

Program Review

Veterans in The Florida College System

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Executive Summary

The Florida College System (FCS) has a long standing record of providing education, job training and re-training to Florida's citizens, including close to 20,000 military veterans. In 2009, the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) estimated that nearly 123,000 active duty personnel list Florida as their home of record and 975,000 veterans aged 18-65 live in Florida. As men and women return from Iraq and Afghanistan, the FDVA reports that many of these veterans will choose to use their education benefits in the FCS after leaving military service.

The purpose of this program review is to examine the current status of veteran services in the FCS. A brief section on the history of veterans' education benefits and information from the related literature on veterans' issues in higher education has been included in this report. Interviews with veteran certifying officials from selected colleges were conducted to obtain information on current services and innovative programs offered and how these services and programs may be improved. In addition to surveying college officials, the Division of Florida Colleges (DFC) surveyed approximately 300 veterans currently enrolled in the FCS. As a result of the information obtained, this report includes recommendations for improvements in veteran services.

Introduction

Florida currently has 17 military installations around the state—from Pensacola to Key West (see map in Appendix D). As of September 30, 2009, the number of veterans living in Florida was 1,650,900.¹ Florida ranks third in the nation in veteran population, behind California (1,972,000) and Texas (1,693,800).² The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) uses data it collects, along with data from the Department of Defense and the U.S. Census Bureau, to forecast veteran population, which accounts for differences from the FDVA's estimates.³

In 2010, the VA reported more than 564,000 veterans and dependent survivors used veterans' education benefits nationwide; in Florida, that number was 36,394⁴ and 17,453 attended a Florida College system (FCS) institution in fall 2010.⁵ Many veterans return to college to earn their degrees or certificates to enter new careers as civilians. Each institution in the FCS has a veteran certifying official who provides information about their respective institutions and assists veterans in applying for VA programs and certification. Some colleges have

¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp

² Ibid.

³ To see U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' population equation model (VetPop), see http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp

⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, November 2010, "State Summary: Florida and the US Department of Veterans Affairs."

⁵ Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

programs specifically tailored for veterans, such as the Veterans Center for Career Re-Entry at Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ). FSCJ also provides classes for the Wounded Warrior Project's TRACK program, a year-long residential program that helps veterans with customized services, college courses towards degree and certificate programs, and career-building skills. Similarly, Veterans Upward Bound at Pensacola State College or the "Refueling and Retooling for Veterans" program at the College of Central Florida provide services specifically tailored to the needs of transitioning veterans. Currently, 10 colleges in the FCS have a chapter of Student Veterans of America (SVA), a student group that advocates for veterans' needs by centralizing critical resources and smoothing the transition for individuals moving from the military to civilian life.

What is a Veteran?

For the purposes of the U.S. Census' American Community Survey (ACS), a "civilian veteran" is a person 18 years old or over who has served on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or the Coast Guard, or who served in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. People who served in the National Guard or military reserves are classified as veterans only if they were called to active duty, not counting the 4-6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps.⁶ All other civilians age 16 years and older are classified as nonveterans. **Exhibit 1** provides the number of veterans living in the United States as of 2009. Nearly ten percent (9.5%) of all U.S. citizens 18 and over were once active military.

Exhibit 1. Number of Veterans in the United States (2009)

Civilian population 18 years and over	231,222,799	
Civilian veterans	21,854,374	9.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

Many veterans make the transition from active military duty to civilian life smoothly. For others, however, leaving the structure and regimentation of the military may be disorienting. This could be amplified if the veteran suffers from a disability relating to combat, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or traumatic brain injury (TBI), for example. To help re-train and re-acclimate these individuals to the civilian workforce, it is necessary to understand this population's needs in order to help optimize their educational experiences. It is also important to point out that not all veterans have experienced combat. Those who served in a combat zone can have differing needs from those who did not when transitioning to the educational environment.

The following section provides a brief history of the federal government's programs for veterans and a brief description of the education benefits.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Social Characteristics, 2009 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates: http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

Background

GI Bill of Rights: Historical Antecedents

Congress attempted to assist World War I veterans by passing the World War Adjusted Act of 1924, which provided a monetary bonus based on the number of days served, however, most veterans did not receive money for 20 years.⁷

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (also known as the GI Bill of Rights or "GI Bill" for short) was designed to provide veterans returning from World War II with assistance for education and training, as many previously returning veterans home from war struggled to find work. With the prospect of an estimated 15 million men and women returning to the United States after World War II, the National Resources Planning Board studied post-war labor needs and recommended programs to help returning soldiers readjust to civilian life. This legislation was a preemptive approach aimed at reducing the possibility of another depression due to extensive unemployment of returning veterans. On June 22, 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 into law. The GI Bill extended federal aid for hospitalization, home and business loans, and continuing education. The GI Bill helped veterans return to school by offering tuition, subsistence, books and supplies, equipment, and counseling services.⁸

The passing of the GI Bill was a pivotal point in America's higher education system. College became accessible to more than just society's elite and veterans excelled in their studies.

After the first GI Bill ended in 1956, additional versions were extended to veterans of other conflicts, including: the Veterans' Readjustment Act of 1952 (Korean GI Bill); the Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966; and the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Educational Assistance Act of 1984 (Montgomery GI Bill). Each of these programs helped more servicemen and servicewomen receive education and training following service to their country.⁹

With the increasing numbers of veterans returning after serving in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, a new bill was introduced. Under the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2008, Virginia Senator Jim Webb introduced a bill that would expand benefits for military families. The bill, known as the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, replaced the Montgomery GI Bill, making veterans' benefits comparable to the original GI Bill, following World War II. Webb stated, "With many of our military members serving two or three tours of

⁷ Our Documents, www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=76 and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/history.htm

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is past time to enact a new veterans' education program modeled on the World War II era GI Bill."¹⁰

On June 30, 2008, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act (Post-9/11 GI Bill) was signed into law and took effect on August 1, 2009. The Post-9/11 GI Bill extends benefits to veterans who served active duty 90 or more days after September 10, 2001. This newest version provides funds for tuition and books, a living allowance, and the option to transfer unused educational benefits to spouses or children.¹¹ The VA began accepting applications in May 2009 and eligible veterans who signed up in time began using the benefits August 1, 2009.¹² Veterans eligible for other education benefit programs such as the Montgomery GI Bill and the Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP) may elect to transfer their benefits to the Post-9/11 GI Bill.¹³

Veteran Educational Benefits

Veterans are eligible for benefits from the federal government to assist in obtaining a postsecondary education. Education benefits are often called "chapters", referring to specific veterans' benefits covered in each chapter of the U.S. Code.¹⁴ Below is a summary and description of education benefits provided under each chapter.

The Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (MGIB-AD) Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 30 of Title 38, U.S. Code)

The benefits outlined in chapter 30 are available to veterans who served on active duty service beginning on or after July 1, 1985. In order to use benefits under the MGIB-AD, service persons must serve on active duty for a minimum of two years and receive a fully honorable discharge. Recipients receive one month of benefits for each month of active duty.

The Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) Educational Assistance Program (Chapter 1606 of Title 10, U.S. Code)

An eligible reservist is entitled to a maximum of 36 months of benefits for education at the full-time rate or the equivalent part-time status under chapter 1606. This includes the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard Reserves, Army National Guard and the Air Guard. In order to be eligible, a recipient must enlist in the select reserve for a period of not

¹⁰ Jim Webb Sworn in as Senator, June 5, 2007, http://www.examiner.com/a-491678-Jim_Webb_sworn_in_as_senator.html

¹¹ Vanguard, July/August, 2009, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www1.va.gov/opa/publications/vanguard.asp>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/CH33/Benefit_Comparison_Chart.htm

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, <http://www.va.gov/vetdata/>

less than six years on or after July 1, 1985. Recipients are not required to serve on active duty in the regular armed forces to qualify.

The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP)
(Chapter 1607 of Title 10, U.S. Code)

REAP was established as a part of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act in 2005. This benefit is designed to provide educational assistance to members of the reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency (contingency operation) as declared by the President or Congress. A member of a reserve component who serves on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 under title 10 U.S. Code for a contingency operation, and who serves at least 90 consecutive days or more is eligible for benefits under chapter 1607. Recipients are eligible for up to 36 months of financial assistance for education.

