U.S. Army Spc. Gerald Schumacher of 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, climbs a mountain Jan. 11, 2012, in Watapur district, Kunar province, Afghanistan (Photo by Staff Sgt. Trey Harvey).

A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH TO VETERANS' TRANSITION: EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, & POST-SERVICE SUCCESS

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Public Support for Military

Trends in Confidence in the Church and the Military
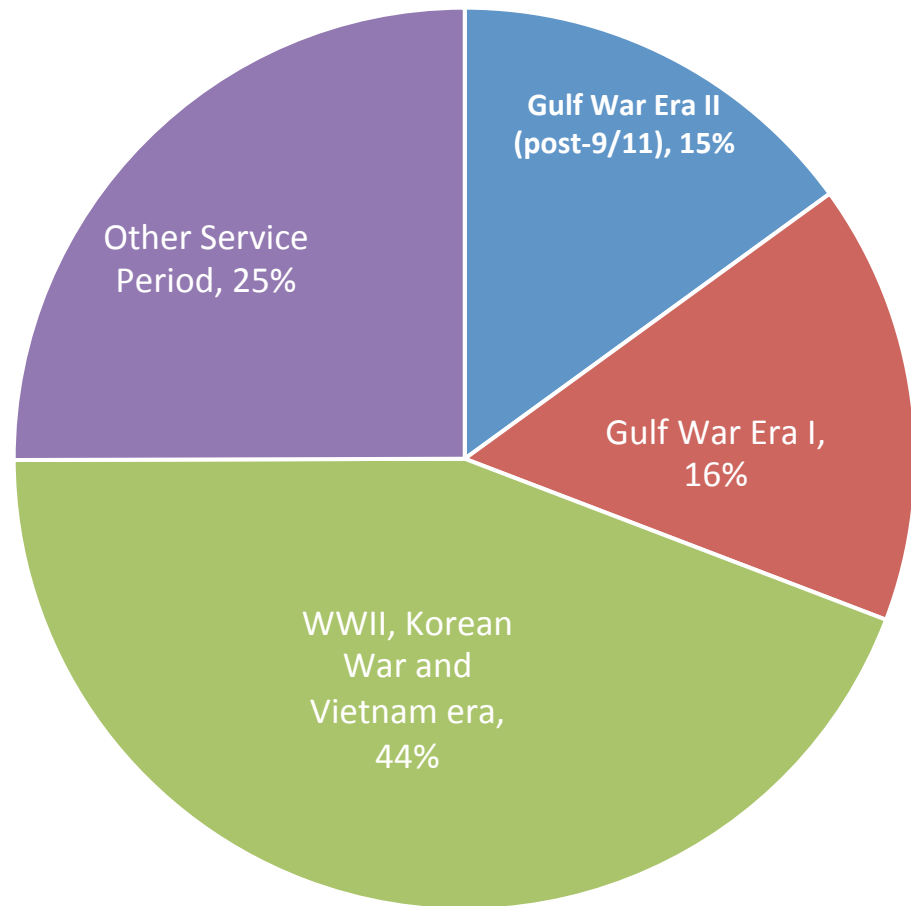
Figures represent % Great deal/Quite a lot

■ The church   ■ The military

Source, Gallop News Service, *Confidence in Institutions*: June 9-12, 2011

Current Force Structure

Active Duty: 1,369,482 servicemembers (1,047,166 of whom do not hold a college degree), with projections of 5M servicemembers likely to enroll in universities by 2020.

Veterans: VA estimates total veterans at 22,299,350. Current Population Survey (CPS 2014) at DoL Bureau of Labor Statistics: 21.2 million veterans, 9% of total U.S. population. With Active & Veteran about 10%--not 1% active—of total US pop.

Gulf War Era II (post-9/11), 15%

Gulf War Era I, 16%

WWII, Korean War and Vietnam era, 44%

Other Service Period, 25%

Education

	All Americans		All Veterans	
Educational Attainment	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%
Total	236,737,000		21,397,000	
Less than a high school diploma	28,791,000	12%	1,227,000	6%
High school graduates, no college	71,044,000	30%	6,733,000	31%
Some college or associate degree	68,253,000	29%	7,428,000	35%
College graduates (Bachelors or Higher)	68,649,000	29%	6,009,000	28%

Approximately 63% of veterans have attained some college or higher. This number is higher compared to the U.S. population (58%).

