

The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes in a diagonal orientation.

Working With Student Veterans 101

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Goals of the Presentation

- General information about Veterans
- Deployment/Post-Deployment Issues
- Mental Health and Medical Issues
- Information about veterans on campus
- Tips for working with student veterans
- VA, Community and campus resources

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Info About Vets

- Who are our Veteran and Service Members?
 - OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom (Oct 7, 2001-present)
 - OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom (March 20, 2003-August 31, 2012)
 - OND: Operation New Dawn (Sept 1, 2010-present)
 - Operation Odyssey Dawn (March 18, 2011-present)
 - Other Era Veterans

Info About Vets

- Ethnicity/Diversity Issues
- Female Veterans



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Background Information Student Veterans

- Over 660,000 undergraduate students are Veterans (about 3% of all undergraduates).
- Approximately 215,000 undergraduate students are military Service Members on active duty or in the reserves (about 1% of all undergraduates).

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Background Information Student Veterans

- Increasing numbers of military Service Members are using GI education benefits for postsecondary education.
 - About 40% of military Service Members were using Veteran education benefits in 2007-2008.
 - Over 300,000 current and former Service Members are using the Post-9/11 GI educational benefits.

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Background Information Student Veterans

- 73% of student Veterans are male; 27% are female.
 - Female student Veterans are over represented in postsecondary education.
- 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.

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Background Information Student Veterans

- 47% of student Veterans have children.
- 47.3% of student Veterans are married.
- Only 35.3% are unmarried and without dependents

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Enrollment Characteristics

- Most student Veterans are enrolled in public 2-year (43.3%) and 4-year institutions (21.4%).
- Almost an equal number of student Veterans are enrolled in private not-for-profit schools (13.5%) and private for-profit schools (12.4%).

Deployment Stressors



- Combat exposure
- Sense of lack of preparedness for deployment
 - Training, equipment, supplies, etc
- Perceived threat
 - Seen and unseen

Combat Driving



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Deployment Stressors

- Battle aftermath
 - Suffering, death, loss, destruction
- Unprecedented fatigue
- Inner conflict
 - Personal, moral, and political beliefs
- Difficult living/working environment
 - No privacy, undesirable food, long work days, hygiene “gaps”

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Deployment Stressors

- Sexual/gender harassment
- Ethno-cultural stressors
 - E.g. Soldiers who look Middle-Eastern and their subsequent treatment
- Life and family disruptions
 - Missing birthdays, weddings, etc
 - Child care concerns
 - Career problems

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Readjustment

- Most Veterans adapt over time
- Readjustment challenges are normal
- Acclimation period will vary by individual
- Increasing protective factors more rapidly facilitates adjustment

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Common Readjustment Challenges

- Small decisions seem big: too many choices
- Unrealistic readjustment expectations
- Difficulty fitting with family/friends
 - Non-shared experience
 - “Civilians just don’t get it.”
- Anger/irritability
- Increased substance use

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Common Readjustment Challenges

- Driving
- Family Challenges
 - New routines and traditions
 - Negotiating new roles
 - Connection to children may take time
 - Shifts in parenting responsibilities

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War zone skills in a non-war zone

- Emotionally “hardened”
- Augmented watchfulness
- Startle response more sensitive
- Heightened protectiveness
- Sleep difficulties
- Changes in worldview

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Mental health/TBI

- Approximately 30% of returning personnel have a mental health diagnosis
 - PTSD and Depression are the most prevalent
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)

Vignette



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Veterans in the classroom

- May prefer to sit in the back of classroom
- May avoid having back to the door
- May appear distracted/trouble with memory
- May leave classroom unexpectedly
- May be irritable in class discussions
- May miss class
- May appear sleepy in class

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Questions?

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Working With Veterans - Higher Ed

- Understand where they are coming from
- Understand what they are dealing with
- Understand what benefits they may have
- Be a resource

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Where Veterans are coming from

- Military offers a sense of “belonging”
- They come from an incredibly structured environment.
- Veterans have typically held significant levels of responsibility

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Where Veterans are coming from

- Often times they didn't choose their "Military Occupational Specialty" (M.O.S.)
- They may feel as though they no longer have an identity

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What Veterans Are Dealing With

- Loss of Identity
- Loss of Structure
- Bureaucratic Struggles (VA, USU, Financial Aid, etc...)
- Perceived lack of options

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What Veterans Are Dealing With