Training & Rehabilitation for Veterans with Service-Connected Disabilities
(Chapter 31 of Title 38, U.S. Code)

The benefits available under this chapter provide assistance to veterans who became disabled as a result of their military service. Recipients must have served on or after September 16, 1940 and have a service-connected disability which is at least 20% disabling as defined by VA. A veteran has 12 years from the date he/she separated from the military or when they are notified of their eligibility as a veteran with a service-connected disability to use these benefits. Financial assistance for education may be provided for up to 48 months.

The Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)
(Chapter 32 of Title 38, U.S. Code)

Chapter 32 education benefits are available for veterans who served between January 1, 1977 and June 30, 1985. In order to qualify, veterans must have entered active duty after December 31, 1976, but before July 1, 1985 and been discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. A serviceperson must have served 181 days or more, or have been discharged for a service-connected disability in order to qualify. Participants receive monthly payments for educational assistance equal to the number of months they contributed, or a maximum of 36 months, whichever is less.

The Post 9-11 Veterans Educational Assistance (Post-9/11)
(Chapter 33 of Title 38, U.S. Code)

In order to qualify for chapter 33 benefits, a serviceperson must have served on active duty for a minimum of 90 days after September 10, 2001. A veteran's eligibility for benefits under this chapter expires 15 years from the date of the last discharge. Individuals eligible under chapter 33 are entitled to 36 months of educational assistance. Service members enrolled in the Post-

9/11 GI Bill program are able to transfer unused education benefits to their spouses or children.¹⁵

**Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)
 (Chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S. Code)**

Chapter 35 provides educational benefits to spouses and children of veterans who either died while in service, died as a result of a service-connected disability, or became totally and permanently disabled as a result of their military service. Disability ratings are provided to veterans who file for disability compensation due to injuries or diseases that happened while on active duty or were made worse by active military service. For example, a disabled veteran with a service-connected disability could be assigned a disability rating of 100 % due to the medically-evidenced determination of individual unemployability.¹⁶

Survivors and dependents are allowed 45 months of full-time benefits. Spouses have 10 years from the date of the veteran's effective date of permanent and total disability rating or the veteran's death. Dependents' benefits end on their 26th birthday, or eight years from the veteran's effective date of permanent or total disability rating, or the veteran's death, but not after the dependent's 31st birthday.

Veterans Receiving Benefits

Exhibit 2. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Education Program Beneficiaries, 2000-2009

Fiscal Year	Total Beneficiaries	Program Name					
		MGIB-AD Trainees	MGIB-SR Trainees	DEA Trainees	VEAP Trainees	REAP Trainees	Post 9/11 Trainees
2000	397,589	279,948	70,299	44,820	2,522	--	--
2001	420,651	289,771	82,283	46,917	1,680	--	--
2002	464,159	323,165	85,766	53,888	1,340	--	--
2003	472,970	321,837	88,342	61,874	917	--	--
2004	490,397	332,031	88,650	68,920	796	--	--
2005	498,386	336,347	87,161	74,267	611	--	--
2006	498,229	332,872	65,511	75,361	739	23,746	--
2007	523,344	343,751	60,298	77,339	568	41,388	--
2008	541,439	354,284	62,390	80,191	560	44,014	--
2009	564,487	341,969	63,469	81,327	448	42,881	34,393

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, Annual Benefits Reports, 2000 to 2009

Exhibit 2 shows the number of veterans, nationwide, who received benefits from 2000 to 2009, disaggregated by chapter. In 2009, 341,969 veterans (60.6%) used the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD), outnumbering veterans using any other chapter. The next widely used benefit was the Survivors and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA); 81,327

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://gibill.va.gov/post-911/post-911-gi-bill-summary/transfer-of-benefits.html>

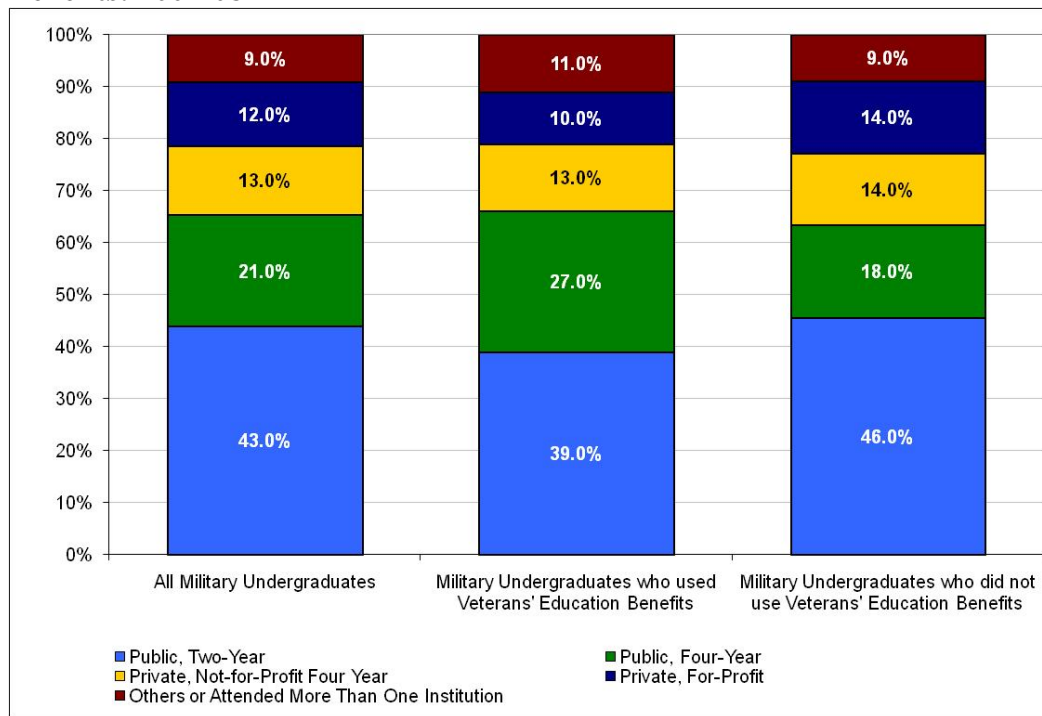
¹⁶ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/compensation/#bm03>

spouses and children of veterans accounted for 14.4% of VA education benefits awarded. 63,469 veterans (11.2%) received benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) for selected reservists. Nationally, the VA reports nearly \$162,053 million in Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit payments to 34,393 individuals and their educational institutions in 2009.¹⁷

Student Veterans and the National Picture

According to The American Council on Education (ACE), the majority of military undergraduates attend public two-year colleges followed next by public four-year colleges. The following ACE charts show college attendance trends for military undergraduates across the United States by sector (type of institution), use of education benefits, and attendance status (part-time, full-time, part-year, full-year). The term “military undergraduates” is used by ACE to represent not only veterans, but also active duty military members and reservists pursuing an undergraduate education. ACE also noted that while some service members may not receive benefits because they are not eligible or their program does not qualify, others may be eligible but still do not receive benefits.¹⁸

Exhibit 3. Military Undergraduates by Type of Institution and by Use of Education Benefits: 2007-08



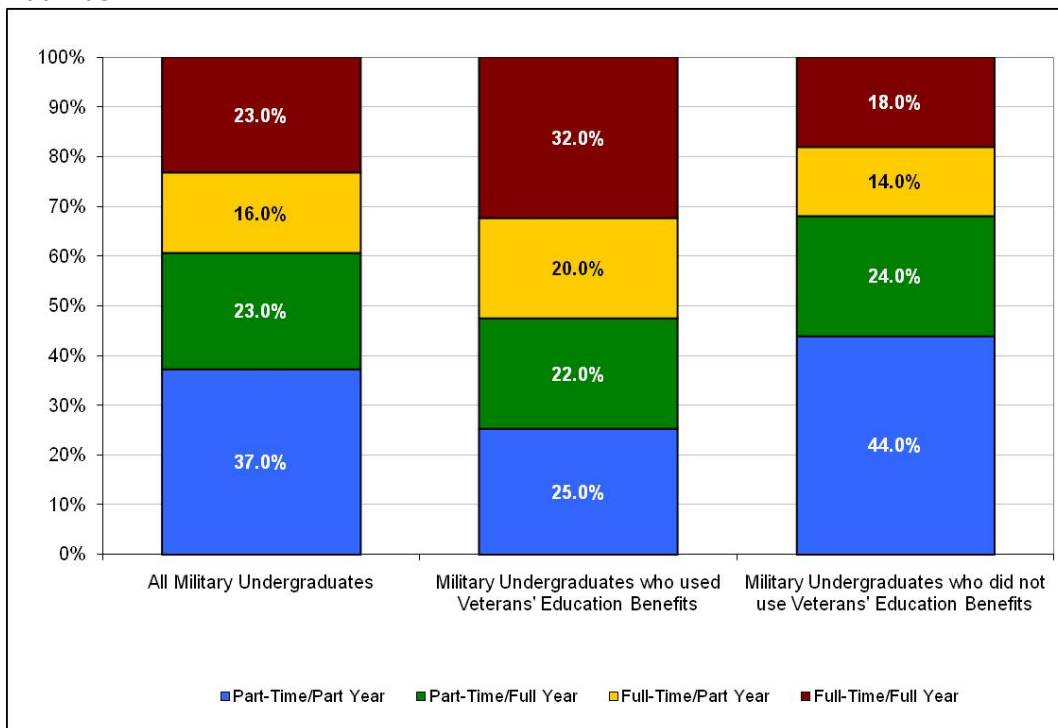
Source: American Council on Education

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, November 2010, “State Summary: Florida and the US Department of Veterans Affairs.”

