Serving Those Who Serve: Higher Education, Servicemembers, and Veterans

2010 AACC Annual Convention
1:45 pm - 3:00 pm, Monday, April 19, 2010

Presenters:
Dr. Kathy Snead, President, SOC Consortium Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges
Dr. Thelma White, President, Elizabethtown Community & Technical College
Dr. Patricia Hsieh, President, San Diego Miramar College
Understanding and Anticipating the Needs of Transitioning Servicemembers
Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges

- SOC was established in 1972 to expand and improve voluntary postsecondary education opportunities for servicemembers worldwide.
- SOC is funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) through a contract with AASCU managed for DoD by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES).
- The SOC Consortium, comprised of more than 1900 college and university members, enrolls hundreds of thousands of servicemembers, their family members, and veterans annually in associate, bachelor, and graduate-level degree programs.
Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Mission

- Serve as vehicle to help coordinate postsecondary educational opportunities for servicemembers
- Strengthen liaison and working relationships among military and higher education representatives
- Advocate for flexibility needed to improve access to and availability of educational programs for servicemembers
• Servicemembers should share the same educational opportunities available to their civilian counterparts

• Educational programs that are provided by appropriately accredited colleges and universities

• Educational programs that are flexible in terms of scheduling, academic residency, course transfer, and acceptance of non-traditional credit
SOC Criteria for Consortium Membership

• Reasonable with Transfer of Credit
  - Minimum loss of previously earned credits
  - Avoid coursework duplication

• Reduced Academic Residency Requirements
  - 25% maximum for most programs
  - 30% for schools providing undergraduate degrees 100% online
  - No final year or semester requirement

• Credit for Military Training and Experience
  - Recognize and use ACE Guide in evaluating military training courses (Service Schools) and award credit where appropriate to degree
  - Approximately 75% of members also award credit for Army and Marine Corps MOSs and Navy and Coast Guard Ratings

• Credit for Nationally-Recognized Testing Programs
  - Award credit for at least one nationally-recognized testing program such as CLEP (General and Subject Exams), DSST (DANTES Standardized Subject Tests), ECE (Excelsior College Examinations)
Military Students and Veterans: Subpopulation of Adult Learners

- Active-Duty Military
- National Guard and Reservists
- Veterans in the Community
- Family Members (spouses and adult family members)

Each segment of the military and veteran student population may have varying and unique educational needs and benefits dictated by type of military service.
Military Students and Veterans - Adult Learners by the Numbers

- **Active-Duty and Reserve Component**—in 2009 more than 300,000 servicemembers used military tuition assistance
  — enrolled in more than 830,000 courses
  — DoD spent roughly $516 million in tuition and fees

- **Veterans in the Community**—since August 1, 2009 VA has authorized more than $1.05 billion for education benefits

- **Family Members**—a reminder that military family members may also have education benefits
  — Post-9/11 GI Bill includes transferability of education benefits
  — Marine GYSGT Fry Scholarship
  — Survivors’ and Dependents’ Educational Assistance
Veteran Student Demographics—a subpopulation of adult learners

- 70% of those eligible for education benefits use portion of them (on average use 17-18 months)
- Average age of claimants, 20-34 years of age (74%)
  - 30% are aged 25-29
  - 24% are aged 20-24
  - 20% are aged 30-34
- Gender: 68% male, 32% female
- Marital status: 51% never married, 37% married
Military Student Characteristics

Excellent candidates for college recruitment/retention:

- Serious, mature, and motivated to complete goals—may have different priorities than 18-20 year old cohorts

- Focused on career goals—and for many, earning a degree IS the pathway toward those goals

- Have money and educational benefits for college

- Have been in disciplined job environment, responsible individuals with proven work ethic

- Possess leadership skills
From Soldier to Student

A national snapshot of the programs, services, and policies that campuses have in place

- Released July 2009
- Provides overview of programs and services
- Identifies gaps
- Serves as a catalyst for discussion
- Downloadable publication from www.acenet.edu/CPA/STS
Key Academic Policy Junctures

- Develop academic policies and procedures that help servicemembers pursue education opportunities and complete degrees
- Adjust existing policies and make accommodations as appropriate for military students who withdraw for a call to mobilization/deployment
- Develop policies and practices that encourage re-enrollment and aid transition back to the classroom for servicemembers and veterans returning from military service
Conceptual Framework for Understanding Student-Veterans

