<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission statement and Vision</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What we do/Who we are</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Terminology</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Green Zone?</td>
<td>8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is a veteran?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Military Experience</td>
<td>12-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Cycle of Deployment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Prevention</td>
<td>15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning</td>
<td>17-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD/TBI</td>
<td>23-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can I do?</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans want you to know…</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming vets to campus</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Campus Toolkit resource</td>
<td>28-33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Veteran Services provides a seamless transition for student veterans both academically and socially by assisting them in becoming fully integrated into the East Carolina University community by educating, preparing, and engaging. Student Veteran Services provides supportive services necessary to ensure that student veterans are successful in their academic pursuits, adjust to the campus environment, and eventually transition to civilian employment.

East Carolina University is committed to easing the transition of Service members to Student Veteran status by:

- Providing coordinated delivery of benefits and services.
- Conducting motivational and outreach workshops for veterans and college faculty/staff.
- Developing partnerships with campus and community personnel and resources.
- Providing Professional counseling services to Veterans in an on-campus setting.
FOR STUDENT VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS

- We help connect Service-members/Veterans and their families to the appropriate services on campus by providing the following:
- Information and resources to ease the transition from military-life to campus-life
- Mentoring through the Pirate-to-Pirate Mentoring Program
- Specific activities that welcome students to the campus community and show appreciation for their military service
- "Support the Pirate Veterans" Student Organization
- A friendly environment to meet with other veterans and assist in locating on-campus and off-campus resources
- COAD 1000 course, designed to prepare students for college-level work

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

- We connect faculty and staff to student veterans, service members and their families by providing the following:
- Green Zone Training - training to faculty and staff on information and resources related to issues faced by student veterans, service members & families
- Resources and information to help students with services needed inside and outside of the classroom
- Activities that engage and enlighten faculty and staff to the needs of students
- A supportive environment where faculty and staff can seek assistance research to understand best practices for student veterans
Who We Are

Mary Beth Corbin  
Executive Director, Office of Student Transitions  
Division of Student Affairs

Trish Goltermann  
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Pirate Veteran Org.

Dustin Hawley  
President

Nicole Beck  
Vice President

Oliver Anderson  
Secretary

Jonathan Jeffries  
Treasurer
As a result of the increasing demand for higher education across North Carolina involving military veterans, a state-wide initiative was launched to study the impact veterans would have on campuses and services offered.

In early 2012, at East Carolina, a committee was formed to evaluate the university’s ability to serve veterans. With the high enrollment of veterans and dependents enrolled, it was deemed necessary to create an office to handle day-to-day requests involving veteran students (with the exception of VA G.I. Bill benefits). The Student Veterans Services offices was established under the Office of Student Transitions.

SVS handles the task of educating staff and faculty of important issues that affect the student veteran population through the Green Zone training program. Green Zone training is a compilation of various sources of information to include: Veterans Administration, healthcare, first hand veteran accounts, university statistics, and transitional characteristics.

The GZT student panel has been a highly successful part of the training program because it gives the participants a chance to ask personal questions and the panelists have to opportunity to tell their individual stories.

Once a faculty or staff member has completed the training they become “Green Zone certified” and can proudly display the GZT logo outside their office door. This lets student veterans know that they should feel welcome and that the faculty member is a friend to veterans.
**Service member** - generic term which encompasses Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve component personnel of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard.

**Veteran** - any individual who served in the U.S. military regardless of length, time, and/or location of service

**OEF** - Operation Enduring Freedom; war engagement in Afghanistan

**OIF** - Operation Iraqi Freedom; war engagement in Iraq

**Dependents** - a child or spouse of a veteran or service member

**PTSD** - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

**TBI** - Traumatic Brain Injury

**MOS** - Military Occupational Specialty; a service member’s job while in the military

**Hooah/Hoorah/Oorah** - A phrase used for many different reasons; can be used to show excitement and to identify that you understand an order or command and will comply.

**“ate-up”** - used to negatively describe a situation in which a person feels like things are not going well or to describe someone with no military bearing.

**Roger** - denotes understanding or compliance; military version of “okay”.
Green Zone...What is it?

- An initiative to support student veterans by designating locations recognized as a “safe place”.
- Identifies faculty and staff throughout East Carolina University who are knowledgeable about issues faced by student veterans and the resources available to assist them.
- Participants are identified by a Green Zone emblem located outside their office door and on their syllabus.
- Is not only a Professional Development opportunity but also a way to be supportive to those who have sacrificed for others.
- Helps faculty and staff provide supportive services necessary to ensure that veteran students are successful in their academic pursuits, adjust to the campus environment, and eventually transition to civilian employment.