¹⁸ American Council on Education, Military Service Members and Veterans in Higher Education: What the New GI Bill May Mean for Postsecondary Institutions (July 2009).

Exhibit 3 shows that in 2007-08, 39% of military undergraduates who used veterans’ education benefits attended a public two-year college, and 27% attended public four-year colleges. The chart also shows that for each of the categories, most military undergraduates chose to attend public two-year colleges. For all military undergraduates (veterans, active duty and reservists), 43% attended public two-year colleges—22 percentage points higher than the number who attended public four-year colleges. Thirteen percent (13%) of those using veterans’ education benefits attended private, not for profit colleges. Finally, approximately 10% of military undergraduates who used their veterans’ education benefits attended private, for-profit institutions and another 11% attended other types of institutions or more than one school.

Exhibit 4. Military Undergraduates by Use of Education Benefits and Attendance Status: 2007-08



Source: American Council on Education

The ACE chart in **Exhibit 4** shows that more veterans using their education benefits (32%) attended full-time/full year, while only 18% of individuals who did not use veterans’ education benefits attended full-time/full year. The data demonstrate that given access to education benefits, veterans will return to school full-time for a full academic year.

Overcoming financial barriers, however, represents only one hurdle that challenges veterans. Many veterans, especially ones who experienced combat, may experience culture shock or re-entry adjustment difficulties when they return to “normal” life in the United States. Therefore, it is important for colleges to be aware of these additional challenges and help facilitate the transitions through specialized services and attentive personnel.

A 2009 ACE study found a variety of cultural and academic issues that veterans face when they come to college campuses:

- Transition from military to student and civilian life – difficulties due to psychological or physical disabilities or being out of school for a substantial period of time.
- Learning student skills (e.g., time management—balance family responsibilities and schoolwork).
- Relations with other students and faculty (e.g., students who ask inappropriate questions, or faculty members who reveal student’s prior military experience, or who criticize military).
- Navigating bureaucratic obstacles at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the college.
- College staff are not well-versed in the veterans’ education benefits and the processes involved (incidentally, college staff report that VA personnel are not responsive or knowledgeable).
- Receiving college credits for military training (e.g., Army/ACE Registry Transcript System or “AARTS” and Sailor-Marine ACE Registry Transcript or “SMART”).¹⁹

More recently, Indiana University’s Center for Postsecondary Research released its findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) report: *Major Differences: Examining Student Engagement by Field of Study—Annual Results 2010*, which included findings on veterans in higher education.

Key findings about veteran students from NSSE’s 2010 report are:

- Veterans attending four-year colleges and universities in the United States generally perceive low levels of campus support.
- Veterans interact less often with faculty members than students who are not veterans.
- Despite spending more time working and caring for dependents, veterans spent as much time studying as their nonveteran peers.
- First-year students who were combat veterans spent twice as many hours per week working and six times as many hours on dependent care.
- One in five combat veterans in college reported having a disability, twice that of nonveterans.
- Despite these findings, overall satisfaction with the college experience was generally comparable between veterans and nonveterans.²⁰

Alexander McCormick, NSSE director and associate professor of education at Indiana University, commented, “Our findings suggest that colleges and universities need to make

¹⁹ American Council on Education, *Military Service Members and Veterans in Higher Education: What the New GI Bill May Mean for Postsecondary Institutions* (July 2009).

²⁰ Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, *National Survey of Student Engagement, Veterans in College Perceive Lower Levels of Campus Support and Interact Less with Faculty than Nonveterans, Survey Finds* (Press Release, November 4, 2010) Retrieved from http://nsse.iub.edu/html/annual_results.cfm

special efforts to identify and address the needs of their student veterans. They make up a small share of the undergraduate population, but it is an important group that is likely to grow under the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Act of 2008 or the ‘new GI Bill.’”²¹

According to the *Community College Times*, many colleges across the nation are making their campuses more “veteran-friendly” by providing services tailored to help them in their transition.²² The following section of this document outlines how services for veterans are structured at Florida College System institutions.

Veteran Services in The Florida College System

The Florida College System has experienced an influx in veteran enrollments since the Post-9/11 GI Bill began. By December 2010, the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs reported that the FCS had 17,517 veterans who used education benefits; 10,848 (61.9%) utilized the Post-9/11 GI Bill—demonstrating the impact this has had on the increasing veteran enrollments in the FCS.

Veteran services at Florida College System institutions are typically housed under the financial aid, registrar, or enrollment services offices. There is typically one person who serves as a veteran certifying official and works directly with veterans helping them understand and apply for VA education benefits. Some colleges also have work-study and part-time employees assisting with processing benefits and, at many institutions, the work-study staff members are veterans themselves. Typical duties include meeting with student veterans to explain benefits, completing paperwork required for the VA in order to process benefits, monitoring enrollment status and progression, and providing referrals to other campus offices. Others who work regularly with veterans include academic advisors and counselors, disability service professionals, and specialized student support personnel. An example of a specialized support program for veterans is the Veterans Upward Bound program. It is a grant-funded federal program for higher education institutions which provides assistance to veterans in adjusting to college. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2010),²³ the Veterans Upward Bound is designed to motivate and assist veterans in the development of academic and other requisite skills necessary for success in college. The program provides assessment and enhancement of basic skills through counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and academic instruction in core subject areas with the primary goal of increasing the rate at which participants enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs. Currently, Pensacola State College is the only college in the FCS that has a Veterans Upward Bound program (<http://www.pensacolastate.edu/upwardbound/>).

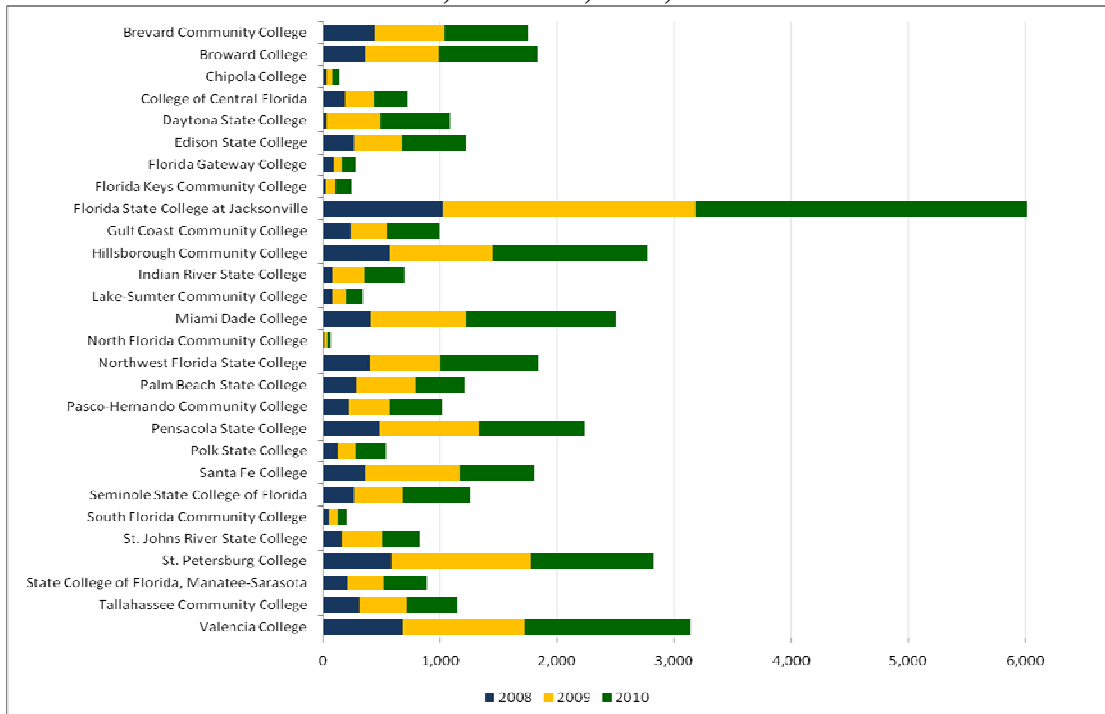
The increase of veterans entering the FCS necessitates deeper knowledge of veteran benefits and procedures as well as adjustment issues veterans face when returning to college. These topics will be discussed and examined below in relation to creating veteran-friendly campuses.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Community College Times, “Veterans finding comfort on campus” (May 28, 2010).

