



2018 OUTLOOK
AHEAD – VETERANS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

FY 2018

"If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way."

Napoleon Hill
The Law of Success, 1925

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TO OUR MEMBERS

To Our Members

“Having education as an outlet when you come home from a combat zone is one of the most grounding and focusing avenues a veteran has to his [her] advantage.”

Rick Scavetta, Reserve Army veteran
Chronicles of Higher Education – June 6, 2007

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

Veterans with disabilities are recognized individuals with a great capacity to help others. Ensuring their unique life experiences are valued in higher education and societal environments demonstrates the vision of AHEAD to embody equality of opportunity. While veterans with disabilities may seem to be primarily an American phenomenon, the lessons on helping individuals with acquired brain injuries, mobility issues, and psychological challenges provide guidance from improved practices in moving all individuals with disabilities toward full participation in postsecondary education around the world.

The purpose of this SIG is to bring awareness of the unique skills and knowledge required to work effectively with veterans with disabilities in higher education. This SIG will provide a forum for discussion of current issues and a network/clearing house/liaison for AHEAD members on veterans' issues. Also, this SIG will sponsor and promote scholarly research about student veterans with disabilities and conduct outreach activities to other professional organizations working with veterans with disabilities in higher education.

The SIG's commitment to research, dissemination of knowledge and discussion of issues and challenges of veterans with disabilities are in keeping with AHEAD's values. These values view disability as the interaction between the person and environment, promotes diversity, is equitable, demands inclusivity and provides an organization strength that sustains essential resources and supports growth.

LOOKING AHEAD

This report serves as a platform to provide the most up to date information, outline SIG initiatives and accomplishments, and provide insight on our current goals. As a SIG member, you are an essential component of the work we do to provide access and support to student veterans with disabilities in the post-secondary environment. Your engagement, active participation, and contributions to the SIG are encouraged, valued, and needed to provide the information and necessary supports to create an opportunity for academic success.

Dan Standage, Chair (Student Veterans of America).

Sandi Patton, Vice-Chair (Nevada State College).

James Weier, Technology Specialist (University of Mississippi).

BRIEF HISTORY

Brief History

In 2010, the AHEAD – Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education Special Interest Group was proposed by researcher and veteran Wayne Miller, Ph.D. and subsequently approved by AHEAD. At that time, the SIG was led by Co-Chairs Wayne Miller and Jorja Waybrant. In late 2015, Dr. Wayne Miller, became an Advisor/Consultant for the SIG. He is one of the nation's leading researchers on the topic of Student Veterans and Student Veterans with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Ed. His work set the foundation for the SIG and he remains as a consultant on the topic.

In 2017, the name of the SIG was shortened to AHEAD – Veterans Special Interest Group. Annual meetings have served as a connector for members and other interested attendees to learn more on what we can do as a group and as disability service providers to assist student veterans on campus. Over the years, the SIG membership base has grown and also transitioned as some past members have retired or moved on to other fields/positions.

Annual meetings take place during the AHEAD Conference held each July. Although new members are acquired at these sessions, attendance of the meetings or of the conference is not a requirement for SIG membership; however AHEAD membership is a requirement. Other means of member collaboration are email, an AHEAD-vets listserv, an online collaboration tool Samepage.io, and the upcoming bi-annual SIG Newsletter targeted for 2017.

The SIG leadership team reports to the Board of Directors' Liaison (BODL) for AHEAD. We are responsible for representation at the general Special Interest Group Chair meeting held during the AHEAD Annual Conference each summer. We are also responsible for holding a separate meeting to provide information/outreach/best practices to our membership base. Various annual reports of the SIG's work, their goals and accomplishments are available for the following dates/periods:

- July 15, 2010
- July 14, 2011
- July 11, 2012
- July 2014
- Mid-year report 2015
- January 17, 2016
- January 2017
- July 2018

Leadership team:

Dan Standage, Chair - Dan has served as a Co-Chair since January 2016. He is employed as the Director of Disability in Education for Student Veterans of America (SVA). As a staff member of SVA, Dan has become a valuable and key leadership member to the SIG providing an outside perspective as we identify needs and collectively develop effective and strategic goals. Also through his experience as a veteran and student with a disability, Dan has provided insight and student veteran voice into the challenges and barriers that exist in higher-ed when accessing disability services.

