</u>	Y		
University of NE-Lincoln	<u>530 student veterans</u> , Using GI Bill Benefits	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No response			U
University of Wisconsin	No response			U
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.2

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln reporting, 530 student veterans using some type of VA educational benefit, falls about in the middle of the totals of veteran populations reported by Big Ten universities. Northwestern reported the fewest at 197, and Ohio State University reported the most at 2200.

Table 4.3 How does your institution track/count its student veterans and military members? Is this done through the registration process?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	We are developing a system to code veterans and military members through a variety of potential points of self-identification: admissions application, FAFSA, orientation, etc. This will give us a broader view of who is enrolled. Currently, however, we code only those students who are using some form of GI Bill benefits.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, method not disclosed	Y		
Northwestern University	Yes, method not disclosed	Y		
Ohio State University	The main method is by use of educational benefits provided by the VA, military services, and Ohio National Guard.	Y		
Penn State University	At this point we do not track the number of veterans or military members, although the data elements exist if the program were to be written. The information is self-reported at the time of application. We do track the number of students using different chapters of the GI Bill.	Y		
Purdue University	We use a combination. Our admissions application has a question to gather those who are willing to self-disclose as veterans and we also track VA benefit students. We also track those using state benefits as well as those using tuition assistance to give us a rounded picture of our population that is close to our actual numbers.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes, there is a question on the application form and we also meet with all our student veterans individually	Y		
University of Iowa	We count those who are using GI Bill Benefits or have self-identified on admission less those who are using their parents' benefits.	Y		
University of Illinois	In 2010 we began asking a question on the admissions form. With this information we generate a list and cross reference it with those using GI Bill Benefits from the certifying official.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	We track veterans and military members through the undergraduate admissions office and the graduate admissions office of the schools or colleges (except Medicine and Dentistry). We compile a list and compare it to the one sent by our certifying official of veteran and military receiving benefits and with a list of Active Duty members getting tuition assistance and out-of-state waivers.	Y		
University of Minnesota	Unknown			U
University of NE-Lincoln	UNL will begin asking a question on the undergraduate admissions form in 2014. Currently the certifying official will provide a list of those using GI Bill benefits upon request.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	UNO asks a question on its application form. In addition to this a hold is placed on the application until the potential student reports to the UNO Student Veteran Office for a briefing on available resources. At this point pertinent contact information is collected on the veteran student.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Veterans self-identify on the application form. Those who don't self-identify on the application, or join Guard/Reserve units after being admitted, we can only identify if they are using GI Bill Benefits. Orientation session is required.	Y		
Responses for this question		13	0	2

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.3

All schools responding to this question used some type of method to determine the student veteran population at their schools. This item is a best practice among Big Ten schools. Many schools ask SVMMs and dependents to self-identify on the admissions form as, UNL does. Many institutions indicated that SVMM numbers were obtained from those using VA educational benefits. Few schools said they were tracking SVMMs to degree completion. Indiana University is developing a coding system to create a broader view of who is currently enrolled. This system will incorporate inputs from self-identification, undergraduate and graduate admissions, FAFSA inputs and orientation. Another method is currently used by the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). It places a hold on the SVMM applications until the student reports to the veteran's service office for a briefing on student veteran support programs and resources. The student is fully identified at this point for future contact.

Table 4.4 Does your university see Facebook or Twitter as a useful way to contact veteran and military member student population about items of interest and events?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Our Veterans Support Office has a Facebook page and a Twitter feed but neither appears to be followed by a large percentage of our students. We also use email but many students report they do not regularly read all their university emails.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, the MSU chapter of Student Veterans of America uses Facebook and Twitter to communicate.	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Our university does use Facebook, but in a very fledgling state right now.	Y		
Penn State University	Our Facebook page is less than a year old and so we are not sure of its effectiveness. We do not use Twitter.	Y		
Purdue University	We are setting up a Facebook page, and have been for a while. Right now we rely upon our website, which is static, and emailing, which does or does not get read regularly.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes	Y		
University of Iowa	We use Facebook as a way to get information out.	Y		
University of Illinois	We do use social media. Our work-study students do it.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response	Y		
University of Michigan	Yes, we use Facebook daily.			U
University of Minnesota	No response	Y		
University of NE-Lincoln	The Student Veteran Organization has a Facebook page it maintains.			U
University of NE-Omaha	UNO is using Facebook.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Yes, social media is very important. It's how today's students communicate, and makes getting the word out much easier.	Y		
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.4

Social media methods of communication, such as Facebook, Twitter, and mass texting are widely used among these college and university student veteran programs. UNL and 100 percent of the other institutions use varieties of these methods to distribute information to their student veteran populations. Some schools indicated that these are the primary communication methods of this generation and that email messages can be ineffective at reaching this population, given the mass of emails students receive daily. Comments by these institutions indicate that email is often the last thing viewed at the end of the day by students. Institutions commented that email addresses were continually changing, requiring on-going updates and making contact with the student population difficult. Feedback from these institutions showed that social media can be used to draw attention to a pending email.

Table 4.5 Does your institution offer on-line degree programs that military members could complete completely on-line if deployed?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Our seven-campus university system has programs scattered across the campuses that can be completed online.	Y		
Michigan State University	USU has over one hundred graduate and undergraduate courses offered via the internet.	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	No, not at this time.		N	
Penn State University	Yes, through our World Campus.	Y		
Purdue University	We offer very few and very narrow online degree programs. This is not a primary mission of our institution.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes	Y		
University of Iowa	No response			U
University of Illinois	Our Office of Continuing Education (OCE) offers degree programs which can be completed online.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	No, not at this time.		N	
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, UNL offers both undergraduate and graduate online degree programs.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No response			U
University of Wisconsin	No response			U
Responses for this question		7	2	6

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.5

Over 78 percent the responding Big Ten institutions said they had limited degree programs which could be completed on-line. Some had hybrid forms of programs which required some on-campus interaction. UNL's website, entitled Online and Distance Education offers information on Undergraduate Bachelor of Science in Applied Science degree, as well as Certificates in Meat Culinology® and Public Policy. UNL offers a minor in Business on-line. UNL's Online and Distance Graduate program listing is very extensive. The Online & Distance Graduate webpage currently list 104 programs which may be completed online. UNL was recently ranked #3 by U.S. News & World Report for Best Online Graduate Business Programs for Veterans!

Table 4.6 Are student veterans/military members provided a separate briefing/orientation to point out the veteran specific resources available on campus/online and locations?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	We provide one-on-one intake advising for each student on the GI Bill benefits that includes information about resources available to them. We also host a fall Welcome Dinner at which information on veteran-related resources is presented/made available.	Y		
Michigan State University	No response			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes, but it does not substitute for the new/transfer student orientation that they must attend. It is held during welcome week activities of the fall/spring semesters.	Y		
Penn State University	Each fall we offer a “Veterans Forum” that includes a buffet dinner for all new student veterans and provide them with information on services both at the university and in the local area. Also, beginning this summer we are implementing a new student orientation program that will include a separate session for student veterans	Y		
Purdue University	Over the past three years we offered a traditional veterans orientation experience with new students sitting in a room and veteran resources speaking to the students. In August of this year we made the orientation more like a patrol in that member of the student veterans organization took members around campus to meet the resources in their own offices. The meetings were very brief and consisted of 1) who the resource is 2) what is the contact of the resource and 3) what can the resource do. It was 5 minutes per resource and then off to the next resource.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes, our student veterans are provided a one on one briefing and tour of facilities.	Y		
University of Iowa	No response			U
University of Illinois	Yes, we offer a separate informal briefing to student veterans	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	We potentially meet every undergraduate at orientation, but there is no separate session- we are looking at providing one though.		N	
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	UNL offers a separate student veteran and breakout session during New Student Enrollment days. Student Veterans/ military members and dependents are provided information on available resources and key locations.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes, every student veteran and military member who self-identifies is required to attend a briefing at the Student Veteran Support Office.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	A separate “Veteran Services” desk is set up at Orientation check-in. (All new undergraduate students are required to attend one of 41 orientation sessions. A table is also set up at Graduate School resource fair.) We also have a required briefing for student veterans after admission.	Y		
Responses for this question		9	1	5

Source: Author’s survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.6

Providing a separate briefing/orientation pertinent to the SVMM sub-group is a best practice among the members of the Big Ten Conference. Methods for meeting student veterans vary by institution. Some set up a separate table or desk during enrollment/orientation. Many institutions like UNL have adopted a separate breakout session where SVMMs and dependents are briefed on university resources. A few institutions are utilizing a welcome event, such as a dinner, where attending SVMMs and their dependents are briefed. Institutions that employ full time veteran coordinators often attempt to contact and meet all incoming SVMM personally. One institution has an orientation briefing as a requirement for new SVMMs.

Table 4.7 Do you have a military post, base, or Guard Unit in close proximity to your campus location? If so, does anyone provide information in an attempt to attract student veterans and military members to your institution; "Recruitment Methods"?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	There is one National Guard training installation about 50 miles from our campus, but IU Bloomington does not actively recruit students there. Some of our regional campuses participate in education fairs at that institution. There are no large active units anywhere in the state of Indiana.		N	
Michigan State University	Selfridge Air National Guard Base is located north of Detroit Michigan			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	The nearest active military installation is Wright Patterson Air Force base located 65 miles west of campus. There are numerous Ohio National Guard and Reserve units located within easy commuting distances of our 6 campuses. We provide information to those units for veterans.	Y		
Penn State University	We have no posts or bases nearby. There are both Army and Air Guard Units in the area that will occasionally stop by our office to introduce themselves, but any active recruiting is conducted away from our purview.		N	
Purdue University	We have a local armory that houses reserve and guard units, but we do not directly recruit.		N	
Rutgers University	Fort Dix, McGuire AFB, and many guard and reserve units. Veteran program coordinators are often in contact with these units spreading the word about the Rutgers's programs	Y		
University of Iowa	The UI has no active duty bases or posts within Iowa's borders. Iowa does however have many guard and reserve units within its borders		N	
University of Illinois	We have a good sized National Guard Unit. Our admissions send emails – proactive recruitment	Y		
University of Maryland	Connect with outside organizations – use public radio, "Story Corp".	Y		
University of Michigan	We do have a National Guard base about an hour away. We have participated in Yellow Ribbon events but DOD regulations now limit on-base visits.		N	
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Offutt AFB 60 miles away in Omaha. Some recruiting is done at events put on by the VA, such as booths.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	UNO has an office on Offutt Air Force Base. Some recruiting is done on off-campus, such as, the VA Welcome Back Home event held at Fort Reilly, KS.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	No, they don't. UW-Madison is more than twice the size of any other school in the "UW System," the only one (by policy) with a Division 1 football team, etc. There is no in-state competitor. So, for a veteran who wants a Big 10 school experience in WI, there is only one choice. UW-Madison's limited (and shrinking) participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program doesn't make it cost-effective for non-resident veterans to attend, so why advertise.		N	
Responses for this question		6	6	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.7

Active recruiting to the student veteran population is rare among the Big Ten institutions. Only 50 percent indicate any type of recruitment effort, such as a booth at job fair or holding events off campus.

Table 4.8 Does your college have a VA Center in your area which provides an external support network and information portal for your student veteran and military member population?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	There is a VA Hospital as well as a Vet Center in Indianapolis, about 55 miles away. There is an VA outpatient Clinic in Bloomington. There is a Vet-to-Vet Program at Ivy Tech Community College's Bloomington campus.	Y		
Michigan State University	1. We have the Ingham County Department of University Veterans Affairs which offers counseling and assistance services for most types of VA needs. 2. Ingham County Department of Veterans Affairs has a 14 passenger van (wheelchair accessible) to take veterans to the VA hospital in Ann Arbor, MI	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes, there are several local and state resources available.	Y		
Penn State University	We do not have a VA Center, however, there is a state Veteran Service Officer nearby town (15 miles) and a VA Regional Medical Center about 40 miles away that also has a local out-patient clinic close to campus.	Y		
Purdue University	We have an outpatient clinic in West Lafayette . There are few services provided other than intake and primary care physician. Anything beyond that; medically or mental health, the veteran must travel at least an hour. The main VA Ileana Health Care System is 50 miles away in Danville, Illinois	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes- VA New Jersey Health Care System - East Orange 385 Tremont Ave, East Orange, NJ	Y		
University of Iowa	The UI does not maintain its own staff as we are co-located with a VA Medical Center.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes, we have the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA Center is in Danville, Illinois.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, the Ann Arbor VA Hospital is only a mile from campus.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, UNL has a Regional Office in Lincoln, NE. It has several outpatient clinics and serves as an intake center for the VA Medical Center located in Omaha, NE, 55 miles away.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes, UNO maintains a staff of health and mental health counselors. We also have a VA Medical Center located in central Omaha.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	University Health Services is educated on basic eligibility and services available from the VA Hospital and Madison Veteran Center. No veteran-specific person on staff, although the Counseling Center has a "veteran-centric" person.	Y		
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.8

UNL, like all the universities of this study, has VA support agencies in its local area. Most institutions have local state agencies that provide for the general needs of the veteran population. Many have regional centers that can be utilized for counseling and clinical health needs. There were a few that benefit from having a VA medical center within driving distance of their campuses. Availability of a VA support network was found to help college campuses and their SVMM populations. These centers provide trained professionals for student referral in multiple areas. They also reduce the size of the professional staff at college campuses needed to serve the SVMM sub-population. Michigan indicated they were recently named a “Vet Success Campus”.