	Gulf War Era II		Gulf War Era I		WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era		Other Service Period	
Educational Attainment	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%
Total	2,837,000		3,233,000		9,828,000		5,500,000	
Less than a high school diploma	39,000	1%	50,000	2%	783,000	8%	355,000	6%
High school graduates, no college	695,000	24%	864,000	27%	3,185,000	32%	1,989,000	36%
Some college or associate degree	1,269,000	45%	1,312,000	41%	3,037,000	31%	1,811,000	33%
College graduates (Bachelors or Higher)	834,000	29%	1,007,000	31%	2,823,000	29%	1,345,000	24%

Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Averages 2013

Diversity I: Race/Ethnicity

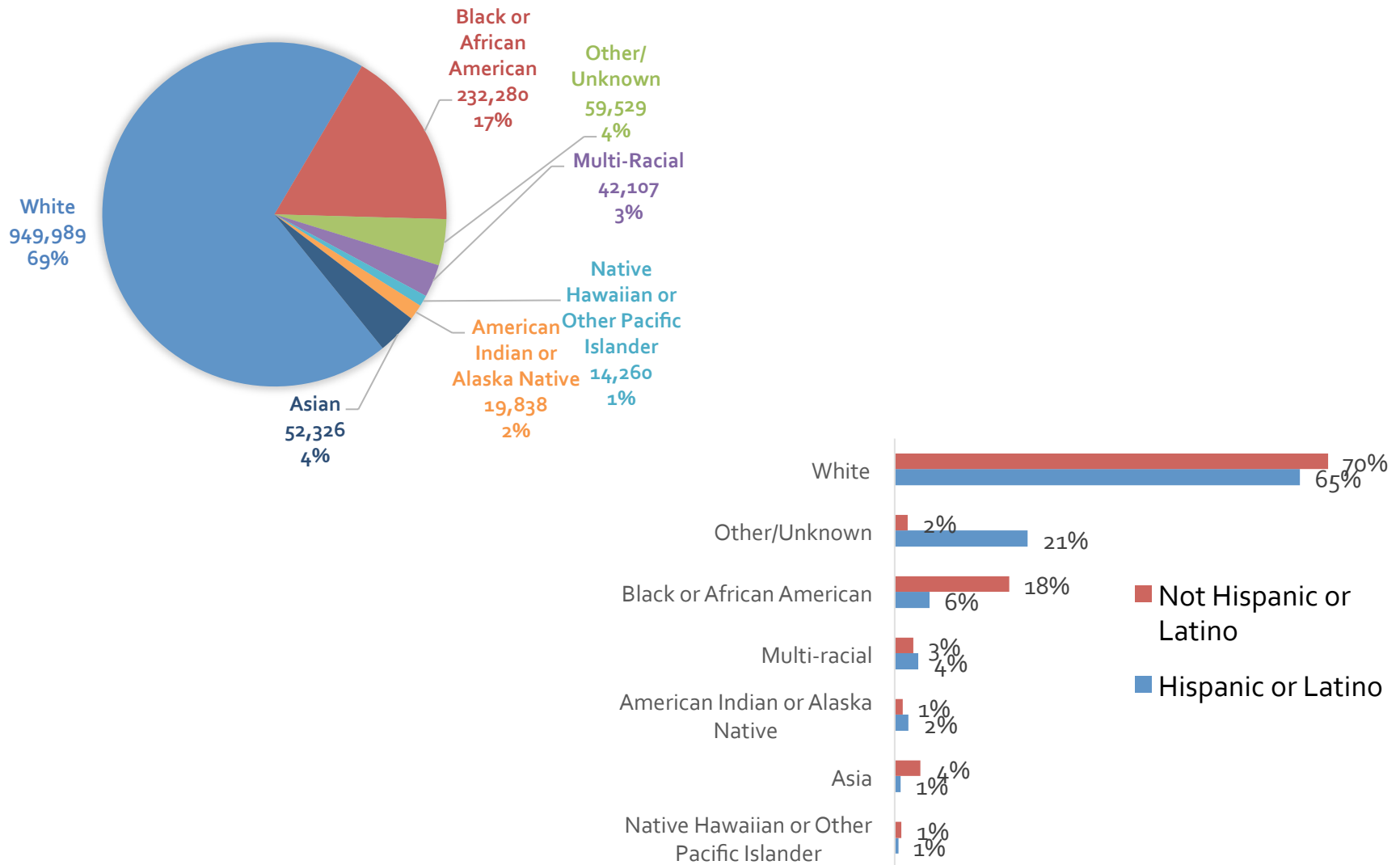| Ethnicity/Race	All Americans		All Veterans	
	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%
Total	236,737,000		21,397,000	
White	187,643,000	79%	18,003,000	84%
African-American	29,088,000	12%	2,469,000	12%
Hispanic	35,519,000	15%	1,385,000	6%
Asian	12,810,000	5%	314,000	1%