Sandi Patton, Vice-Chair - Sandi joined the leadership team in January 2017. She has over 30 years' experience as a disability service provider in higher-ed and nearly 10 years working with student veterans. She currently serves as Director of the Disability Resource Center at Nevada State College (NSC). She also Co-Chairs the Veterans' Club at NSC and works closely with the Dean of Students to promote veteran

BRIEF HISTORY

issues. She is on the Nevada Veterans Council, works with the Nellis Air Force Base USO to promote opportunities for active duty and transitioning service men and women and their families, and is a member of Blue Star Mothers.

James Weier, Technology Specialist - Jim joined the leadership team in spring of 2017 as the SIG expanded into the online market for better outreach. He currently serves as the Adaptive Technology Specialist in Student Disability Services with the University of Mississippi. He earned a B.S. in Biology at St. Louis University in 1992 and an A.A.S. in Network Technology in 2002. Prior to becoming an Adaptive Tech Specialist at Ole Miss, Jim worked in the computer/networking field for many years.

Wayne Miller, Ph.D., Advisor/Consultant – Wayne is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces as well as the founding father of the AHEAD Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education Special Interest Group. He served as a Co-Chair until late 2015, when he moved to the role of an Advisor/Consultant for the SIG. Wayne is employed with Weber State University. He is regarded as one of the nation’s leading researchers on the topic of Student Veterans and Student Veterans with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Ed. His work set the foundation for the SIG and he remains as a consultant on the topic.

Jorja Waybrant, M.Ed., Consultant - Jorja has served as Co-Chair of the SIG since its inception in 2010. She has published and presented nationally on the topic of best practices for supporting student veterans and military-connected students in higher-ed. Her extensive experience and history working 1:1 to support student veterans and military-connected students in the post-secondary environment, as well as her experience in state and national outreach on the topic of best practices for supporting student veterans with disabilities in higher-ed landscape were instrumental in the SIG’s early and continued success. In July 2018, Jorja moves to serve as an Advisor/Consultant for the SIG.

This annual report documents the SIG’s history, past work, and current goals. It provides a platform for outlining needs in the field of education and disability to promote awareness and enable professionals in higher-ed to work effectively with veterans. This platform also serves as a means to inform our colleagues and constituents of existing barriers that potentially serve as impediments to academic success for veterans with disabilities. We endeavor to facilitate change and to open opportunities so that all veterans, regardless of their injuries or wounds, are provided the necessary knowledge and information to access disability-related services in post-secondary education. We invite you to become part of our team and to join us in the journey.

AHEAD Requirements and Opportunities

REQUIREMENTS

- Provide information and referral;
- Organize professional development opportunities;
- Network around a particular topic;
- Have representation at the annual AHEAD Chair meeting;
- Offer an annual meeting for SIG members and other interested individuals;
- Provide annual reporting and updates to the AHEAD BODL.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Involvement in JPED publication;
- Submit 1-3 ALERT articles yearly;
- Use website to build information and SIG/resources;
- Representation as program reviewer for AHEAD conference;
- Capability to establish a listserv through AHEAD to meet the needs of the SIG;
- Assistance through AHEAD for SIG member research endeavors.

INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Initiatives and Accomplishments

2010

- Establish a website through AHEAD
- Use the website and our group email as the primary means of regular communication between members.
- Develop two conference proposals
 - Panel discussion
 - Small descriptive study about the challenges of starting a veteran's service program
- SIG member Webinar (Wayne Miller, M.L. Vance, Tom Church, and P. Grossman) - Wounded Warriors: Campus-Wide Responses - Association on Higher Education and Disability Webinar; May 2010.
- SIG member invited poster presentation (Wayne Miller) - Serving Wounded Warriors: Current Practices – 22nd Annual Postsecondary Disability Training Institute, Saratoga Springs, NY; June 2010.
- Two SIG meetings held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2010
- SIG member symposium presentation (Wayne Miller and M.L. Vance) - Wounded Warriors and Disability Services: Preparedness and Models of Leadership: Wounded Warrior Research: One Year Later – AHEAD and PEP Net 2010 Conference, Denver, CO; July 2010.
- SIG member presentation (Wayne Miller and M.L. Vance) - Serving Wounded Warriors: Current Practices – Veterans in Higher Education Conference, Tucson, AZ; September 2010.

2011

- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2011.
- Increase information/resources on the SIG's web page.
- Publication review.
- Member list updated.
- SIG member presentation (Jorja Waybrant, Sandi Patton, Merrill Parra, Patricia Richter, and Brenda York) - Sustainable Access: Incorporating Social, Environmental, and Economic Concepts when serving Student Veterans – AHEAD Conference and PEP Net 2011, Seattle, WA; July 2011.
- SIG member symposium presentation (Wayne Miller, M.L. Vance, P. Grossman) - Wounded Warriors and Disability Services: Preparedness and Models of Leadership: Wounded Warrior Research: One Year Later – AHEAD and PEP Net 2011 Conference, Seattle, WA; July 2011.
- SIG member research policy and practices presentation to regional governors of California Community College System (Wayne Miller and Gaeir Dietrich) - Sacramento, CA; December 2011.

INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2012

- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference July 2012.
- SIG participation in Silent Auction basket donation for the AHEAD scholarship fund – providing resources, books, other information re student veterans with disabilities.
- Proposal to draft and collaborate on a brochure offered by via the SIG webpage.
- Support/encouragement provided for presenting on our SIG topic to audiences beyond AHEAD.
- Information/resources added to the SIG’s web page.
- Member list updated.
- SIG member presentation (Jorja Waybrant) - The Veterans Are Coming Home! What Are Current Postsecondary Best Practices? – AHEAD Conference, New Orleans, LA; July 2012.
- SIG member discussion of current practices in California Community Colleges in serving student veterans with and without disabilities (Wayne Miller and R. L. Wilson) - La Cerritos, CA; Grossmont, CA; Redwood City, CA; 2012.

2013

- SIG member presentation (Jorja Waybrant) - Access to College for Student Veterans with Disabilities - Arizona Summit on Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Education, Flagstaff, AZ; April 2013.
- SIG member report (Wayne Miller): Preliminary Report of First Two Phases: A mixed model methodology - High Tech Center Training Unit and California Community College System Chancellor’s Office, Sacramento, CA; May 2013.
- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference, July 2013.
- Student Veterans with Disabilities in Higher Ed brochure drafted by SIG members, continue work needed.
- Information/resources added to the SIG’s web page.
- Member list updated.
- SIG member symposium presentation (Wayne Miller, M.L. Vance, and P. Grossman) - Current Developments in serving student Veterans - AHEAD International Conference, Baltimore, MD; July 2013.
- SIG member presentation (Wayne Miller, M.L. Vance, and P. Grossman) – Wounded Warriors and Disability Services: Current Research – AHEAD Conference, Baltimore, MD; July 2013.
- SIG member presentation (Wayne Miller, M.L. Vance, P. Grossman) - Are You Prepared to Serve Those Who Serve Us? - National Academic Advising Association National Conference, Salt Lake City, UT; October 2013.
- SIG member presentation (Jorja Waybrant) - Fostering Student Success: Comparative Models of Best Practices when Working with Military Affiliated Students, including Student Veterans with Disabilities – National Academic Advising Association National Conference, Salt Lake City, UT; October 2013.
- Keynote Speaker (Wayne Miller): Evidence Based Best Practices for Serving Student Veterans: 3 Years of Research - California Community College System Annual Conference, Newport Beach, CA; December 2013.

INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2014

- SIG meeting held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2014.
- Information/resources added to the SIG's web page.
- Member list updated.
- SIG member presentation (Wayne Miller) - Essential Practices for Serving Student Veterans in the California Community College System - at the California Veterans Summit, December 2014.

2015

- SIG member (Wayne Miller) published research findings for the California Community College System – Essential Practices for Serving Student Veterans in the California Community College System (Revised) Jan. 2015.
- Member outreach for additional Co-Chair.
- Exploration among members for better networking via a listserv or other platform.
- Exploration for future presentation proposals.
- Updates to the SIG's web page.

2016

- Dan Standage joins the leadership team to serve as Co-Chair of the SIG.
- Clear strategic goals and objectives outlined in the January 15, 2016 SIG report.
- The online collaborative workspace for the SIG under Samepage.io launched March 2016.
- Opened a multitude of opportunities for professional development with the development of team leaders/sub-committees to head or work on a variety of projects: Communications, Disability Liaison, Disability Point of Contact, Disability Series, and the newly added Newsletter and Program Proposals.
- SIG member presentation (Dan Standage) – Disability in Education: Student Veterans during the AHEAD Regional Conference, at New Mexico State University, Alamogordo, May 2016.
- Two SIG meetings held during the AHEAD Conference in July 2016.
- SIG membership, engagement and participation increased.
- Vice-Chair leadership role for the SIG developed December 2016.
- Collaborative outreach accomplished with other higher-ed professional organizations working to address issues related to student veterans and/or disability in education. This collaborative team began meeting via phone conference Fall of 2016, and remains an ongoing effort. The collaboration is an attempt to strengthen the knowledge and work with veterans in the educational landscape. We seek to build knowledge sharing among professionals in higher-ed, as opposed to working in silos. We also seek to design, develop and implement methods of direct information to veterans about the various services and supports, including disability-related services, available in all post-secondary institutions. A Facebook page was created and launched late 2016 by the collaborative team for this specific purpose.

INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Representatives of the collaboration network offer an array of expertise and come from a variety of backgrounds and organizations. Current team representatives are from:

- AHEAD – Veterans SIG;
- SVA - Student Veterans of America;
- NACADA – National Academic Advising Association;
- NASPA – Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Ed;
- MFRI - Military Family Research Institute;
- CCME - Council of College & Military Educators;
- NCLCA - National College Learning Center Association.

2017

- Sandi Patton Joins leadership team as Vice-Chair
- Technology Specialist, Jim Weier, serves to ensure all documents are fully accessible
- SamePage virtual collaboration space taken offline due to forthcoming implementation of AHEAD’s online community platform
- Represented at the SIG Chairs meeting at the annual conference in Orlando. Presented SIG Goals and Objectives, including the Disability Services Liaison (DSL) pilot and Disability Services Contacts (DSC) project. Discussed importance of working more closely with other SIGs.
- One SIG meeting held during the annual conference
- Changed the newsletter name to Newsfeed and the delivery to three times per year
- Consistent updating of SIG landing page to ensure public content is fresh
- Dan Standage presents at Student Veterans of America’s 9th annual national conference (NatCon) on the need for student veterans to normalize help-seeking behaviors by becoming a DSL
- Dan Standage presents the DSL program at the State of the Science Symposium at the Uniformed Services Health Sciences in Bethesda, MD, seeding the idea that military healthcare providers need to include disability in higher ed as part of their continuing education curriculum.
- Jorja Waybrant presented Access to Disability Services in Education for Student Veterans at the NACADA Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, offering information on: utilizing proactive advising methods, taking a team approach to outreach and support by forming interdepartmental collaborations on campus, and utilizing student veterans and military-connected students to share information about disability-related services on campus.
- Sandi Patton presented Veterans with Disabilities: Eliminating Barriers and Facilitating Change for Equity and Access in Post-Secondary Ed at the AHEAD Conference in July. The presentation noted that most student veterans arrive on campus with no prior history, use, or knowledge of the accommodations and resources available to students with disabilities.