Who is a Green Zone volunteer?

- ECU staff and faculty who identify themselves as:
  - someone who is aware of the issues and concerns faced by student veterans/service members
  - someone who is available to assist the student
  - someone who has completed the Green Zone training
- Volunteers are NOT expected to be experts who can “solve” the problems; Instead—
  - lend a sympathetic ear
  - be someone who can help the student find the appropriate resources for problem resolution
Who is a Student Veteran/Service member?

Student veterans are a diverse group of individuals. They are:

- From all branches of the military
- Range in age, race/ethnicity and gender
- Have served during times of war and peace
- More likely to have families

Student Veterans and Service members at ECU

We have identified that there are:

- 505 Undergraduate Military students
- 159 Graduate Military students
- 515 Undergraduate Dependent students
- 137 Graduate Dependent students

Of those students, the top majors for veterans or service members at ECU are:

- Health Physical Education and Exercise - 18%
- Business Foundation - 13%
- Criminal Justice - 5%
- Biology - 2%
Military Experiences...

Military culture and battlefield skills can be deeply internalized by many service members. Sometimes, core beliefs and principles learned through military service can conflict with the beliefs and principles underlying higher education. For example, following orders and respecting rank and formality may run counter to independent thinking and informality encouraged in many classrooms.
The Military Experience

In North Carolina:

- **50,886** troops have deployed to OIF/OEF since 9/11*
- There are more than **743,377** veterans living in North Carolina**
- There are **100,000** Active Duty N.C. residents*

The **Military Experience** and **Deployments** are characterized by the following:

- Separation from family or loved ones
  - Most are leaving home for the first time
  - Separation from extended family and close friends
  - Separation from boyfriends and girlfriends

- Relocate away from family and friends
  - May be assigned to a base in a different part of the country
  - Adjustments to new climates and culture

- Deployments last from 6-18 months

- Multiple deployments
  - Some serve more than one deployment before being discharged from the military
  - More than 977,500 have experienced 2 or more deployments

- Emotional Cycle of Deployment:
  - Pre-deployment, Deployment, Sustainment, Re-deployment, Post-deployment

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* U.S. Census Bureau, 30 Sept 2010
** Defense Manpower Data Center, 29 July 2012
Green Zone Training

Emotional Cycle of Deployment*

Pre-Deployment
Anticipation of loss vs Denial
Train-up/long hours away
Getting affairs in order
Mental/physical distance
Arguments

Deployment
Mixed emotions/relief
Disoriented/overwhelmed
Numb, sad, alone
Sleep difficulties
Security issues

Post-Deployment
Honeymoon period
Loss of independence
Need for “own” space
Renegotiating routines
Reintegration into family

Redeployment
Anticipation of homecoming
Excitement
Apprehension
Burst of energy/“retesting”
Difficulty making decisions

Sustainment
New routines established
New sources of support
Feel more in control
Independence
Confidence: “I can do this!”

* Franklin, 2009
Suggested Resources

http://www.jointservicessupport.org/FP
http://www.militaryonesource.mil
http://www.militarymentalhealth.org

Emotional Cycle of Deployment

Family Members/Dependents

Family members or dependents of Veterans/Service members may also need support. They could be experiencing any of the following:

- Separation from a loved one
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty transitioning
- Difficulty adjusting to role changes
- Loss or injuries of a loved one
Suicide Prevention Program

Under the Army’s initiative to decrease suicide amongst the ranks, Soldiers are taught to “Ask, Care, and Escort” anyone who mentions suicide.

- Usher to a Behavioral Health Care provider, chaplain, or Primary Care Provider
- Never leave a friend alone
- Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

Encourage your Veteran students to seek help. Seeking help is a sign of courage.

The following feelings and behaviors can all be signs for concern. It is important to seek professional guidance right away if a veteran is:

- Thinking about hurting or killing him or herself
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
- Unable to sleep or oversleeping
- Withdrawing from friends, family or society
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Engaging in reckless or risky behavior
- Experiencing excessive rage, anger or desire for revenge
- Having feelings of anxiety, agitation or hopelessness
- Reliving past stressful experiences
- Experiencing dramatic changes in mood
Transitioning: Service to Student, Base to Campus

Transition Strengths

Veterans and Service members who transition out of the military onto college campuses bring a unique perspective with them.