- Medical issues
- Psychological issues
- Financial Issues
- Educational Issues
- Reserve Obligations

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What Benefits Veterans May Have

- Medical Benefits
- Mental Health Benefits
- Housing Benefits
- Education Benefits
- Employment Benefits

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What Benefits Veterans May Have

- Education Benefits
 - GI Bill
 - VA Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Purple Heart Scholarship
 - Tuition Assistance

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Benefits - GI Bill

- GI Bill

Since 1944 GI Bil has produced the following:

- 14 Nobel Prize winners
- 3 Supreme Court Justices
- 3 Presidents of the United States
- George H. W. Bush
- Richard Nixon
- Gerald Ford
- 12 US Senators
- 24 Pulitzer Prize winners
- 91,000 scientists

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Benefits - GI BILL

- GI Bill
 - Post 9-11 GI Bill (CH33)
 - Montgomery BI Bill (CH 30 -Active Duty)
 - Montgomery GI Bill - Reserve (CH 1606- Select Reserve).
 - Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Ch1607 - REAP)
 - Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
 - Educational Assistance Test Program (Section 901)
 - Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program
 - National Call To Service
 - Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VOW)
 - Whew!!!!!!!

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Benefits - GI BILL

- GI Bill
 - Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, etc....
 - Post 9-11 GI Bill (CH33)
 - Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, etc.....
 - Montgomery BI Bill (CH 30 -Active Duty)
(CH1606 Reserve)
 - Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, etc.....

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Questions



Veterans and Service Members

A Million and Veterans from
WWII -OIF/OEF/OND

Veterans From WWII- Operation New Dawn
21.5 Million

Active Duty Service members
1,429,995

Members Reserve and National Guard
850,880

Total 23,780,875

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ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

- Approximately two million Veterans will enroll in postsecondary education in the next decade, an amount unprecedented since the massive demobilization following World War II (American Council on Education, 2008).
- *Military enrollment has historically been higher at schools near military bases and major VA hospitals

STUDENT VETERANS ARE TRANSITIONING

Military Life

Unit buddies are family
Buddies have your back
Unit is a supportive community
Unit works together
Commanders tell when & what to do
Strict rules
Being told when to do things
Stay focused and alert for safety

Civilian Life

Spouse/children/parents are family
They may feel no support & protect
New community does not feel caring
Everyone for themselves
No-one tells you what to do
Different rules or no rules at all
Do things when you feel like it
Should be relaxed and not worry

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BE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

WHAT NOT TO SAY TO A VETERAN

- What was going to war like
- Did you see anyone die
- Did you kill anyone?
- Would you go back?
- How was Iraq/Afghanistan?
- How did you get injured?
- Are you opposed to the war?
- Are you okay (mentally)?
- That must have been hard...
- Thank you for what you did
- Did you lose any friends?
- Are you traumatized?
- Are you experiencing PTSD?