**Military Experience**
1. Why Join?
2. Getting “Called Up”
3. Combat and Other Memorable Events
4. Earning Credits

**Transition**
1. Exiting Active Duty
2. Returning Home
3. Local Campus Veteran’s Office
4. Academic Preparation

**College Life**
1. Connecting with Peers
2. Blending In
3. Opinions/Reactions
4. Faculty Support
5. ROTC

**Health**
1. Students with Disabilities
2. Anger and Resentment
3. PTSD

**Finance**
1. Personal Finances
2. Delayed Benefits Payments
3. Multiple Sources

**From the research of David DiRamio (Auburn U), Robert Ackerman (U Nevada, Las Vegas), and Regina Mitchell (Central Michigan U). “From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student-Veterans,” NASPA Journal, 2008, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp 73-102. Used with permission.**
Challenges Preventing Student Veterans from Enrolling and Staying in College

- Informational Barriers/Challenges—easy access to good information about transfer credit, financial aid, orientation for adult learners
- Cultural Barriers/Challenges—helping them feel comfortable on campus: connecting with other veterans
- Injury and/or Trauma-Related Barriers/Challenges—providing services and support for the needs of disabled veterans; mental health issues affect enrollment and student success
- Financial Barriers/Challenges—tuition waivers and financial assistance until GI Bill funding kicks in, grants and loan eligibility

Student Veterans’ Wish List for Colleges/Universities*

★ Develop a Veterans Support Committee to improve campus climate for veterans (lessons learned from campus veterans, surveys)

★ Develop Student Veterans Club and/or provide meeting space on campus to gather socially

★ Determine if institution is eligible for VA Work Study (assign Work Study student to assist entering veterans with concerns/provide information); identify other student employment options on campus, for example, security, IT, office administration

★ Publicize campus information on Vet-Friendly Website (one-stop resource guide) and create adult learner orientations

★ Educate faculty and staff about student veteran needs and concerns—it’s been reported that some faculty create hostile learning environments

*Campus Kit for Colleges and Universities, Student Veterans of America
How Some Colleges are Responding

- Priority registration for returning military students
- Simplified/expedited application process for readmission
- Extended/flexible enrollment deadlines
- Course schedules adapted for transitioning active-duty servicemembers
- Academic and counseling services targeted to military students
- Special Web pages for returning military students
- Support groups
- Veteran centers and lounges
- Scholarship opportunities
- Deferred tuition payment plans (to accommodate TA and VA paperwork lags)
- Academic research focusing on needs of returning servicemembers
Success for Veterans Grants

- Nine community colleges received $100,000 each from the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Wal-Mart Foundation through its Success for Veterans Award Grants program.

- The grants awarded April 2009 to 20 institutions across the U.S. that operate model programs advancing access and success in higher education for military veterans and their families.

- Aim of program is to provide needed resources to expand and enhance the existing veteran services provided on these 20 campuses, and to support the dissemination of lessons learned to other institutions.
Fresno City College (CA) will build on a partnership with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. to train veterans for employment, including preparation for pre-employment testing and access to counseling.

Los Angeles City College (CA) will create a formal mentoring program, publish a veterans’ handbook and train faculty and staff to increase awareness of the challenges confronting student veterans.

Southwestern College (CA) will establish a veterans’ welcome center to provide more comprehensive counseling, support services, job placement and faculty development.

Empire State College (NY) will expand and enhance educational support services and improve training of faculty, mentors and staff to create awareness of challenges faced by student veterans.

Onondaga Community College (NY) will establish a visible presence to welcome veterans, increase awareness/knowledge of unique veterans’ issues, and expand and enhance services to current and prospective veteran students.
Success for Veterans Grants

- **Clackamas Community College** (OR) will expand outreach to veterans and develop standards for awarding credit for military training and experience.

- **Lane Community College** (OR) will expand its Lane Integration of Vets in Education (LIVE) program to deliver first-year experience, including learning communities, advising, supplemental instruction and early intervention systems.

- **Trident Technical College** (SC) will create Project VETS (Veterans’ Educational Transition Services) to provide a continuum of services from pre-college through graduation, including veterans-specific orientation program, faculty and staff development, veterans’ task force and veterans’ student club.

- **Madison Area Technical College** (WI) will provide streamlined veterans services, veteran student orientation and expansion of programs and services to veteran families through it’s Success and Access for Veterans Education (SAVE) project.
To provide eligible military spouses worldwide up to $6,000 of financial assistance to help pay for licenses, certifications and education in high growth, high demand portable career fields.

The goals are to:

- Provide targeted military spouses with financial assistance to pursue education, training, and credentials/licenses required for obtaining/retaining employment and advancing in their careers;
- Provide highly-skilled, well-trained workers to employers in high-growth, high-demand industries and sectors;
- Increase the financial stability of military families; and
- Support the retention and readiness of the U.S. Armed Forces.

