

2014-15 Veterans Enrollment Report

Prepared by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 76 (Chapter 13, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*)

November 2015

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Nevada, Reno
Nevada State College
College of Southern Nevada
Great Basin College
Truckee Meadows Community College
Western Nevada College
Desert Research Institute



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Background and Purpose

The Nevada System of Higher Education is dedicated to supporting student veterans and their families in pursuing their educational goals. Student veterans are growing in number not only in Nevada, but across the nation. This particular student population often faces unique challenges in assimilating back into civilian life. It is the goal of NSHE and its institutions to provide the necessary services to support student veterans, in order to ensure their success in achieving their educational goals.

The purpose of this report is to meet the reporting requirements of Assembly Bill 76 (Chapter 13, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*). This measure requires the Board of Regents to submit an annual report to the Legislature, or to the Legislative Committee on Education when the Legislature is not in regular session, which includes: (1) the number of students who are veterans or who are receiving payments or benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; (2) information about how policy changes may have affected the number of students who are veterans enrolled in the Nevada System of Higher Education; (3) the number of students who are veterans who graduated during the immediately preceding academic year; and (4) the efforts undertaken by each institution within the System to retain and graduate students who are veterans.

NSHE institutions have undertaken a significant technical implementation to improve the collection of veteran enrollment data. However, the implementation was not complete for the 2015 Veterans Report which is based on 2014-15 data. Currently four institutions (UNR, UNLV, NSC, and TMCC) make it possible for veterans to self-identify on their application for admission. The other three institutions (CSN, GBC, and WNC) are in the process of having it added to their application. Since the application only collects data on new students, the institutions are also using various survey instruments to identify currently enrolled veterans. Full implementation will be complete in time for the veterans to self-identify during the application process for the Fall 2016 semester.

Due to the implementation schedule as it relates to the deadline for this report, the data in this report is incomplete and should not be used to make policy decisions or to draw any conclusions regarding the performance of student veterans or the success of recently approved policy changes impacting such students. However, over time, the accuracy and reliability of this data will improve, particularly when the additional efforts to ensure the collection of data for all student veterans is put into place.



Student Veterans Data

Number of Identified Student Veterans: 6,098

For academic year 2014-15, 6,098 student veterans were identified across the seven NSHE teaching institutions. This figure is unduplicated and only captures students whose veterans' benefits were certified by an NSHE institution, or who self-identified on an admissions application or survey instrument. Due to the limitations in the NSHE data at this time, it does not include all student veterans that are attending an NSHE institution.

Number of Student Veterans receiving payments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: 2,937

For academic year 2014-15, 2,937 student veterans were certified by an NSHE institution for the purpose of receiving educational benefits. This figure is unduplicated and only includes students who have been certified by an NSHE institution to receive benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Percent of Student Veterans by Gender: 67.2% Male, 32.8% Female

Of the 6,098 student veterans identified as enrolled at an NSHE institution in Academic Year 2014-15, 67.2 percent were identified as male and 32.8 percent female. Gender data is not available for all identified student veterans.

Average Age of Enrolled Student Veterans: 30 years old

For the identified student veterans enrolled in the 2014-15 academic year, the average age of those identified students was 30 years old as of November 2015.

Fall to Spring Retention: 79.8%

Of the identified student veterans that were enrolled in Fall 2014, 79.8 percent persisted and enrolled in the Spring 2015 term.

Number of Student Veterans Who Graduated: 586

During academic year 2014-15 (7/1/2014-6/30/2015), 586 student veterans received a degree or certificate. This number would exclude any veteran who did not receive benefits and/or self-identify as a veteran to the institution.

Areas of Study

Assembly Bill 76 requires that NSHE report “the most common areas of study among the students who are veterans.”

This data is reported by the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) category for student veterans enrolled during the 2014-15 academic year. The CIP codes used in this report are based on a taxonomic scheme that supports the accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity. The CIP scheme was developed and is maintained by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. The CIP code is the accepted standard for the federal government on instructional program classifications in higher education and is used in a variety of education related surveys and databases within NSHE and across the country.

The top 15 CIP categories with the highest number of student veterans enrolled are noted in the following table.

