



# Veterans KC Semi-Annual Newsletter

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## Hot Topics in the world of Student Veterans: Boots on the ground: Examining transition factors for military and veteran student academic success

**Link:** <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd/14428/>

**Abstract:** The number of military and veteran students entering higher education continues to grow rapidly; nevertheless, there is a paucity of institutional research from which to draw recommendations about how the college transition translates to academic success and persistence. The purpose of this study was to identify the demographic characteristics, financial, academic, and personal experiences and campus relationships during military and veteran students' transitions to a college or university that predict grade point average (GPA) and intent to return. This study utilized a cross-sectional, non-experimental survey design to determine the relationship between study factors, cumulative GPA, and the level to which these factors can be used to predict academic success as measured by GPA and continued commitment to the institution based on intent to return to the institution.

The results of the study indicated that multiple, but different, factors predict academic success as measured by GPA for community college and four-year institution students. Intent to return could not be predicted utilizing the study model for four-year institution students; however, the perception of being academically prepared to enter the institution was the sole significant predictor of intent to return for community college participants. Relationship and personal factors were consistently insignificant, which presented a new finding in terms of military and veteran student literature.

**Practical Take-away Notes:** The research produced a variety of practical recommendations for practitioners. First, feeling academically prepared to enter the

institution was a key factor in influencing academic success. Practitioners could consider ways to address academic success and academic self-efficacy early or prior to the matriculation process. Bureaucratic processes such as determining military academic credit or determining benefits eligibility should be streamlined and/or explained as thoroughly as possible early in the matriculation process to avoid those processes being a larger stumbling block academically than they need to be. Finally, in terms of research, this study revealed the many research needs that still exist. For those engaged in research or considering research, I outline some of the many opportunities there might be to learn more in terms of serving our students.

**Brief Bio:** Dr. Denise Williams-Klotz earned her Ph.D. from Iowa State University in 2015 and currently serves as the assistant director of Multicultural Student Affairs at the same institution. Denise grew up in a multigenerational Air Force family and spent the last 3 years researching the transition experiences of military-connected students to college. Along with Dr. Ann Gansemer-Topf, she has a forthcoming article on this topic on the Journal of First-Year Experience and Students in Transition about transition experienced for newly matriculated military-connected students. The pair was also recently awarded a NASPA Large Foundation Grant to study the experiences of military connected students of color at a variety of institution types.

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Learning with Purpose

# University of Massachusetts Lowell

University of Massachusetts Lowell pro-actively serves Military Connected Students and employs a comprehensive strategic, research-based approach to providing support to these students and their families. Their Student Veterans Organization participates in Student Veterans of America's NATCON and SVA Leadership Conferences each year and placed third in the national business plan competition last year. Student Veterans benefit from active Alumni support, a Military Alumni Hall of Fame and a 0% loan fund for those facing financial difficulties.

Additionally, UMass Lowell was the first nationally chartered chapter of SALUTE National Honor Society. The University established both a Veterans Office and Lounge in 2011 and enrollment has increased from 510 to over 1200 Military and Veteran Students currently.

The Office of Veterans Services and the Student Veteran Lounge is located within the new Student Center on campus, University Crossing, and enjoys a panoramic view of the Merrimack River and campus. Included in the space are areas for study, small meetings,

socializing and TV/gaming. In addition to referral to on-campus resources, the Office services range from assistance with homelessness, VA Compensation and Pension and Vocational Rehabilitation applications, VA Educational benefits processing, referral for medical and mental health care, peer mentoring and tutoring, peer support and career employment programming.

## Upcoming initiatives for veterans and their families

Points of Light's Military Initiatives is launching **YEAR TWO** of the AmeriCorps Program – **FRONTLINE FAMILIES**. This program is designed to create a pipeline of volunteer leaders to support ANY program within an organization. Organizations do not need an existing military program or implement a new one to participate in this program. We want to leverage the skills, commitment, and experience of the MilVet population to support your organization's current **GOALS** and **MISSIONS**.

Service members, veterans and their families have traversed this world to protect the civil liberties that our nation promised. As service members transition they are seeking opportunities to serve in another capacity. Frontline Families is a national service program that inspires veteran families to serve on the frontline of their communities as part of their reintegration process. AmeriCorps members will train veteran families as volunteer leaders to increase volunteer capacity for local organizations.

Our next cohort will begin November 2016. Please visit <http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/military-initiatives/frontline-families> to apply for the program.

Feel free to reach out to [militaryinitiatives@pointsoflight.org](mailto:militaryinitiatives@pointsoflight.org) for additional inquires.