²³ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www.va.gov/>

Exhibit 5. Veteran Enrollments, Fall 2008, 2009, and 2010*



*Enrollments counts reported by colleges each September.
 Source: Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

Over the past 4 years, The Florida College System has experienced steady enrollment growth every year providing education for a broad spectrum of students. The implementation of chapter 33, Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, could be one reason for increases in veteran enrollments in fall 2009. **Exhibit 5** shows the number of veterans enrolled from fall 2008, 2009, and 2010. These numbers were reported by the colleges and show the sharp increase in veteran enrollments from 2008 to 2010. In 2008, the total number of veterans who received education benefits was 7,994, increasing to 14,098 in 2009 and to 17,453 in 2010. From 2007 to 2010, there was a 118.3% increase in the number of veterans enrolled in the FCS.

Exhibit 6. Student Response by Chapter

Chapter 30 (Montgomery GI Bill, Active Duty)	13.0%
Chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation)	12.0%
Chapter 33 (Post-9/11)	63.0%
Chapter 1606 (Montgomery GI Bill, Selected Reserve Education Assistance)	4.0%
Chapter 1607 (Reserve Educational Assistance Program)	0.3%
Other	7.7%

Source: Division of Florida Colleges, Student Veterans Survey

The Florida Department of Education collects data on students receiving veterans benefits with the exception of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Since Post-9/11 benefits are disbursed directly to the student, education benefits under all other chapters are disbursed to the postsecondary institution. As a result, student veterans were asked in which benefit chapter they were enrolled. As shown in **Exhibit 6**, the majority of respondents (63%) were using benefits under chapter 33, followed

by chapters 30 (13%) and 31 (12%). A small percentage of students were using benefits under various other chapters. These results emphasize that many more veterans are accessing and utilizing their education benefits under chapter 33.

When asked about the type of academic programs student veterans are pursuing, the programs most respondents indicated they were pursuing were health related fields such as nursing, criminology, business, and education. Approximately 40% of the student veteran respondents indicated that their ultimate goal was to earn a certificate or a degree in a health-related field.

Exhibit 7. Academic Programs Pursued by Veterans

Certificate - Career and Technical	1.7%
Certificate - College Credit	0.3%
Associate in Applied Science	12.0%
Associate in Science	23.0%
Associate in Arts	40.0%
Bachelor of Applied Science	9.0%
Bachelor of Science	8.0%
Other	6.0%

Source: Division of Florida Colleges, Student Veterans Survey

Generally, the majority of enrollments and degrees awarded in the FCS are in associate degree programs. This trend is also reflected in veteran responses to a Division survey. **Exhibit 7** shows academic programs in which veterans are enrolled. Most respondents (40%) were pursuing an Associate in Arts degree while 23% were pursuing an Associate in Science. Twelve percent (12%) of veterans returned to college to obtain an Associate in Applied Science degree. Other respondents indicated they were pursuing other certificates or degrees (e.g., career and technical certificates or baccalaureate degrees).

The next section details the methods used to conduct the research associated with this program review.

Research Methods

In order to examine the status of veterans and veteran services in The Florida College System, the Division of Florida Colleges visited four colleges of varying sizes and veteran enrollment. Descriptions of the colleges are listed below in **Exhibit 8**. College administrators interviewed for this report interface with veterans regularly in different capacities, ranging from veteran certifying officials to support services such as advising and services for students with disabilities. At each institution, the veteran certifying official was interviewed. Additionally, at institutions A and B, disability service coordinators, financial aid officers, and specialized veteran program coordinators were interviewed. Approximately 20 students who qualified under differing educational benefit chapters and of various ages were also interviewed.

Exhibit 8. Description of Focus Group Colleges²⁴

College A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large rural, Associate degree granting • Undergraduate Profile: mixed part-/full-time • In close proximity to military bases? No • Proportion of overall enrollments who are veterans (2010): 1.1%
College B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large rural, Associate degree dominant, some baccalaureate degrees • Undergraduate Profile: mixed part-/full-time • In close proximity to military bases? Yes • Proportion of overall enrollments who are veterans (2010): 4.0%
College C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium rural, Associate degree dominant, some baccalaureate degrees • Undergraduate Profile: More part-time • In close proximity to military bases? Yes • Proportion of overall enrollments who are veterans (2010): 5.6%
College D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very large urban, Associate degree dominant, some baccalaureate degrees • Undergraduate Profile: More part-time attending two-year programs • In close proximity to military bases? Yes • Proportion of overall enrollments who are veterans (2010): 3.4%

The Division also created and administered separate surveys to all college veteran certifying officials and student veterans in The Florida College System. Questions and topics for interviews with student veterans and veteran certifying officials were generated as a result of current literature and issues raised by veteran students to the Division.

Approximately half of the colleges responded and came from different areas such as financial aid, enrollment services, or the registrar’s office. More than 300 student veterans responded to the student survey. The results of both surveys are included throughout this review.

Findings

While there is always a significant population of veteran students across colleges in The Florida College System at any given time, many new veterans arrived with the introduction of chapter 33, the Post-9/11 GI Bill. In order to get more in-depth information on the challenges that student veterans and colleges face, the Division conducted on-campus interviews with focus groups for both student veterans and staff.

Interviews with college administrators and students, as well as results from the student and certifying official surveys, revealed commonly perceived challenges or barriers that veterans experience. The common barriers included:

²⁴ Description adapted from Carnegie Classification, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup_listings/institution.php

- Admissions process
- Residency for tuition purposes
- Applying for benefits
- Deferment of payment
- Academic planning
- Academic tutoring
- Credit for military training education
- Job placement

These topics are covered in the sections below using survey responses and anecdotal information from interviews with veterans and college staff. Taken together, this information is intended to help provide a picture of veterans and the assistance colleges.

Transition Issues

Veterans returning to college are not unlike most new students in many ways. They must learn how to navigate a college’s landscape to complete tasks relating to admissions, registration, and financial aid. They also must learn about campus resources and services that are available to them. This is all in addition to the challenges that come along with returning to a routine of studying and homework. Some veterans, however, may require assistance in adjusting to the college environment while others may require special services such as disability services, counseling, tutoring, or financial aid. This section provides details in the transition issues that veterans face when returning to college.

Exhibit 9. What are the barriers experienced by veterans as they transition to the college environment? (Respondents were asked to check all that apply.)

Financial	100.0%
Applying for benefits	60.0%
Transition from military to classroom	60.0%
Other	47.0%

Source: Division of Florida Colleges, College Staff Survey

In **Exhibit 9**, college staff respondents indicated that there were two chief barriers for student veterans related to college: financing and applying for benefits (100% and 60%, respectively). The processes related to veterans claiming their education benefits are complex and require knowledgeable staff to guide veterans in applying for admissions to informing them of course load requirements. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents also said that transitioning from the military to the college classroom was a challenge while 47% indicating “other” barriers to transitions to college. Some “other” issues include in-state tuition/residency or accuracy of information.

Exhibit 10. Does your college have any student groups specifically for veterans?

Yes	53.0%
No	47.0%

Source: Division of Florida College, College Staff Survey

Among the suggestions for creating a more veteran-friendly campus was encouraging the creation of a student veterans group. **Exhibit 10** shows that 53% of college staff survey respondents said their campuses currently had a student group specific to student veterans and 47% did not. One respondent who answered “no” also noted that their campus was currently in the process of getting approval to start an organization through Student Veterans of America. With the increase of veterans enrolling in college, more student veteran organizations may be established in the future to create more welcoming campuses to veterans.