Table 4.9 Does your campus operate a separate student veteran/military member Information Success Center separate from the RSO organizations? Is it co-located with the Certifying Official or by itself?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Our Veteran Support Services office contains three Certifying Officials, provides, veterans lounge, study space. It develops and sponsors a range of programs. It is Co-located with the RSO study space.	Y		
Michigan State University	No Response.		N	
Northwestern University	No		N	
Ohio State University	We have an Office of Military & Veterans Services. The Certifying Officials are part of this office. New in 2012.	Y		
Penn State University	Our Office of Veterans Programs has four Certifying Officials. We have had a veteran support office for 34 years.	Y		
Purdue University	In July of this year we opened a Veterans Success Center. The coordinator and both certifying officials are housed in our office. It is in the heart of campus, but the location is temporary. We will transition to our Memorial Union next summer.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes, an 8 room house located on the edge of campus at: Garage 14 Lafayette 14 Lafayette St. New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Every Rutgers location has a veteran's support office.	Y		
University of Iowa	Our Office for Veterans Services is structured under Center for Diversity and Enrichment.	Y		
University of Illinois	The Office for Veterans Services is operated separately from the Veteran Student Organization. We have recently opened a veteran's lounge that is separate.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, our Office of Veterans services are separate from the Student Veteran Organization.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	UNL does not have an Office for Veterans services. An office is provided to the Student Veteran Organization with a desk and computer.		N	
University of NE-Omaha	UNO has a large Office for Veterans Services which contains VA Certifying Officials, a veterans study and meeting area.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	I'm one of five Assistant Dean of Students. I handle assistance and conduct cases like the others; the veteran piece in in addition. The Vets for Vets student organization has a separate office. The Certifying Official is in a separate office.	Y		
Responses for this question		10	3	2

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from table 4.9

The presence of an identified veterans services support office is a best practice among the Big Ten universities with 70 percent of those responding indicating their school has a named office. The configuration of the office space and the staff varies. Most offices are large enough to contain the professional staff. This staff usually includes a full time veteran program coordinator. In addition, some institutions provided space for the certifying officials at the same location. Often, work-study students are provided work space in these offices, as well. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not have a veteran support office. Like a few others, the professional position taking care of veteran needs is a secondary duty, and this person is positioned in the office of their primary duties and does not include a veteran coordinator title. The certifying official is located next to and reports to the Registrar. Reasons for having all professional staff in one location are that staff often need to communicate with each other that and they share duties. Respondents stressed the importance of having an identified go-to place and person to meet SVMM needs. Some respondents said having the staff in one location minimizes the need for SVMMs to go to multiple locations to be served. Staff professionals shared that having many services in one location increases the contact with students and makes passing on information more likely. One negative mentioned was that certification duties take time away from other issues. A few have the registered student organization meeting and study space at the same location, and in other cases they are in separate locations. Schools have differing opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of having RSO study areas at the same location. Advantages listed were increased contact with students, including recognizing problems early and finding resolution. Some

universities cited the advantage of mentoring possibilities. Sometimes more senior students can be used to solve problems for incoming students getting settled into the education system. Information also flows more readily in a face-to-face mode. Disadvantages include noise and privacy concerns.

Table 4.10 How is the Veteran Student Center staffed: professionally, volunteers, work-study students?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Our Veterans Support services Office contains three Certifying Officials, provides and veterans lounge/study space, and develops and sponsors a range of programs targeted at student veterans, military, and their families. This office is staffed with 2.5 FTE IU staff dedicated solely to VSS as well as 2 to 6 VA work-study employees, depending on availability and need.	Y		
Michigan State University	No		N	
Northwestern University	6 Certifying Officials who performs other duties in their particular colleges.		N	
Ohio State University	Our office is staffed with four full time employees, to include: two Certifying Officials. We also have one graduate student intern for ten hours/week. We are currently awaiting approval as a VA work-study site and plan on hiring five.	Y		
Penn State University	Our Office of Veterans Services has six full-time professional staff. Other than our staff assistant, all staff members are veterans with at least a Master's Degree, 3 with degrees in counseling. The VA has authorized up to 19 work-study students, who staff our reception area and outreach area.	Y		
Purdue University	The Coordinator of Military Veteran and Nontraditional Student Programs (and Director of the VSC), one full time SCO, one ¾ time SCO, and four VA work study students.	Y		
Rutgers University	The Rutgers veteran support office has two full time staff, plus professional staff from college support agencies and the VA on site. We also have many work-study students	Y		
University of Iowa	GI Bill Services has 2 FT staff and 3 VA work-study students. The Veterans Center has 1 FT staff and 3 VA work-study students. Funding is provided by the Registrar, Equal Opportunity, and Student Government depending on need.	Y		
University of Illinois	The Veterans Office is supervised by one professional FTS. The Certifying Official is also a FT professional The rest of the positions are filled by six VA work-study students.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Our Veterans Services Office is staffed by 4 professionals. We have 3 Certifying Officials	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Veterans Services are provided by a number of offices: Certifying Official located in Registrar, Assistant Director of Career Services oversees many student veteran programs. A Veterans Task Force is authorized through the Office of Student Affairs. Undergraduate Admissions authorizes student veteran orientations. An AmeriCorps funded position staffs the Student Veteran Office two days a week.		N	
University of NE-Omaha	Our Student Veteran Office is staffed by three full time staff. The Certifying Official is also located in this office. There are four to eight VA work-study students.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	I am the supervisor for five work-study students at the Vet for Vets office. The Certifying Official works in the Registrar's Office.	Y		
Responses for this question		10	3	2

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.10

The majority of student veterans support programs (70 percent) responded that their veteran student support offices are professionally staffed. As shown in Table 4.9, the inclusion of office staff varies and can be driven by space availability and whether the staff fulfills multiple roles. A few institutions have all staff in one location; others have them divided according to primary position. The advantages and disadvantages were covered in the discussion of take away points for table 4.9.

Table 4.11 Does your Veteran Student Center have a meeting or study area with computer access and tables for this group of students?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Yes, it is co-located with our Student Veterans Office and has a lounge/study area with computers.	Y		
Michigan State University	No response			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	No we are in the planning process of establishing a student veteran lounge at a separate facility from the office.		N	
Penn State University	There is not separate meeting area for student veterans in general, however our work-study students have access to 8 computers and a fax machine, and the veterans who come in that need assistance in VA matters also have access to these machines to complete their business.		N	
Purdue University	Provide an open study space available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Hope to have ½ computers and printer fall 2013. Provide access to and meeting space for the Purdue Student Veterans Organization.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes, our facility provides meeting spaces and has computer terminals for student veterans to study	Y		
University of Iowa	The student organization is co-located with my office and I am their Advisor but they are a separate entity and elect their own officers.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes- no specifics	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, it is located by itself.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	UNL has an office and small meeting area for the Student Veteran Organization. It contains a desk, computer, and printer. UNL does not have a Veteran Support Center so this office stands alone and is currently occupied by an AmeriCorps funded position two days a week.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	UNO has a student meeting area with computers for the veteran students to use. This area is co-located with the Student Veteran Support Office.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	The Vets for Vets student organization has a meeting space. It is staffed by five work-study students. It is funded with a budget from student government and contributions from the VFW, American Legion, and local business.	Y		
Responses for this question		9	2	4

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.11

The majority of Big Ten respondents, 88 percent said their universities provide meeting space and study areas for their SVMM RSO population. The configuration and location varies by institution. Some are co-located with the veteran support center. Others are located alone and away from the support office. Many colleges, like UNL, provide a RSO office/meeting area. These spaces differ in size and amenities. UNL's RSO office contains a computer, desk and small sitting area. A few colleges provide more of a lounge setting and can contain multiple computers, televisions, vending machines and large meeting areas. Some schools having these large RSO spaces indicated financing through contributions.

Table 4.12 How do you encourage student veterans and military members to use your programs and resources?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Each person receives a personal tour and invitation to use the space during their benefits intake advising session.	Y		
Michigan State University	No response			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Variety of ways: community college outreach, student veteran organization, collaboration with academic advising, counseling and consultation and disability services. The most effective way is word of mouth from veteran to veteran.	Y		
Penn State University	Office bulletin board, notification of the Veteran Student Organization, presentation at the Veterans Forum, email, word-of-mouth.	Y		
Purdue University	We communicate with them during the orientation, via email, one-on-one, word of mouth through the SVO, and also communicate with other faculty and staff members on campus.	Y		
Rutgers University	We use several methods; the coordinators talk with incoming student long before they reach campus, provide a full in-brief to our programs and facilities, our student inform each other through email and Facebook and promote our programs and events.	Y		
University of Iowa	We use several methods: students are made aware of our facilities at Spring and Fall Veterans Orientations, End of semester social gatherings, film screenings and discussions, Fall Veterans Reception, and of course word of mouth.	Y		
University of Illinois	We use email, different types of events, discussion panels, open forums, athletic support here is good, and some free tickets.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Facebook, email, Student Veteran Association support, word of mouth, and food for encouragement.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Veteran and military students who self-identify on the application are provided a breakout briefing session during enrollment day. Their names are placed in the Student Veteran Organization list-serve for future contact purposes. They are all personally contact by a person from UNL's Mentorship group; they are contacted via email and Facebook for social events and on-going information.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	We use our intro briefing to make students aware of the resources available to them. We use email, a one-stop veteran's webpage, and notifications from the Student Veteran Organization, social gatherings, and postings in the office area and around campus, and word of mouth.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	We use the typical methods, such as email, Facebook. We also rely on word of mouth through our Vets for Vets Student Organization and emails. We have organized events: The Veterans Resource Fair and Veterans Day Memorial. Additionally, we have an engagement strategy which begins as soon as the student considers the University of Wisconsin-Madison.	Y		
Responses for this question		11	0	4

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.12

The universities of the Big Ten use similar techniques to increase awareness among SVMs and encourage use of programs and resources to increase educational success. Many institutions mentioned that word of mouth is best as long as the institution is seen as being veteran or military friendly. If student veterans are treated well, communication will spread in a positive manner. Some universities, such as UNL, provide breakout sessions in an effort to spread the word about available opportunities. Most said they use email and social media. Other institutions commented on the importance of a well-designed webpage, which can work as a conduit to information links both internal and external and upcoming events. Many colleges pointed to the importance of social events, discussion panels, and veteran forums.

Table 4.13 Do you offer a webpage where student veterans/military members can access information and links pertinent to this specific group?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	www.veteran.indiana.edu contains a “getting started” checklist for new student veterans as well as links to resources and programs on campus and in the community. We are working to build a centralized page containing all policies and procedures relating to veterans for better transparency and a single-point of information.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, MSU has an extensive student veteran page containing links to internal and external information for student veterans http://veterans.vps.msu.edu/	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes we do and our students seem to like having the information in one place where it is easy to find.	Y		
Penn State University	Yes we do have a webpage and feedback on it has been favorable.	Y		
Purdue University	The current webpage has been through two significant over halls in the past year and is closer to this one-stop location for information, but with only myself updating it and not being a web expert it relies on my time to dedicate to make it happen—which is at an unfortunately slow pace.	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes, we have a webpage linking our programs with others available on the Rutgers campuses	Y		
University of Iowa	Yes we have a veteran’s webpage; we provide information which is unique to student veterans and also use it as a means to educate faculty/staff about the programs and services available to veterans.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes we maintain a webpage, www.vets.umich.edu	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	UNL has several webpages providing unique information to student veterans to include: Transfer Credit procedures and policies, GI Bill information from the Registrar’s Office, information from admissions, the Student Veteran Organization page and several others. UNL has been planning to update its centralized page linking many of these.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes, we feel having a “one stop” page linking resources both internal and external for veteran students is a real asset.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Yes, currently the Registrar’s Office offers a veterans webpage. Eventually, there should be only one central page for veterans on the UW website. http://students.wisc.edu/doso/vetsassistance.html	Y		
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author’s survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.13

The idea of a veteran one-stop webpage was promoted by 100 percent of universities responding in this project and is a best practice among the Big Ten universities. Again, webpage design varies according to university wishes and needs. Most respondents agreed that the page should be a conduit to other university information that would be meaningful to SVMM students. Most also agreed that external links are important connections to VA resources and state agencies, which often help student veterans overcome obstacles. Most universities, like UNL, have many websites maintained by college departments that contain important information for all students. Several institutions pointed out that much information pertinent to SVMMs is unique enough to warrant a veteran's information webpage to reduce the time needed to locate specific information. Since this page is designed to be directed towards the SVMM population, it may provide an additional way to distribute information about events and opportunities other subpopulations would not be interested in. A few colleges promote sites with moving banners and colorful images to attract attention, where others are merely drop-downs with access to links.

Table 4.14 Does your university support and actively nurture a Student Veteran Organization (SVO) with support such as a meeting area and activities?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	The Director of the Veteran Support Center Office serves as the sponsor for the IU chapter. Organization of meetings and activities is left to the student membership as with any student organization.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, MSU Student Veterans of America.	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes, as a recognized student organization, they have the same funding and access to other resources as other student organizations.	Y		
Penn State University	Yes, we have two veterans' student organizations: Penn State University Veterans Organization (PSUVO) and Omega Delta Sigma (National Veterans Fraternity). Both are supported on par with other student organizations.	Y		
Purdue University	Yes, the Purdue Student Veteran Organization They have their own webpage, use Facebook and Twitter	Y		
Rutgers University	Rutgers has two Registered Student Organizations (RSO)s affiliated with veteran students	Y		
University of Iowa	Yes, we support the UIVA.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes, we support veterans RSO.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, we provide limited funding, advisor, and food for meetings.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, UNL has a RSO called UNLSVO. This organization is provided a meeting area and funds to promote it existence.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Yes, they are called Vets for Vets, est. 1972, founding chapter of Student Veterans of America	Y		
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.14

Promoting a student veteran organization (SVO) is a best practice for the members of the Big Ten Conference. All of schools responding support an SVO. Many contribute funding, some contribute a meeting place, and most contribute both, as UNL does, for its SVO. Most schools also allow their SVO to maintain its own webpage.