- Military training
- Life experience
- Established identity
- Worldly view

There are also certain skills taught in the military to help students be successful.

- Leadership
- Motivation
- Time Management
- Work Ethic
- Stress Management

Transition Difficulties

There are a number of issues that may arise that affect the transition process for Veterans and Service members and could become a barrier to success.

- Difficulty translating their military skills into a new profession
- Difficulty switching gear with a new focus that is unrelated to military experience
- Military skills & training may not translate into college credits
- Universities may have difficulty deciphering transfer credits for those who have started and stopped higher education at multiple institutions
Transition Difficulties cont...

- Difficulty using the G.I. Bill
  - Late fees due to late payments of VA Benefits
  - Late payment can prevent them from registering for classes, applying for graduation, and receiving transcripts
- Being an older student, possibly with a family to care for
- Living off campus
- Alienation
- Insensitivity of classmates, faculty and others on campus in regards to discussion of war and military

Things to keep in mind about Student Veterans in the classroom:

- Have difficulty relating to classmates
- Find loud noises to be disturbing
- Become anxious with changes in the classroom
- Have excessive absences
- Have PTSD or TBI
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD occurs after an individual has seen or experienced a traumatic event that involved injury, the threat of injury or death. PTSD is experienced by some, but not all student veterans and service members. It is beneficial to have some knowledge of PTSD and its symptoms but not to expect that every student veteran will display them. Although many student veterans may have stressful or traumatic experiences not all develop PTSD.

PTSD Symptoms:

- Repeated “re-living” of the event which disturbs day-to-day activity
  - Flashback episodes where the event seems to be happening again and again
- Avoidance/Numbing
  - Avoiding people and places that remind you of a trauma. Emotional “numbing” or feeling as though you do not care about anything
- Hyper-arousal
  - Excessive awareness (hyper-vigilance). Feeling keyed up, irritable or angry and constantly on guard. Difficulty concentrating and falling/staying asleep.

PTSD in the Classroom

Student Veterans may:

- Sit in the back of the classroom so they can have a clear view of everything around them
- Be withdrawn from class discussion
- Be easily startled by noises (pends dropping, shuffling in a backpack, whispering or other noises from classmates)
- Have difficulty maintaining emotional control during difficult topics
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A TBI can result from a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. The severity of the injury can vary from mild to severe. With a mild TBI there is a brief change in mental status or consciousness. A severe TBI results in an extended period of unconsciousness and possibly amnesia after the injury.

Combat experience is one of the main risk factors for sustaining a TBI. Combatants are exposed to blasts from explosions and roadside bombs.

Improvements have been made to body armor and helmets to prevent the occurrence of a TBI. The likelihood of surviving blasts has increased as a result of sophisticated equipment, unlike in previous wars.

TBIs often go undiagnosed because symptoms may not appear until weeks later. It is especially difficult for strangers to detect changes in a service member’s emotional health and personality. Can often be hard to distinguish and identify between PTSD and a TBI because both share overlapping symptoms.
TBI Symptoms

- Cognition
  - Motor Sensory Disturbances
  - Impairments in:
    - Language
    - Communication
    - Attention
    - Concentration
    - Memory
    - Learning new information
    - Speed of information processing
    - Judgment
    - Decision making
    - Problem solving
    - Insight

- Mood
  - Apathy/Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Irritability
  - Emotional Liability
  - Insensitivity
  - Egocentricity

- Behavior
  - Lack of initiation
  - Lack of inhibition
  - Impulsivity
  - Emotional Liability
  - Restlessness
  - Aggression
  - Agitation

Other wounds of war:

*Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)* - A spinal cord injury occurs when trauma or disease damages the spinal cord and results in partial or complete paralysis.

*Military Sexual Trauma (MST)* - Includes sexual assault, sexual threats, bullying, and unwanted touching or grabbing that occurred while in the military.
Invisible Wounds

Up to 1/3 of student veterans may be struggling with “invisible wounds” of war: traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder or major depression. These conditions can impact school performance. All three “invisible wounds” can impact the ability to concentrate and complete assignments.
Faculty Resources

VA National Center for PTSD Website
www.ptsd.va.gov
Fact sheets, videos, web resource links, and more.