- The majority of Americans and veterans are White/Caucasians

- There are some differences in ethnicity/race within each era of veterans

- Gulf War era I has the largest percentage of African Americans which is at 18% followed by post-9/11 veterans which is at 15%. Post-9/11 veterans has the largest percentage of Hispanics which is at 13% followed by Gulf War era I which is at 9%. And post-9/11 veterans has the largest percentage of Asians which is at 3% followed by Gulf War era I which is at 2%.

Ethnicity/Race	Gulf War Era II		Gulf War Era I		WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era		Other Service Period	
	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%
Total	2,837,000		3,233,000		9,828,000		5,500,000	
White	2,177,000	77%	2,442,000	76%	8,765,000	89%	4,619,000	84%
African-American	433,000	15%	592,000	18%	762,000	8%	683,000	12%
Hispanic	370,000	13%	287,000	9%	428,000	4%	300,000	5%
Asian	86,000	3%	64,000	2%	109,000	1%	55,000	1%

Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Averages 2013

Diversity I: Race/Ethnicity

White 949,989 69%

Black or African American 232,280 17%

Other/Unknown 59,529 4%

Multi-Racial 42,107 3%

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander 14,260 1%

American Indian or Alaska Native 19,838 2%

Asian 52,326 4%

White — 70% / 65%
Other/Unknown — 2% / 21%
Black or African American — 18% / 6%
Multi-racial — 3% / 4%
American Indian or Alaska Native — 1% / 2%
Asia — 4% / 1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander — 1% / 1%

Not Hispanic or Latino

Hispanic or Latino

Diversity II: Women

- 90% all veterans are male and 10% are females
- The proportion of females are larger with veterans that served during Gulf War era I and II compared to any other period of service
- Women are the fastest growing population especially within post-9/11 veterans

	All Veterans	
Gender	Estimated Number	%
Total	21,397,000	
Male	19,173,000	90%
Female	2,225,000	10%

	Gulf War Era II		Gulf War Era I		WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era		Other Service Period	
Gender	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%	Estimated Number	%
Total	2,837,000		3,233,000		9,828,000		5,500,000	
Male	2,259,000	80%	2,626,000	81%	9,458,000	96%	4,830,000	88%
Female	579,000	20%	606,000	19%	370,000	4%	669,000	12%

Diversity III: Disability

The highest number of disabled veterans served in Gulf War Era, including servicemembers deployed in GWOT. In this context, more than 1.5M Gulf War veterans are categorized by the VA as having a disability, which accounts for 40 percent of all disabled veterans receiving compensation.

Q: Do you have a service-related disability?
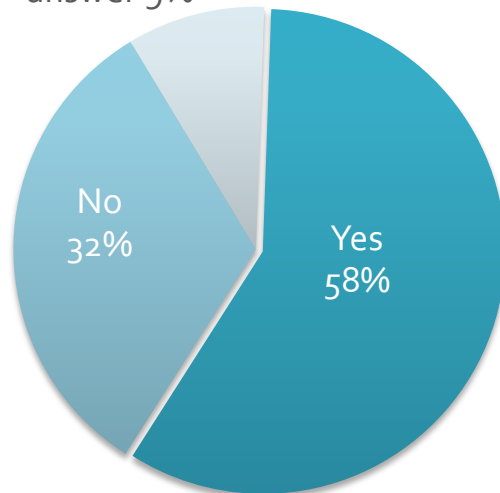
Q: What is your current service-connected disability rating?