Despite its burgeoning veterans population, College C did not have a specific student organization for veterans. The financial aid director offered the following explanation with regards to a student veterans organization:

“Yeah, the students would have to organize that [a student veterans group] then they would have to find a faculty advisor. We’re different, I think, because of our population. Being a commuter school, we don’t have the presence of students on campus in the evenings. So they don’t have the need to be able to ‘gel’ together and with some of the younger ones with the transfer benefits, they probably are already active in some of the other student activities. But there is nothing specific for veterans.”

Responses from college staff show that veterans face difficulties in different aspects of college life. Veteran responses to the survey reveal other barriers relating to their transition experience.

In the student survey, veterans were asked about the most challenging aspect of transitioning from a military environment to the college environment. Many veterans responded that balancing full-time work with school, acquiring adequate study skills, dealing with PTSD, and lag time between application for VA education benefits and actual receipt of benefits were the most challenging aspects in their transitions. Some veterans cited adjustment issues related to the shift from the military culture to college culture. An example that was cited was the difference between veterans receiving regular guidance on required tasks while in the military, to college where students are independent and expected to manage their academic responsibilities on their own. One veteran responded with the following comment when asked about the challenges of the transition process for veterans:

“The fact that now I am in college I have to develop my own routine everyday instead of simply having everything planned out for me by the higher in command.”

Additional comments regarding transition challenges included:

- “Learning how to study again.”
- “Diagnosed with PTSD, it is difficult for me to retain the information so exercising my mind has been the hardest transition.”
- “Maintaining my grades while working a full time job.”
- “Delay in VA benefits until middle of the term.”

Students were also asked about beneficial programs and services for veterans. Many veterans noted that tutoring services, student groups for veterans, specialized on-campus programs designed to give veterans advising and support, the VA certifying official, and flexible class times were beneficial programs and services. Respondents were also asked about programs or services they would like to see implemented at their institution. Student veterans who did not have a student group for veterans on their campus indicated that they would like to see a group on their campus. Many participants also responded that more staff members are needed to assist veterans. Other participants noted that they would like to see an orientation or transition program designed specifically for veterans.

As shown above, feedback from veterans gives rich information on what services and activities colleges can offer to help veterans in their transition from military life to life in college. The next section details the types of support services that are available to veterans in the FCS.

Support Services in the FCS

This section details the nature of the work colleges and their staff undertake to assist veterans transition into and succeed in college.

As mentioned previously, the processes relating to claiming veterans education benefits are complicated and oftentimes require guidance from college staff. In addition to guiding students through these procedures, college officials must also verify that veterans have registered for the correct amount of course hours, which requires further tracking. Depending on the number of veterans and the number of staff available to carry out this task, this work can be time-consuming but must be painstakingly completed.

Exhibit 11. How many staff hours per day are spent addressing veteran issues?

1-2 hours	7.0%
3-4 hours	27.0%
5-6 hours	0.0%
7 or more	60.0%
Do not work on veteran issues on a daily basis	7.0%

Source: Division of Florida College, College Staff Survey

Exhibit 11 shows the breakdown of staff responses to the question of the number of hours spent work on veterans’ issues. The majority (60%) of staff members spend 7 or more hours working on veteran issues. Generally, these respondents also reported having 1-2 staff

members relative to the number of veterans they serve (ranging from 300 – 1,200 student veterans). Twenty-seven percent (27%) of respondents from the 3-4 hour range identified themselves from other college offices (e.g., admissions, enrollment services or financial aid). This was the same for the 7% who reported working 1-2 hours or intermittently on veteran issues. Many respondents indicated that veteran services are only part of what they do and they have multiple roles at their institutions.

Exhibit 12. Does your college offer a one-stop service center for veterans?

Yes	20.0%
No	66.7%
No Response	13.3%

Source: Division of Florida College, College Staff Survey

Colleges can help ease the transition for student veterans by providing assistance in navigating the bureaucracies involved in attending school. This can be accomplished in a number of ways including centralizing key offices in one location or in one building. **Exhibit 12** shows that 66.7% of survey respondents said that their colleges did not have a “one-stop” service center for veterans, while 20.0% said their colleges had such a center on its campus. Some respondents stated that their colleges were in the process of creating a one-stop center or had key offices (e.g., financial aid and VA offices) in the same buildings.

Although 60% of survey respondents in Exhibit 11 report that 7 or more hours per day are spent on veterans issues, the level of assistance provided varies from college to college. For onsite interviews conducted for this review, three of the colleges were near military bases and one was not. Of the colleges near military bases, one college provided assistance with certifying, but did not have special programs geared towards veterans. The college that was not near a military base provides assistance to student veterans beyond certifying an individual’s eligibility for education benefits. Other colleges have special programs targeting veterans in transitioning from military to college life and provide a more holistic approach to their veteran services that extends beyond GI Bill benefits. These range from walking individuals through admissions and education benefits procedures to services that provide personalized advising or referrals to other offices as necessary (e.g., student disability office).

College D has a specific program for veterans funded by a federal grant. The program director discussed College D’s program role in helping veterans:

“We’re specifically working for veterans. We not only assist them in achieving their academic goals but also career placement. We do not work with any student unless you’re a veteran.”

The program coordinator from the same college described his function within the program:

“Enrollment services for me would be different from someone else in a more traditional-type setting. I’m always dealing with enrollment. And also, I do what we call degree audits to make sure students stay on track. If

they have any problems with registration or anything like that, I also help them with that, too. I'm also like a cheerleader. I advise them with classes and everything. I even tutor because I'm a Florida state teacher in math and science...I set them on a career path. I find internships for them through other intermediaries. I set them on a track for success by making sure they graduate and meet their academic goals."

Exhibit 13. How often do veterans meet with veterans officials?

About once a week	5.0%
More than once a week	2.5%
About once a month	16.6%
Once a semester	29.0%
Only on as-needed basis	47.0%

Source: Division of Florida Colleges, Student Veterans Survey

Exhibit 13 shows how often student veterans indicated they meet with veterans officials. The large plurality (47%) of respondents indicated that they meet with veterans officials on an "as-needed" basis. Twenty-nine percent (29%) indicated they meet with an official once a semester and approximately 17% indicated they meet with an official about once a month. Only 7.7% of respondents said they meet with a college veterans official either once a week or more than once a week. These results show the varying levels of student veteran needs with regard to accessing a campus veterans official for an assortment of reasons.

Administration of Veteran Benefits

On the other hand, some college veteran services offices are focused mainly on administrative duties such as maintaining records and tracking students to ensure federal compliance.

"It's really important now with chapter 33 (Post-9/11) because unlike the others if you went from 11 to 9 hours using chapter 30 (Montgomery GI Bill, active duty), well, your status didn't change because it's still three-quarters time. Chapter 33 needs to know which classes and how much they cost. It's a lot more work. Anyways, we have a check in place for that. That's one of the things that create a bit of a bottleneck here because after I do 800 certifications I have a whole stack of the schedules on my desk now. I have to go back and review every single student and check every single class to find out who didn't tell me if they dropped classes. It's the only way to do it. After the first check, I get the Monday morning report once I've verified you've either changed your classes or everything is still the same. There is a lot of long-drawn out checks there, especially at first. That month before and the month or so after registration is pretty much chaos."

In this instance, the certifying official from College C was the only person working with veterans and it appears that difficulties arose from the lack of personnel. This college did not

have specialized advising, student services, or a student organization for veterans, despite the growing student veteran population.

Exhibit 14. What is your college’s policy on offering multiple financial deferments per year?

One per academic year and additional deferments allowed as needed	53.0%
Allow one per term for chapter 33 veterans and one for other chapters	20.0%
Only allow one per academic year for all veterans	20.0%
No policy in place relating to multiple deferments	7.0%

Source: Division of Florida College, College Staff Survey

Also, 53% of certifying officials said that deferments are available to veterans once per academic year and they provide extensions or additional deferments in other terms as veterans need them. Other certifying officials provided variations on their college’s deferment policy (as show in **Exhibit 14**). Currently, s. 1009.27(2), F.S. states:

“Any veteran or other eligible student who receives benefits under chapter 30, chapter 31, chapter 32, chapter 33, chapter 34, or chapter 35 of Title 38, U.S.C., or chapter 1606 of Title 10, U.S.C., is entitled to one deferment each academic year and an additional deferment each time there is a delay in the receipt of benefits.”²⁵

Twenty percent (20%) of college staff responded that their colleges allowed one deferment, per term, for chapter 33 veterans (Post-9/11) and one for veterans using education benefits from other chapters. Another 20% only allowed one deferment per academic term for all veterans while another 7% responded that their colleges did not have any policy in place relating to multiple deferments. Veterans may experience a delay in the receipt of their education benefits due to matters beyond their control (e.g., delays at the regional officer at which benefits are processed). Because of this, colleges should review current statute and develop policies at the institutional level to help ease the financial stress for veterans.

