

AHEAD-VETERANS NEWSFEED

A tri-annual newsletter brought to you by the AHEAD—Veterans Special Interest Group

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Academic Accommodations in Higher-Ed



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VALUABLE TRAINING MODULE: YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED RE STUDENT VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic Accommodations in Higher Ed - this training module was put together by a Veterans Affairs Emergency Room physician, after Dr. Mitchell noticed a trend at the Phoenix VA hospital. Young veterans were being admitted for suicide ideations, and after talking with them, discovered their pattern of being student veterans with (non-visible) disabilities, struggling in school or on academic probation, and unaware of Disability Services and the accommodations and services/supports available on campus. Additionally, the cultural issue of veterans subscribing to the military definition of disability, VA clinicians and case managers are mainly geared to care for the geriatric population, not the younger veterans currently eligible for the GI Bill.

This training module is meant to provide VA care personnel with relevant information, so they can better support student veterans "to, through, and beyond" higher ed.

Your feedback is needed on the video and related materials. Mainly, if you identify any fundamental issues with the content presented. Keep in mind, the video is intended for VA care personnel who have little to no idea of what disability in education is. From a cultural competency standpoint, there is lots of good nuggets of info pertaining to the veteran population that faculty and staff may benefit from. The module is offered at no-cost through PsychArmor--feel free to redistribute. <http://bit.ly/2EMYATR>

ACCESS TO DISABILITY SERVICES IN EDUCATION FOR STUDENT VETERANS



In October 2017, Jorja Waybrant, Co-Chair of AHEAD Veterans SIG presented at the NACADA Annual Conference re Access to Disability Services in Education for Student Veterans. The objective of the discussion was to offer information and materials regarding disability services to academic advisors and other higher-ed personnel who work with veterans and non-veterans on campus.

Academic advisors and other staff members who work with students on campus need information on the challenges veterans encounter due to a lack of knowledge about disability-related services. By educating at the advisor level on what services available and how to access these supports, an advisor gains useful knowledge for their work with veterans as well as other students who may need disability-related services in order to be academically successful.

There are a number of strategies and adaptable models that can be employed on campus and are designed to foster academic success. Information in the presentation outlined the parallels that exist between student veterans with disabilities and traditional students, and identified the differences that may serve as an opportunity or barrier to academic success. Jorja discussed the gaps, and provided solutions to advisors and other campus members to address any challenges.

Some effective methods offered include:

- **Utilize proactive advising methods** (understand the challenges - veterans have a high propensity for disability, veterans lack knowledge about disability services; be knowledgeable of the disability-related services on your campus - what is offered and where to access the services; refer when necessary; and take a creative and flexible approach to supporting veterans)
- **Take a team approach to outreach and support by forming interdepartmental collaborations on campus** (This includes advisors, faculty, disability office staff, admissions staff, counseling center staff, veteran advisors, case managers, and campus learning centers)
- **Utilize student veterans and military-connected students to share information about disability-related services on campus** (These strategies include your campus military-connected student task force, new student or transfer student orientation sessions, and advocating for a proactive Disability Service office and the creation of a DSL position on campus)

Demographically, the number of student veterans with a disability far out numbers the general student population on college campuses. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, roughly 10.8% of all non-veteran students have a disability; yet, 20.6% of all student veterans on campus have a disability-related condition. However, despite NCES's reported numbers and depending on what data you are looking at, the numbers can be even higher: A 2014 VA Profile of Post 9/11 Veterans indicates 32% of all student veterans have a disability, while a 2016 SVA Census Survey indicates those numbers are as high at 58%.

DISABILITY SERVICES LIAISON (DSL) UPDATE:



With the support of *Student Veterans of America* (SVA) the Disability Services Liaison (DSL) program is expanding this year in 2018. If your campus does not have a DSL and you would like more information about how to implement one, please reach out to Mr. Dan Standage. Dan is a Co-Chair of AHEAD Veteran's SIG and SVA's Director of Disability in Education. Dan can be reached by email at dan.standage@studentveterans.org.

Due to the high volume of student veterans on campuses located near one of the following U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, a DSL program is currently in high-demand: Tampa, Long Beach, Chicago, Richmond, San Antonio, and Minneapolis (regional office).

AHEAD-VETERANS SIG WEBPAGE:



At the end of January, AHEAD began migrating the website to a new platform. The new platform creates an internal "community" for AHEAD members, while also maintaining a public site on the internet. While the public site looks unchanged, a few changes occurred as content was moved to the members-only area. The landing page for the AHEAD-Veterans SIG is still located at [this URL](#); however, members who login can now access an organized set of resources, such as integrated member messaging, a searchable member directory, and communities, such as the SIGs. The communities offer a real-time environment for collaboration. Each SIG has its own library for sharing files, links and other content, as well as an internal area. The listings used by AHEAD for decades will be phased-out as this new, modern platform fully implemented. In addition, all AHEAD members had their SIG affiliations reset, which requires everyone to re-join the ones they still have interest with. We encourage *all* members to re-join online, review and update profile information, and reconnect. There's no limit on the number of SIGs you can be affiliated with. The only limitation is that we can't do it for you. If you have any issues accessing the new member site, contact AHEAD support at ahead@ahead.org.

PAVING ACCESS FOR VETERANS EMPLOYMENT (PAVE)

PAVE is a program of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), which provides vocational counseling and job placement assistance to any veteran, active duty counseling member, spouse or caregiver across the country. It's a unique, **no-cost** program that offers assistance with a variety of customized job search strategies that position our clients for success. Through the generous support of both private and public partnerships, the PAVE program strives to place at least one client every day. Employment events in 2018 will be hosted in New York, Nashville and San Diego. For more information contact Ms. Shelly Stewart at shellys@pva.org. For more information on PAVE visit <https://www.pva.org/veterans-employment>.

We are always looking for articles or information of interest pertaining to supporting student veterans with disabilities in the higher education landscape. If you are interested in submitting information for publication in the AHEAD-Veterans Newsfeed please contact:

Jorja Waybrant at waybrantj@uncsa.edu.

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<https://www.ahead.org/SIGs/veterans>