Table 4.15 Do your individual departments, such as, Admissions, Controller's Office, Counseling Center, Family Resource Center, Office of Financial Student Aid Veteran's Benefits, Graduate School, Registrar's Office, Veteran's Certification, Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities, Student Affairs, maintain key points of contact experienced with student veteran/military matters?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	We have points of contact in most of these areas which have developed over time as best equipped to work with specific veteran issues.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, MSU has established a Resource Team made up of Key offices and individual. Their contact information is listed in a drop-down off the Student Veterans Information webpage.	Y		
Northwestern University	Northwestern has it certifying officials locate in offices providing other functions, such as, financial aid. NW also has a veteran's committee to promote veteran issues.	Y		
Ohio State University	Yes	Y		
Penn State University	Our Office of Veterans Programs acts as a conduit to these other offices. Veterans that need assistance navigating the bureaucracy can come to our office and be put in touch with an individual in another office who will assist them with their needs.	Y		
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	Yes, Rutgers fills it is important to maintain key contacts with these offices and has many of these key people on site in the veteran support center.	Y		
University of Iowa	Yes, UI has a group of individuals from differing departments that meets periodically and these individuals are often good contacts in other offices to refer veteran students.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes, we have contacts in most of these offices.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	The Program Director of the Student Veterans Assistance Program chairs the U-M Council on Student Veterans which includes all of these offices and maintains key points of contact with these offices.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs chairs the UNL Student Veterans Task Force which is made up of key points of contact from many support offices.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	UNO has an advisory group made up of individuals from many of these support offices. Many of them serve as good points of contact to refer student veterans to.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	I have a network of whom I work. However, I was advised by my boss not to formalize it, as it may attract more oversight and become "non-functional."	Y		
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.15

Having personnel in key student support offices trained and experienced in student veteran issues, is attempted by 100 percent of the Big Ten respondents. Many of these college veteran support offices commented that they have certain people they often correspond with and are more experienced in military matters. Some of the larger institutions commented on knowing key individuals who have the authority to make change happen. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has key individuals located in several support offices to help student veterans and is attempting to expand this knowledge base through its mentoring program.

Table 4.16 Does your school use a Veteran Task Force type of committee that meets regularly to share information and discuss issues about your student veteran program? Are members of the SVO invited to share their input?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	The Bloomington campus uses a more ad hoc approach, but our Indianapolis campus has an organized veteran support team. IUB had a Task Force in 2005 that met and recommended the creation of the current VSS office. That group included at least two representatives from the student veteran organization.	Y		
Michigan State University	The Veteran's Resource Team is comprised of individuals from administrative offices who serve as the primary contact for student veteran's resources and services. The team meets quarterly, or as needed, to discuss and explore opportunities for improved Services.	Y		
Northwestern University	Yes, Northwestern has a veterans committee.	Y		
Ohio State University	Yes we do, and there are members of the RSO present at most meetings.	Y		
Penn State University	Our World campus hosts informal "Military Consortium" that meets twice annually to share information about veteran/military initiatives occurring in different departments on the campus. There is no student representation.	Y		
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	Yes, Rutgers has a veteran's advisory committee, but given the size of our institution it is necessary for our veteran coordinators to attend many other meetings to get the word out about veteran programs.	Y		
University of Iowa	Yes	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes we have a veteran's advisory committee.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, UM Council on Student Veterans. There is a RSO member on this council.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs chairs the UNL Student Veterans Task Force which is made up of key points of contact from many support offices.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	UNO has an advisory group made up of individuals from many of these support offices. Many of them serve as good points of contact to refer student veterans to.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	I have a network of whom I work. However, I was advised by my boss not to formalize it, as it may attract more oversight and become "non-functional."	Y		
Responses for this question		12	0	3

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.16

This research found that having a formalized subcommittee to discuss student veteran issues is a best practice, with 100 percent of institutions supporting this idea. Some of these institutions, like UNL, use these committees or “Task Forces” as a means to promote changes to support programs to better the chances for educational success for their student veteran and military member population. The UNL Student Veteran Task Force attempts to meet monthly during the academic year.

Table 4.17 Does your University offer/support a student veteran, military member and dependent mentoring program made up of peers, staff or faculty?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	No		N	
Michigan State University	No response			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	We currently have an informal program and are attempting to establish an formal program for Fall of 2013	Y		
Penn State University	No, however the University provides extensive “walk-in” tutoring services available to all students and mentoring from one of our professional veteran counselors can be made available if requested.		N	
Purdue University	Yes Purdue has an e-mentoring program and a Veterans Mentoring Program	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes. Done by volunteer students for a semester.	Y		
University of Iowa	Our student veteran organization offers peer mentoring.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes, our program is called Vet Connect and is made up of mostly peers	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes we offer the Vet to Vet program which is transitioning to the PAVE program.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	UNL has established a staff/faculty student veteran mentoring program in 2013. Over one hundred staff and faculty have received training and have volunteered to help student veterans if contacted. The program is being expanded to include a personal contact/greeting from a mentor to each new student veteran.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No, we do not have a program at this time.		N	
University of Wisconsin	Yes, we have an informal peer mentoring program	Y		
Responses for this question		8	3	4

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.17

Mentoring programs are supported by 62 percent of those answering this question. The form of mentoring program takes multiple forms. One university offers an e-mentoring program. Many institutions with strong student veteran organization followings and meeting areas or lounges where student veterans often gathered during the day have forms of peer to peer mentoring programs. Some of these are more formalized than others. Still others have a type of institution talk-in tutoring service which provides many of the academic opportunities mentoring sometimes contains. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has undertaken a formalized program of mentoring where staff and faculty volunteers receive training on military culture and support issues and contact student veterans offering welcome and support.

Table 4.18 Do you offer a college transition course/seminar for veterans, military members and dependents?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Yes, but enrollment is very low. We do not have a mandatory freshman seminar or similar requirement that this substitutes for- it is purely and elective.	Y		
Michigan State University	MSU Course (UGS 101) called-Military Transitions in Society	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Not currently.		N	
Penn State University	No		N	
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Yes, the Life after War class is specific to veterans	Y		
University of Illinois	No		N	
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	No, have not seen the need or desire for this from student veterans here, but most all are transfer students.		N	
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	No, not designed specifically for veteran student, but UNL does offer First-Year Experience and Transfer Programs.		N	
University of NE-Omaha	No		N	
University of Wisconsin	No		N	
Responses for this question		3	7	5

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take away points from Table 4.18

Only three responding universities, (43 percent) offer a type of transition course for SVMM students. One of these commented that the attendance for the course was extremely low. This low figure can be deceiving, however, as many colleges, like UNL have recently developed “First Year Experience” programs which offer freshman and sometimes transfer student options to join “Learning Communities” with student of like interests. UNL, as an example, has a Transfer Learning Community that is open to Students who are within their first year of transferring to UNL as a full-time student; eligible students include those starting at UNL in the Spring or Fall semesters.

Table 4.19 Does your institution provide counseling assistance and health care services for student veterans and military members?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Our Counseling and Psychological Services staff maintains a high level of knowledge about working with all students with PTSD especially veterans. We have also had VA mental health counselors with office hours on campus in the years immediately after a major redeployment on Indiana National Guard troops.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, MSU has a full professional staff trained to handle many types of issues including PTSD and sexual assault issues.	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes, through our campus Counseling & Consultation Service. A counselor holds office hours once per week in the Office of Military & Veterans Services. We also have a Vet Center and VA Health Clinic within 5 miles of our Columbus campus.	Y		
Penn State University	Yes our Veteran Services Office is staffed with three members who are attuned to these issues and help identify students who may need assistance. Students in need are then referred to either the campus Counseling and psychological services (CAPS) office or to one of our local VA sponsored counseling operations. Also, one of our staff hosts a weekly “drop in” group session with another trained counselor from CAPS which is open to any and all veterans.	Y		
Purdue University	No response	Y		
Rutgers University	Yes, sometimes on site of veteran support office.	Y		
University of Iowa	No, we are co-located with the VA Medical Center		N	
University of Illinois	Yes, and students are usually referred to the VA as well.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response	Y		
University of Michigan	Yes	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, UNL has an individual trained in SVMM issues	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes, called “AT Ease”.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	University Health Services is educated on basic eligibility and services available from the VA Hospital and Madison Veteran Center. No veteran-specific person on staff, although the Counseling Center has a “veteran-centric” person.	Y		
Responses for this question		12	1	2

Source: Author’s survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.19

Counseling and health care services for student veterans and military members is available at 92 percent of the universities answering this question. One university, which did not provide this support, is located next to a VA medical center and refers clients there.

Table 4.20 Does your university belong to associations/media sites, such as GI-Jobs (Military Friendly), American Council on Education (ACE), Service Members Opportunity Colleges (SOC) consortium or others?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	GI Jobs is a media outlet and we have been recognized by them for the last four years. IU is a longstanding member of ACE. Only three of the seven campuses are SOC members- Bloomington is not one of them.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators, SOC and GI Jobs	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes	Y		
Penn State University	Our World Campus has been listed on several “military lists” to include GI Jobs. One of their staff members is also on the board of CCME (Council of Colleges and Military Educators). Our World Campus is a full SOC member.	Y		
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Yes	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, GI Jobs, ACE, Consortium of Michigan Veteran Educators	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Yes	Y		
Responses for this question		10	0	5

Source: Author’s survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.20

Membership with media sites and associations, such as GI-Jobs, Military Advanced Education, Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, and the American Council on Education Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions, is promoted by the majority of Big Ten schools. 100 percent of those who answered this question said they belong to at least one association or media site of this type. UNL belongs to all the above mentioned media sites and associations and was the subject of the cover story for the September 2013 magazine issue for the GI Jobs media site.

Table 4.21 Does your institution offer credit for military courses and life experiences of student veteran/ military members?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Yes, General transcript/DD 214 review is done by admissions. Some credit is directly articulated for elective courses, but much is undistributed. Students can work directly with schools and departments for specific course credit, if desired. Sometimes academic units will allow large amounts of undistributed credit to fulfill general categories – for example, 30 hours of undistributed physics credit awarded to a nuclear sub technician was allowed to fulfill the entire Science and Technology option within his business degree. The IUB admissions website does not contain specific information about military credit.	Y		
Michigan State University	We have a multi-state collaborative for credit program			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes, but it depends on the degree granting department to decide if it counts for graduation requirements.	Y		
Penn State University	Yes, transfer credit here is a 2 step process. Applicable credit is applied toward a University transcript upon matriculation by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Step 2 is to have that transcript evaluated by the college within the University offering the degree to see what may count as an elective and what may satisfy a degree requirement. Most veterans receive PE credit and some additional transfer credit based on their major field of study.	Y		
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	No response		N	
University of Illinois	CLEP -No, DANTES-NO, ACE lower division-NO, ACE upper division- maybe but rare, No military courses accepted		N	
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Very limited, It depends on the evaluation by the department or school.		N	
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, the UNL Transfer Coordinator has created a program where it is possible for some veteran student to receive credit for military/life experiences meeting course requirements for ACE 8 and ACE 9 courses. This program is transparent with transfer policies and guidance clearly posted on a webpage for students to view.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No response			U
University of Wisconsin	No response			U
Responses for this question		4	3	8

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.21

Only 4 responding colleges accept military credit during their process for evaluating transfer credit for student veterans. The determination of courses accepted is most often decided by individual colleges and programs of study. UNL has developed a very positive program in which students have the opportunity to apply credit from military experience to satisfy one of ten required general education outcomes.

Table 4.22 In-state tuition rates for all honorably discharged veterans?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	No, but under discussion.		N	
Michigan State University	Yes, with time limits and conditions to establish residency	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes, with one year honorable service.	Y		
Penn State University	No		N	
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Yes	Y		
University of Illinois	No, the student must be a state resident.		N	
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	No, must be a resident or have lived in the state for 12 months.		N	
University of NE-Omaha	All active duty military (including Nebraska Guard) and their dependents that are stationed in Nebraska receive in-state, or resident, tuition rates without being a Nebraska resident. Students must complete and have notarized the Application for Residence Classification for Tuition Purposes and submit to MaV USO with a copy of the documentation required under "Section G. Active Duty Military".		N	
University of Wisconsin	No		N	
Responses for this question		4	6	5

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.22

Providing in-state tuition rates for honorably discharged student veterans and dependents is being offered by only 33 percent of responding Big Ten institutions. This decision by universities often involves not only college administrators, but requires state legislation. Like Nebraska, many states offer in-state tuition rates for military members and sometimes their dependents living in their state. This item will be mentioned in Chapter six, since it has received much national attention.

Table 4.23. Yellow Ribbon Program sponsorship				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Yes, at the \$10,500 max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level for a maximum of 40 students, as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
Northwestern University	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs.	Y		
Ohio State University	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
Penn State University	Yes, at a full percentage for all programs except medical school, and a fixed percentage for law school	Y		
Purdue University	Yes, at the \$7,000 max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level, for a maximum of 50 students as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Yes, at the \$2,500 max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes, at the \$25,000 max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
University of Minnesota	Yes, at the \$ 1,000 max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Yes, at the unlimited max school contribution level per undergraduate student per year level as per the US Department of Veterans Affairs	Y		
Responses for this question		13	0	2

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.23

Participation in the Yellow Ribbon Program includes 100 percent of respondents. It should be noted that a university's financial contributions are sometimes limited and the numbers of students who can participate also may be limited. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln participates in the Yellow Ribbon program at the "unlimited" level for all students who qualify.

Table 4.24 Policies and Instructions for tuition/ fee reimbursement and readmission for military members who are activated?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Yes, they are available for viewing on the Veteran Support Services webpage. http://veterans.indiana.edu/deployment/index.shtml	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, we have written and posted policies for reimbursement and readmission for military called away for military duties.	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes	Y		
Penn State University	Yes	Y		
Purdue University	Yes, New excusal policy.	Y		
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Yes, our policy is written and originates from the Office of the Registrar	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Yes	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Could not locate, handled on case by case basis by student affairs		N	
University of NE-Omaha	UNO will provide a full refund or work with student for deployments and temporary duty requirements. A written policy was available for viewing on the Records and Registration website.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Yes, A student who'll be deployed before the end of the semester will have the option to finish or withdraw on a course by course basis. Those courses from which he/she withdraws will be back-dated so he/she gets a refund. His student account will be kept open during deployment plus following two semesters after return, so he/she can register at any time without re-applying.	Y		
Responses for this question		10	1	4

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.24

Many universities indicated they have written policies in place for fee/tuition reimbursement and readmission for military students who are called to active duty. A few have these policies clearly visible in writing and displayed on a website. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln said it handles these on a case-by-case basis, referring students to the Registrar. No written policies were found for withdrawal and readmission, specifically for student veterans who face activation.

