VETERAN EDUCATION

Veterans face unique challenges when going to college following their service.

With the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill and the ramping down of our nation's two long-term wars, more Veterans than ever are heading back to school—one of the main reasons given for joining the service in the first place. They are a diverse group that brings with them unique perspectives, and they attend schools ranging from two year community colleges, four year public and private not-for-profit, and for-profit institutions.

Differences between Student Veterans and other students:

Challenges: Student Veterans' transition to higher education can be quite different from other students. Military training and military culture established patterns of behavior that can both help and hinder transition. Veterans often speak of a sense of isolation and a loss of purpose when they leave behind the military's social support. They miss the camaraderie of their units, and it can be difficult for them to reestablish roles and relationships. Many return with visible and non-visible wounds from the battlefield. Identifying with more traditional students, often younger and straight out of High School, can also be challenging.

Strengths: Veterans have demonstrated significant resiliency through rigorous military training and deployments. They bring a disciplined, goal-oriented mind-set. Their firsthand experience with other cultures and geographies can add novel insights to the classroom. They also tend to have financial independence and have had training and development opportunities that benefit their experience in college.

Talking Points

The following Eight Keys to Facilitate Veteran's Success On Campus were produced from a collaborative initiative between Dept. of Ed, VA, DOD, and DOL:

- **Create a culture of trust and connectedness**
- **Ensure sustained support from leadership**
- **Implement an early alert system**
- **Centralize campus efforts for all Veterans**
- **Collaborate with communities and organizations to coordinate services**
- **Utilize a uniform set of data tools**
- **Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff**
- **Develop systems that ensure sustainability of practices**

"War and Sacrifice in the Post 9/11 Era", Pew Research Social and Demographic Trends, , 2011.
"Uncle Sam Wants Who?", Brooks, Rosa, *Foreign Policy*, July 31, 2013.
"Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions", *American Council on Education* website, www.acenet.edu
US Dept. of Education's Services and Resources for Veterans Military Families website, http://www.ed.gov/veterans-and-military-families