



Exploring the
Social Support
Needs of Student
Veterans in a Post
COVID Assessment
of Academic,
Social, and Career
Factors

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OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENTATION

- I. **Background:** Provide **background** information on campus efforts to support student Veteran transitions to campus at Texas State University;
- II. **Research Project:** Explore highlights from demographic, transition, academic, and social data from a **post COVID needs assessment survey** on a newer generation of campus Veterans;
- III. **Program Development:** Describe highlights of **program development efforts** that are indicated from this data that better enhance social supports, well being, and transition needs.

I. BACKGROUND

Texas State University

- 38,376 students (Fall 2022)
- An emerging research university, Run to R1 in process
- A federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), over 35% Hispanic enrollment and about 50% overall ethnic minority (Spring, 2022)
- Long tradition of supporting the military with two ROTC units & in a military corridor alongside I-35



Interdisciplinary Veterans Initiative Model

- All military-connected students included: Veterans and military family members
- **Veteran Advisory Council:** Meets monthly since founding in 2008
- **Covers Transition: Departments:** Admission---> Career Services including Student Veteran organization
- **Disciplines represented:** Education, Social Work, Business, Counseling, Legal, Computer Science, Sociology, Student Affairs
- **Coordinated Model** across departments built on supporting overall well-being of student Veterans
- **Off Campus Partnerships** for added services
- **Student Veteran Peer Leadership component**



II. RESEARCH

Where Is the Field of Student Veteran Research ?

- In its infancy on research on *student Veterans*. Although gains made in higher education institutions gaps and limitations remain. (1)
- Some studies have reported on transitions: feeling isolated, having physical injuries, psychological stress, feeling alienated, concerned about less structure (2)
- There is some evidence overall in how student Veterans are doing – outcomes – like retention & graduation but some of it is still less rigorous (3)
- Studies on graduation rates are mixed but Cates' 2017 NVEST study has moved the needle forward on positive graduation rates(4)

Where Is the Field in Terms of Research Efforts?

Some challenges on College Campuses/Universities:

- Tracking systems for following student Veterans during their education and beyond graduation are not well established (5)
- Campus-wide programs and supports have little to no data on describing, explaining, or predicting effectiveness (6)(7)

Methods

A Changing Population?

Demographic Item	Frequency	%
Age		
17-22 years	47	22
23-28 years	63	29
29-34 years	40	19
35+ years	64	35
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	62	29
Not Hispanic/Latino	151	71
Race		
White/Caucasian	151	66
Black/African American	39	17
Asian	11	5
Biracial/Multiracial	11	5
American Indian or Alaskan Native	7	3
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2	1
Other	7	3
Sex		
Male	125	58
Female	88	41
Other	1	0.5
Relationship Status		
Married	83	39
Single	74	34.5
In a Relationship	45	21
Divorced	11	5
Widowed/Widower	1	0.5

Military Demographics

Demographic Item	Frequency	%
Main Reason for Joining Military		
To Serve Country	57	37.5
Economic or Financial Reasons	28	18.5
Qualify for Education Benefits	26	17
Family Tradition of Military Service	19	12.5
Other	22	14.5
Military Branch		
Army	86	57
Marine Corps	25	17
Air Force	23	15
Navy	12	8
Coast Guard	4	3
Rank		
Junior Enlisted (E-1 to E-4)	63	46.5
Non-commissioned Officers (E-5 to E-7)	68	50
Commissioned Officers (O-1 to O-7)	5	3.5
Service Status		
Active Duty	135	66.5
Reserves	22	11
National Guard	20	10
Reserve Officer Training Corps and Individual Ready Reserves	26	12.5

Identified Challenges when Transitioning

Barriers/obstacles While Transitioning

Item	Frequency	%
Meeting people on campus	45	14.71
None	39	12.75
Understanding admission process	36	11.76
Understanding the campus and its services	35	11.44
Veteran's benefits paperwork	34	11.11
Getting an adequate class schedule	30	9.80
Moved far from home/military to attend	22	7.19
Receiving financial aid in a timely manner	20	6.54
Understanding my role as a student	18	5.88
Little downtime between military discharge and enrollment	15	4.90
Other	12	3.92
Total	302	100

Note. Participants were able to select more than one choice.

Use of Campus- Based Supporti ve Services

Campus-based Supportive Resource Utilization

Resource	Utilization Response							
	Yes		No		Do Not Need		Did Not Know	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Academic Advising	111	84.09	7	5.30	8	6.06	6	4.55
Veterans Affairs	85	66.41	29	22.66	9	7.03	5	3.91
Financial Aid	65	52.42	28	22.58	27	21.77	4	3.23
Student Veteran Campus Group	54	46.15	32	27.35	16	13.68	15	12.82
Recreation Center	45	38.14	43	36.44	17	14.41	13	11.02
Student Learning Assistance Center	42	34.15	48	39.02	24	19.51	9	7.32
Veteran Academic Success Center	35	28.46	51	41.46	20	16.26	17	13.82
Disability Services	31	25.41	44	36.07	35	28.69	12	9.84
Tutoring Services	28	23.93	50	42.74	28	23.93	11	9.40
Career Services	27	23.28	50	43.10	21	18.10	18	15.52
Attorney for Students	19	16.24	50	42.74	27	23.08	21	17.95
Health Services	17	14.29	47	39.50	43	36.13	12	10.08
Dean of Students	15	12.82	59	50.43	32	27.35	11	9.40
Counseling Center	13	11.11	51	43.59	33	28.21	20	17.09
University Counseling Center	12	10.34	59	50.86	24	20.69	21	18.10
Institutional Inclusive Excellence	6	5.22	47	40.87	41	35.65	21	18.26

Off - Campus Services Utilized

Off Campus Supportive Services Utilized

Resource	Frequency	%
Veteran Affairs (VA) Hospital or Clinic	100	33.11
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	31	10.26
DAV (Disabled American Veterans)	26	8.61
Private Provider (Doctor, Counselor, etc.)	25	8.28
Texas Workforce Solutions	18	5.96
VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars)	18	5.96
Other Veteran Service Provider	17	5.63
County Veteran Services	16	5.3
Vet Center (Community Based)	11	3.64
Guard/Reserve Unit Services	8	2.65
Legal Assistance (Veterans Court, Housing, etc.)	8	2.65
Texvet.com (TX Veterans and Family Support)	8	2.65
Employment Assistance/Resources	6	1.99
Other	10	3.31
Total	302	100

Note. Participants were able to select more than one choice.

It's Complicated: Health Wise

80% Reported “Satisfied or “Very Satisfied” With Overall Experience at TXST

- Kudos to Texas State!
- Positive direction of offering support
- Responsive to the needs of student Veterans
- Continue the mission of supporting
- Academic success is important; well-being is equally important
- The data exemplifies the solid work of the campus student Veteran team

Thank you to the student Veterans at Texas State University and the Veterans Advisory Council

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Research Limitations

III. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Student Veteran Program Highlights

- Great progress in supporting student Veterans since 2008
- Phases of Model Development at Texas State:
 - Phase 1: Preparing for arrival of student veterans on campus- standing up benefits and organizing
 - Phase 2: Growing our programs with a focus on describing our Veterans & understanding the transition; internship opportunities to support post-graduation careers
 - Phase 3: Strengthening services through outside partnerships, collaborations, and campus training of faculty & staff; community capacity building
 - Phase 4: Innovating Programs & Focusing on outcomes and graduation rates and moving towards supporting well-being

Continuing the Mission

Abbreviated References