## Allies & Advocates: ACE's Service Member and Veteran Academic Advising Summit

### A Holistic Look at Removing Barriers and Increasing the Student's Return on Investment

#### Tanya Ang, Director, Veterans' Programs

On April 14 and 15, 2016, the American Council on Education's (ACE) Veterans' Programs hosted its second [Service Member and Veteran Academic Advising Summit](#) in Arlington, VA. This two-day summit brought together experts on the topics of military-connected students, admissions and academic advising, veteran employment, and transition assistance to discuss promising practices for increasing the number of students making better informed decisions when it comes to the pursuit of post-secondary education. The goals of the summit were to:

1. identify concrete actionable items based on the five themes identified at the [first summit hosted by ACE in 2014](#) for better supporting military-connected individuals in the application and admissions process;
2. carefully examine the relationship between education and employment and ways in which those providing academic advisement on post-secondary education for military-connected students can help these potential students navigate their education to accomplish career goals;
3. mobilize a national campaign to increase and enhance localized support networks in communities throughout the

country utilizing existing networks and resources to increase partnerships between educators, employers, and other key stakeholders to aid in a smooth transition from the military into education and civilian employment.

During the summit participants heard from military-connected students about their experience through the application and admissions process. Other panels included representatives from federal agencies, institutions of higher learning, and employers highlighting some of the work they do to help create better informed consumers of post-secondary education. These representatives also shared ways they were actively engaged within the local community to create collaborative relationships that effectively meet the holistic needs of their students including addressing challenges with child care, transportation, and healthcare. The final panel focused on highlighting successful examples of community collaborations and the impact on increased academic retention and completion due to these partnerships.

In addition to hearing from these five panels, participants were divided into two groups for participant brainstorming sessions. The group focused on increasing the pipeline from education to employment identified challenges and obstacles veterans, institutions of

higher learning, and employers face in helping with the transition from military service into higher education and ultimately the civilian workforce. This group then worked to identify ways to overcome some of these obstacles in order to increase attainment of both academic and career goals.

The other group, focused on community collaborations, spent their time identifying the many resources currently available to military-connected individuals. They then mapped out ways in which institutions could collaborate with these resources on a local, state, and national level to address various risk factors that would inhibit military-connected students from attaining post-secondary goals.

As an outcome of the summit, ACE plans to release a list of these identified resources for institutions of higher learning to make it easier for them to partner with external organizations in order to meet the different needs of their students. ACE also plans to continue its effort to build out and enhance community partnerships including partnerships between employers and educators to ease the transition from education into the civilian workforce.

## Seeking Women Veterans to Blog with WISA

The Veterans Knowledge Community is partnering with the Women in Student Affairs KC to generate some knowledge about the experiences of women student veterans. This is a very difficult population to solicit to share their stories, so I'd ask your help in spreading the word to help us find some interested women to tell us their story.

<http://low.ly/QZGHi>

Once we have a blog schedule we will share it through the WISA, VKC, and broader NASPA communications channels. One story has already been shared, we hope to have more!

## What I Wish I Knew - Doh! Looking Back at Three Years of False Assumptions and Mistakes

Highlights of a session presented at the NASPA Military-connected student conference in February:

- Most programs *WANT to be* “veteran-friendly” but do not know what that means
- Colleague departments may NOT be too-friendly
- Faculty, staff, and administration have little exposure and understanding of military service, transition issues, and support opportunities available
- Importance of distinguishing veteran resource center and student veteran organization for both student veterans and community supporters
- Many veterans are not interested in the traditional college experience and therefore do not engage in veteran-specific programming held on campus
- Establishing multiple communication platforms, i.e. email, social media, flyers across campus, provide an opportunity to connect with student veterans, though many do not utilize their provided campus email

- To grow buy-in from student veterans, campus' must provide timely responses to student veteran questions, connect with new veteran students early, and provide a safe space on campus for current and former service members to engage with one another

Dr. Michael Kirchner is the first director of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Military and Veterans Resource Center (MAVRC). MAVRC is the campus' lead supporter for all student veteran related initiatives, including new student orientation, Veterans Week, the Milwaukee Veterans Ball, Military and Veteran Graduation Ceremony, and the Veteran's Corporate Partners Program. Kirchner is a published author on topics ranging from student veterans to leadership training and Army leader development and recently earned his doctoral degree in Adult, Continuing, and Higher Education Leadership. Kirchner can be reached at [kirchne3@uwm.edu](mailto:kirchne3@uwm.edu).