CURRENT AND ONGOING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Current and Ongoing Goals and Objectives

- Continue to increase engagement and participation by members in the AHEAD – Veterans SIG:
 - Provide professional development opportunities with the SIG;
 - Increase leadership roles and opportunities for SIG members;
 - Develop sub-committees within the SIG to effectuate our short and long term goals.
- Develop a Disability in Education series:
 - 6 modules;
 - 2-year rollout;
 - Intent is to bridge the knowledge gap in several areas;
 - Covers veterans, disability services, veteran resources, VA providers, general public/caregiver, and service animals;
 - Offers best practices for web-based instruction.
- Build a disability point of contact database as a tool to assist student veterans:
 - Similar to WEAMS (the VA institution search tool);
 - Determine where this database will be based;
 - Determine best avenues for obtaining this information (DSSHE listserv, individual universities, AHEAD);
 - If the POC is an individual, determine how the database be maintained and updated when the POC changes.
- Create turnkey model for Disability Service Liaison:
 - Assist post-secondary ed campuses in developing a peer mentoring program in disability service office;
 - Position draws from VA work-study benefits to pay student veterans as peer mentors;
 - Provides practical experience and knowledge about the field of disability services;
 - SIG will conduct outreach to PSE institutes to see if we can assist them in creation of program;
 - Peer mentor can serve as the liaison between disability services and veterans' services.
- Continue to extend collaborative outreach to other organizations that focus on student veterans in the educational space:
 - Higher-ed organizations (i.e., NACADA, NASPA and their special interest groups or communities that focus on veteran issues);
 - The VA (to provide information about disability services in higher-ed);
 - Student Veterans of America.

CURRENT AND ONGOING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Develop a SIG Newsletter:
 - Newsletter to be distributed tri-annually.
 - Newsletter will replace monthly email or listserv updates.
 - Newsletter will offer space for a variety of voices (SIG leadership team, SIG members, Disability Service Provider professionals, Higher-ed professionals who work with veterans, Higher-ed professional organizations, Student Veterans.
 - Newsletter will offer professional development opportunities for SIG members who would like to work on this Team.
- Develop Statewide Outreach Coordinators:
 - This position will serve as a liaison between the AHEAD - Veterans SIG and the VA Veteran Service Offices (VSO) within their state.
 - Each county/region within a state is assigned a VSO.
 - Statewide Outreach Coordinator will provide information about disability services available in post-secondary-ed environments.
 - A turnkey model that works effectively will be created and tested first in a few states and then expansion to the remaining states will be made.
- Expand realm of what we do as a SIG to include all postsecondary institutions where veterans also access the GI Bill:
 - Conduct research to learn more about the provision of disability services to veterans at vocational/trade/and other PSE campuses.
 - What are the needs?
 - What information and support/resources can the AHEAD SIG provide to assist veterans with educational access and success?
- Broaden our scope to include employment as a goal of education as it relates to veterans with disabilities:
 - Conduct research to learn more.
 - What do employers seek (compliance, diversity, etc.)?
 - What do employers lack for successful transition?
 - What can be provided to veterans while in school that bridge gaps?
 - Why is this important?
- Develop a brochure and/or other outreach materials:
 - For use with the collaboration team FB page.
 - For use with outreach to the VA Veteran Service Offices.
- Address structural challenges for SIG:
 - How are we measuring everything we do?
 - How are we communicating what we do (so we're not just preaching to the choir)?

CONTACT INFORMATION

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