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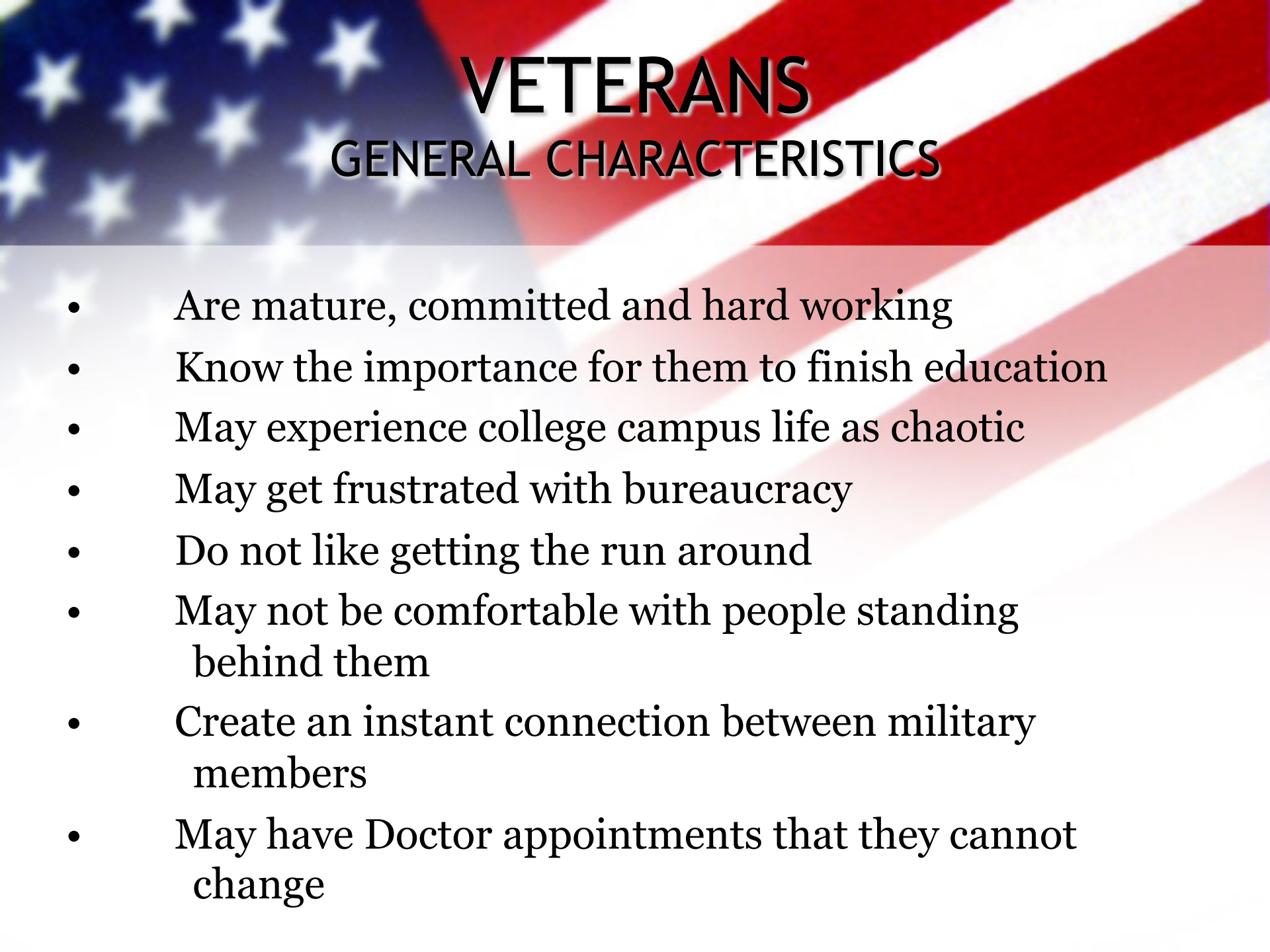
BE CULTURALLY SENSITIVE

WHAT TO SAY...

- “Thank you for serving”
- “Thank you for your service to our country”
- “Welcome back”
- Thank their family for their service in supporting their Service-member

Ask questions that can get factual answers:

- When did you get back?
 - What unit were you with?
 - What branch of the service are you/were you in?
-
- Don’ t Pry. If they don’ t want to talk don’ t push it.
 - Don’ t go overboard in praise or thanks to the veteran.
 - Simplicity is the key.

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VETERANS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Are mature, committed and hard working
- Know the importance for them to finish education
- May experience college campus life as chaotic
- May get frustrated with bureaucracy
- Do not like getting the run around
- May not be comfortable with people standing behind them
- Create an instant connection between military members
- May have Doctor appointments that they cannot change

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LOOK AT VETERANS AS YOU WOULD ANY SPECIAL **POPULATION**

1. They are a minority population on campus
2. Re-entry into civilian/academic life is challenge
3. Our Military have their own vocabulary
4. Have special needs such as need to decompress
5. Benefits of Connection to military peers
6. Lack of knowledge of benefits- succeed when supported
7. Strict rules for use of benefits

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EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Veterans, Dependents and Active Duty Military members may be eligible for one or more different types of benefits

Your School Certifying Official is responsible for knowing all the different rules for using and processing the benefits

BE A RESOURCE

DO YOU KNOW Who your School Certifying
Official IS?