Classification of Instructional Program Category	# of Students
52-Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	888
51-Health Professions and Related Programs	756
24-Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies, and Humanities	672
43-Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Firefighting and Related Protective Services	362
14-Engineering	361
41-Science Technologies/Technicians	321
42-Psychology	275
45-Social Sciences	272
11-Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services	261
26-Biological and Biomedical Sciences	225
13-Education	218
50-Visual and Performing Arts	201
15-Engineering Technologies and Engineering Related Fields	152
47-Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians	118
40- Physical Sciences	102



Policy Changes

Assembly Bill 76 requires reporting of any information necessary to determine the impact of policy changes on the number of student veterans who are enrolled in NSHE. Two significant policy changes have recently taken effect that merit measuring the impact: 1.) the federal Veterans' Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, and 2.) Assembly Bill 260 enacted during the 2013 Session of the Nevada State Legislature. Both establish criteria under which a veteran may be deemed a resident for tuition purposes, therefore avoiding higher non-resident tuition charges under certain circumstances.

The Choice Act

Under Section 702 of the Veterans' Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (H.R. 3230, "Choice Act"), public institutions of higher education that do not offer in-state tuition rates to certain veterans will lose federal veteran educational assistance dollars under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*, which includes the Fry Scholarship) and Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty (Chapter 30 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*). Specifically, institutions must offer in-state tuition rates to veterans who are living in the state in which the institution is located; served in the active military, naval or air service; are pursuing a course of education with federal education benefits; and enroll in the institution within three years after their discharge from service. In-state tuition must also be offered to certain family members of the veteran or a member of the armed forces who died in the line of duty while on active duty if that family member enrolls within three years after the veteran's discharge or the service member's death and is using veterans education benefits.

To ensure NSHE institutions comply with this new federal law and do not risk the loss of federal veteran educational assistance by its students, the Board of Regents adopted provisions necessary to comply with the Act in March 2015 (*Board of Regents' Handbook*, Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3.12). The adopted policy complies with Section 702 of the "Choice Act" by providing an exemption from tuition charges for a covered individual who enrolls within the specified three-year timeframe. Covered individuals must only start their program within the three years and then they will be covered for terms after the 3 year mark. In addition, the Board chose to extend the requirements of the Choice Act in Nevada to also include within the non-resident tuition exemption veterans and dependent beneficiaries who qualify under the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program (See Chapter 35 of Title 38 of the *United States Code*). The DEA Program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or of veterans who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition.

Impact: Academic year 2015-16 will be the first year for which data is available concerning the number of veterans to choose to assimilate to civilian life in Nevada after the enactment of the Choice Act and attend an NSHE institution. That data will be captured in future reports.

Assembly Bill 260 (Chapter 505, *Statutes of Nevada 2013*)

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 396.540 provides that the Board of Regents may fix the tuition charges for students at NSHE campuses, but must not charge tuition to certain students, including for example, students who are residents of Nevada. Existing Board policy under *Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3* (Tuition) and *Section 4* (Resident Students) of the Handbook recognizes the provisions contained in NRS 396.540.

The 2013 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 260 (Chapter 505, *Statutes of Nevada 2013*), which added “veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who were honorably discharged within the 2 years immediately preceding the date of matriculation of the veteran at a university, state college or community college within the System” to the list of students for whom the Board must not charge tuition under NRS 396.540. In June 2013, the Board of Regents approved a policy revision under *Title 4, Chapter 15, Section 3* to reflect this addition. Subsequently, the 2015 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 76 (Chapter 13, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*) and amended this section of State law to increase the timeframe from two years to five years.

Impact: In Fall 2013, 50 veterans availed themselves of the provisions of *Title 4, Chapter 16, Section 3*, and were deemed residents for tuitions purposes. In Fall 2014, an additional 117 veterans enrolled and were deemed residents under the policy. Between Fall 2013, when the provision was initially put into place, and Fall 2014, NSHE saw a 134 percent increase in the number of students who fell under the policy. It is expected that with the expansion of the provision from two years to five years, the number of veterans seeking residency status under this provision will continue to grow.

Institutional Efforts

Assembly Bill 76 also requires a summary of efforts of each NSHE institution to retain and graduate student veterans through retention and other related programs. The following summaries, provided by the institutions and compiled here, detail those retention and related student success efforts on each campus.

UNLV

UNLV Veteran Programs: The following programs are nationally recognized as the model for welcoming, admitting, mentoring and providing resources to student veterans to help increase retention and graduation.