Prefer not to answer 9%

No 32%

Yes 58%

Disability Rating	Percent
0 percent	6%
10 or 20 percent	20%
30 or 40 percent	21%
50 or 60 percent	20%
70 percent or higher	33%
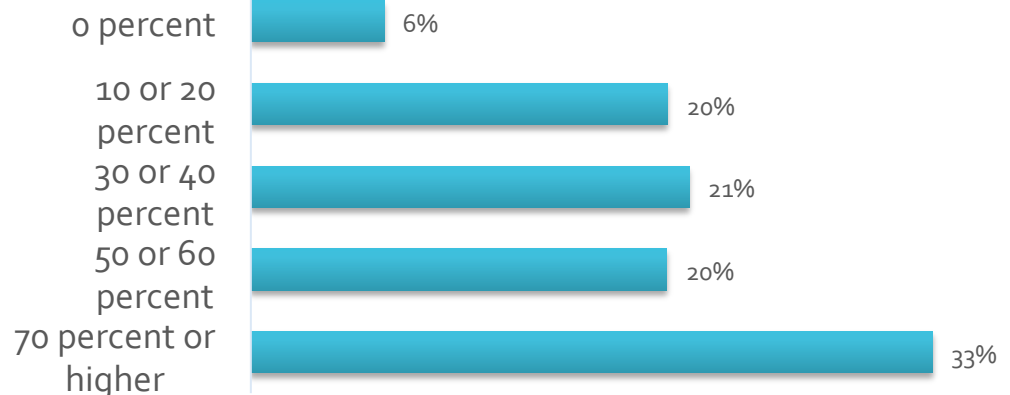
Disability Status, Survey 1, 2015

Framing

❖ **Contradiction:** Broad public support for Post-9/11 servicemembers & veterans—but extremely little understanding (research) or even interest in veterans experiences during & after war. Academics & federal agencies—not part of the solution.

❖ How to get **academic institutions up to par** in supporting veterans' success, understanding what those with national service have to offer academia (strengths), public, nation…

❖ Imbuing a lost sense of **public service.** Why has service become the purview of a minority—at high cost to them, not the whole country/community?

Policy Implications of Data Driven Research

Overall Approach: Using many sources of support (NSF, Google) and many federal datasets (ACS, BLS, IPEDS), we have developed an evidence-based picture of student veterans in their educational aspirations and experiences.

1. **Post-9/11 Veterans—lost data, missing perspectives**

2. **Why is this research necessary?**

3. **How may research—evidentiary basis for servicemembers' in transition and higher education—help positively influence stakeholders?**

Guiding Research Questions

1. Who is serving? Who is going to school?

2. Does national service influence education and post-service careers—motivation and aspirations, preparedness, campus and career experiences?

   ❑ Does STEM military training increase STEM aspirations?

3. Does post-service education influence transition?

4. What challenges—personal, services, systems—do servicemembers face in postsecondary education?

5. What strengths do servicemembers bring to postsecondary education?

6. Best education practices to ease post-service transition and positively affect academic success?

Prioritizing Veterans' Perceptions

Primary Motivations:

❖ **Paradox:** Broad, public "support for troops" but too little understanding, especially of post-service life—beyond stereotypes.

❖ Research on student veterans tends to focus on academic performance (e.g., graduation rates) and challenges adapting to campus life.

❖ Gap in knowledge in servicemembers' experiences, needs, expectations, and aspirations in transitioning to campus life.