Admissions-Related Issues

Residency for Tuition Purposes

Another issue with which student veterans have difficulty is residency. Section 1009.21, F.S., establishes the requirements for resident states for tuition purposes. Active duty military service members who are stationed in Florida or attending a Florida public institution that is within 50 miles of the military installation at which they are stationed, given the military instillation is within a county contiguous to Florida, are eligible for in-state tuition. However, there is no provision in Florida law which affords special consideration to veterans when

²⁵ The 2010 Florida Statutes,
<http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?Mode=View%20Statutes&Submenu=1&Tab=statutes&CFID=244269007&CFTOKEN=48266085>

granting in-state residency. Veterans often find themselves residing in a particular city because it is the last military installation at which they were stationed before they separated from service. Many veterans who pursue their education in Florida after leaving military service learn that they must pay out-of-state tuition if they do not have the required documents showing they are Florida residents. The cost of out-of-state tuition can be as much as three times greater than the cost of in-state tuition. This can mean that veterans must secure additional financial resources to pay for any remaining costs. The amount of money received under the veterans education benefits does not differ based on residency status.

A student veteran from the same college spoke of his experience:

“I came back to Florida and they say that I’m not a resident because I haven’t been here for 12 months. I’ve kept my residency for 24 years and then you say I’m not a resident.”

Currently, state laws and rules relating to residency requirements do not provide special dispensation for veterans returning to college. Such modifications may help ease the transition from military to civilian life and also ease the financial burden for their education.

Transfer of Military Credits

A study carried out by ACE revealed that only 14% of survey respondents and a few focus group participants reported that their institution’s credit transfer policies had been a major factor in choosing that institution.²⁶ While some focus group undergraduates did not see their military work as relevant to their degree plans, others reported inconsistencies in credit transfer rules among academic departments.²⁷

According to ACE’s *Guide to the Evaluation of Education Expectations in the Armed Services*:

“The use of ACE recommendations is the prerogative of education officials and employers. The recommendations are provided to assist you in assessing the applicability of military learning experiences to an educational program or occupation. You may modify the recommendations in accordance with your institution’s policies and practices. Credit may be applied to a student’s program in various ways: (1) applied to the major to replace a required course, (2) applied as an optional course within the major, (3) applied as a general elective, (4) applied to meet basic degree requirements, or (5) applied to waive a

²⁶ American Council on Education, “Executive Summary: Service Members in School. Military Veterans’ Experiences Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Pursuing Postsecondary Education” (November 2010).

²⁷ Ibid.

prerequisite. Credit granted by a postsecondary institution will depend on institutional policies and degree requirements.”²⁸

Factors such as date of training, date of faculty review, and rank can affect credit recommendations in subject areas and the number of credit hours specified. For example, recommendations for a veteran who left after a short stint in the military at the rank of E-3 (e.g., Seaman) would be vastly different from a veteran who retired at the rank of E-9 (e.g., Master Chief). This would be further affected by what degree or certificate program the individual pursues at a college. If the academic program is diametrically different from one’s military career field, applicable college credits from military training may be fewer.

It was also noted that not all FCS institutions have the same policy regarding the granting of college credit for military training and experience which can be confusing to veterans. Enrollment services or the Office of the Registrar at college campuses handle transcript evaluation and some utilize ACE guides to help determine how military training can transfer as college credits.

“Now, our college gives veterans seven credits for military service but it depends on their service background. Some students may get more, some students may get less. Veterans who were medics in the military and are studying nursing at our college may get more credit compared to the student who comes in and has a lot of medical experience and wants to do computer programming.”

When asked if they received credit for their military experience, most student veterans responded that they did not receive any credit for their military training and experience. Most of those who did earn credits for military training earned them in physical education. Many student veterans commented that although they received credit, the credit was elective credit and did not count towards specific program requirements. Additionally, some veterans can earn too many elective credits that do not count toward their degrees or certificates. If a student has too many credits, it may affect their eligibility for federal financial aid and other benefits.

Generally, student veterans in the focus group for this program review voiced relatively few concerns regarding receipt of college credits for military training (compared to timely receipt of benefit payments, for example). One student said:

“It was very easy. I submitted my transcript and they evaluated it and [the credits] popped up.”

One certifying official states that the frustration that students experience relating to transferring military credits stems from the lack of understanding of how credits are applied. Although

²⁸ American Council on Education, “Guide to the Evaluation of Education Expectations in the Armed Services” *Frequently Asked Questions* retrieved at <http://militaryguides.acenet.edu/FaqGeneral.htm>.

veterans are often told that they can receive college credits for their military training, military credits cannot be applied “across the board” for all degree or certificate programs. As mentioned previously, if a veteran pursues a program different from his or her military career field, it is less likely that those military credits can be applied to his or her chosen academic program. These exceptions should be expressed explicitly to veterans to help prevent misunderstandings.

Recommendations

Based on studies conducted by ACE, there are several ways in which colleges can make their campuses more veteran-friendly. The results from surveys and interviews of campus staff and student veterans in The Florida College System further confirm the need to simplify processes related to helping veterans claim their education benefits and improve service to help veterans transition to college life.

In its publication “From Soldier to Student: Easing the Transition of Service Members on Campus,” ACE also identified five (5) areas in which higher education can improve in serving military service members and veterans:

1. Provide assistance to help veterans transition to the college environment.
2. Provide professional development for faculty and staff on transitional needs of military students.
3. Train staff to meet the needs of veterans with brain injuries and other disabilities.
4. Streamline campus administrative procedures for veterans for returning from military deployments.
5. Provide opportunities for veterans to connect with their peers.²⁹

Additionally, focus group participants and veterans program administrators who participated in ACE’s most recent report suggested the following:

1. Prompting prospective students to indicate their veteran status when they first request information or apply to the institution.
2. Providing resources to ensure that veterans program administrators—and particularly school certifying officials—have adequate training and support.
3. Ensuring that staff members in other institutional administrative offices, such as student accounts and financial aid, are familiar with the terms of the new GI Bill.
4. Providing disability and mental health staff who understand veterans’ issues.
5. Establishing consistent credit transfer guidelines and transparency about those guidelines.
6. Offering an information session for veterans as part of the institution’s annual student orientation, and holding additional veterans’ information sessions throughout the year.
7. Encouraging students’ efforts to build a student veterans organization on campus.³⁰

²⁹ American Council on Education, “From Soldier to Student: Easing the Transition of Service Members on Campus” (July 2009).

The above suggestions are examples of how colleges can help make their campuses more welcoming to veterans returning to school. Also, respondents to the surveys administered by the Division of Florida Colleges provided feedback on how colleges could enhance their veteran services on campus:

1. Provide additional staffing (with appropriate knowledge of veterans benefits and issues) to assist student veterans in their transition.
2. Create a centralized office where student veterans can access multiple services (e.g., certification, academic advising, mental health counseling).
3. Provide orientation or transition programs specifically for veterans entering college.
4. Offer a student veterans group for veterans to network and socialize with one another.
5. Provide flexible class times and specialized on-campus programs tailored to the needs of student veterans.

At the state level, the following are areas that need further consideration:

1. Residency for tuition purposes. Currently, if a veteran does not have the required documentation proving Florida residency, he or she must pay out-of-state tuition and fees until in-state residency is established, pursuant to s. 1009.21, F.S. The Florida Legislature should consider providing in-state tuition to veterans who served in the military. This would not only help ease the financial burdens associated with the transition to college life but also show gratitude for service and sacrifice to the country. A revision to s. 1009.21, F. S., which allows veterans who separated from military service no more than 12 months prior to the start of the first day of classes and can demonstrate ties to Florida to become in-state residents could assist veterans.
2. Deferments. Presently, colleges interpret the statute differently and administer deferments differently. One college may only allow one deferment while another might allow more than one under special circumstances. Revision of s. 1009.27(2), F.S., would provide consistency in allowing deferments across colleges, especially in cases when disbursement of funds from the VA has created the delay. A revision to s. 1009.27, F. S., which entitles veterans to a deferment of tuition and fees any time payment from the VA has been delayed due to circumstances beyond the student's control could simplify the process for students.
3. Credit for military training and education. Consideration of the consistent transfer of military credits across colleges should be explored by the Articulation Coordinating Committee.