Returning from the War Zone Guides
Full color PDFs in versions for Military personnel and families with narratives. Includes a Flash interactive multimedia presentation

Understanding PTSD
Learn what PTSD is, and what it is not. Hear real stories of people dealing with PTSD. Includes an interactive online format as well as a full color PDF handout.

VA PTSD Program Locator
Find a VA PTSD treatment program near you.

Student Resources

After Deployment:
www.afterdeployment.org.
Wellness resources for the military community.

Military OneSource:
www.militaryonesource.com*
Free service provided by the Department of Defense for active-duty, Guard, and Reserve Service Members and their families, topics include education, relocation, parenting, stress.

National Resource Directory:
www.nationalresourcedirectory.org*
Over 11,000 resources for wounded, ill or injured Service Members and their family.

Real Warriors:
www.realwarriors.net*
Promotes the processes of building resilience, facilitating recovery and supporting reintegration of returning Service Members, Veterans and their families

Returning Service Members:
www.oefoif.va.gov*

Student Veterans of America:
www.studentveterans.org*
National organization that helps develop student Veteran groups on campuses and develop programs and policies to assist with Veteran transition to the classroom.
Considering the Needs of Student Veterans with Disabilities...

It is estimated that 23%-31% of veterans of OIF/OEF have PTSD symptoms and 20% have mild TBIs. Some of these vets are coming to our campus.

Student veterans may be experiencing these or any disabilities for the first time. They may be unaware of services on campus for people with an identified disability.

Veterans may also not want to self identify as having a disability. They may not want to disclose problems because of social stigma. Identification of a disability may have implications for future in the military for those who are still active service members or those who are seeking to go back into military service after school.

What Green Zone volunteers should know:

Do not ask or suggest that the student veteran/service member has a disability but instead inquire about the issues he/she is experiencing to better provide the appropriate resources.

Become familiar with information provided on Disability Support Service website for those who may request such services (http://www.ecu.edu/csstudentlife/dss)

Students may need extra help navigating the system and understanding what help is available. Provide the student with contact info for DSS office, if requested. Assist student veteran in making an appointment, if needed.
Services offered on ECU’s campus:

**Disability Support Services**
138 Slay Hall  
252.737.1025  
dssdept@ecu.edu

**PASS Clinic**
311 Rawl Building  
252.737.4180

**Center for Counseling and Student Development**
137 Umstead  
252.328.6661

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**On–Campus Resources for Veterans**

- GI Bill Benefits: 328-1731  
  D107A Brewster
- Financial Aid: 328-6610  
  2103 Old Cafe
- Cashier: 737-6886  
  G120F Old Cafe
- Registrar: 328-6747  
  Whichard Bldg.
- Transcripts (ECU): 328-6747  
  Whichard Bldg.
- Admissions/Transfer credits: 328-6640  
  225 Which. Anx
- Admissions/DANTES Credit: 328-6640  
  225 Which. Anx
- ITCS HelpDesk: 328-9866
- Student Veteran Org.: pirateveterans@ecu.edu  
  Pirate Veterans
- Disability Support: 737-1016  
  138 Slay
- Counseling Center: 328-6661  
  137 Umstead
- Dean of Students: 328-9297  
  362 Wright
- Military Programs: 737-1812  
  214 Spilman
- Military Outreach: 737-1632  
  404-D Self Help
- Career Center: 328-6050  
  701 E. Fifth St.
- Pirate Tutoring Center: 737-3009  
  2300 Old Cafe
- Rights and Responsibilities: 328-6824  
  364 Wright
- Graduate School: 328-6012  
  107 Ragsdale
What can I do?

Have an open dialogue with student veterans about their frustrations. Discuss career goals and where they would like their future to go. Provide them with information about various service and resources available as it seems appropriate.

- Student Veteran Services
- Veteran certification (Office of the Registrar)
- Career Center
- University Counseling Services
- Disability Support Services Office
- VA Hospital
- Wounded Warriors Project

Questions to Ask:

- What is your branch of service?
- How long were you in the military?
- How many deployments and where, were and for how long?
- How has your experience been at school?
- What was your job and where did you go?
- How are you and your family doing?

Do not ask if they have killed someone or how they were injured!
Student Veterans want faculty to know...

We are having normal reactions to an abnormal experience.

*No two veterans are alike.* Each of us has had different experiences.

Do not assume that you know my **POLITICS** or my **BELIEFS** just because I was in the military.