❖ Clear need to identify leading institutional support systems, processes, and practices that best promote long-term student veteran success

Research Design

Two-Part Study

Study One: Servicemembers' Perspectives on Higher Education

- Servicemember to Student Survey

Study Two: VPA & Academic Leaders' Perspectives

- Campus Policies & Programs for Student Veterans' Success Survey
- Semi-structured interviews & campus visits with student veteran professionals

Multi-Method Approach

Surveys (structured and open)

Interviews and campus visits

Great Support from Key Partners

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

Student Veterans of America (SVA)

Military Times

Innovation in Research Instruments and Methods

Targeting a population that has **never been broadly surveyed** on their educational experience before

Developed **partnerships with academics and practitioners**, and promoted discussions among veterans-serving institutions

A **multidisciplinary research team** from Syracuse University to create a comprehensive and diverse view of complex problems

Collecting **perspectives from different populations**: service members, academic leaders, and thought leaders
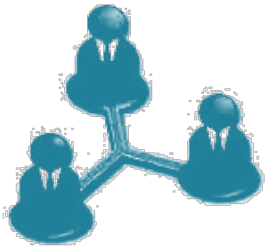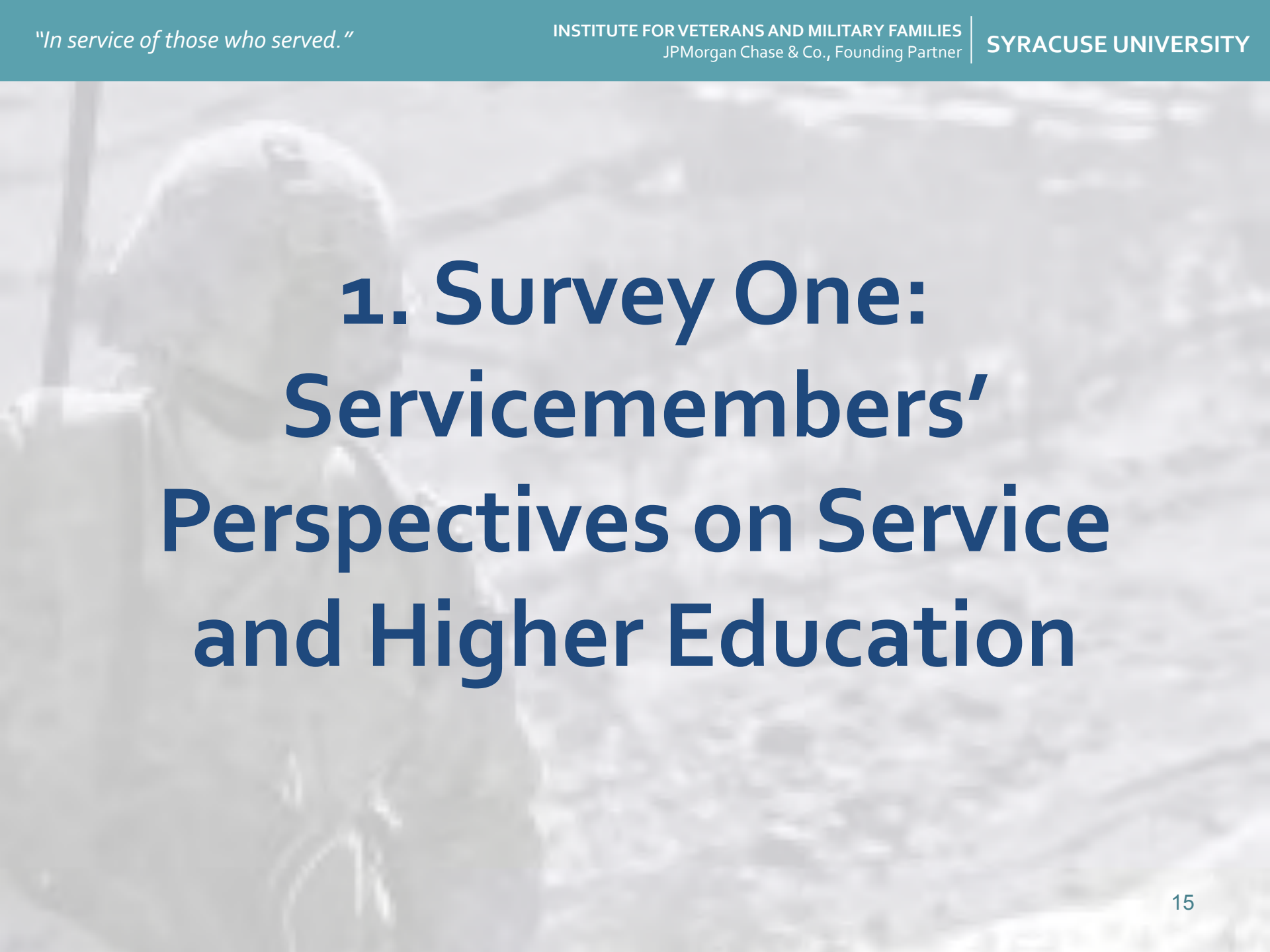
Utilized an **organizational frame** that allows for multiple individual perspectives within the same survey—hence, capturing the whole scope of institutional factors that create ecosystems of veterans' success