- Nevada in-state tuition is granted to all “honorably” discharged veterans within five years of discharge.
- Nevada in-state tuition is granted to all military dependents using GI Bill® within three years of sponsor’s discharge.
- Priority registration is provided to all veterans to expedite payment of the Chapter 33 GI Bill® housing allowance.
- UNLV is ranked as a Top 15% “Veteran-Friendly” University (GIJOBS.COM 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).
- UNLV is one of 91 campuses to have the VA VetSuccess program with a VA Benefits Counselor on campus.
- UNLV sponsors a nationally recognized Student Veterans Organization and a Rebel Women Veterans group.
- UNLV hosts “Safe Talk” suicide prevention training and an “Ask-a-Lawyer” legal aid workshop each semester.
- UNLV College of Education and Clark County School District are partners for the “Troops to Teachers” program at UNLV, which provides an accelerated licensing program to any veteran with a bachelor’s degree.
- Recently Military TIMES magazine ranked UNLV /CSN as 49 of the top 50 colleges nationwide providing exceptional service to veterans.

Campus Celebrations:

- ❖ **The “Walk/Run to Remember” 2014 celebration** consisted of the following: (a) a run/walk along a flag-decorated two-mile course, (b) a memorial wreath ceremony with Army and Air Force ROTC combined color guard, (c) a special presentation to the parents of Richard Perez in honor of their son, who was killed in Iraq in 2003, (d) a CAEO-funded field trip to bring the Gibson Middle School Drum Line to UNLV to perform, (e) VA VetSuccess support services table, (e) an SVA table for students, faculty and staff to write veteran thank-you cards, and (f) a table where faculty, staff and students could donate to the UNLV Yellow Ribbon Fund. (This event raised more than \$300 for the fund.)

- ❖ The UNLV Wind Orchestra conducted a special concert for American Heroes in honor of our more than 1,400 student veterans, and a special ceremony of the French Government presenting the French Legion of Honor to three D-Day veterans from Las Vegas. The concert was attended by more than 1,600 guests, who contributed almost \$4,000 to the UNLV Foundation's Yellow Ribbon Program.
- ❖ **The 2nd and 3rd Rebel Vet Graduation Reception:** On December 16, 2014, and May 14, 2015, the Office of Veteran Services and the UNLV Student Veterans Organization, with invaluable volunteer support from the Student Veterans & Military Family Support Committee, hosted two semiannual Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions. During the ceremonies we recognized the service and academic achievement of more than 209 graduating veterans and ROTC graduates. The ceremony included the following: (a) a slide presentation of the graduates set to music, (b) a UNLV welcome by Provost John White and AVP Mike Sauer, (c) a presentation of guests by Wynn Resorts Director of Security Samantha Bieber (UNLV Graduate) and Under Sheriff Kevin McMahill, both Army veterans, (d) a celebration cake cut with an Army saber, and (e) the recognition of graduates. We presented each graduate with a Las Vegas Rotary-funded Rebel Vet coin and cord, a packet with certificates of recognition by each of the Nevada delegation, and a donated Garth Brooks Greatest Hits CD. We also conducted a drawing of community prizes that included show tickets, dinner coupons and weekend getaway packages. We will continue to host Rebel Vet Graduation Receptions and are working to coordinate additional recognition, including the following: (a) coordinating with the graduation committee to have the UNLV president ask all of the graduating student veterans to rise and be recognized, and (b) publishing the graduation list of student veterans, military family members, and Army and Air Force ROTC graduates in a full-page celebration ad in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* newspaper twice a year for the spring and fall graduations.

Peer Advising Veteran Education (PAVE): UNLV is one of a few universities in the country that participates in the University of Michigan PAVE (Peer Advisor Veteran Education) program. PAVE is a peer support program that connects incoming student veterans with student veterans already on campus in order to help them navigate college life, identify challenges they are facing, refer them to the appropriate resource on or off campus, and provide ongoing support to their academic and personal ventures. Contact the Office of Veteran Services to learn more about how to get involved.

UNR

The following table includes information on the types of support programs that the UNR Veterans Services Office has in place for student veterans:

Program	Type of Retention Effort	Description
Veterans' Orientation	Initial retention	Provided through Veteran Services office. Administered through staff and Vet2Vet representatives. Initial brief of services offered, staff available, and events to engage in. Concept is success strategies and developing immediate network with our services.