I may or may not be ready to talk about my experiences.

**TRUST** Can be an issue for me.

Being friendly & listening Can go a long way toward building trust.

*Do not be AFRAID of me.*

We are accustomed to being successful and may be too proud to ask for help.
Things to remember...

- Student veterans are a unique population with different experiences.
- There are numerous ways to help student veterans and service members just as there are for other students.
- Developing trust with this population is important.
- Following-up with student veterans and service members and carrying out what you say you will is essential.

If a veteran or service member openly discusses his/her experience, do not interrupt, do not minimize, do not offer your political beliefs about the way

How to welcome veterans to campus

- Welcome them home
- Express your appreciation of their service
- Offer to help with their transition to (or back to) campus
- Support with patience and understanding
- Understand that the transition home is a process and can take time
Veteran’s Privacy

Some veterans and service members may not want to bring attention to their service. There may be many reasons for this, one of which is that he/she may not wish to speak of his/her experiences.

**What can I do?**

Be respectful of a person’s desire to disclose or not disclose his/her veteran status.

If you are interested in providing veteran’s in your class an opportunity to covertly disclose his/her status you could hand out note cards during the first class to gather information about the students. Students could include veteran status or information about their past military experiences.

**How can I help?**

Faculty members are often the only point of contact for student veterans. Faculty can help in many different ways. Find out how to make your syllabus veteran friendly and how to understand and help with specific classroom behaviors.
Adjustment Issues in the Classroom

Transitions can be a challenge, and the transition from the military to the classroom is no exception. Adjustment difficulties may be amplified if a Service Member or Veteran is transitioning to civilian life after one or several deployments. Some of the more common adjustment issues are recognized below, along with tips and suggestions for how to help. Please keep in mind that in addition to Veterans, there may be Active Duty, Reservists, and National Guardsmen on campus, some of whom have or will be deployed. These tips are applicable to them as well.

Distraction

Veterans may appear easily distracted. They have been trained to assess for threat, and noises and movement may pull their attention from the instructor. Distractions could include other students using cell phones during class or using electronic devices for social networking/web surfing during class. People entering class late may also interfere with focus. Loud noises or smells can be triggering. For example, a dropped book may be quickly overlooked or forgotten by most people. Someone who has just returned from a combat zone may be immediately on guard since a loud noise could indicate danger. A Veteran may not be able to concentrate for the rest of the class period due to this single incident.

What can I do? Your first inclination may be to encourage the Veteran to sit in the front of the classroom, out of sight of some of these distractions. However, Veterans often prefer to sit in the back, where they have a better opportunity to assess the situation and any danger. Invite a conversation about what seating arrangement would work best for the Veteran. It may also be helpful to set rules around conduct in the classroom. For example, cell phones should be turned off or put on silent.

Provocative Content

Class content may contain triggering material. Certain writing assignments, readings, or videos may serve to bring up painful reminders. Although these materials may seem innocuous, the Veteran may still attribute meaning to them. This could lead to difficulty in concentrating.

What can I do? Provide information and prompts prior to introducing potentially distressing content (e.g., combat, war videos). Encourage pre-screening of videos, or skimming of readings and assignments. Be open to discussing alternative options for fulfilling the requirements of the class.

Sitting Quietly

A Veteran may have difficulty sitting for extended periods of time. Military training fosters quick reactions and being ready to mobilize at a moment's notice. In the classroom, this can look like inattention and hyperactivity. Do not assume the Veteran has attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Consider the life-saving function of this training, and remember that there is no un-training that occurs when the Veteran leaves service.
What can I do? Offer breaks during the class.

Sleepiness
Many Veterans have trouble sleeping. They may have difficulty falling asleep, nightmares, or wake up multiple times a night. As a result they may be drowsy in class. This may become evident in class if a Veteran appears to be nodding off or falling asleep.

What can I do? If you notice this behavior, it may be helpful to speak with the Veteran in person. Brainstorm together for ways to help him or her stay engaged (taking notes, asking questions, calling his or her name). It is not a good idea to tap/touch a Veteran who is sleeping, as he or she may react quickly and in a manner of self-defense.

Unstructured Setting
Structure and discipline are a part of daily life in the military. Further, the military has a specific chain of command, demanding respect for authority. Campus life is less structured, often with an unknown hierarchy. This may lead to problems with open-ended assignments, leaderless or small group assignments, and uncertainty about how to communicate during class discussions.