Designed and implemented **practical solutions** to support the success of student veterans

Created one of **the largest datasets on veterans and service members' experiences in education**, and a **comprehensive and up-to-date database** of veteran-focused programs

1. Survey One: Servicemembers' Perspectives on Service and Higher Education

Survey I: *Servicemember to Student Survey*

❖ Focus on servicemembers' *post-service life*, experiences, challenges & recommendations as these relate to education and *successful transition*.

❖ Data will help research team identify challenges, pathways for success, and *institutional best practices* at schools & training programs; inform veterans' community, academia, and partners how to best support veterans educational attainment.

❖ *Extremely few studies* have collected or analyzed this data.

❖ Survey 1 implemented in Qualtrics; unique links generated per distribution channel; social media messaging crafted for partners' networks.

❖ Survey dissemination began *May 16 2014*: still running to maximize bumps from other outreach efforts & instruments

❖ As of May 2015: over 8,561 respondents with 58% completion rate—twice online academic surveys (30%)

Survey 1: *Servicemember to Student Survey*

Research Questions: How are veterans doing in school?

Bringing Rigorous Research to the Subject of Veterans Education:

Calling the question: Why aren't researchers studying veterans' experiences in education? Social scientist have conducted similar research for veterans through the WW II and Vietnam eras, but not for the post 9/11 cohort

Who can provide knowledge/experience with this issue? In addition to student veterans, researchers' need to consider veterans who are not enrolled, administrative officers at educational institutions, thought leaders, historical records and academic literature

How do we amplify the message? Leverage social media channels and a multi-pronged outreach strategy

Sample Survey 1 Questions:

- What is your motivation for education and/or training?
- How has your military experience left a lasting impression on you?
- What is your preferred method of instruction and classroom environment?
- Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?
- Were there any lessons or skills that you learned from difficult experiences in the military or on deployment?

Sample: Servicemember Characteristics
Status

Q. What is your current military status?*

- Veteran
- Active Duty
- Reserves
- National Guard
- Family member

Pie chart:
- 83% Veteran
- 4%
- 3%
- 5%
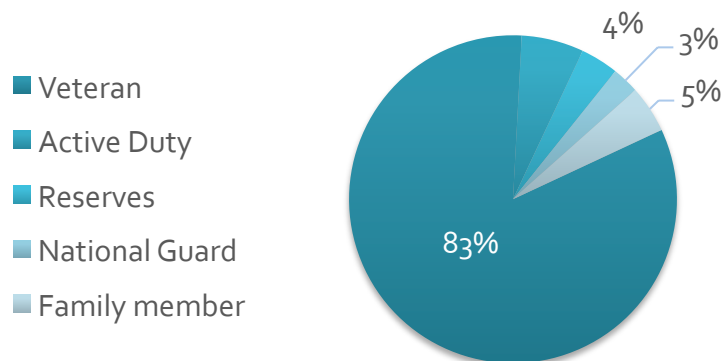
The majority of the sample was veteran (83%) followed by armed forces (6% active duty, 4% reserves, and 3% from the national guard). 5% of respondents were from family members of U.S. armed forces or Veteran