Program	Type of Retention Effort	Description
Veteran 1-1 Intake	Initial retention/Network building	All incoming students meet one on one with our Intake Coordinator. Benefits are set up, degree plans are confirmed, basic needs assessed, tailored services offered.
Vet2Vet Program	Long-term retention/Peer Support/Network Building	Each incoming student (First year and Transfer) is assigned a Vet2Vet representative. The Vet2Vet rep has been trained through our office to follow the student for the first 12-18 months. Regular communication is established. Ongoing needs assessment for academic and integration success and tailed services offered. Workshops for success given by Vet2Vet reps.
V.I.T.A.L. Grant	On-going retention/Community Involvement	VA grant that establishes a connection to health care and mental health services. VITAL employees also support UNR Vet Services' on and off-campus programming.
Three Student Veteran Groups	On-going/campus engagement/Community Involvement	All three veteran student groups' missions align with UNR Veteran Services office to support campus integration and retention efforts. All three group presidents report to the Director of Veteran Services to coordinate programming.
Progress Reports	Intense One-on-One	Veterans that have dropped below 2.3 and/or show a pattern of dropping GPA are called into office for one-on-one assessment and customized help or referral.
Warning Term	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who have dropped to 2.0 or below are advised on benefit and/or financial aid impact. Customized assessment and referral given.
Academic Counseling	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who are not following academic plans are advised and plan confirmed to stay on track.
Class/Instructor Mitigation	Intense One-on-One	Veterans who are having integration issues with a particular class or instructor are counseled on how to resolve. Veteran Services can assist in the mitigation if necessary.

Program	Type of Retention Effort	Description
VetSMART	On-going Campus-wide	Veteran Services and Vet2Vet Reps deliver professional development training and awareness to faculty and staff. This builds a network of identifiable personnel on campus a veteran can seek assistance from.
Vet LINC	On-going Career Preparation	An intense three week workshop series prepares junior and seniors for marketing themselves in the civilian sector for employment. This program is in partnership with community leaders willing to mentor the process.

NSC

Nevada State College provides critical academic and financial support to veteran students, and the scope of this assistance continues to expand with the growth of our veteran population.

Support Personnel

Promoting the success of veterans begins with personnel, and NSC now enlists the following support staff¹ to help veterans meet their financial, academic, and career goals:

VA Specialist – The VA Specialist in the Office of Financial Aid helps veterans navigate often complicated financial aid processes and obstacles with the provision of resources and one-on-one counseling

Academic Advisor – A dedicated academic advisor in our new Advising Center provides robust support to veterans with degree planning and the resolution of academic challenges. This support is provided to students through multiple modalities, from email to in-person consultations, to help meet the varied needs of our diverse population.

Career Services Specialist - The support for veterans extends to our new Career Center, which now assists veterans in the pursuit of internships and career opportunities with resources such as USAJOBS and intensive guidance in the development of relevant skills (e.g., resume writing, interviewing, and career planning).

Financial Assistance

We also try to ensure that veteran students capably overcome the many financial obstacles they are likely to face. This is achieved partly through the VA specialist described above, but it also manifests through

¹ Given the small size of our veteran population (N = 144 in fall 2015), these support personnel also provide assistance to other students at NSC.

special procedures that are only applied to veterans. NSC upholds rigorous tuition and fee standards that require students to make payments by specified dates, lest they get removed from their courses. However, because of the unique way in which veterans receive funding, our bursar's office protects these students from being removed from their courses until they receive their financial support from the government.

To further enhance the financial well-being of veteran students, NSC has established a relationship with Nevada Partners, which provided monetary support to veterans in need.

External Partners

In our efforts to expand the support of veteran students, NSC has forged partnerships with a number of external businesses and organizations. These partners include Vegas PBS, Goodwill of Southern Nevada, the National Guard, the Henderson Vet Center, and Dress for Success.

Recruitment

At present, NSC does not conduct recruitment efforts that are exclusively designed for veterans. However, our recruiters apprise prospective veteran students of the aforementioned support personnel and structures to encourage them to apply to NSC.

CSN

The College of Southern Nevada is fully committed to providing our student veteran population with an exceptional education experience by providing programs and services that are designed maximize student success. The Veterans Education and Transition Services (VETS) Center is the tip of spear for institutional efforts to assist student veterans in achieving their personal, professional, and academic goals. In our effort to increase retention and persistence rates for our student veterans, the VETS Center has partnered with the CSN Advising and Coaching Services Department to help all CSN student veterans, regardless of major or number of earned credits, in building the necessary skills to succeed in college. Services include assessing personal strengths and limitations, learning academic success strategies, exploring careers conducive to appropriate major selection, accessing campus and community resources, and connecting to campus life. Returning, continuing, and transfer students with declared majors seek academic advisement from Academic Schools Counselors in their selected major/department. The Academic Counselor provides student veterans with an Academic Success Plan designed to give them a pathway towards graduation. The electronic student referral system, also known as the Faculty E-Alert System, allows CSN's instructional staff to become proactive and collaborate with Student Affairs in offering struggling students assistance to pass their classes. The E-Alert system administered by Advising and Academic Coaching Services, contacts the student veterans and proposes working on strategies and interventions that can help in successful course completion.