SCO IS RESPONSIBLE TO

- Ensure veteran register for classes required for graduation
- Notify VA within 30 days if a student drops or withdraws
- Must report the Last Date of Attendance for changes
- Certify to the VA classes students registered in are eligible
- Monitor payments from the VA to the College
- Be a liaison for the Veteran with the College departments, VA benefit and health care system, State VA Office, DOD, DVA, VA Education, VA Debt Management and more
- If you are contacted for verification of LDA, please respond right away to assist us in meeting our deadlines

Contact your SCO if you have concerns if Veteran is having attendance or behavior problems in class

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BE A RESOURCE

THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND

- VA rules are often difficult to navigate, rigid and frustrating
- Don't use military lingo to attempt to connect or joke with your veteran

Careless comments or questions can trigger painful memories or flashbacks

- Not all Veterans have PTSD, but even those that do can function fine in the classroom
- Refrain from identifying a student as a Veteran unless they self identify first
- Veterans will share their story with you if they trust you

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BE A RESOURCE

YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Enhance feelings of comfort in the classroom and in testing setting (e.g., quiet, less crowded). Know your school resources to assist.
- Recognize that some individuals will be most comfortable in the back of a classroom near an exit door. Do not perceive this as disinterest. This position may enable them to better attend and learn
- Veterans have medical appointments scheduled months in advance which may impact course attendance. Be willing to work with them
- If your student is NG or Reserve they may have trainings or deployments. Please work with them to complete their work.
- Tell them exactly what you want and to keep it simple
- Include a statement about accommodations for Veterans for ways to make arrangements for medical appointments, training, unexpected leaves of absence, or other needs related to adjustment issues

VETERANS AND EDUCATION BENEFITS

- Rules for using benefits are very rigid
- Veterans are only paid for Required classes
- Veterans normally have 36 months of benefits to complete their education
- Navigating the bureaucracy of the VA and College/ University can be frustrating and chaotic
- VA rules for using benefits change impacting the Veteran
- Many Veterans have a job, family and attend school
- If required classes are not available Veterans take a reduction in their monthly pay and some will lose benefits for the semester

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BE A RESOURCE

BE CONSCIOUS OF WHAT YOU SAY AND DO

An instructor told her students that if they didn't finish their work she would line them up against the wall and shoot them.

--In Iraq, this veteran came upon the scene of a mass execution by the Government of Iraq done in this method.

As an assignment in an art class, an instructor had her art students bring to mind a painful memory- think about it- feel your emotions again- what do you see or smell? Now, draw a picture of the event.

--This assignment put the veteran in a state of fear and distress. He said "There is a reason we bury those memories so deep."

A veteran had been injured by a IED in Iraq and his buddies were killed. When he returned a student asked him how he lost his leg.

--This brought back the memories and pain of the blast and loss of buddies. The veteran said he did not know why he lived and his buddies died. It wasn't right, he said. I should have died too

OUR GOAL IS EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT....



VETERAN FRIENDLY

IT IS MORE THAN A PLAQUE ON THE WALL



HOW TO CREATE A VETERAN FRIENDLY CAMPUS

- Track admissions of Veterans to stay connected to them
- Send a letter from the school's administration to all new Veterans welcoming them to your school
- Create a welcoming Veterans Office or Veterans Center
- Find space and events where Veterans can connect with other student-Veterans
- Determine who could serve as a point-person for your student-Veterans to contact for support
- Consider allowing veterans to register for class early.
- Create a Veterans Committee to improve services and support for your veterans