Q. In total, how long did you serve on active duty?

- Less than 1 year: 2%
- 1-3 year: 20%
- 4-8 years: 40%
- 9-20 years: 18%
- 20+ years or more: 20%
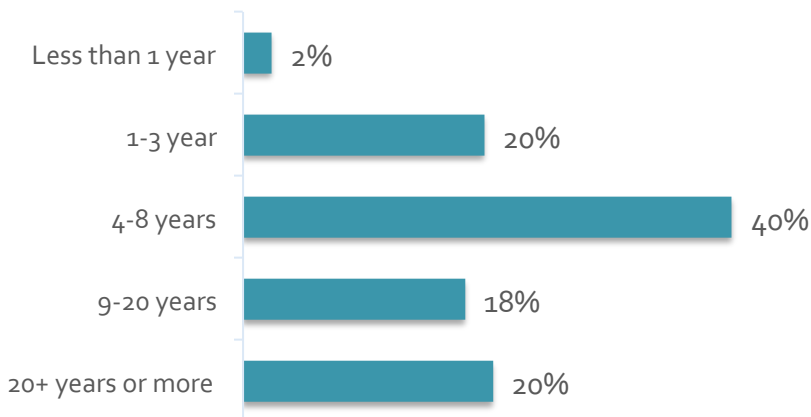
Q. What rank did you attain?

- Junior Enlisted (E1--E4): 34%
- Senior Enlisted (E5--E9): 53%
- Warrant Officer (W1--W5): 1%
- Company Grade Officer (O1--O3): 5%
- Field Grade Officer (O4--O6): 6%
- Flag/General Officer (O7--O10): 0%
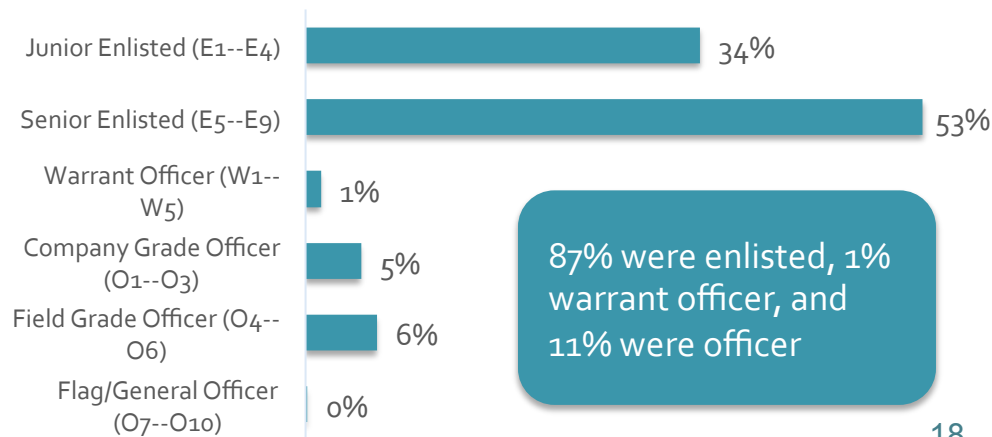
87% were enlisted, 1% warrant officer, and 11% were officer

18

Servicemember Characteristics
Branch

Survey 1: Servicemember to Student Survey

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard

Branch of Service

2% · 11% · 19% · 47% · 21%

Branch of service is *comparable* to data from Defense Manpower Data Center and the VA but is slightly over and under represented in certain branches

2012 DMDC Data 2012 Demographic Profile

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard

Branch of Service

2% · 12% · 21% · 48% · 17%
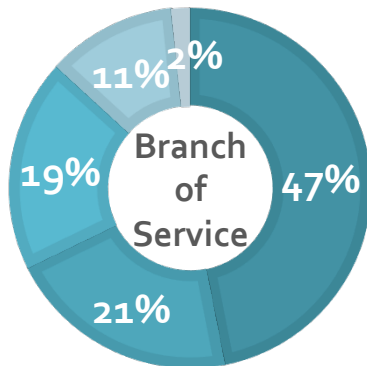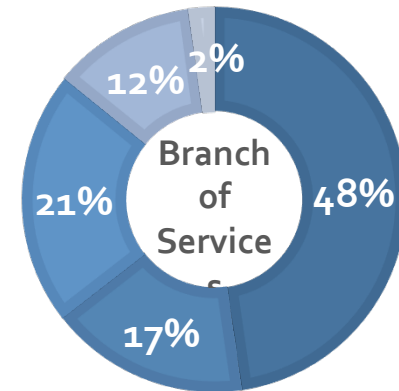
VetPop2014 Estimation based off of Sept 2014