Table 4.25 Academic or financial advising specifically tailored toward veterans/military members?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Yes, we conduct financial advising through our Veteran Support Center, Academic advising is provided by the academic units.	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes,	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes	Y		
Penn State University	No		N	
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Yes, on an individual basis	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes. Most information is available online in printable PDF form for student veterans to view and print if needed.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response		N	
University of Michigan	Yes, handled through the Student Veteran Office	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response		N	
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No response			U
University of Wisconsin	No		N	
Responses for this question		7	4	4

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.25

Financial advising specific to student veterans was said to be available upon request by 57 percent of the institutions responding. Many of the colleges who have veteran support offices indicated many financial questions are answered by their support offices. Most institutions said student veterans have specific financial aid advising available upon request. A few colleges attempt to answer basic financial questions on websites from the office containing the most veteran specific information. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln displays student veteran specific information on its Registrar's website.

Table 4.26 Waive application fee for veterans and military members?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	No		N	
Michigan State University	No response			U
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	No		N	
Penn State University	No		N	
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	No response			U
University of Illinois	Not formally, but can be done based on income		N	
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	No		N	
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Yes	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Yes	Y		
University of Wisconsin	No response		N	
Responses for this question		2	6	7

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take away points from table 4.26

Waiving the application fee for student veterans who self-identify is not commonly used at the Big Ten universities, with only 33 percent of responders indicating they have this practice. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has recently adopted this policy, effective for 2014 applicants.

Table 4.27 Parking considerations for disabled veterans?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Parking is the same as for all students	Y		
Michigan State University	Yes, we have the Veterans with Disabilities Assistance Program. https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/programs/veterans	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Parking is the same as for all students	Y		
Penn State University	All students with disabilities may request special compensation.	Y		
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Parking is the same as for all students	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	Disability considerations are handled by the Office for Disabilities on a case by case basis.	Y		
University of Minnesota	No response			U
University of NE-Lincoln	Parking is the same as for all students	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No response			U
University of Wisconsin	Parking is the same as for all students	Y		
Responses for this question		9	0	6

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.27

All responding schools have programs in place where any student with disabilities can register and be evaluated for special compensation. Only Michigan State University identified a program specifically for student veterans with disabilities.

Table 4.28 Many veterans are transfer students and would live off-campus. Do you offer housing locator assistance or special housing policies for student veterans?				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	No		N	
Michigan State University	Yes we offer available off-campus housing locator and external links for services which do the same.	Y		
Northwestern University	No response			U
Ohio State University	Yes	Y		
Penn State University	There is off-campus housing assistance available to all students.			U
Purdue University	No response			U
Rutgers University	No response			U
University of Iowa	Available upon request.	Y		
University of Illinois	Yes, for all students. We waive the requirement as freshman for student veterans	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U
University of Michigan	We have a special on and near campus housing for veterans and military. We have 0 interest loans to Veterans waiting on GI Bill Housing Stipend.			U
University of Minnesota	No response			
University of NE-Lincoln	Students over 19 years of age may choose to live off campus including veterans. UNL has an automated housing search engine available for student use online.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	No response			U
University of Wisconsin	No response			U
Responses for this question		5	0	8

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Take-away points from Table 4.28

All responding institutions have housing policies in place that include veteran students. Those allowing veterans to live off campus as freshmen are based on age and not veteran status. Many colleges have some type of housing locator assistance. Those institutions having veteran support offices sometimes aid in helping student veterans locate housing. One college mentioned having a system in place where student veterans could choose housing together much like a learning community.

4.4 Additional Ideas Mentioned by Big Ten Universities During Questioning

Table 4.29 Other mentioned incentives/programs for veteran and military member students.				
University Name	University comments	Response to Question		
		Yes	No	Unknown
Indiana University	Free math tutoring in the Student Veteran Organization Lounge. Cost benefit analysis done = 7.4 M to local economy- 500 students. Veteran/Indiana National Guard Tuition Residency Exception for military only. Remission of non-resident portion of credit hour fees for military and spouses. Fall 2013 National Guard Supplemental Grant. Graduation Honor Cords. Tutoring done by research librarians.	Y		
Michigan State University	Advanced Payment Request for beginning of semester. Children of Veterans Tuition Grant MSU Disabled Veteran's Assistance Program MSU written readmit policy for veteran students MSU written refund policy for veteran students In-state tuition rates for honorably discharged student veterans, spouses and dependents moving to Michigan within days following discharge with intent to establish domicile. Doane Student VET Success Scholarship MSU has approved the Red, White and Blue honor cords to be worn by veterans during commencement. MSU- Family Resources Center	Y		
Northwestern University	We surveyed the student veterans on needs.	Y		
Ohio State University	We believe that you must get faculty buy in and that veteran issues don't become another student life niche program. Tie everything you do into academic success. DOD- trained psychologists on campus. One-transcript – college of military, DOD Serve as community ambassadors.	Y		
Penn State University	For active duty military and drilling reservists our World Campus offers a military-grant-in-aid for undergraduate programs that lowers the per credit cost to \$49 over the amount paid by tuition assistance. This allows the student to take a 3 credit course for \$147 plus TA, and thereby conserve their GI Bill for post-service education. University marketing plan for veterans. Professional staff – all veterans	Y		
Purdue University	Vet success center includes certifying official/ work-study. New excusal policy.	Y		
Rutgers University	Vets committee – recommends policy changes for entire university. Veteran House has dedicated student tutors serving entire semester. Many veteran students sit on a variety of committees – contribute to veteran perspective.	Y		
University of Iowa	We have developed student veteran admission criteria	Y		
University of Illinois	Faculty and Staff Development. Admissions send email – proactive recruitment. POC in every college.	Y		
University of Maryland	No response			U

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Table 4.29 Other mentioned incentives/programs for veteran and military member students.
continued

University of Michigan	We are a Vet-success campus Special out-of-state waiver for Active Duty military and their families while stationed in Michigan. All Post 9/11 GI Bill tuition is pre-funded into student accounts prior to VA payout. Re-admittance for deployed service men and women. Special recognition upon graduation. Veteran Friendly faculty and staff cards. Coordinate Veterans Week Veteran/Military meet and greet. Special faculty/Staff/Student Veterans appreciation lunch. Special on and near campus for housing for veterans and military. 10. 0% interest loans to veterans waiting on stipend.	Y		
University of Minnesota	One-stop-shop : held in high regard by other institutions nationally.	Y		
University of NE-Lincoln	Developed procedure for receiving educational credit for life and military experience. UNL has established a staff/faculty mentorship program. We have a student veteran break-out session during new student enrollment.	Y		
University of NE-Omaha	Exceptional veteran support office facilities.	Y		
University of Wisconsin	Held a separate career fair. Personal contact works well. Madison veterans system: webpage displaying Vet information.	Y		
Responses for this question		14	0	1

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Table 4.30 of all questions asked of the universities in this professional project.

The indicators in the table “Y”, “N”, and “U” represent the same conditions as in the previous tables. The column to the far right labeled “Percentage Using This Item” shows the percentage of Universities that responded who said their program contain some form of the item identified in a particular question.

4.5 Identification of Student Veteran Program Best Practices for the Big Ten Universities

Table 4.30. Identification of Student Veteran Program Best Practices for the Big Ten Universities

Veteran Support Program Elements Used by the Universities of the Big Ten Conference	Indiana University	Michigan State University	Northwestern University	Ohio State University	Penn State University - World	Purdue University	Rutgers University	University of Illinois	University of Iowa	University of Maryland	University of Michigan - Ann	University of Minnesota - Twin	University of Nebraska - Lincoln	University of Nebraska - Omaha	University of Wisconsin	Percentage Using This Item
Table 4.3 Track/Count veterans, military members, dependents	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.4 Use Facebook or Twitter To Contact SVMM	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.5 On-line Degree Programs	Y	Y	U	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	N	U	Y	U	U	71
Table 4.6 SVMM Orientations	Y	U	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	N	U	Y	Y	Y	89
Table 4.7 Military Base/Post or Guard/Reserve Close Proximity	N	U	U	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	U	Y	Y	N	50
Table 4.8 VA Center in Area	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.9 Have a Veteran Support Office	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	N	Y	Y	70
Table 4.10 Is Veteran Support Office Professionally Staffed	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	N	Y	Y	70
Table 4.11 SVMM Study Area: computer, Tables	Y	U	U	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	88

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Table 4.30.
continued

Veteran Support Program Elements Used by the Universities of the Big Ten Conference <i>Continued</i>	Indiana University	Michigan State University	Northwestern University	Ohio State University	Penn State University - World	Purdue University	Rutgers University	University of Illinois	University of Iowa	University of Maryland	University of Michigan - Ann	University of Minnesota - Twin	University of Nebraska - Lincoln	University of Nebraska - Omaha	University of Wisconsin	Percentage Using This Item
Table 4.12 Encourage Use of Programs	Y	U	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.13 SVMM Specific Webpage Information	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.14 Sponsor a Student Veteran Organization	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	U	Y	100
Table 4.15 Key Office Personnel Trained on SVMM Needs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.16 University Sponsored Veteran Task Force Committee	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.17 Mentoring Program for Student Veterans	N	U	U	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	N	Y	62
Table 4.18 SVMM Transition Course	Y	Y	U	N	N	U	U	N	Y	U	N	U	N	N	N	43
Table 4.19 Counseling and Healthcare Assistance for SVMMs	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	U	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	92
Table 4.20 Associations: ACE, SOC, GI-Jobs, etc.	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.21 Educational Credit for Life Experience or Military/Course	Y	U	U	Y	Y	U	U	N	U	U	N	U	Y	U	U	25

Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

Table 4.30.
continued

Veteran Support Program Elements Used by the Universities of the Big Ten Conference <i>Continued</i>	Indiana University	Michigan State University	Northwestern University	Ohio State University	Penn State University - World	Purdue University	Rutgers University	University of Illinois	University of Iowa	University of Maryland	University of Michigan - Ann	University of Minnesota - Twin	University of Nebraska - Lincoln	University of Nebraska - Omaha	University of Wisconsin	Percentage Using This Item
Table 4.22 In-State Tuition for Honorably Discharged Veterans and Military Members	N	Y	U	Y	N	U	U	N	Y	U	Y	U	N	N	N	33
Table 4.23 Yellow-Ribbon Program	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100
Table 4.24 Tuition/Fee Reimbursement and Readmission Policies when Activated	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	U	Y	U	N	Y	Y	90
Table 4.25 Financial Advising for Student Veterans	Y	Y	U	Y	N	U	U	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	U	N	57
Table 4.26 Waive SVMMS Application Fee	N	U	U	N	N	U	U	U	N	U	N	U	Y	Y	N	33
Table 4.27 Parking Consideration for Disabled Student Veterans	Y	Y	U	Y	Y	U	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	100
Table 4.28 Housing Locator Assistance for Student Veterans	N	Y	U	Y	U	U	U	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	U	U	100

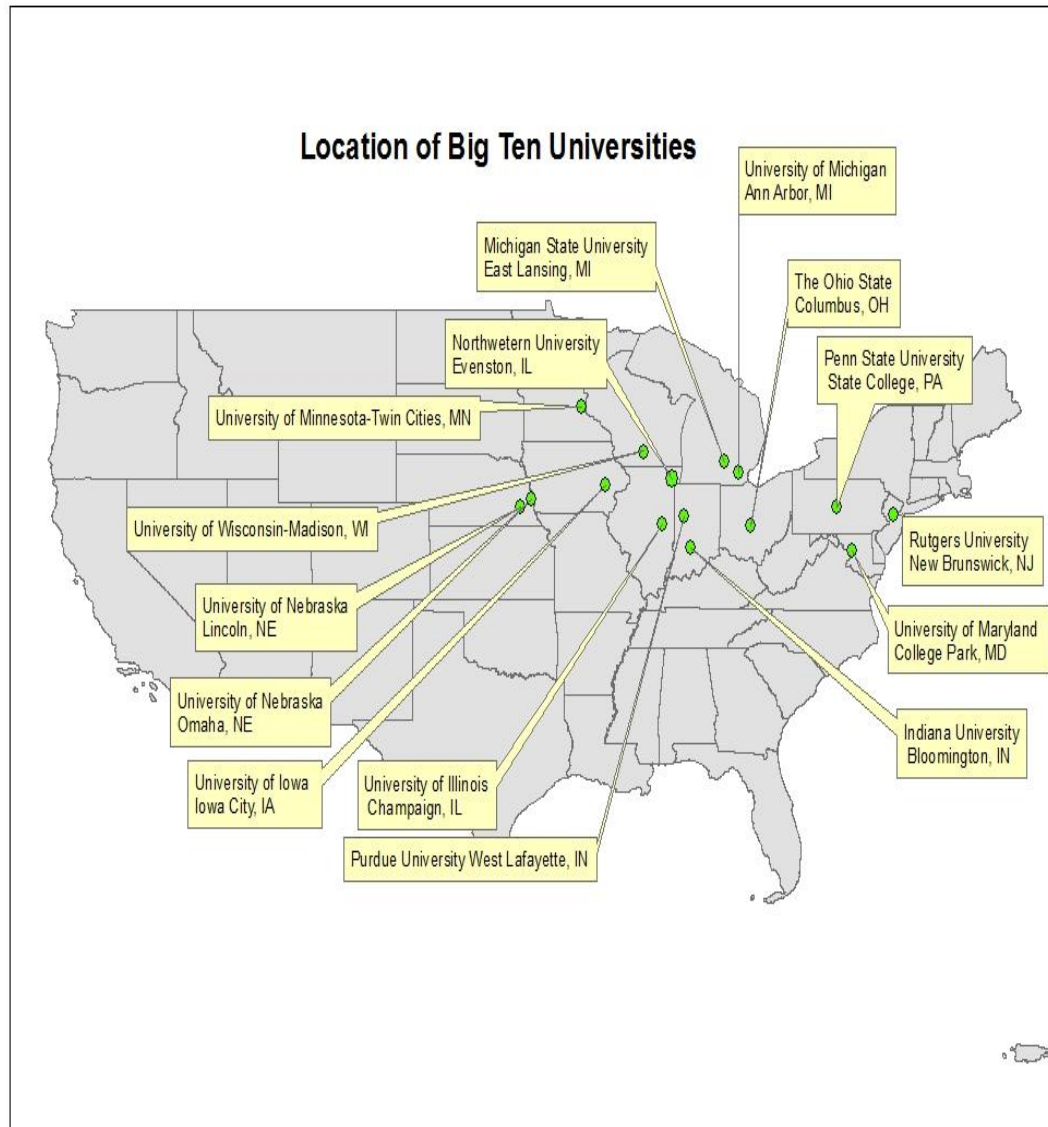
Source: Author's survey of Big Ten universities (see Appendix 6) and university websites

CHAPTER FIVE

Maps Displaying the Projected Veteran Population, Big Ten University Locations and Competitive Community Colleges

This chapter provides the UNL's Student Veterans Task Force with Geographic Information System maps. The first map, entitled "The Location of the Big Ten Universities" is labeled Map 5.1. This map shows the locations of the Big Ten University campuses. The second map, (Map 5.2) entitled "Regional Community Colleges and Military Units" displays the locations of the primary community colleges which are considered competitors and suppliers of student veterans and military members to UNL. It also shows the locations of military units in the region. The third map, (Map 5.3) entitled "2014 Veteran Population by County", shows the locations of the 2014 veteran population for Nebraska and for the veteran population within a 50 mile commuting radius around the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the years, 2013-2018.