The VETS Center administers programs under Round 4 funding of the Technical Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program. The program has allowed us to expand and improve our ability to deliver education and career training programs that can be completed in two years or less, and prepare program participants for employment in high-wage, high-skill occupations. Business, Computer and Information Technology (CIT), Military Medic to Licensed Practical

Nursing, and Criminal Justice programs were the selected programs. The Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR) is a grant partner and will assist in the implementation of the Burning Glass Labor Insight program that provides real-time labor market information to help guide decision making. Three (3) Veterans Success Specialists will assist program participants in developing an Academic Success Plan and related employment readiness activities. A n IT Success Coordinator will have the primary responsibility of acting a Liaison between our CIT program participants and CIT industry employers. A Transcript Specialist will work with academic departments and the Office of the Registrar to explore ways to award veterans more academic credit for their military training and experience.

GBC

At Great Basin College, we offer a wide variety of services to our Student Veterans. We have established a very welcoming and supporting environment that keeps them engaged with all aspects of the GBC campus.

At the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) we provide an encouraging environment by acknowledging, honoring, and addressing all of our Veteran's needs, all while helping them attain their educational goals. The VRC's mission is as widespread as the rural GBC service area. Our main goal is to provide Military Veterans and their dependents with the resources, support, and advocacy needed to succeed in higher education. Our staff and volunteers at the VRC have donated their time to mentor our Student Veterans throughout the up and down periods of their semesters. This ensures that the Student Veteran understands that the support doesn't stop at Admissions & Records, but lasts until they graduate. Our volunteers have quite the list of credentials that have proven to be invaluable to our institution's success when it comes to our Student Veterans. Examples of this would be a former Geologist tutoring a Student Veteran regarding his science class that he is struggling in; a former English major reading a Veteran's final draft of an essay before he or she turns it in; or a Vietnam Veteran talking with a struggling Student Veteran about reasons to push through this rough math class because, "it's only temporary, but success is permanent". There are many forms of informal mentoring that go on throughout the course of the day in the VRC. It is a place where a Student Veteran can come grab a cup of coffee, do their homework, and relax. This is where the GBC Student Veterans' support is housed. We are working on a similar VRC at the GBC Pahrump Valley Center. We also provide tutoring through our Academic Success Center, which is a highly valued resource of GBC for all students alike.

At 1200 noon, on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, the VRC houses a VA Vet Center group that is facilitated by a clinical psychologist from the Vet Center out of Salt Lake City, UT. These meetings are a great resource for our Veterans in need of mental health services. Our group has become quite large, servicing a wide variety of branches and eras. Veterans relate to Veterans, this is where comradery comes into action. The reason that our VRC is a comfortable place for Veterans is because we promote comradery. It is that missing piece of military culture that bonds our Vets, causing them to lean on each other. The VRC Coordinator conducted a painting class for Veterans as a method of de-stressing. The class was free to Veterans and was very successful.

We encourage all of our faculty and staff to frequent the VRC so that the student veterans feel that they are being supported by all of GBC. This has been well received by both GBC employees and Student Veterans. We have created a, "Honor our Veterans" environment outside the VRC in the hallway. This

helps to bring awareness about our past and present military members to the rest of our student population. This ensures a good working environment between the two populations while in classes and beyond. We have done this with showcasing Veterans, their stories and a “This Month in Military History” board. We also encourage our Student Veterans to bring in their former unit patches to add to our patch wall. This gives the Student Veteran some pride and ownership in the VRC, and the college as well.

We are very visible with advertisements and posters throughout campus and our community. Our instructors have also been invaluable by sending their Student Veterans to us. We work closely with the Student Financial Services so that financial barriers are not a reason to quit. We have co-created a community group to help all Veterans, including our students, get better services in rural Nevada. We are in compliance with “Principles of Excellence” administered through the Department of Veterans Affairs, and we are a supporting member of the “8 Keys to Veterans Success”, through the Department of Education. We assist our Veterans in every way possible through our personal approach.

We have a Student Veterans of America (SVA) Chapter here on campus called the “Battle Born Veterans Club”, which allows Veterans to transition back into civilian life with the help of other Student Veterans. The club has been very proactive on campus and continues to grow and do great things.