What can I do? It may be helpful to be explicit about the students' roles and define expectations during class discussions and group assignments.

- Encourage students verbally and in the syllabus to ask questions and actively participate. Veterans are trained not to challenge authority, and this may lead to them not asking questions in class.
- Encourage interactions with peers through discussions, group work, etc.
- Communicate expectations and assignments in a clear, direct manner with specific goals.

Encourage students to approach you with questions after class and during breaks or to use office hours and email. A student asking for an extension or flexibility on an assignment or test may be doing so for various reasons. For example, if the Veteran has an appointment in the Pain Clinic at the VA Medical Center, and the Pain Clinic only has appointments available on the first Tuesday of the month, it may his or her only opportunity to get medical treatment for something that is impacting his or her sleep, concentration, and attention. Further, if a student is a National Guardsmen and has drill on the weekend, he or she may be away from home from Friday through Monday. This could affect the student's ability to complete an assignment or study for an exam. Some flexibility with assignments, tests, or attendance policies, based upon a particular situation, should be considered.

Campus Culture/Climate
Be aware of political statements that may be overtly expressed in the classroom and on campus.
These may elicit strong emotional feelings in Veterans. Always assume that someone in the class has been or knows someone who has been in the military.

Situations to be aware of include:

- Public anniversary dates (e.g., Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day).
- Protests. These can be triggering events, both due to inflammatory content (e.g., anti-war) and due to discomfort with large groups congregated in a single place.
- Private anniversary dates. Dates on which events of personal significance have occurred (e.g., deployment date, return date, death of a buddy).

**What can I do?** Be respectful and mindful of the impact the above situations may have on the Veteran. Like other diversity groups on campus, make an effort to learn more about your student Veterans.

**Privacy**

Some Veterans may not want to bring attention to their service. There may be many reasons for this, one of which is that he or she may not wish to speak of his or her experiences.

**What can I do?** Be respectful of a person’s desire to disclose or not disclose his or her Veteran status.

- If you are interested in providing Veterans in your class an opportunity to covertly disclose his or her status, you could hand out note cards during the first class to gather information about the students in your class. You could ask them to include Veteran status or information about their past military experiences.

You could also consider expressing support through non-verbal means (pins, stickers, ribbons) which may make it easier for a Veteran to approach you with questions.

**Relating to Others**

Student Veterans may not only be several years older than their fellow students, they may also have different responsibilities, such as childcare, employment, etc. Further, combat Veterans have often witnessed and experienced extreme life and death situations. This may lead to some student Veterans feeling a disconnect from students who are often younger and who may have less varied life experience.

**What can I do?** Recognize that the carefree college attitude of some students can be troubling to Veterans who have seen the real world. This can make it difficult to relate to peers.
Respect

When Veterans and Service Members were asked to identify the most helpful thing faculty and staff could do, they responded with a request that they be treated with respect.

**What can I do?** Treat all students with respect.

## ECU Shows Support

We:

- Maintain a highly visible office, Student Veteran Services, Brewster D 107, that is appropriately staffed by Trish Goltermann and Connie Blake, who are knowledgeable about policies and procedures related to the military and Veterans’ benefits. These individuals are able to coordinate services, provide advice, advocate, and create programming for students with issues related to their military status. Further, these individuals able to communicate with the college about credit related to military training and experiences.
- Developed a website that consolidates information specific to Veterans.
- Coordinated withdrawal or ways in which Veteran may get credit or partial credit for courses in the event of a deployment during the academic year.
- Developed and communicate with faculty regarding absence policies related to military duty.
- Develop and communicate procedures related to a student’s return to school following a deployment via the Registrar’s office.
- Are developing transition programming (e.g., a 1 day or 1 week Veteran-specific orientation to campus resources and activities). This could help the Veteran translate military skills (e.g., adaptability and mission focus) to civilian life.