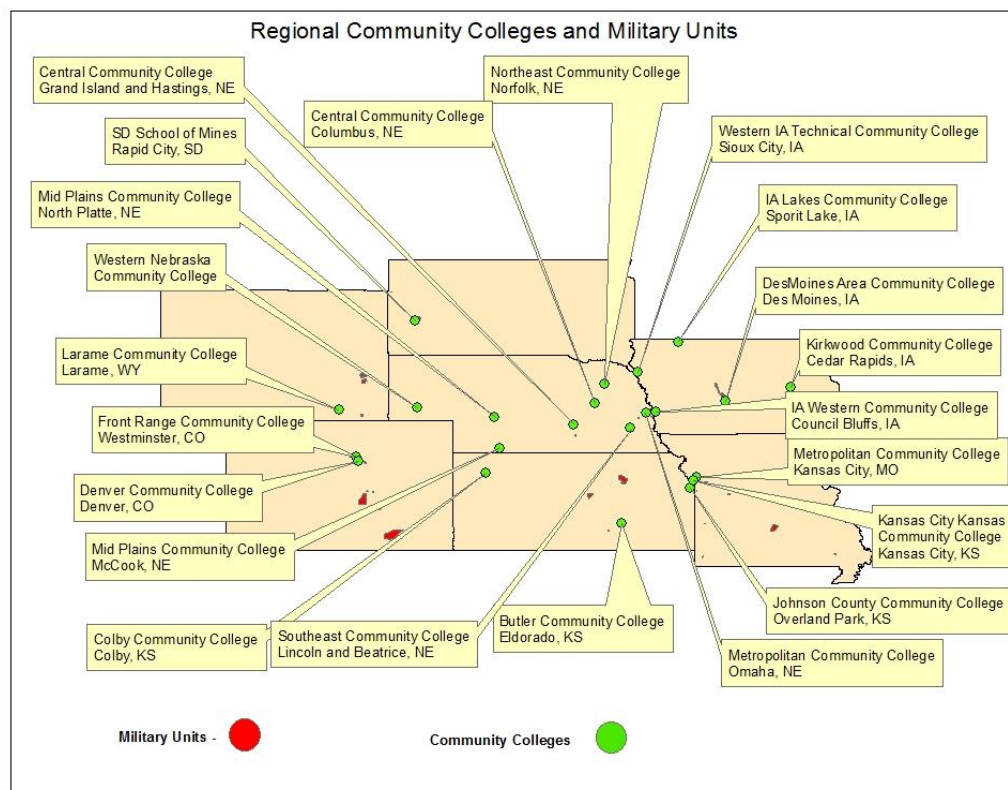
5.1 Locations of Big Ten Universities



Map 5.1. Location of Big Ten Universities
Source: Big Ten University websites

5.2 Regional Community Colleges and Military Units

Regional community colleges and military units are displayed in Map 5.2. These community colleges, geographically located in the central United States, are competitors for the student veteran population. These institutions are not only competitors for entry level students, but are also potentially important to UNL's program. These institutions are providers of transfer students to UNL for those students wishing to pursue higher levels of education. This paper mentioned earlier that student veterans are often transfer students from other colleges they have attended. Map 5.2 also displays the locations of military units that can provide support for student veterans.



Map 5.2. Regional Community Colleges and Military Units

Source: UNL Professional Staff and Community College websites for location

5.3 2014 Veteran Population by County

Student veteran population projections provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are useful for determining the stability and size of the future veteran population. Population information is visually displayed on Map 5.3, which shows the population projections for 2014. This map and its accompanying table show the number of veterans in 2013 aged 17 thru 44 within a 50 mile commuting distance of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. It also shows the projections for the years 2014 through 2018. This information could be important to UNL administrators for determining the resources to target toward veteran support programs and possible areas of focus for advertising decisions. The information provided by the VA are derived the *Veteran's Population Projection Model 2011*. This model provides living Veteran counts by key demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, period of service, and race/ethnicity at various geographic levels. It considers military separations, mortality and migration of individuals. See Appendix H for a full explanation provided by the VA Office of the Actuary.

The veteran population projections five years into the future show this area experiencing a slight decrease in veteran population of 1425 over the next five years. The 2018 population is projected to be 19,671 veterans aged 17 thru 44 within the 50 mile radius of Lincoln Nebraska.

2014 Veteran Population by County

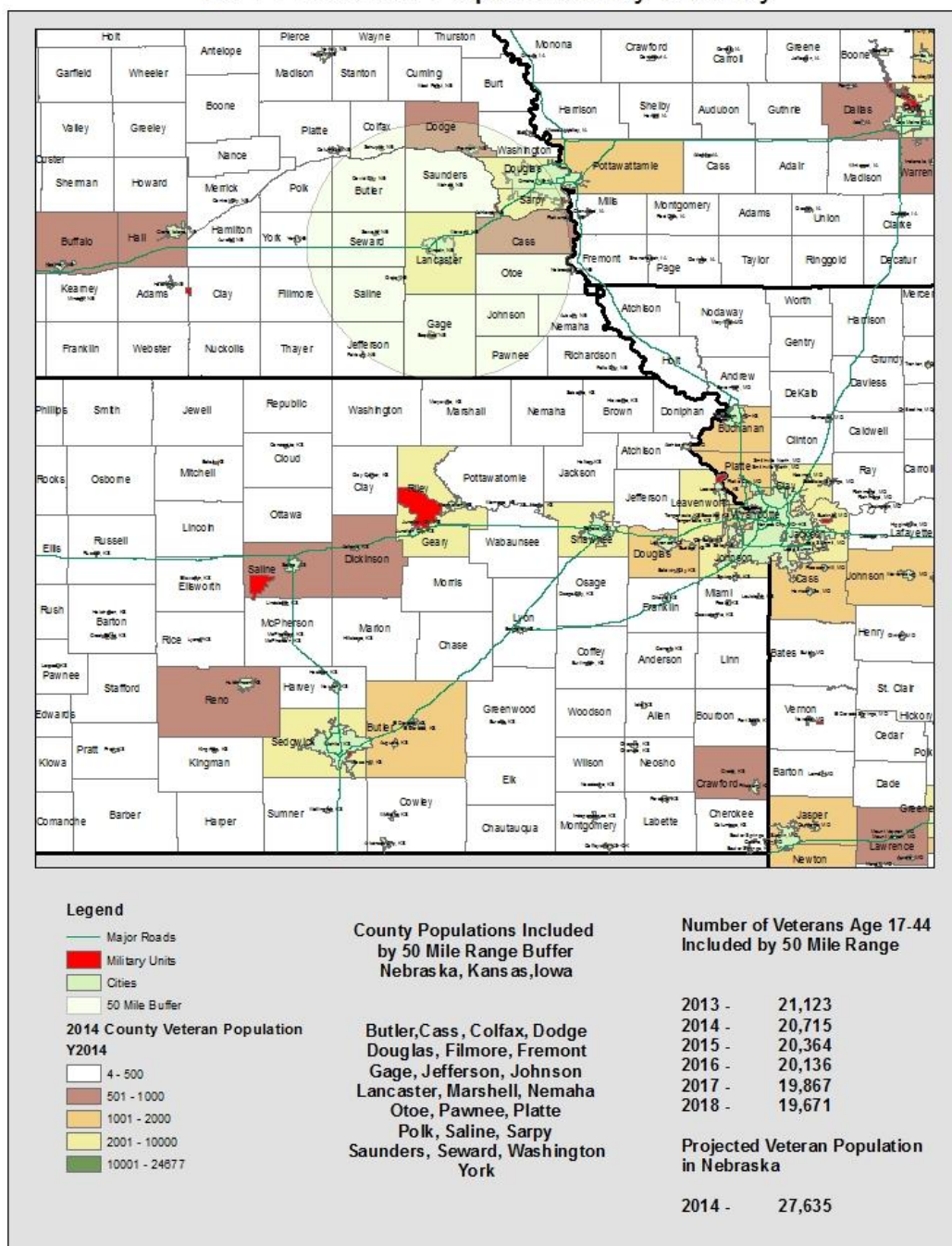


Figure 5.3. 2014 Veteran Population by County

Source: (United States Department of Veterans Affairs. National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics)

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions and Recommendations for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

6.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this professional project has been to research options and alternatives used in student veteran support programs of the Big Ten universities and to provide this information to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as a means to assist UNL's Student Veteran Task Force in considering improvements to the University's student veteran support programs. Universities of the Big Ten Conference are taking steps to welcome student veterans, military members and dependents into their student populations. The findings in this paper show these universities each pursuing their own blend of support programs and ideas.

The UNL Student Veteran Task Force is the primary client or stakeholder in this professional project. The Task Force is responsible for recommending change to better serve the needs of the UNL SVMM population.

To identify options for UNL's student veteran support program this project commenced with a search for creditable ideas that could lead to improvement of UNL's program. Literature reviews showed multiple, often overlapping, resources offering ideas to build support programs for student veterans. Universities are holding conferences and discussions with trained professionals to decide how to best serve this diverse student veteran and military member sub-group. Some of these literary sources report on surveys of university programs across the United States. The American Council on Education

(ACE) had surveyed populations of student veterans to determine their educational challenges and wishes. For this project, library sources, discussions with professional groups, such as the UNL Student Veteran Task Force, and website reviews all provided information needed to establish some of the typical elements used in university student veteran and military member support programs.

The information gathered was used to develop a questionnaire which was reviewed and critiqued by the UNL SVTF. The questionnaire was then distributed to the universities of the Big Ten Conference. This group of universities was chosen because of UNL's recent entry into the conference. Schools in the Big Ten Conference are often the comparative body for other studies now occurring at UNL. The purpose of this information gathering was not to simply copy ideas from other member universities, but rather to learn from their successes and failures and attempt to identify a few program elements which work for them. The questionnaire feedback and personal contact provided input into a comparative analysis, where university responses were compared side-by-side to determine how many of these universities include each element in their programs. Questions with percentages above 50 percent or more are called "Best Practices" and receive increased attention in the recommendations section in this chapter.

The recommendations will allow the UNL Student Veteran Task Force to evaluate support program ideas for implementation as part of UNL's student veteran support programs. Of course, the extent of UNL's implementation of the recommendations on the university's will and available resources. It should be noted that the programs of the other Big Ten Universities have not been idle while this project was occurring. Many university programs have continued to evolve and have undoubtedly

adopted changes which were not present during the questioning process of this professional project.

Geographic Information Systems maps are a valued tool for conveying information to stakeholders. This project produced three maps which the UNL Student Veteran Task Force can utilize in its decision process. Map 5.1 displays the locations of the Big Ten Universities in relation to each other on a United States map. Typically, the eastern portion of the United States has greater population densities and this should be considered in the evaluation process. Map 5.2 presents a central United States regional map showing the names and locations of the community colleges which are both competitors and feeder institutions for student veterans, military members, and dependents of military members. Map 5.3 shows the central region of the United States with portions of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri. Total of veteran populations per county are depicted with color-coded range. The location of the UNL campus is identified, with a fifty-mile buffer around it. This map identifies the veteran populations in the counties which intersect the buffer. This population is projected into the future, (to 2018) thus showing the estimated veteran population within a reasonable commuting distance of the UNL campus. This information will be useful as the UNL Veterans Task Force and administrators determine future programs and resources for the student veteran population at UNL.

6.2 Recommendations

The options and recommendations to the UNL Student Veteran Task Force presented in this section, are believed to be founded on sound academic theory and proven practice. Recommendations are based on inputs from creditable literary sources, informed university professional staff, and conclusions based on comparative analysis of questionnaire responses from Big Ten Universities. Many of the program ideas and elements have more than one option. Positive and negative aspects of several of the recommendations are presented. Some of these recommendations require additional funding to be available and so they will be considered longer term possibilities.

6.2.1 Track/Count Student Veterans, Military Members and Dependents

Immediate Action:

Recommend continued identification and tracking of student veterans, military members, and dependents (SVMM).

- Continue the self-identification question asked on the admission application and continue to waive the application fee, as this improves the likelihood of self-identification. Be sure this fee waiver policy is identified and understood in the directions applying to this question.

Future Action:

- Expand the question, if possible, to break SVMMs into groups, such as: active duty, some previous military experience, ROTC, Guard/Reserve, and military

dependent. Each of these groups has differing needs and is often served by different offices at UNL.

- Record this information in a database viewable by those serving this SVMM group. This information may be required in the future to determine graduation rates, specifically for SVMMs. These data could become an instrument for tracking student progress through graduation if requested by the UNL leadership and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Accurate information, accessible by all who need it, is helpful in any successful program. Currently at UNL, information collected including SVMM numbers, group configuration, and graduation rates, is only available if pieced together from multiple sources. This information should be available to college administrators without having to rely on information captured by the UNL Student Veteran Organization (UNLSVO). These data, if accessible, could provide for planning purposes, the support offices with preliminary numbers of students needing their services. This information could provide a way to connect UNL mentors with those needing help in the same majors and interest. Breakout sessions for briefing SVMM students could be individualized to student needs.
- The database of SVMM information is useful, but sensitive in nature. It should be located in a place updated and maintained by UNL professional staff. The UNLSVO has only the office amenities to conduct RSO business.