Current policies relating to these areas should be evaluated for possible legislative changes needed in order to assist veterans and provide consistency across the system.

³⁰ American Council on Education, "Executive Summary: Service Members in School. Military Veterans' Experiences Using the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Pursuing Postsecondary Education" (November 2010).

Conclusion

The increased numbers of veterans enrolled in The Florida College System calls for improvement in the services provided to this population. A number of issues involving veterans transitioning from the military to college can be alleviated by institutions working towards fostering a veteran-friendly campus. Initiatives such as training staff on veteran benefits requirements, providing centralized services, and a student veterans group could go a long way in helping veterans adjust to college. At the state level, policies relating to the number of deferments veterans can receive, transfer of military credits, and residency for tuition purposes should be reviewed and amended, as necessary, to help veterans transition to college. While some campuses have larger numbers of veterans than other campuses, it is advisable each FCS institution review its current policies relating to veterans to ensure that current practices act as conduits, not barriers, to helping veterans receive job training and a postsecondary education.

For more information please contact:

Dr. Kathyrine Scheuch, Research Analyst
Kathyrine.Scheuch@fldoe.org, (850) 245-9456

Dr. Amy Albee, Coordinator for Outreach and Access
Amy.Albee@fldoe.org, (850) 245-9488

Dr. John Hughes, Associate Vice Chancellor for Evaluation
John.Hughes@fldoe.org, (850) 245-9482



Florida Department of Education

Florida Department of Education
Dr. Eric J. Smith, Commissioner
The Florida College System
Dr. Willis N. Holcombe, Chancellor
Dr. Judith Bilsky, Executive Vice Chancellor
Phone: (850) 245-0407
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1544
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
www.fldoe.org/cc/

Appendix A: GI Bill Historical Timeline³¹

- **1944:** President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act.
- **1944-1952:** Veterans Administration (VA) backed nearly 2.4 million home loans for World War II veterans.
- **1947:** Veterans accounted for 49 percent of college admissions in the United States.
- **1956:** On July 25, the original GI Bill ended. By this time, 7.8 million of the 16 million World War II veterans had participated in an education or training program.
- **1966:** On March 3, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act which offered benefits to post-Korean War and Vietnam-era veterans.
- **1984:** GI Bill renamed "Montgomery GI Bill" after former Mississippi Congressman Gillespie V. Montgomery who revamped it for the newest generation of combat veterans.
- **1994:** While commemorating the 50th anniversary of the GI Bill, President Bill Clinton claimed, "Just as D-Day was the greatest military action in our history, so the GI Bill arguably was the greatest investment in our people in American history."
- **2008:** The GI Bill was updated to give servicemen and women who were active on or after September 11, 2001, enhanced educational benefits that cover more expenses. The bill is called Post-9/11 GI Bill.*
- **2009:** On May 1, veterans began filing the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

*In June 2008, President Barack Obama signed into law the *Post 9-11 Veteran Educational Assistance Act*. This bill went into effect in August 2009 and provides for the following benefits:

- Up to the amount of the maximum tuition and fees for an in-state student at the most expensive public school in that state.
- Up to \$1,000 per academic year for books, supplies, equipment, and other educational costs.
- A monthly housing stipend equal to the amount of basic housing for military personnel in military housing, adjusted by ZIP code. Individuals with a skill or specialty that is in critically short supply, as designated by the Secretary of Defense, may have their monthly stipend increased.
- Up to \$100 per month for up to 12 months for students who require tutoring, as certified by the instructor leading the course.
- A \$500 relocation/travel assistance grant for those living in a county with less than seven persons per square mile and who relocate at least 500 miles to attend school or who must travel by air to attend an institution because it is too far to drive.
- Up to \$2,000 for one licensing or certification exam.

³¹ GI Bill Historical Timeline, www.allmilitary.com

Appendix B: Veteran Enrollment by College

	Spring 2010	Fall 2010
Brevard Community College	771	715
Broward College	880	839
Chipola College	53	61
College of Central Florida	298	288
Daytona State College	608	598
Edison State College	504	549
Florida Gateway College	106	109
Florida Keys Community College	138	133
Florida State College at Jacksonville	2,727	2,839
Gulf Coast Community College	452	458
Hillsborough Community College	1,046	1,322
Indian River State College	343	344
Lake-Sumter Community College	147	150
Miami Dade College	1,417	1,278
North Florida Community College	27	36
Northwest Florida State College	823	837
Palm Beach State College	394	418
Pasco-Hernando Community College	445	449
Pensacola State College	917	900
Polk State College	212	257
Santa Fe College	390	634
Seminole State College of Florida	574	576
South Florida Community College	81	79
St. Johns River State College	238	319
St. Petersburg College	1,092	1,043
State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota	360	370
Tallahassee Community College	409	426
Valencia Community College	1,561	1,426
System Total	17,013	17,453

Source: Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

Appendix C: Comparison of Fall 2008, 2009, and 2010 Veteran Enrollment³²

	2008	2009	2010
Brevard Community College	443	596	715
Broward College	365	627	839
Chipola College	31	51	61
College of Central Florida	191	248	288
Daytona State College	26	463	598
Edison State College	263	415	549
Florida Gateway College	94	70	109
Florida Keys Community College	21	87	133
Florida State College at Jacksonville	1,026	2,155	2,839
Gulf Coast Community College	234	307	458
Hillsborough Community College	570	880	1,322
Indian River State College	85	270	344
Lake-Sumter Community College	80	116	150
Miami Dade College	409	818	1,278
North Florida Community College	10	23	36
Northwest Florida State College	401	602	837
Palm Beach State College	286	505	418
Pasco-Hernando Community College	220	350	449
Pensacola State College	482	850	900
Polk State College	128	150	257
Santa Fe College	363	810	634
Seminole State College of Florida	262	421	576
South Florida Community College	56	70	79
St. Johns River State College	163	342	319
St. Petersburg College	582	1,200	1,043
State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota	211	304	370
Tallahassee Community College	308	408	426
Valencia Community College	684	1,033	1,426
System Total	7,994	14,098	17,453

Source: Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

³² Represents all veterans receiving benefits as reported by the Florida State Approving Agency