## Military Culture Corner: Did you know?

All enlisted men and women recite the same oath at the culmination of their basic training. You can see it happen [here](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

DAV- Disabled American Veterans

**Conference Name:** 95<sup>th</sup> DAV/DAVA Conference

**Conference Location:** Atlanta, GA

**Conference Dates:** July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

HACCC, Houston Area Consortium of Career Centers

**Conference Name:** 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Drive – In Conference

**Conference Location:** University of Houston – Clear Lake

**Conference Dates:** July 29, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

NASPA

**Conference Name:** AAWHE-NE's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

**Conference Location:** Dartmouth College (Hanover, NH)

**Conference Dates:** August 4, August 5, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

SDVOB

**Conference Name:** 13<sup>th</sup> annual National Conference

**Conference Location:** San Antonio, TX

**Conference Dates:** August 24-25 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

NASPA

**Conference Name:** UTAH NASPA Conference

**Conference Location:** University of Utah, Salt Lake City

**Conference Dates:** September 30, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

The Texas A&M University System

**Conference Name:** 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Military and Veteran Education Support Symposium

**Conference Location:** Prairie View A&M University

**Conference Dates:** Oct 12 – Oct 13, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

**When proposal submissions are due:** Oct 7, 2016

Noda

**Conference Name:** 2016 Orientation Professionals Institute

**Conference Location:** JW Marriott Indianapolis

**Conference Dates:** November 3, November 5, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

**Conference Name:** 2016 NASPA Western Regional Conference

**Conference Location:** Seattle, WA

**Conference Dates:** November 09 - November 12, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

NASPA

**Conference Name:** Mid-Level Institute at the Joint IV-WE Conference

**Conference Location:** St. Louis, Missouri

**Conference Dates:** November 13 – November 15, 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

**Conference Name:** NASPA Region I Conference

**Conference Location:** Burlington, VT

**Conference Dates:** November 13 to 16 2016

Link to [Registration](#)

**Conference Name:** 2016 NASPA Region IV-West/East Conference

**UPCOMING EVENTS -  
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!  
CONTINUED**

**Conference Location:** Historic Union Station: St. Louis, Missouri

**Conference Dates:** November 15 - November 17, 2016

**Link to [Registration](#)**

**When proposal submissions are due:** June 6th

Noda

**Conference Name:** 2016 Women's Leadership Institute

**Conference Location:** Dana Point, California

**Conference Dates:** December 6, December 9, 2016

**Link to [Registration](#)**

**Organization Acronym and Full Name of Org:** NASPA

**Conference Name:** 2016 Leadership Educators Institute

**Conference Location:** Long Beach, California (Renaissance Long Beach Hotel)

**Conference Dates:** December 11 - December 13, 2016

**Link to [Registration](#)**

## Call for Nominations!

**VKC Supra Et Ultra Award Nomination** – The nomination form for the 2016 Supra Et Ultra Award is [here](#). All completed nomination forms are due to Bob Heckrote, Supra Et Ultra Liaison by **November 15th!** You can email completed forms to [rheckrote@bloomu.edu](mailto:rheckrote@bloomu.edu).

## NASPA VKC

The VKC would like to congratulate the newly appointed VKC Advisory Board. The full Advisory Board Roster can be found [HERE!](#)

Chair – Lauren A. Runco, Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University

Past Chair – David T. Vacchi, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Vice Chair – Ken D. McRae, Mississippi State University

Research Co-Chairs – Amber Mathwig, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Kiersten Downs, University of South Florida

Communications Co-Chairs – Chelsea M. O'Brien, Rochester Institute of Technology; Christine M. Black, Marywood University

Supra Et Ultra Liaison - Bob Heckrote, Bloomsburg University

Women Military-Connected Representative – Virginia Jasmin Linares, Austin Peay State University

Sponsored Programs Liaison – Kim B. Sibson

Allies and Advocates Representative – Tanya Ang, American Council on Education

Student Veteran Representative – Jorge Hernandez

History Co-Chairs – Julie Shank, George Mason University; Tamela Evans, Georgia Southern University

Conference Events Liaison – Cody Nicholls, University of Arizona

Mental Health/Disability Chair – Janine Jackson Wert, University of Massachusetts Lowell

Region I Representative (term ends 3/06/18) – Nikki Cole, University of Connecticut

Region II Representative (term ends 3/14/17) – Dwight Boddorf, Department of Veterans Affairs

Region III Representative (term ends 3/14/17) – Denny Powers, Coastal Carolina University

Region IV East Representative (term ends 3/14/17) – Barton Buechner, Adler School of Professional Psychology

Region IV West Representative (term ends 3/06/18) – Crisann Hanes, Oklahoma State University

Region V Representative (term ends 3/14/17) – Damien Pitts, University of Utah

Region VI Representative (term ends 3/06/18) – Tammy Oluvic, Azusa Pacific University