6.2.2 Use of Facebook, Twitter and Social Media to Contact SVMMs

Immediate Action:

Continue to use social media methods as one of many ways to reach the SVMM population.

- All responding Big Ten Universities use types of social media to get the word out to SVMMs. This includes: important information, event notifications, and to draw attention to more detailed email messages and websites. Several responses from universities said social media is, predominantly, the way this generation communicates. Students receive large numbers of email messages each day. Without a way to attract attention, UNL business emails can go unread and into spam filters. UNL uses the UNLSVO Facebook accounts to distribute information to the UNL SVMM student base. Information is distributed when time permits, as the UNLSVO office is occupied only two days a week.
- The main disadvantage of the current method is the time requirements to update ever-changing email addresses of students. The student email addresses most likely to be current are those contained in the UNL Blackboard program and not available to the UNLSVO without special permission. Facebook, too, has its limitations. The volume of Facebook posts makes the current message soon disappear to the bottom of the page and possibly not be read for days, if ever.

Future Action:

Utilize university professional staff to stay current on social media use.

- Social media communication will continue to grow in the future. No one method of contact is fitting for all circumstances. The UNL student veteran program could develop a communication method based on sending mass texts to students. Since most students carry smart phones and receive multiple texts, they are much more likely to read a text than an email in a timely manner. Such text messages should be kept short and simple, designed to prompt the reader to then see more detailed information on a website or newsletter containing information pertaining to the SVMM population. Updating phone numbers and email addresses will continue to be a challenge.
- Utilizing work-study students could be an effective way of maintaining social media sources, as they are often tech-savvy and connected with their peers.

6.2.3 On-line Degree Programs

Immediate Action:

Recommend offerings of on-line and hybrid degree programs. Responding universities to this project's questionnaire noted the popularity of on-line degree programs to the student veteran population and many other non-traditional students.

- On-line degree programs are appealing to student veterans who are balancing family obligations, work and school. Some must work to supplement their educational benefits. Job requirements can involve rotating schedules which do coordinate well with traditional university classes. Sometimes on-line classes or hybrid classes where attendance is flexible are the only option for SVMMs to use

their earned benefits. UNL currently offers four online undergraduate programs and over forty online graduate programs. These programs offer the flexibility and convenience military personnel and their families need to further their education and advance their careers.

- Another reason on-line courses and programs can be valued by some military students stems from their obligations to military duties. Military members, such as those belonging to National Guard and Reserve units, are required to complete periodic training events to maintain their currency. Training events and medical appointments can remove SVMDs from class for short periods of time. Guard and reserve units are a part of the ready military force and are sometimes required to serve deployments which can last a year or more. Students belonging to these units must either withdraw from school during this period or take on-line classes while deployed.

Future Action:

Given the popularity of on-line courses, UNL should continue to expand offerings of on-line classes and degree programs.

- If entire degree programs are not suited for being accomplished completely on-line, perhaps individual courses could be taught on-line to UNL student military members during deployments. This option would also be appealing for nontraditional students who may be required to work in an alternative work schedule for a period of time. This would keep the students involved in their programs, thereby requiring less time to complete the programs.

6.2.4 Student Veteran, Military Member, and Military Dependent Orientations

Immediate Action:

Continue SVMM breakout sessions for student veterans to provide useful information during UNL New Student Enrollment. The information provided should be evaluated by the UNL Student Veteran Task Force to determine what content is needed. The information should be organized in a document and placed on the UNL student veteran website for viewing and printing by students.

- Student veteran orientations and breakout sessions during new student enrollment activities are popular elements included in the programs of the Big Ten Universities, with 90 percent of responding universities having a program in place. UNL's breakout session has worked well as a way of informing SVMMs of the existence of UNL programs and resources available. Students are made aware of key organizations and offices that could assist them if needed. Contact information is verified during this session to improve the likelihood of future contact. This is one of UNL's best tools for being able to advocate for SVMMs in the future.
- Campus veteran coordinators from other universities stressed the idea that oral briefings should be backed up with written information or website information since students are likely to be overwhelmed with information on their first day.

Future Action:

- Other universities take differing approaches to meeting and orienting the SVMM group. Some institutions provide information at occupied tables that students pass

as they progress through enrollment activities. A few institutions that have full-time veteran coordinators contact the SVMMs on an individual basis before the students come to campus. In most cases, this greeting and connection approach is available on campuses with full-time professional staff and resources. The outreach involves a variety of things including: housing availability information, campus tours, oral and written campus resource listings, and connection with peers who are often members of the student veteran organization. In one case the school places a hold on enrollment until the SVMM attends a campus student veteran resources briefing at his or her veteran support office. Many universities commented that their student veterans enjoy social events. Some universities combine their SVMM orientations with a social event. These events bring together new students with existing successful students and university staff and faculty who are interested in SVMM success. The author recommends UNL consider a combined social event, such as this, in the future. It could be a good first opportunity to welcome and gain student confidence, while at the same time introduce new students and faculty to information and each other. This approach would, however, require resources and coordination beyond the scope of UNL's current student veteran organization.

6.2.5 Military Base/Post and Guard/Reserve Units in Close Proximity

Immediate Action:

UNL staff should endeavor to know the locations and key educational contacts at its regional military units and local community.

- This recommendation is not suggesting aggressive, active recruitment methods because these are not condoned by the majority of Big Ten universities. This recommendation is instead focused on information and problem solving. Challenges facing student veterans and military members are often closely connected to obligations to military service. To meet these challenges requires an understanding of military culture. Understanding unit deployment schedules and training events can help colleges prepare for possible student military member challenges.
- Military units are team oriented and often contain resources which are valuable to SVMMs attending college. They employ professionally trained staff who at times could be used for training purposes for military cultural understanding for faculty and staff. The local community is also well equipped to provide many kinds of help to SVMMs if needed. UNL should utilize these available resources for their staff and faculty training and also for specific student health concerns. These professionals outside campus are often specialists in their fields and are sometimes funded by grants and outside sources offering their services free of charge.

Future Action:

Nebraska is proud of its veterans, and this is displayed by the available resources that are available to help this group try to return to society and normal lives. UNL should take appropriate steps to identify itself as a great educational opportunity for potential students at military units in this region.

- These potential students have one of the best educational benefits ever offered and are often looking for an educational home. Some, who are capable of college completion, are sometimes first generation students and occasionally poorly informed about the full benefits of a major university college experience.

6.2.6 VA Center in The Area

Immediate Action:

Utilize available resources for student needs and for staff and faculty training.

- UNL has a VA Regional Office located in close proximity to its campus, and the VA Regional Medical center is 50 miles away in Omaha. There are also VA sponsored offices with professionally trained staff for health and mental health needs. All of the project questionnaire responders have VA connections similar to UNL and are utilized by the campuses.

Future Action:

Gather information and contacts available through local VA agencies to be made available to student support staff.

- If this information were available, it could be used for training and referral purposes on a variety of subjects concerning SVMMs at UNL.
- Much of this information should be made available to SVMM students through webpage links.

6.2.7 Veteran Support Office

Immediate Action

Research shows many advantages for establishing a student veteran support office. Twelve universities of the Big Ten Conference reported they have some type of veteran support services offices operated by a professional staff person. UNL needs to continue to build its student veteran program.

- This improvement can occur in differing forms of structure. Some student veteran support programs are centralized. They, for example, rely on clearly identified veteran support programs with professional staff to advocate for the student veteran, military member and dependents group. Others are de-centralized, relying on individual student support service offices to determine appropriate support for student veterans and military members.
- Identify staff members trained in SVMM affairs. At present, UNL is utilizing a decentralized method of SVMM support. UNL employs many highly quality professionals who work in their offices to support SVMM needs. The challenge for the SVMM student under the de-centralized approach is to locate the specific person who can assist them. Often, subject matter experts for veteran support are not identified as such. Much time and effort has been spent by many of these people to be the best sources of information for student veterans.
- A student veteran information website would also be a useful for students to locate department subject matter experts located in various academic and support services.

Future Action:

The future of the UNL veteran support program office is currently uncertain. Clearly, UNL has many highly qualified staff to support student veterans in its present configuration.

- As a starting point, UNL should create a professional staff position for a Veteran Program Coordinator. This position could possibly be filled internally by a person currently advocating for UNL student program improvements. This would establish a “Go-To” person at UNL for student veteran concerns and reduce confusion among staff, faculty and students about who to speak with on veteran educational matters.
- This person should be provided an office that is clearly identified as the Office of Veteran Student Services. This office would serve more than function need. It would also be a symbol of recognition to the SVMM student body that they and their service are appreciated at UNL. It would support the network of professionals that exists at UNL. This office should be easily to access for students. The office should be spacious enough to provide a private office for the Program Coordinator and computer access and workspace for AmeriCorps and/or veteran work-study students to serve as program assistants. This office would have long distance phone capability to reach out to current and prospective students. The services this office could provide are extensive.
- The program coordinator would most likely serve as the sponsor for the student veteran organization (SVO). The SVO meeting area could be co-located with this office, could be close by, or in a completely separate location. Each configuration

has its positives and negatives, according to veteran coordinators responding to the questionnaire used for this project.

6.2.8 Professional Staffing for the Veteran Support Office

Immediate Action:

Create a full-time identified Student Veteran Coordinator. This position should be dedicated to SVMM educational service and not created as a secondary duty for a person fulfilling a different primary function. This position should be backed by university support.

- This project found that 70 percent of responding Big Ten Universities have an identified person directing the daily activities of the university student veteran program. Some university coordinators wear more than one hat, but they commented that their other responsibilities distract from their ability to serve as a student veteran coordinator. Other universities commented on their programs' increased capabilities if someone in authority is in the office every day. Overall educational success is most often noted as the reason behind this individualized service. Persons in these full-time positions often have access to student records thereby making contact and record updates much easier. Some university coordinators commented on how word of mouth between student veterans helps spread the word. Student veterans soon become accustomed to the individualized service and an identifiable location for service. Students experiencing difficulties have an identified point of contact. The advantage of this is that sometimes

student problems can be overcome before they escalate and the student withdraws from education.

Future Action:

UNL should continue to use student resources to augment the UNL student veteran program office staff.

- Many Big Ten universities utilize available AmeriCorps and work-study programs to the maximum extent, as they are state and federally funded programs.
- Direct student involvement has also been mentioned by other universities as a way to increase student understanding of available resources. If student military members serve in the office, it is likely to attract their peers.

6.2.9 A Student Veteran, Military Member, and Dependent Study Area

Immediate Action:

Continue to provide an office/ study space for student veterans and members of the UNL Student Veteran Organization.

- Most Big Ten universities indicated that they sponsor a registered student veteran organization (SVO), and in most cases provide a meeting area and some monetary support. Configuration, spaciousness, and available amenities like computers and furnishings vary greatly. Location also plays a role in the extent to which these study and meeting areas are used. Some universities that have an identified student veteran support office are co-located with a SVO meeting area. A positive aspect of this approach is increased student veteran traffic utilizing university

resources. If student problems are occurring, professional staff is present to help. Formal and informal peer mentoring could occur in the study space. Some survey respondents, who have larger study spaces with amenities, experienced increased traffic of SVMMs. This lends itself to having a more structured peer mentoring programs, much like the “Learning Communities,” available on some university campuses. Students with common backgrounds and like interests are brought together to study, to enjoy fellowship, and to overcome challenges. A negatives aspect of these co-located facilities is the increased noise. Some universities, such as UNL, have the SVO area in a separate location. A negative aspect of this configuration is lack of security for isolated unsecured spaces. Other students besides SVO members could use printing resources funded by SVO activities.

Future Action:

Ideally, UNL should have its student veteran study space located close to a future student veteran support office.

- This would increase use, visibility, and the opportunities for peer mentoring, both academically and for support through graduation.

6.2.10 Student Veteran and Military Member Webpage

Immediate Action:

Upgrade the current UNL student veteran support webpage. This page could be separate from the SVO webpage or combined together.

- All responding Big Ten universities indicated they have veteran-specific information posted on a webpage. The detail and complexity of the page varies according to functionality, university design criteria, and whether the site was professionally designed. The webpage is often referred to as a “One Stop” page because it generally brings together items of interest specific to students with some previous connection to the military.
- Some webpages at other universities include specific points of contact in academic and support offices where staff are trained to help student veterans. Often included are deployment and activation policies, transfer requirements specific to military service, and scholarship availability. Links are usually provided to support offices of key points of contact within those offices that are trained to help SVMM needs. Offices sometime included are: Financial Aid, Admissions, Career Services, Disability Services. Also, VA work-study information, newsletters and postings of campus activities are targeted toward the student veteran group. Usually, external links to local VA and state agencies are provided. Sometimes printable take-away university policies and directions designed to answer questions for SVMMs are available.

Future Action:

- UNL should try to expand the content and usefulness of its student veteran webpage. It is a source of information to potential students looking for a school to attend, and should be well organized and available from one central point.

6.2.11 Sponsor a Student Veteran Organization

Immediate Action:

Recommend continued support of the UNL Student Veteran Organization

- This support should include an assigned office space and normal support for office functions.
- Continued financial support is recommended because the UNLSVO office is providing the administrative needs for UNL internal programs, such as, the UNL Student Veteran Mentoring Program and the UNL New Student Enrollment breakout sessions. The UNLSVO is also expending monetary resources to promote external community help projects, such as National Day of Service.
- All Big Ten universities that responded to this project provided assistance and support a student veteran organization.

Future Action:

Future recommendations for the UNLSVO are dependent on UNL student veteran support program growth. The current configuration will require continued support for the UNLSVO for the administrative services it provides.

6.12 Trained Staff, Experienced in Student Veteran, Military Member and Dependent Challenges

Immediate Action:

Offer professional staff trained in their specific field and SVMM issues.