Appendix D: Surveys

Student Veterans Survey

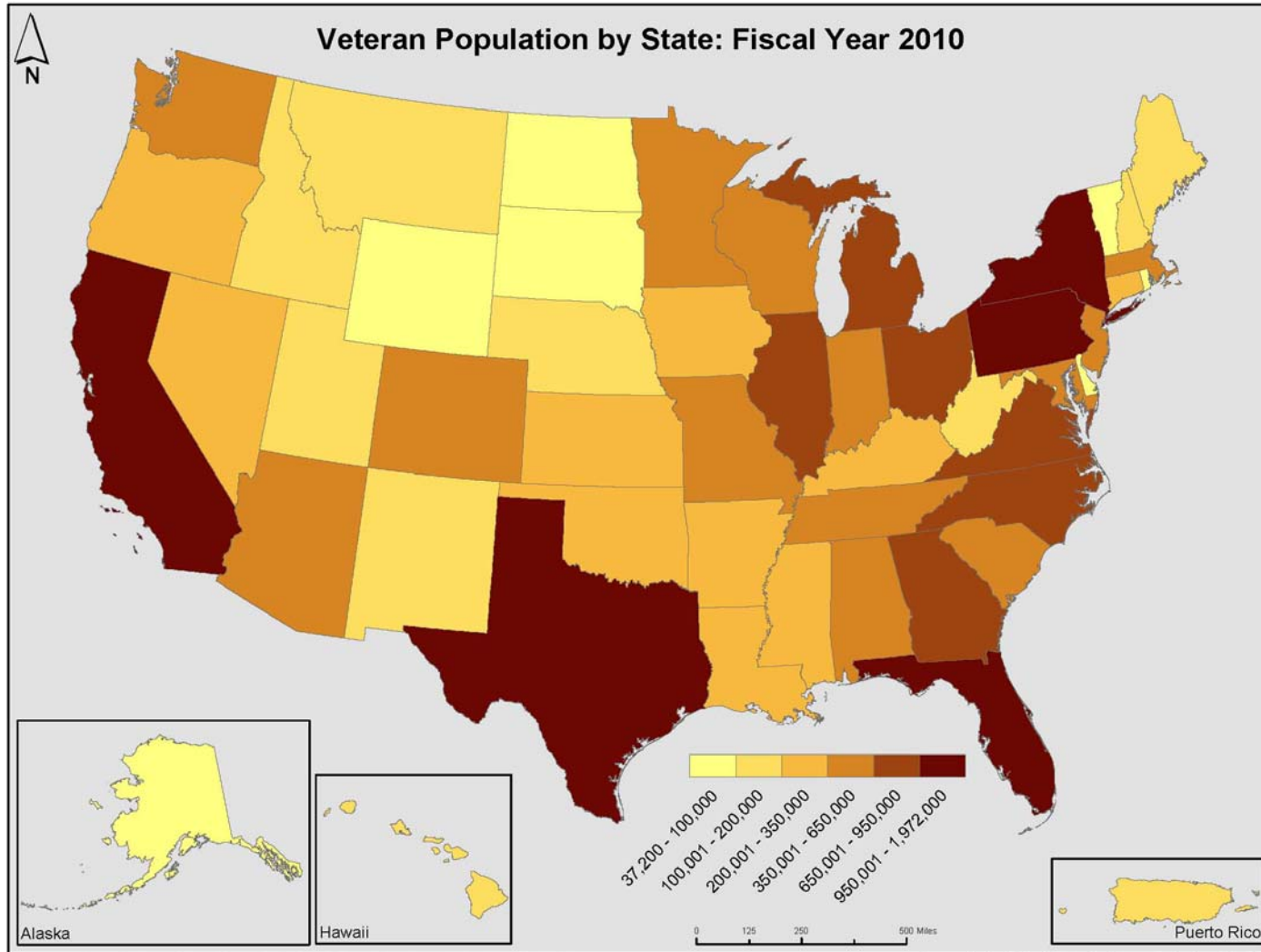
1. College Name
2. How long did you serve in the military?
3. When did you exit the military?
4. Did you receive any college credit for your military training/experience? If so, please list the courses for which you received credit. If awarded block credit, how many hours were you awarded?
5. Which chapter of veteran benefits are you currently receiving?
 - Chapter 33
 - Chapter 30
 - Chapter 31
 - Chapter 1606
 - Chapter 1607
 - Other
6. Which type of academic program are you currently pursuing?
 - Associate in Arts
 - Associate in Applied Science
 - Associate in Science
 - Bachelor of Science
 - Bachelor of Applied Science
 - Certificate – College Credit
 - Certificate – Career and Technical
 - Other
7. What is your desired major field of study?
8. What is the most challenging aspect of transitioning from the military to college for you?
9. Are you aware of any student group/organization on campus for student veterans? (Yes, No)
10. Are you a member of a student veteran group at your college? (Yes, No)
11. How often do you have contact with the veterans service office at your college?
 - More than once a week
 - About once a week
 - About once a month
 - Once a semester
 - Only on an as-needed basis
12. What programs and services offered by the college are most beneficial? Please describe.

13. Are there any potential programs and/or services for veterans that don't currently exist at your college that would be beneficial?
14. Please include any additional comments you may have.

Veteran Certifying Official Surveys

1. College Name
2. Contact Name
3. Contact Title
4. Contact Email
5. What is your primary role in your position at your institution?
6. What are the estimated total staff hours per day spent working with veterans or addressing veteran issues at your institution?
 - 1-2 hours/day
 - 3-4 hours/day
 - 5-6 hours/day
 - More than 7 hours
 - Do not work on veteran issues on a daily basis
7. How many staff members does your college have directly serving veterans (please include part-time and work study positions)?
8. Does your college offer a one-stop service center for veterans? (Yes, No)
9. Does your college have any student groups or organizations specifically for veterans? (Yes, No)
10. How many veterans did you college serve during the following semesters? (spring 2010, fall 2010)
11. What are some of the barriers that veterans face when acclimating to the college environment? Please check all that apply.
 - Financial
 - Applying for benefits
 - Transition from military to classroom
 - Other
12. What programs have the highest enrollment of veterans at your college?
13. What is your college's policy on offering multiple financial deferments per year?
14. Please describe your college's procedure for deciding the awarding of credit for military training/education.
15. Please provide any additional information regarding veteran services and improving services to veterans that you would like to share.

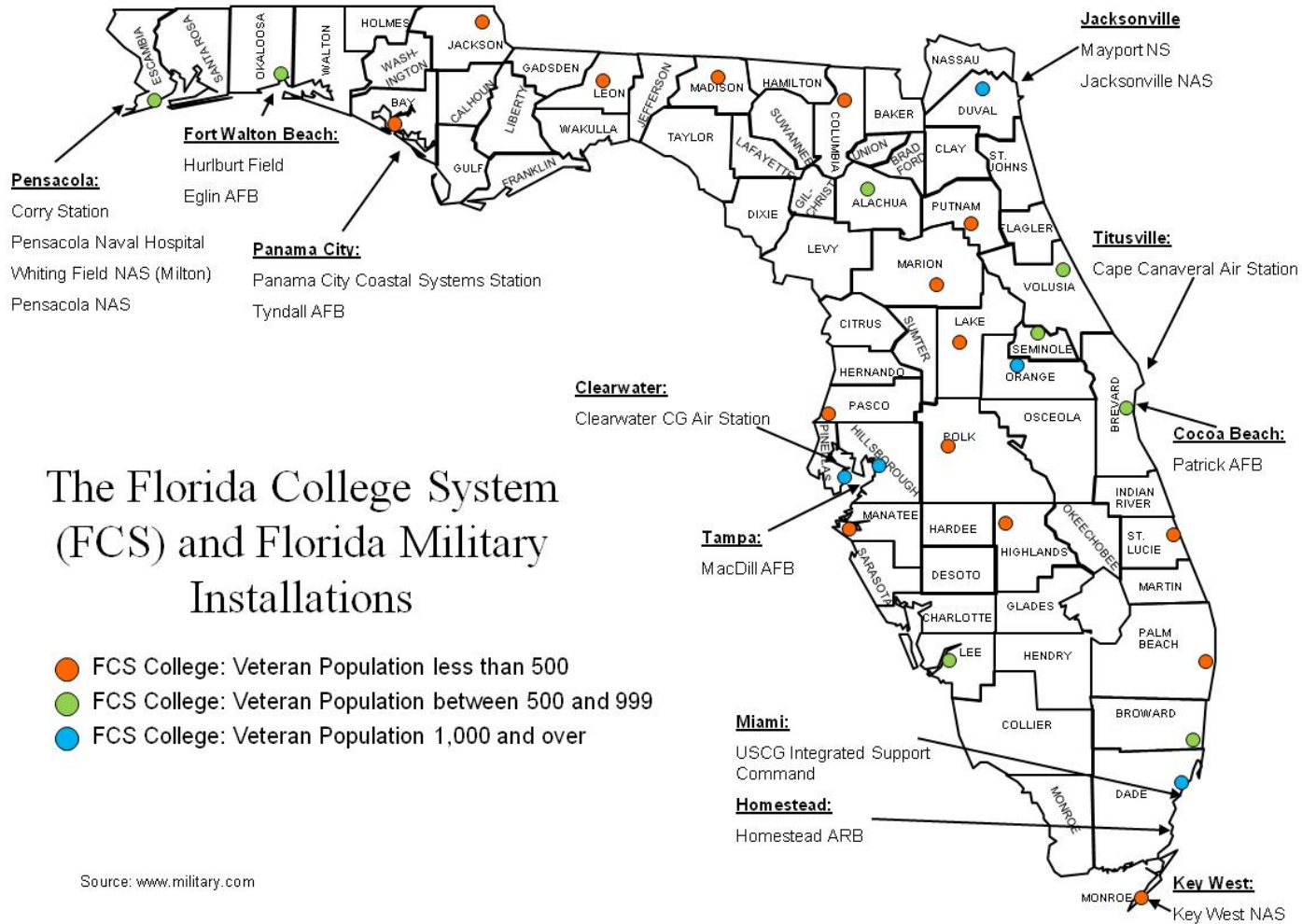
Appendix E: Veteran Population by State



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop), 2007

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

Appendix F: Map of Florida with FCS Institutions and Military Bases (Fall 2010)



The Florida College System (FCS) and Florida Military Installations

Source: www.military.com