VETERAN FRIENDLY IS SIMPLE

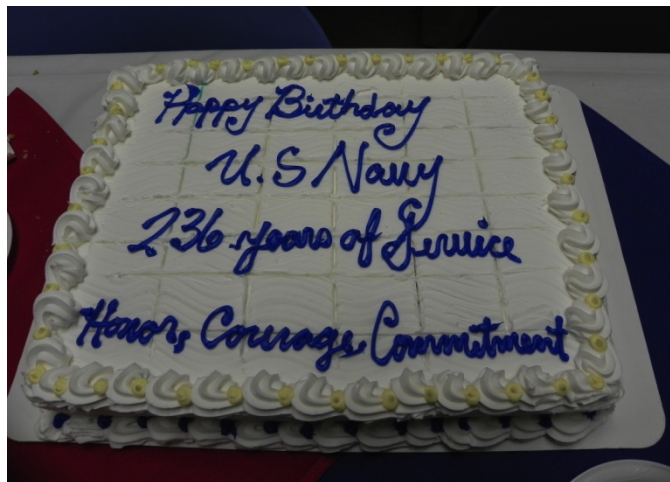
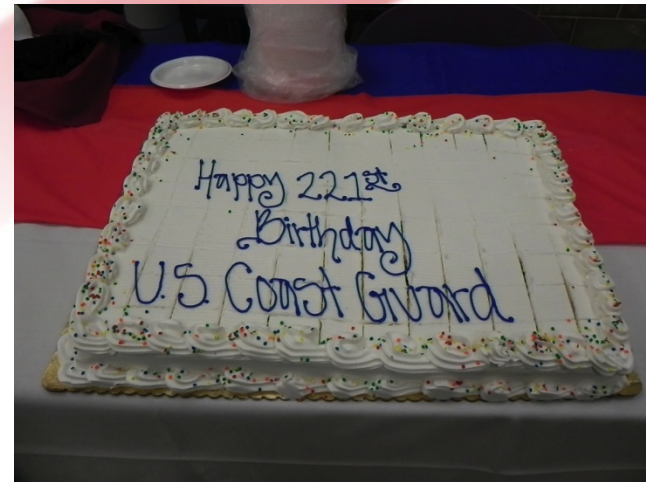
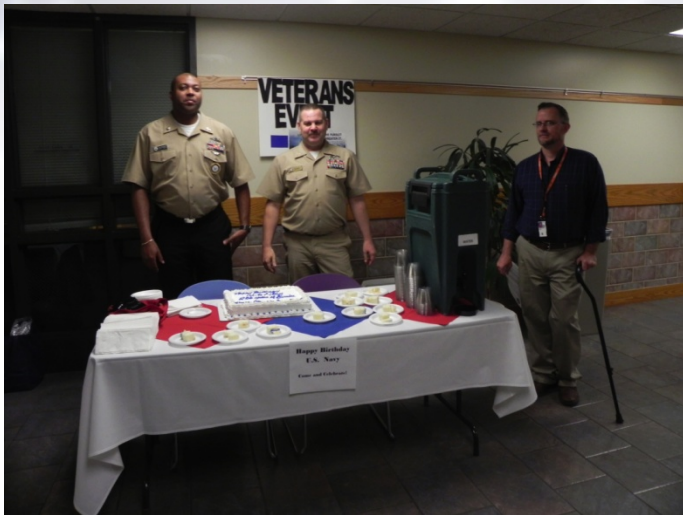
Let your Veterans and Military members know they are important on campus in many ways

- Provide workshops such as Financial Awareness, Study Skills, Stress Management, Resume Writing
- Plan an orientation for New Veterans
- Educate faculty, staff, and administration about student-veterans issues.
- Provide veterans' a needs survey to determine their needs
- Participate in the VA Work-Study Program.
- Provide quality programs and events for Veterans

Provide an atmosphere of caring.

CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAYS OF EACH BRANCH OF SERVICE

Include a flyer highlighting the many contributions including Humanitarian Service of that Branch of the Military



GRADUATION



Ask Military students to participate in Color Guard for events



Acknowledge Veterans at Graduation

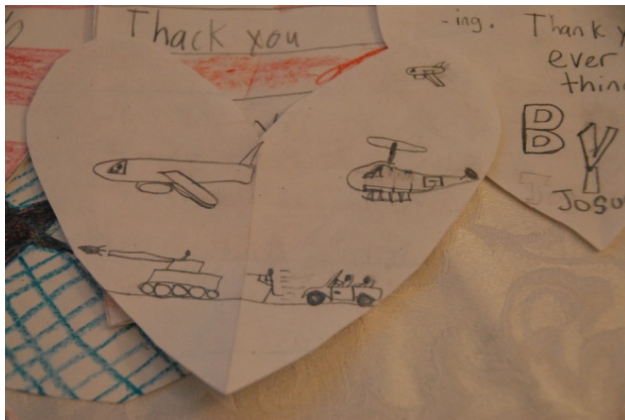
PROVIDE VETERANS DAY PROGRAMS THAT HONOR VETERANS



JOIN WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENTS



Valentines 4
Veterans



JOIN WITH STATE VA EVENTS

“Honoring our Women Veterans” Annual Dinner



SUPPORT YOUR DEPLOYED MILITARY STUDENTS & STAFF



This SLCC flag, sent to a deployed instructor was flown by Army Blackhawk helicopter over Kuwait and Iraq.
It now hangs in our Veterans Center.

TELL US WHERE YOU SERVED!!!