* My CAA funding is experiencing a temporary hiatus; currently not enrolling new military spouses but are processing institutional participation agreements and paying benefits for spouses previously accepted and authorized for advancement account
Serving yesterday and today’s Soldiers and the BRAC Transformation
Programs and Services Offered for Active-Duty and Retired Military

- Academic courses for servicemembers preparing to enter Physician Assistant Program—Anatomy and Physiology offered in Fall 2010 through new on-post science laboratory

- Assists students in enrolling in Army’s tuition assistance program—entering courses in GoArmyEd portal for any system courses; enroll military spouses in MYCAA

- Support injured Soldiers in Wounded Warrior Transition Unit in pursuing education
Programs and Services Offered for Active-Duty and Retired Military

- Provides information to Soldiers and their families at on-post “New Comer” briefings regarding educational opportunities and tuition assistance.
- ACT testing for on-post high school; ACT and COMPASS testing for servicemembers, veterans, and spouses.
Programs and Services Offered for Active-Duty and Retired Military

- Academic Advising for all current and former students with a signed SOCAD Student Agreement (contract for degree)
- Provides test proctoring for all schools in the SOC Degree Network System for Soldiers and families at Fort Knox
- In-state tuition for service personnel and their families
Assisting with BRAC Transition

- The Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) will bring an additional 6000 military civilian jobs and military contractor jobs to our area—Army Human Resources Command will be located on Fort Knox.

- Army 101 is an online course designed to give civilians an introduction to the Army and assist them in the application/hiring process.

- Army HR 101 is an online course directed at the Army Human Resources Command as an entry level introduction to the complex Army Accessions Command and Human Resources Command.
Partnership with SOC/SOCAD

- Formal agreement is established between the college and each student; SOCAD Student Agreement or documented degree map is required by the end of the second class taken at the home college; lays out all coursework including military training that will be credited and all future courses that will be required.

- Courses can be completed in the classroom at a SOCAD college, via distance learning, or by learning assessment.

- Our partnership continues with the veteran after they leave military service.
Headline: “California Community Colleges Take the Lead in Educating Veterans” (Affinity – The Magazine for California Community College Alumni)

San Diego Miramar College was recognized as Vet-Friendly by G.I. Job Magazine in October, 2009
Number of Students at San Diego Miramar College who are on Active Duty or Veterans

- Voluntary Education instructional program at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) in Miramar, CA since 1983: Around 600 students
- On main campus: Close to 1,000 students (8% of total enrollment)
Programs and Services Designed and Provided to Servicemembers and Veterans

- Veterans’ Affairs Office - SCO
- Military Leadership Studies - A A Degree
- Vets to Jets
- Staff Development for Faculty & Staff
- Disabled Support Programs & Services
- Student Veteran Organization
- Priority Enrollment for Veteran Students
- Student Lounge
Programs and Services Designed and Provided to Servicemembers and Veterans (Continued)

Military Leadership Studies (MLS)
Associate in Arts Degree Program

- 2008-2009
- Online
- The first in California
- One of the five in the nation
- A broad foundation in leadership & management skills with a focus on application
- Active and Reserve US military (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps) and Veterans working with the military
Vets 2 Jets

- 2009
- Wal-Mart /ACE grant
- Current and prospective veterans, military students, and military spouses
- Completion of educational goals
Programs and Services Designed and Provided to Servicemembers and Veterans (Continued)

Vets 2 Jets (Continued)

Specialized Services
- Outreach Activities & Coffee Hours
- Meet & Greet Orientations
- Counseling
- Workshops on Various Topics
- Newsletter, Facebook, Website
- Mental Health Support Groups
- Tutoring
- Book Scholarships
Vets to Jets (Continued)
Specialized Services (Continued)

Example: “So You Want To Be an AZTEC”
Learn how to transfer to San Diego State University (SDSU) Workshop includes:
• Admissions & application guide
• Overview of services and opportunities for veterans at SDSU
• Information on admission criteria, application tips, veterans housing, & student veterans organization
“Coming Full Circle: Resource Fair & Tribute to Veterans”

Participants:
- Dept of VA
- VA Health
- SDSU Veterans Center
- UCSD
- VETWORKS
- Employment Development Department
- Veteran Village of San Diego
- Courage to Call

Sponsors:
- Filipino American National Historical Society
- San Diego Miramar College Diversity/International Education Committee
- Mira Mesa Recreation Council
- San Diego Miramar College Student Veteran Organization (SVO)
Contact Us

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges
1307 New York Avenue, NW
Fifth Floor
Washington, DC  20005-4701

Phone:  800-368-5622; 202-667-0079
Fax: 202-667-0622
Web Site:  www.soc.aascu.org/
E-mail:  socmail@aascu.org
Dr. Thelma White  
President/ CEO  
Elizabethtown Community and Technical College  
thelma.white@kctcs.edu  
(270)706-8410
Thank You!

QuickTime™ and a None decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Dr. Patricia Hsieh
President, San Diego Miramar College
phsieh@sdccd.edu
(619) 388-7834