

Transition Courses for Veteran Students

Empowering the Heroes to Succeed in College

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Watch the Video!

This session was recorded – find the video
posted at:

www.College-Success.com/instructors



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Success Courses at UCSB

- ED 10: Intro to the College Experience
 - » Entering freshmen, Fall
- ED 20: University Success Course
 - » Freshmen and Sophomores, Winter and Spring
- ED 118: Transfer Success Course
 - » Entering transfer students, Fall and Winter
- ED 118V: Veterans Transition Course
 - » Entering veteran students, Fall



Special Thanks

- Jeff Harlig
- Kirsten Gabriel
- Jess O'Keefe



- Don Lubach, Assistant Dean of Students
First-Year and Graduate Initiatives
UC Santa Barbara



Agenda

- Veteran Students
- Unique Needs
- UCSB's Course
- Challenges
- Benefits
- Resources
- Veterans Resource Team



Today's Student Veterans

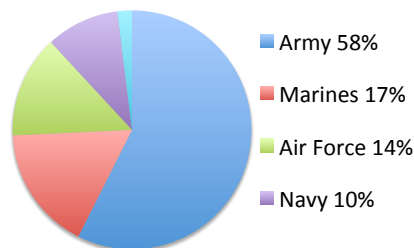
- 660,00+ undergrad students are Veterans (3%) and 215,000 (1%) are military service members on active duty/reserves
- 73% male, 27% female
- 15% are traditional ages of 18-23 years
- 47% have children and 48% are married
- 43% enrolled in 2-year and 21.4% in 4-year
- More likely to be first-generation and/or underrepresented ethnic/racial/SES

Dept. of Veterans Affairs



University of Wisconsin

- Status:
 - » 48% Veteran
 - » 28% National Guard
 - » 18% Family/dependent
 - » 13% Reserves
 - » 1% Active Duty
- 32% rate transition from the military to college as fair; 10% rate it poor or very poor
- 16% may leave due to health issues, VA benefit difficulties, and/or academic problems



Veteran Students

- 1.78 million members of armed services deployed to combat zones 2001-08
 - » 1/3 have served at least 2 tours in a combat zone
 - » 70,000 with 3+ deployments
 - » 20,000 with 5+ deployments



Department of Defense (2010)

*UCSB's Student
Veterans Association*



Combat and Disabilities

- 64% know someone seriously injured or killed
- 40% have been shot at
- 25% involved with physical ambush or assault

- 14% PTSD
- 14% Major Depression
- 19% Traumatic Brain Injury



The Threat of Suicide

- Percentage of national suicides in 2010:
 - » 22.3% Army
 - » 21.8% Marine Corps
 - » 9.7% Navy
 - » 9% Air Force
- Every day, 18 veterans die from suicide
 - » Of these, 5 are enrolled under VA care
 - » Three of these five veterans were patients with a known mental health condition
- Colleges can play an important role!

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



Needs of Veterans

- Academic = culture + expectations
- Social = friends, recreation, safe space, Veteran mentors
- Emotional/psychological = non-VA support services, coping skills, substance abuse
- System-navigation = housing, services, children's programs



Challenges That Vets Experience

- Loss of sense of purpose/identity
- Grief and survival guilt
- Physical disabilities
- Potential mental health issues
- Potential substance abuse
- Culture of academic setting
- Insensitivity by civilians



Veteran Identity Development

- Military identity:
 - » “warrior”
 - » combat vs. non
 - » *former* military
 - » branch and rank
 - » cultural norms
- Life-stage identity
- Patriot identity
- Other “otherness” - e.g., individuals forged in a crucible of discipline, danger, destruction



UCSB Transition Course for Vets

- Version of Transfer Success Course, ED 118
- ED 118 V is open to vets only
- Separate course, 4 units, Fall term
- Guest speakers from campus services (preference for military experience), Student Veterans Association, and local VA Office



Course Topics

- Academic culture and expectations
- Academic success skills (critical thinking and analytical writing)
- Veterans identity and experiences
- FERPA and HIPAA policies
- Adult learning models and theories
- Thriving after trauma
- Resilience and coping with stress
- Preparing for future career/grad school



Readings

- First-person narratives by veterans:
Hoge: *Once a Warrior, Always a Warrior*
Armstrong: *Courage After Fire*
- Andreatta: *Navigating the Research University* (3rd ed)
- Variety of articles on:
 - » veteran students
 - » resiliency and coping
 - » career planning



Assignments

- Weekly journals and reading critiques
- Experiential activities to use campus services
- Group project on issue related to veteran students (e.g., handbooks or videos for incoming veterans or faculty/staff)
- Final exam



Challenges

- Orientation to rank
- Resistance to “challenge authority”
- Discomfort with military resources
- Health and wellness
- “Gravity” inequity
- Insulated discussions



Benefits

- Safe place for discussing experiences and frustrations
- Smoothing the transition
- Enhanced skills/confidence with academic culture
- Increased use of campus health services
- Enhanced understanding of resiliency and coping strategies



Other Variations

- Creative writing courses
- History courses
- Entrepreneurship courses (EBV)
- Internship courses
- Training for serving military population



Resources

- This presentation (recording and slides)
- Resources for Campus Professionals
- Syllabi + Readings for ED 118V
- Great websites
- Videos + Films
- www.College-Success.com



Veterans Resource Team

The Veterans Resource Team (VRT) is an interdisciplinary group of staff and administrators from key departments across the UCSB campus who have come together to foster awareness of the student veteran experience and ensure that the needs of student veterans are being met.



Veterans Resource Team

Collaborating Offices

- Admissions
- Veterans' Certifying Official, Office of the Registrar
- Financial Aid
- Academic Advising
- Housing and Residential Life
- Office of Student Life
- Campus Learning Assistance Services
- Counseling Services
- Disabled Students Program
- Alcohol and Drug Programs
- Student Health Services
- Student Veterans Organization

Sub Committees

1. Training of faculty and staff
2. Educational and marketing materials (e.g., flyers and website)
3. Faculty/Staff/Student veterans mentoring project



Services Offered to Veterans

- Enhanced assistance handling extensive documentation requirements
- Priority registration for classes
- Priority housing selection with undergraduates allowed to live in graduate housing
- Counseling with experienced therapists
- Student veterans course
- Active outreach, specialized orientation sessions, and support through graduation
- Concerted public support effort
- Credit for military training
- Secured funds for survey research to better understand and meet their special needs
- Secured funds to support promotional materials and Student Veterans Organization activities



Assess Your Campus

- How many veterans and dependents are on your campus?
- How can you create a veterans success course?
- What services are you offering with existing staff and resources?
- Do you have a coordinated veterans services team in place?
- What would you would recommend to your campus?





***“As tough as school was,
Iraq was harder.”***

– Tommy Palmer, US Army
UCSB Graduate 2010



Questions + Comments

- 13 questions asked and answered on video recording of this session



Thank you!

- All materials are posted at:
www.College-Success.com
- Contact:
 - » Britt Andreatta, MA, PhD
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- Watch my new online training course
“Delegating Tasks to Your Team” at
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