Provide ways you acknowledge their service

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INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

- When the veterans used the college computer lounge with other students, they were uncomfortable and kept checking behind them.
- Veterans would want to talk to me about personal issues
- When a veteran saw another veteran, they enjoyed talking to each other and always asked what branch of service they served in. When they found another from the same branch, they lit up.
- The veterans wanted to connect with each other but there was not space for them to talk.
- When asked why they dropped out of school, I was told they dropped out because of finances and they felt alone

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STEPS WE TOOK AND SERVICES PROVIDED

- Identified who were OUR veterans
 - Need to understand the military culture
- Planned the components in the center around that culture
 - The study area and computer bank
 - A place to gather and support each other
 - Veterans Lounge to allow veteran to study and decompress
 - Veterans Services Office Area to support students
- Arranged for outside services to come on campus
- Created opportunities for community outreach creating connection and additional support for veterans

CREATE A SPACE FOR VETS TO RELAX, STUDY OR VISIT



Veterans know they can come into their lounge and study, watch TV or sleep. The Center provides space for them to decompress between classes.

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SLCC VETERAN SUPPORT

Assist with College- Admission-Graduation

Assist with VA requirements and support

- VA education benefits enrollment
- Assistance completing VA Educational Application
- SCO always available to assist students
- Veteran work-study employees provide Veteran-to-Veteran Support
- Literature from many community support organizations
- Veteran Support Agencies available on campus
- Computers and printer free for use

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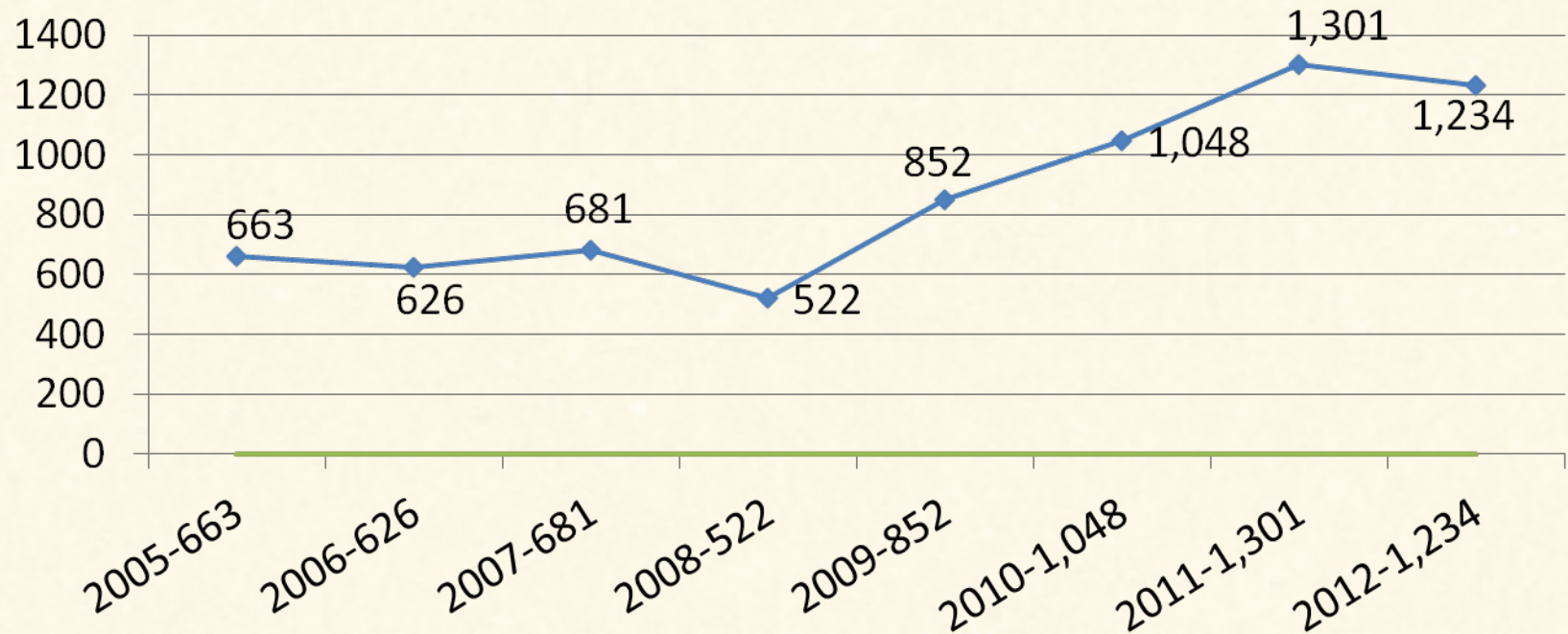
RESULTS