From Great Basin College administrators to student workers, GBC has ensured that our Student Veterans have the tools they need to facilitate a successful college experience and assist them in reaching their personal educational goals.

TMCC

Truckee Meadows Community College’s (TMCC) Veteran Services is determined to retain and graduate veteran students through numerous projects and initiatives. To that end, beginning Fall 2015 we launched two brand new veteran programs, through the support of the Nevada Military Support Alliance: the Veteran Leadership Academy (VLA) and the Student Veteran Mentor Program. These two veteran programs are designed to assist the student in creating a positive experience in higher education. The VLA is designed for 10 student veterans to enhance their leadership skills by interaction with local leaders through various partners of the community. They will have the opportunity to listen and ask direct questions of these leaders to better understand the application of leadership in a practical environment. The Student Veteran Mentor Program is designed for 50 student veterans that are assigned to a faculty mentor who will assist them in their transition to the academic environment. During this program they will also be required to attend a minimum of three veteran-specific workshops or events that are designed to enhance their overall success as a student and a professional. Ultimately these programs create success for the student veteran personally and academically.

Created in April 2014, and now with the support of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant, the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) provides a dedicated space for TMCC’s veterans. This is an area for student veterans to apply for benefits, find out about veteran-related events and resources, and simply hang out and have a cup of coffee with their fellow veterans. This helps us better serve our student veteran population by giving them a more personal experience as well as providing an area that the students can call their own. Student veterans are a unique student group where first impressions can play a key role in their college endeavor. These operations in the VRC help provide a comfortable and trustworthy environment to help the student veteran succeed.

One theme which helps retention and graduation is creating a low stress environment. Operating under a model of continuous improvement, we continually implement initiatives to help student veterans succeed in their overall academic goals. We partner with local veteran organizations to help fund student veteran scholarships. These scholarships help ease the financial burden that some students face. Our institution also established early enrollment for student veterans, beginning in 2012. Because most veterans at TMCC are financially dependent on their VA Education Benefits, it is crucial that they get enrolled in the classes they need in order to be certified for benefits.

Veteran Services conducts numerous veteran outreach events along with veteran-specific professional development workshops that are free of charge. We are able to hold large veteran events such as BBQs where our veterans can interact with each other. The ability to do this helps the veterans revisit the comradery they once had while they were in the service. We have also partnered with community resources to offer workshops for faculty and staff in order better educate them on the military/veteran culture.

We recently implemented direct access to our student veterans who are identified in TMCC's early alert system. This early alert system gives us the opportunity to identify student veterans struggling in their classes and then refer them to campus resources on an individual basis.

WNC

The following summarizes the approach taken by WNC in support student veterans:

1. Holistic approach to the individual
 - a. We have had vets check in who were homeless, without transportation or money for food.
 - b. We have developed many contacts in the community to assist these veterans.
2. Tutoring
 - a. Many veterans were not scholastic overachievers in high school.
 - b. Further, they have not been in the school environment in many years.
 - c. We assist the transition with remedial classes, individual and group tutoring and the Veterans Upward Bound program and constant monitoring of academic status.
3. Mentorship
 - a. Everyone who works in the VRC is a veteran.
 - b. The coordinator is a retired Marine Corps officer.
 - c. The pre-admissions advisor was an eight year veteran of the Marine Corps who graduated from WNC and is now finishing up his bachelor's degree.
 - d. All six of the student veteran workers have multiple semesters at WNC under their belts. Most are on the Dean's List.

- e. Each incoming veteran is individually welcomed and counseled by the pre- admissions advisor and VRC Coordinator including review of a sixteen point checklist that includes common student veteran pitfalls and services provided by the Veterans Resource Center.

4. Advising

- a. After an initial orientation to the Veterans Resource Center and Programs, we explore ways to be a successful student.
- b. We explore ways to be a smart student regarding scheduling of classes, types of semester classes and load breakdown.
- c. We have assisted student veterans with classes on how to plan a week from class time to merging work, family, and study time.
- d. The VRC Coordinator is the student veteran's faculty advisor for their time at WNC.
- e. Students not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) meet with the Coordinator weekly to review previous week's work, current week requirements and upcoming semester projects for each class.

5. Career exploration/definition & Accelerated Technical Programs

- a. For those students who do not have an academic direction or chosen career field, we work with SIGI 3 software to assist that process. SIGI 3 basically does an inventory of an individual's likes, dislikes, merges that with work experience /military occupational specialty, and gives possible career paths to explore based upon those answers and shows schools with those programs.