- All responding Big Ten universities have committees that meet periodically to discuss student veteran issues. In some cases these individuals are clearly identified on the veteran support webpage and their specific webpages for contact by student veterans if needed. One university has this committee identified as a student veteran support team, showing their support and training.

Future Action:

UNL should continue its training program for staff and faculty to build understanding.

- Training opportunities should be ongoing, due to staff turnover and changing issues. The number of people trained in SVMM issues should be expanded if possible. Many responding universities in this project commented on the value of staff and faculty training to increase understanding, since less than one percent of the population has ever served in the military. Research indicates this understanding can break down barriers and increase the graduation rate.

6.2.13 University Sponsored Veteran Task Force

Immediate Action:

The UNL Student Veteran Task Force should be continued. It is a good mechanism to advocate for veteran program change at UNL. The round table forum is an opportunity for staff and students to provide input.

- Big Ten universities support the concept of this committee, but have differing membership and structure. Most responding universities have programs similar to UNL. They are composed of department heads and individuals with training in student veteran affairs. Some allow student membership, such as a student organization president. These committees serve several functions: training, flow of information to administrators and back, a student voice, and a vehicle for implementing change.
- Among the few concerns raised are (1) that these committees function better away from administrators and (2) that the free flow of information does not exist due to the possibility of retaliation from superiors.

Future Action:

UNL should take steps to determine the needs and desires of the SVMM student population. A portion of the student population made up of those who have served in the military, active duty students, Guard/Reserve students and military dependents should be surveyed to provide feedback to the UNL Student Task Force. This could be another effective vehicle through which UNL can determine the direction of the student veteran program.

6.2.14 *Mentoring Program for Student Veterans*

Immediate Action:

Research shows student veteran mentor programs aiding educational success. The UNL Student Mentor Program should continue to help the SVMM population.

- This program, involving staff, faculty and students, is valuable and somewhat unique across the Big Ten universities.
- Many of the schools of the Big Ten have some type of mentoring program. There are differing approaches to reach the student veterans and military members, because they sometimes do not readily seek help. Some of these, like the UNL program, bring together staff, faculty and students. Other programs rely on mentoring to occur between peers. Peer mentoring has been formalized in some cases for schools maintaining a staff of professionals and work-study students to keep a central office and meeting area occupied and trained to provide information and help. Some institutions utilize informal peer mentoring because it occurs naturally anytime you bring people together with a common bond and interest. This seems to work the best in institutions offering a student veteran meeting area, often the student organization meeting area. The downside of the informal approach is it does not necessarily bring professional help together with those needing it.
- Mentors should be provided training on expectations, military culture, and sources for referral information. Ways should be found for mentors and students to meet in a social setting to build confidence and break down barriers. Differing times should be considered to accommodate more student attendance.

Future Action:

Mentoring at UNL should continue. Differing approaches should be considered and evaluated for results.

6.2.15 Counseling and Healthcare Assistance

Immediate Action:

Healthcare and mental health care are important factors in the educational success of student veterans. UNL should continue to offer training to its professional staff to increase understanding of military culture and issues associated with war injuries, deployments, and referral contact information.

- The majority of Big Ten universities employ staff to care for student veteran needs. The numbers of campus trained staff is generally influenced by the availability of VA resources in the immediate area and the size of the SVMM population.
- Many training opportunities are available as a result of having VA personnel close by, and they should be utilized when appropriate.

Future Action:

UNL should be mindful of the growth of student veteran growth and makeup. This can affect the necessity of increasing or decreasing staff size. Care providers can acquire information about deployment cycles from local units to be prepared for potential issues.

6.2.16 *Belong to Associations and Media Sites Supporting Student Veterans*

Immediate Action:

All Big Ten institutions responding in this project belong to various associations and media sites. The University of Nebraska –Lincoln should continue this practice.

- These sites serve as both a recruiting tool for universities and an information center for potential students looking for a university concerned about their needs. The tech-savvy students of today look at these sites, not only to see if a college is listed as being military or veteran friendly, but also to see what support services the university offers to support these claims.
- Investigations conducted by Congress in the recent past have focused on universities advertising less than truthful college and university claims of student veteran support. All universities serving student veterans, military members, and dependents receiving VA benefits and funding should provide more than just admission assistance, according to Congressional reports (U.S. Senate 2012, 1). Suggested program content is advised by the federal government in recent publications, specifically Executive Order 13607 and interpretations of it from the United States Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education. Implementation of E.O. 13607 - establishing principles of excellence for educational institutions serving service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members).

Future Action:

Continue connection to associations and media sites concerned with student veteran issues. These sites can be a good source for information concerning focused subjects, such as student veteran program issues.

6.2.17 Educational Credit for Life Experiences and Military Courses

Immediate Action:

UNL is a leader among Big Ten universities in providing an opportunity for some student veterans and military members to receive degree course credit for military life experiences. This acknowledged and written procedure at UNL should be continued and mirrored by other universities.

- All Big Ten universities responding in this project have written procedures for students to transfer and receive credit for previous classes and courses taken. Some have written policies openly indicating they would accept no credit from any type of military school. Other universities indicated they leave the decision up to individual colleges. Most credit of this nature can only be used for electives purposes.
- Providing an opportunity for deserving student veterans and military members to validate that they understand the intent behind the course objects and outcomes and have demonstrated this understanding through their service and deeds should continue.

6.2.18 Waive Application Fee for Those with Previous Military Service, Active Duty and Dependents Using Military Educational Benefits

Immediate Action:

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has recently announced the acceptance of this policy and should continue this practice.

- Student veterans sometimes do not self-identify. Questions can be worded poorly, leading to misunderstanding. If the question were to ask a person if he /she is a veteran with no other options, many would answer no, because they think it means a retired veteran or a combat war veteran. Others prefer not to self-identify due to the inappropriate questions sometimes asked by students and staff.
- This policy is not a best practice among the members of the Big Ten Conference, but probably should be. Literature shows advantages for both the university and student veterans. When identified, these students can be made aware of programs that can benefit their educational success. The university in turn can adjust programs to meet student needs.

6.2.19 In-state Tuition Rates for all Honorably Discharged Veterans and Military Members

Immediate Action:

Allowing in-state tuition rates for honorably discharged veterans and military members normally involves state laws in most states. This is currently not offered in Nebraska.

Four of nine responding Big Ten schools offer in-state tuition to honorably discharged service members. A few states have ways to establish residency based on time and certain conditions.

6.2.20 *Parking Considerations for disabled student veterans*

Immediate Action:

UNL should continue to consider student veteran disabilities as it does for all students.

- All responding universities of the Big Ten have disability programs in place. Many of these include parking if the student qualifies.
- Student veterans sometime receive a disability rating from the VA as they leave the military. They mistakenly believe this rating is what entitles them to accommodation, rather than university policies.
- The information regarding disability accommodation should be provided students during enrollment so students have a clear understanding of how the disability determination is made.

6.2.21 *The Yellow Ribbon Program*

Immediate Action:

Recommend continued support for student veterans, and dependents eligible to use the Yellow Ribbon Program and Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

- The Yellow Ribbon Program allows the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to be competitive and a good choice of schools for prospective non-resident students able to qualify for the program. This is an attractive benefit in Nebraska, since Nebraska does not offer in-state tuition rates to non-resident student veterans. In

essence, the Yellow Ribbon Program pays the difference between resident tuition and non-resident tuition rates through contributions from the college and the VA.

- All responding Big Ten universities offer the Yellow Ribbon Program to eligible students. The main difference between university program offerings is the restrictions the school places on the amount of money they will contribute and the number of students they will cover.

Future Actions:

The Yellow Ribbon Program participation should be continued if UNL wishes to remain an attractive institution to non-resident student veterans.

6.2.22 Reimbursement and Readmission Policies When Student Veterans are Activated

Immediate

Establish written policies for student veterans to follow if activated, as most Big Ten universities have established.

- UNL's Registrar's Office counsels student veterans on a case by case basis.
- The author could not identify a written policy for withdrawal and re-admission due to military activation.
- Written procedures are recommended for re-admission and withdrawal due to military deployment. These should be posted on the veterans information page.

This recommendation is based on suggestions contained in Executive Order 13607 and the SOC Consortium *Student Military Bill of Rights* identified on UNL webpages.

6.2.23 Housing Locator Assistance for Student Veterans

Immediate Action:

Continue housing locator assistance, policies allowing student veterans to live off campus and the webpage-based housing locator assistance.

- Housing locator assistance is provided by 100 percent of responding Big Ten universities. A few universities own off-campus housing. Many institutions have policies to waive on-campus living requirements for freshmen determined by age of student.
- One campus has arranged for veterans to live close together in a particular area of housing if they desired.

6.2.24 Financial Advising for Student Veterans

Immediate

Financial advising for student veterans and military members should be continued.

- Research indicated financial issues being one of the primary concerns for SVMs. These concerns include issues of how the university would respond to late VA educational payments, what is and is not covered by various VA benefits, and who at the university knows the answers and where are they located.
- Financial advising specific to student veterans was said to be available upon request by 57 percent of the institutions responding. Many of the universities that have veteran support offices indicated many financial questions are answered by

their support offices. Most institutions said student veterans had specific financial aid advising available upon request.

- The University of Nebraska-Lincoln displays student veteran specific information on its Registrar's website.

Future Action:

Establish written policies concerning veteran issues to promote understanding and minimize stress and distractions, which can interfere with educational success.

6.3 Final Thoughts

The student veterans and military members are important to us all. These volunteers have served our country for the benefit of everyone. One of the earned benefits for many veterans and military members is the opportunity to pursue a quality post-secondary education. This professional project has shown that a properly developed educational support program for SVMMS can have an impact on their educational success as well as improve the institution's ability to recruit and retain future student veterans. The past has shown us these men and women possess the capability to become formidable leaders of society. The decision a university makes to invest in programs to help these people reach their potential should not be based on economics alone. Their potential and value to society should be considered.

Appendix 1

Key Student Program Elements from the ACE Toolkit For Veteran Friendly Institutions

Creating a Successful Program

1. Top-Down Support
2. Funding
3. Admission, Readmission & Transfer Considerations
4. Tracking Veterans and Military Students
5. Veteran-Specific Space
6. Central Point of Contact

Admission & Financial Aid

1. Recruitment
2. Policies: Entrance Exams, Transcript Review, Early Registration, Housing Policies, Residency Policies, Withdrawal & Readmission Policies
3. Identification of Student Veterans
4. G.I. Bill Benefits
5. Yellow Ribbon Program
6. VA Work-Study Program

Academic Services

1. Staff & Faculty Training
2. Open Lines of Communication
3. Academic Preparation and Tutoring
4. Veteran-Specific Courses
5. Excused Absence (Withdrawal)
6. Accommodations

Appendix 1

(continued)

Student Services

1. Disability Services
2. Health Services
3. Mental Health Services
4. Career Services

Campus Life

1. Engaging Student Veterans
2. Staff & Faculty Training
3. Housing Policies
4. Dedicated Space for Veterans
5. Student Veteran Organization
6. Financial Aid
7. Diversity

Appendix 2

Victory Media & G.I. Jobs Military Friendly Schools Criteria

Financial Benefits

1. Yellow Ribbon Program
2. Military Scholarships
3. Military Discounts
4. Military Discounts for Dependents
5. In-state Tuition for Non-Residents
6. Credits for Military Service and Training
7. CLEP

Flexibility

1. Campus with Online
2. Campus Only
3. Evening Classes
4. Weekend Classes
5. On-base Program

Support

1. No Activation Penalty
2. SOC
3. Full-time VA Counselor on Staff

Appendix 2

(continued)

4. Supports Military Installation
5. Veterans Clubs/Groups
6. Veterans Web Page

Degrees Offered

1. Doctoral
2. Masters
3. Bachelor
4. Associate
5. Certification

Accreditation

1. Regional
2. National
3. Hybrid
4. Programmatic

Appendix 3

Military Advanced Education's (MAE's) Criteria for Evaluating Military Friendly Institutions

Military Culture

1. Is the school signatory to the Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding
2. Is the school a Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC)
3. Does the school offer ROTC
4. Is there an admission advisor exclusively for military students
5. Do the schools have website pages for military students
6. Is the school military spouse career advancement accounts (MyCAA) approved

Financial Assistance

1. Are active duty students offered in-state tuition
2. Does in-state tuition also apply to Reserve and National Guard
3. Are tutors offered at no cost
4. Is the school part of the Yellow Ribbon Program
5. Is tuition lower than the Yellow Ribbon minimum
6. Are there scholarships specifically for military students
7. Are there scholarships specifically for military dependents
8. Are credit hours within the DOD approved Tuition Assistance (TA) limits
9. Does the school reduce or waive fees for military students
10. Does the school offer book scholarships for military students
11. Is there a veteran work-study program
12. Are there tuition discounts for military students

Flexibility

1. Is there an online distance learning program
2. Does the school have an office on-base/post to assist veterans with counseling, registration and recruiting
3. Is there an online only program
4. Are classes held on-base/post
5. Does the school accept transfer credits from other schools
6. How many transfer credits does the school accept
7. What is the maximum number of ACE credits accepted
8. What is the maximum number of Dante's Exams credits accepted
9. Is there an activation penalty

Appendix 3 **(continued)**

Support Services

1. Is the faculty trained in veteran reintegration
2. Is there a dedicated office for military/veterans affairs that is part of the administration
3. Is there an on-campus veterans' organization
4. Is the student veteran's organization a chapter of Student Veterans of America (SVA)
5. Is the student veteran's organization officially recognized by the school
6. Is there an on-campus veterans center
7. Is there a full-time coordinator at the veteran's center
8. What is the size of the veteran center staff
9. Is there on-campus child care
10. Does the veterans center offer the following services/counseling:
 - a. Vet-to-Vet mentoring
 - b. Financial Aid
 - c. Disability
 - d. Career Advising

Appendix 4

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Student Military Bill of Rights

1. Accurate Info on schools programs requirements, accreditation, admissions, and student services practices.
2. Access basic college/university info and fees without disclosure of student personal info.
3. Educational planning and career guidance without high pressure registration and enrollment efforts from institutions.
4. A clear and complete explanation of course/program enrollment procedures and all resulting financial obligations.
5. Explore without coercion, all financial aid options before signing up for student loans or other financial assistance.
6. Accurate scholarship info, free of misleading scholarship offers based on military tuition assistance.
7. Appropriate academic screening and course placement based on student readiness.
8. Appropriate, accessible academic and student support services.
9. Clearly defined institutional drop/add and withdrawal policies and procedures including information about the impact of military duties (e.g., mobilization activation, temporary duty assignments) on their academic standing and financial responsibilities.
10. Clearly defined grievance/appeals processes.