STORIES AND STATISTICS

- A veteran experiencing flashbacks in class used the lounge to relax and returned to class that day
- Many veterans comment upon seeing the center, that it feels like a mini USO to them.
- Veterans came to the center for services provided, using the study area or lounge over 7,000 times during the 1st year
- Many Veterans have received financial assistance from the Department of Workforce Services to pay for their schooling
 - Enrollment increased AND
 - Graduation rates went up

Total Veteran Enrollment at SLCC

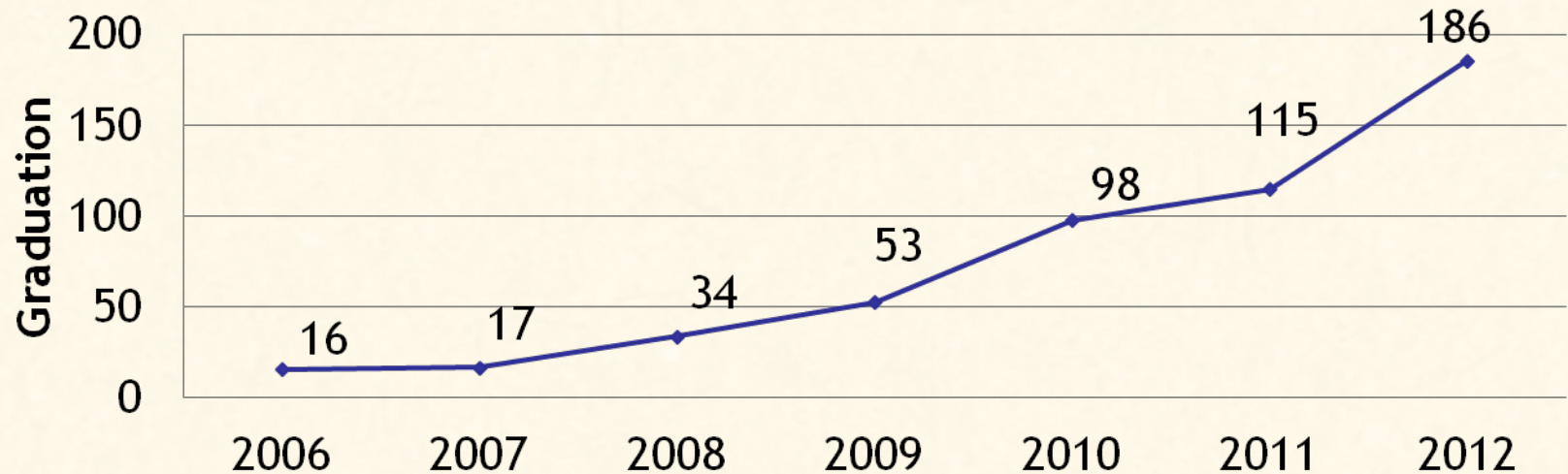
Enrollment dipped slightly due to deployments and high graduation 2012



Veteran Graduation

Total Fall, Spring, Summer

Veterans Graduating



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Resources for you

- Vet Success On Campus
 - Overview of program
 - Program history, progress, and expansion
 - Educational and Occupational Counseling
 - Benefits Counseling
 - Readjustment Counseling
 - Employment Assistance

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Resources for you

- VITAL Program

Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership

- Pilot program-20 sites nationally
- Liaison between VA Health Care and College
- Outreach/training
- Direct client care
- Provides Health Care support for Veterans
- Sign Veterans up for their Health Care Benefits

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Resources for you

- Your School Certifying Official
- VA Handbook resource section (Pg. 31)
- DVD with Vets talking about their academic experiences
- Further training is available
 - On site at your campus
 - Tailored to your needs



RESOURCES FOR YOU

THERE ARE MANY RESOURCES AVAILABLE- HERE ARE A FEW

The Military Advantage, Christopher P. Michel and Terry Howell
Military.com

Down Range, To Iraq and Back
Bridget C. Cantrell, Ph.D. & Chuck Dean

Once a Warrior, Wired for Life
Bridget C. Cantrell, Ph.D. & Chuck Dean

Veterans and Families' Guide to Recovering from PTSD
Stephanie Laite Lanham

ACE- From Soldier to Student, July 2009 , 2012

WWW.acenet.edu

Military OneSource

1-800-342-9674

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