We:

- Educate faculty and administrators on Veterans' issues, including strengths of a military background and potential struggles that may occur upon return from deployment through Green Zone training.
- Provide resources on counseling, advising, and health care. This includes information in the form of a Campus Resource Guide.
- Perform outreach and provide education to faculty on how a Veteran's time away from school may lead to difficulty establishing study habits and routines.
- Educate faculty that Veterans with identified (or even unidentified) disabilities are learning and navigating a new system. Veterans may not even recognize that resources are available or that they may access these resources. Further, Veterans may be eligible for disability services on campus, even if they are not eligible for state or federal disability. A military Veteran may receive federal disability if they have an injury that occurred while on active duty or if their injury was made worse by active military service. (Disability Support Services)
We:

- Encourage Veteran participation in campus groups and activities. Veterans bring tremendous life experience, diversity, and skill (e.g., leadership and teamwork) with them to the campus.
- Encourage students to approach faculty with questions after class and during breaks or to use office hours and email. The relationship with a faculty member or advisor could be the single item that helps the Veteran remain in school. For instance, this relationship may help the Veteran feel more connected to the campus, may help the Veteran navigate a new system (many Veterans leave higher education because they grow frustrated with the process and inability to obtain benefits), or feel support from an authority figure. Further, if a student is a National Guardsmen and has to drill on a weekend, he or she may be away from home from Friday through Monday. This could affect the student's ability to complete an assignment or study for an exam. Some flexibility with assignments, tests, or attendance policies, based upon a particular situation, should be considered.
- Recognize that a Veteran is a non-traditional student who may hold multiple roles (parent, spouse, employee, Reservist/Guardsman). Encourage communication and exhibit flexibility related to these many demands.

Tips for Making your Syllabus Veteran Friendly

Creating a syllabus that reflects awareness of student Veterans as a student group can communicate your interest and respect for their service and success in school.

One possibility is to include a Veteran-friendly statement in your syllabus. This one has been used at a number of different universities.

"Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor."

Here are some additional considerations for your syllabi:

1. Today's student Veterans are non-traditional students. Many are several years older than traditional students (i.e., only 15% are between 18 and 23 years of age), and many have children and/or are married. As a result, many student Veterans are managing multiple roles, such as parent, spouse, employee, and student. In addition, some students may be Active Duty, Reservists, and National Guardsmen, and they may still be participating in drill on the weekend or have the potential to deploy. Drill involves a commitment of a weekend every month, as well as two weeks at some point during the year. This could intensify if a service member is scheduled to deploy.

- **What can I do?** If possible, provide the syllabus in advance, with specific dates for assignments and tests to allow for planning around work and childcare. While it may not seem helpful to give specific dates for exams, the student can schedule childcare or work schedules around this, or use this as an opportunity to speak to you about rescheduling.
2. Being in combat, or even in the military, may leave a person changed. While many of these changes are positive, there may be some struggles with adjusting to civilian life. For many, this adjustment will resolve with time, but some student Veterans may need additional assistance.

- **What can I do?** Consider providing assistance when adjustment issues are present. Veterans consistently say that other Veterans are their major support on campus, so encourage contact with the Office of Student Affairs for information on Veteran Service Organizations and peer-support programs. These services may help provide assistance with adjustment. If classroom behavior and academic performance are significantly impacted, consider a referral to the counseling center or the campus disability office. Providing information about the disability office on the syllabus may help students get connected to services. For some, this will be the first time they have navigated the disability service, so they may have to learn a new system. For Veterans with established medical or mental health concerns, they may be pursuing or have established treatment at the Veterans Affairs (VA) Healthcare System. Please consider some flexibility if a Veteran requests time for appointments.

### Who Are Today's Women Veterans?

**Background Information:**
- In the United States military, 14.3% of active duty personnel, 17.7% of the Reserves, and 15.5% of the National Guard are women.
- Currently, about 11% of the US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan are women.
- Three quarters of military women are between the ages of 20 and 40.
- Over 25% of women are from racial or ethnic minority groups; 26% are Black and 10% are Hispanic.

**Experiences while in the Military:**
- Although still prohibited from serving in official combat roles, many women serve in combat support units, for example as police, pilots, truck drivers, and fuel suppliers.
- Approximately 12% of women deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF; Afghanistan) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) report moderate levels of combat and up to 40% come under mortar or artillery fire.
- Twenty-two percent of women Veterans report "military sexual trauma" (MST) defined as sexual assault or severe and threatening sexual harassment during military service.

**Post-military experiences (women seen in the VA settings):**
- Women Veterans report less perceived social support than male Veterans.
- Women Veterans are less likely to receive substance abuse care than male Veterans (16.3% versus 71.2%).
- Percent of medical diagnoses in OEF/OIF Veterans seen in the VA
  - 46% Musculoskeletal issues (e.g., joint pain, back pain)
  - 39% Mental disorders, with 15-17% diagnosed with PTSD