Appendix 5

Implementation of E.O. 13607



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

JUL 13 2012

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

GEN-12-10

Subject: Implementation of E.O. 13607 – Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and other Family Members

Summary: This letter provides guidance to postsecondary institutions on implementation of Section 2 of Executive Order 13607 signed by the President on April 27, 2012: standardized cost form, Federal aid information, aggressive and fraudulent recruiting, accreditation, readmission, refund, individual education plans, and academic and financial counseling point(s) of contact.

Dear Colleague:

On April 27, 2012, the President signed Executive Order 13607, Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members. The published Executive Order is available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-05-02/pdf/2012-10715.pdf>. This Executive Order addresses key areas relating to Federal military and veterans educational benefits programs.

The enclosure to this letter provides additional guidance on how postsecondary institutions may comply with Section 2, paragraphs (a) through (h) of Executive Order 13607 covering the following areas: (a) standardized cost form, (b) Federal aid information, (c) aggressive and fraudulent recruiting, state authorization, misrepresentation, and incentive compensation, (d) accreditation, (e) readmission, (f) refund, (g) individual education plans, and (h) academic and financial counseling point(s) of contact. The guidance is provided in a question and answer format to best address issues raised by service members, veterans and their families, and institutions participating in the Federal military and educational benefit programs.

This guidance is provided to assist institutions with understanding how best to comply with Executive Order 13607 in these areas and does not make changes to the Executive Order. Affected parties are responsible for taking the steps necessary to comply pursuant to their arrangements with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

We thank you for your continued cooperation as we work to implement these principles.

Sincerely,

David A. Bergeron
Acting Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education

Attachment/Enclosure:
Executive Order 13607 Principles of Excellence Q&A

1990 K STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the Nation.

Appendix 6

Student Veteran Program Questions Pertaining to Big-10 University Student Veterans, Military Members, or Military Dependents

This information is being used by Daniel Moseman, a University of Nebraska (Lincoln) Graduate Student. My project topic seeks to identify Best Practices in Student Veteran and Military Member support programs at the Big-10 Universities. Much good work is being done in this area to provide our returning military members with a much better chance of college success than their predecessors. After reviewing the web-sites of many Universities it is evident no approach is more correct than another. I do believe however having a comparative list of our methods could be useful to us all in improving all our Veteran Student Programs. I intend to complete a summary report of these findings which may be used by all who participate. As a twenty-year Veteran I thank you for your hard work, continued effort and your time for answering these questions. Best Regards

My contact information will follow.

Daniel Moseman, Community and Regional Planning Graduate Student
University of Nebraska (Lincoln)
daniel.moseman56@huskers.unl.edu
HP: (402) 791-2511
CP: (402) 310-4406

Student Identification and Enrollment

1. How does this institution track/count its student Veterans and military members? Is this done through the registration process?
2. Does your university see Facebook or Twitter as a useful way to contact the Veteran and military member student population about items of interest and events?
3. What is your undergraduate/ graduate student Veteran/ military member student population?

4. Does your institution offer on-line degree programs that military members could complete completely on-line if deployed?
5. Are student Veterans/military members provided a separate briefing/orientation to point out the veteran specific resources available on campus/online and where they are?
6. Do you have a military post, base, or Guard Unit in close proximity to your campus location? If so, does anyone provide information in an attempt to attract student veterans and military members to your institution?
“Recruitment Methods”
7. Does your college have a VA Center in your area which provides an external support network and information portal for your student veteran and military member population?

Veteran Office, Staffing and Web-site Structure

8. Does your campus operate a separate Student Veteran/military member Information Success Center separate from the RSO organizations? Is it co-located with the Certifying Official or by itself?
9. How is the Veteran Student Center staffed: Professionally, Volunteers, work-study students?
10. Does your Veteran/Military Member Success Center have a meeting or study area with computer access and tables for this group of students?
11. How do you encourage student Veterans and military members to use your programs and resources?

12. Do you offer a webpage where student Veterans/military members can access information and links pertinent to this specific group? Do your students like having a “ONE STOP” information page or information clustered according to the needs of a specific group such as this?

University Support

13. Does the university support and actively nurture a Student Veteran Organization (RSO) with support such as a meeting area and activities?
14. Do your individual departments, such as, Admissions, Controller’s Office, MSU Counseling Center, Family Resource Center, Office of Financial Student Aid Veteran’s Benefits, Graduate School, Registrar’s Office, Veteran’s Certification, Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities, Student Affairs *maintain key points of contact experienced with student veteran/military matters?*
15. Does your school use a Veteran Task Force type of Committee that meets regularly to share information and discuss issues about your student veteran program? Are members of the RSO invited to share their input?
16. Does your University offer/support a Student Veteran, Military Member and dependent Mentoring Program made up of peers, staff or faculty?
17. Do you offer a college transition course/seminar for veterans, military members and dependents?
18. Does your institution provide counseling assistance for men and women Veterans and military member students who have experienced military sexual trauma or with issues related to PTSD?

19. Does your university normally belong to associations, such as G.I.-Jobs (Military Friendly), American Council on Education (ACE), Service Members Opportunity Colleges (SOC) consortium or others?

Military/Transfer Credit

20. Does your institution offer credit for military courses and life experiences of student Veteran/ military members when they enroll?
21. Are these military courses usually applied toward electives, actual course requirements, PE or just not accepted. Who is usually the decision authority on these matters? Are Military/Transfer Credit policies available for prospective student viewing?

Special Programs or Incentives

Does your institution offer any special programs, incentives, of fee waivers to encourage student veterans, military member or their dependents to pick your college and more importantly stay enrolled through graduation?

Examples:

- a. Waive application fee for Veterans and military members.
- b. In-state tuition rates for all honorably discharged veterans?
- c. Parking considerations or scholarships for disabled veterans?
- c. Yellow Ribbon Program sponsorship.
- d. Policies for tuition and fee reimbursement for military member who are activated?

- e. Policies to readmit service members into college without change in academic status if the service-related absence does not exceed five years?
- f. Many Veterans are transfer Student and would live off-campus. Do you offer housing locator assistance?
- g. Academic or Financial advising specifically tailored toward Veterans/military members?
- h. Other Ideas you have seen work which would be of interest to help create a successful Student Veteran Program?

Appendix 7

IRB Approval Letter for Big Ten Questionnaire

RE: Review of Research Questions for Dan Moseman

Accompanying

Appendix F

Rachel Wenzl [rwenzl2@unl.edu]

IRB-Approval

Hi Dan, My apologies on the delay of my response, but as we discussed during our meeting, **this project is not considered human subjects research as defined by 45 CFR 46. In defining this project, we have determined that this work does not meet the definition of human participants. While the research does include living individuals, it does not include procedures to obtain information about those individuals. Rather this project seeks organizational information. UNL IRB approval is not required,** however, you might think about seeking organizational permission before engaging in conversation with a specific person. This permission would only be documented with your records and not provided to us, if applicable. Again, apologies for the delay and I hope all goes well with the project. (This communication will be stored in the Research compliance Services secure drive for future reference documenting IRB approval not being required.)

Cordially,
Rachel Wenzl, CIP
Research Compliance Services Specialist
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Office of Research
Research Compliance Services
312 N. 14th St, Ste 209
Lincoln NE 68588-0408
rwenzl2@unl.edu
402-472-8196

From: daniel.moseman56@huskers.unl.edu [mailto:daniel.moseman56@huskers.unl.edu]

Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 8:35 PM

To: Rachel Wenzl

Subject: Review of Research Questions for Dan Moseman

Rachel Wenzl
Research Compliance Services Specialist
Office of Research
Research Responsibility

MS. Wenzl:

Thank you for talking with me on Monday March 25th. Your comments were most helpful. As I mentioned, these departmental procedure questions are intended to gather procedural information about veteran support programs of the Big Ten Universities. I am attaching my questions for your review as you suggested. Please let me know if I should make changes or delete an unsatisfactory question.

Best Regards Daniel Moseman CRPL Graduate Student

Appendix 8

Veteran Population Projection Model 2011

Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of the Actuary

The Veteran Population Projection Model 2011 (VetPop2011) provides the latest official Veteran population projection from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

VetPop2011 is an actuarial projection model developed by the Office of the Actuary (OACT) for Veteran population projection from Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 to FY2040. Using the best available Veteran data by the end of FY2010, VetPop2011 provides living Veteran counts by key demographic characteristics such as age, gender, period of service, and race/ethnicity at various geographic levels.

VetPop 2011 is the 6th generation of the OACT Veteran Population Projection Model with significant improvements in data, methodology, and modeling process. Unlike prior generations, VetPop2011 is a bottom-up model which projects future Veteran population at the county level as a starting point. The county-level projections are then aggregated to provide Veteran information at larger geographic units such as congressional districts, states, and at the national level. The VetPop2011 actuarial model uses both Veteran record-level data and survey data from a wide variety of sources including VA, Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), Department of Treasury's Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). These data sources enabled OACT to develop the VetPop2011 Model using advanced actuarial and predictive modeling methods for three critical VetPop2011 modules -- the Separation Module, the Mortality Module, and the Migration Module.

Military separations from the Armed Forces provide new entrants to the Veteran population. Thus, the Separation Module is an essential component of the Veteran Population Projection Model. VetPop2011 Separation Module first used annual military separation data from DOD between FY1975 and FY2010, and then developed a set of Time Series Models (ARIMA and the Multiplicative Winters models) to project annual separations for various age and gender groups. The Time Series Models were also developed separately for separations from Active Duty and Reserve Components due to the distinct differences in the characteristics of the two groups. The projected separations from Active Duty and Reserve Components by gender and age groups were then aggregated to the national level. VetPop2011 Model then used historical county separation data based on VA administrative records along with migration information from the IRS to project the county level separation from FY2011 to FY2040 using predictive modeling techniques.

Appendix 8

(continued)

The VetPop2011 Mortality Module uses mortality experience data that includes Veteran specific experience from VA administrative data and U.S. population experience data from SSA. Mortality projections are developed for each single year of age (17 and up) and gender using the Lee-Carter Model combined with credibility weighting and smoothing techniques. VetPop2011 projected lower mortality rate for older age Veterans due to longevity improvement. As a result of the longevity improvement, VetPop2011 projected a relatively larger Veteran population in the future than earlier generations of VetPop models. The Migration Module at the county level is a critical component to the bottom-up VetPop2011 model. The OACT team developed the county Veteran migration models for various age and gender cohorts using historical longitudinal data from VA, IRS, and ACS. Key factors for Veteran migration were developed using predictive modeling techniques and nonlinear logistic regression modeling techniques to project county-level Veteran migration by age and gender. The VetPop2011 Migration Model has shown that Veteran migration varies at the county level due to the costs of living and the unemployment rates of the county. With the significant enhancement of data and advanced modeling methods, the VetPop2011 projected more living Veterans in the future compared to previous projections from earlier VetPop models. The projected Veteran population increases include both the women Veteran and minority Veteran populations. Compared to the overall U.S. population, the Veteran population is getting younger, especially for the male Veterans. Another noticeable trend for the Veteran population is the projected higher growth in the Southern and Western regions. For detailed discussion of the VetPop 2011 Model, please refer to the OACT VetPop2011 Report to be released in early 2013.

For questions on VetPop2011 model, please contact the Office of Actuary:
Lijia Guo, Ph.D., ASA, MAAA
VA Office of the Actuary
E-mail: lijia.guo@va.gov
Phone: 202-461-1049

Appendix 9

Contact Activity with the UNL Student Veterans Task Force and the UNL Veteran Mentorship Group during 2013

February 2013: Met with Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. Explained intent of this professional project and received permission to proceed and meet with UNL Student Veteran Task Force and individual members.

February 20th: Author was asked to serve as AmeriCorps veteran representative to fill vacancy from student called away.

March 28: Attended Veteran Task Force meeting. Met with Deb Quinn, Certifying Official and discussed UNL procedures regarding student veterans using GI Bill educational benefits.

April 19: Met with members of the UNL Veterans Task Force. Discussed UNL Mentorship Program and upcoming training activities.

April 30: Spoke with UNL Financial Aid advisor concerning advising procedures offered student veteran and military members.

May 5: Attended Veteran Task Force meeting with Lt. Col Ford from Joint Chiefs. Discussed UNL Veteran Support Programs that have been established in the previous year.

June 3: Met with member of UNL Explore Center about their function in helping students determine a major.

June 15: Served as veteran representative at UNL booth during the Veteran Music Festival located at the Lincoln VA Regional Center with other members of the UNL Student Veteran Task Force.

June 27: Met with VA Secretary Shinseki as a student veteran. He passed on his thoughts and importance of teamwork and support for student veterans.

August 20: Attended UNL Mentor Group training, talked with mentors and task force members about subjects which should be included in upcoming training for mentors and when it should occur.

Appendix 9

(continued)

September 10: Sent Questionnaire to UNL Student Veteran Task Force members for feedback and option to ask further questions of the Big Ten Universities.

September 29: Responded to Assistant to Chancellor-Comm Relations about inquiries concerning UNL Student Veteran Organization membership numbers.

October 3: Served as panelist for UNL student veteran mentor training with students and task force members.

October 11: Attended meeting with Assistant to Chancellor-Community Relations and Assistant Director of Career Services. Talked about UNL veteran program issues and feedback from trip to the veterans conference at Purdue.

October 17: Attended first fall UNL Student Veteran Task Force meeting. Presented Big Ten University questionnaire results to members of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Veteran Task Force.

November 21: Presented professional project options and recommendations to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Student Veteran Task Force.

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