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marine Corps
- Coast Guard and Other

Branch of Services

1% · 12% · 19% · 45% · 23%
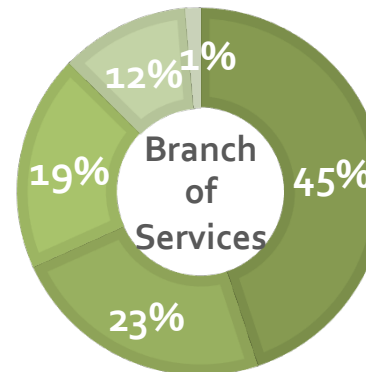
Reasons for Joining the Armed Services

Q. Why did you join the armed services? Rank your top choices up to five.

Reason	Percentage
Education benefits	53%
A desire to serve your country	52%
New experiences/adventure/travel	49%
Sense of purpose	36%
Career opportunities	31%
A history of service in your family	29%
Defend your country	29%
Practical skills and training opportunities	25%
Financial security	21%
Leadership	20%
Retirement benefits in the future	20%
Health care benefits	19%
Lack of job opportunities	16%
Job Security/fullfillment	12%
Military community, network, and overall quality	9%
Improve earning potential	8%
Promotion/advancement opportunities within the	7%
Other	7%
Friends enlisted	5%

Top Reasons For Joining

Finding: Joining a Good Decision

Q. Overall, was joining the military a good decision for you personally?
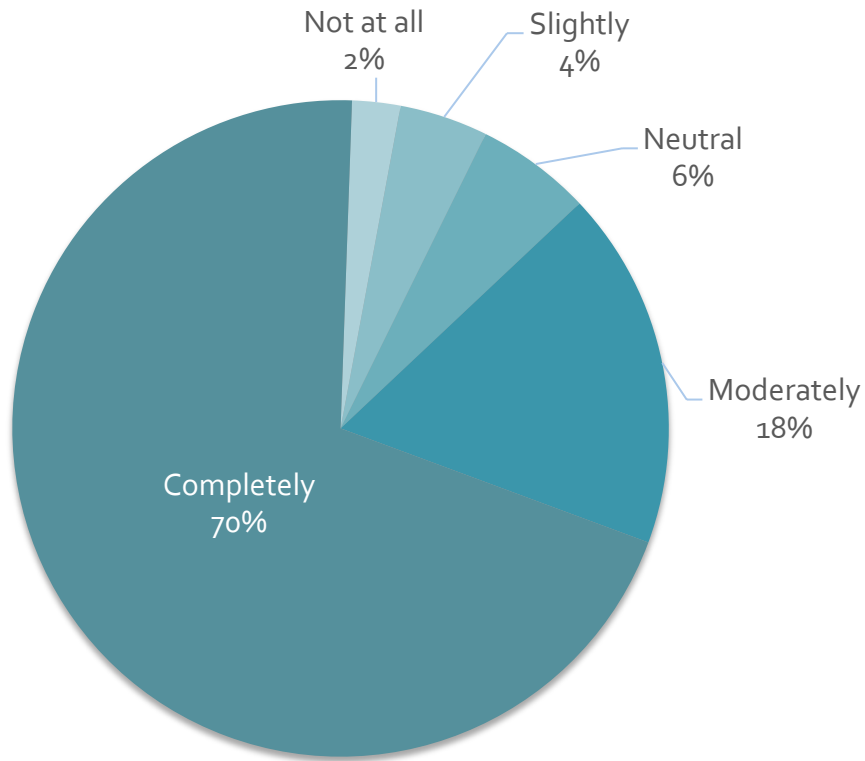
88% of servicemembers indicated that joining the military was *moderately* or *completely* a good decision

Military Specialization

Did your military specialization or job(s):

	Not At All	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Completely
Promote your interest in education?	26%	15%	21%	23%	15%
Promote your interest in a training, certification, or licensing program?	29%	15%	19%	22%	15%
Prepare you for your education?	31%	17%	22%	18%	11%
Promote your interest in STEM?	34%	15%	20%	19%	12%
Prepare you for your civilian career?	34%	18%	21%	16%	11%
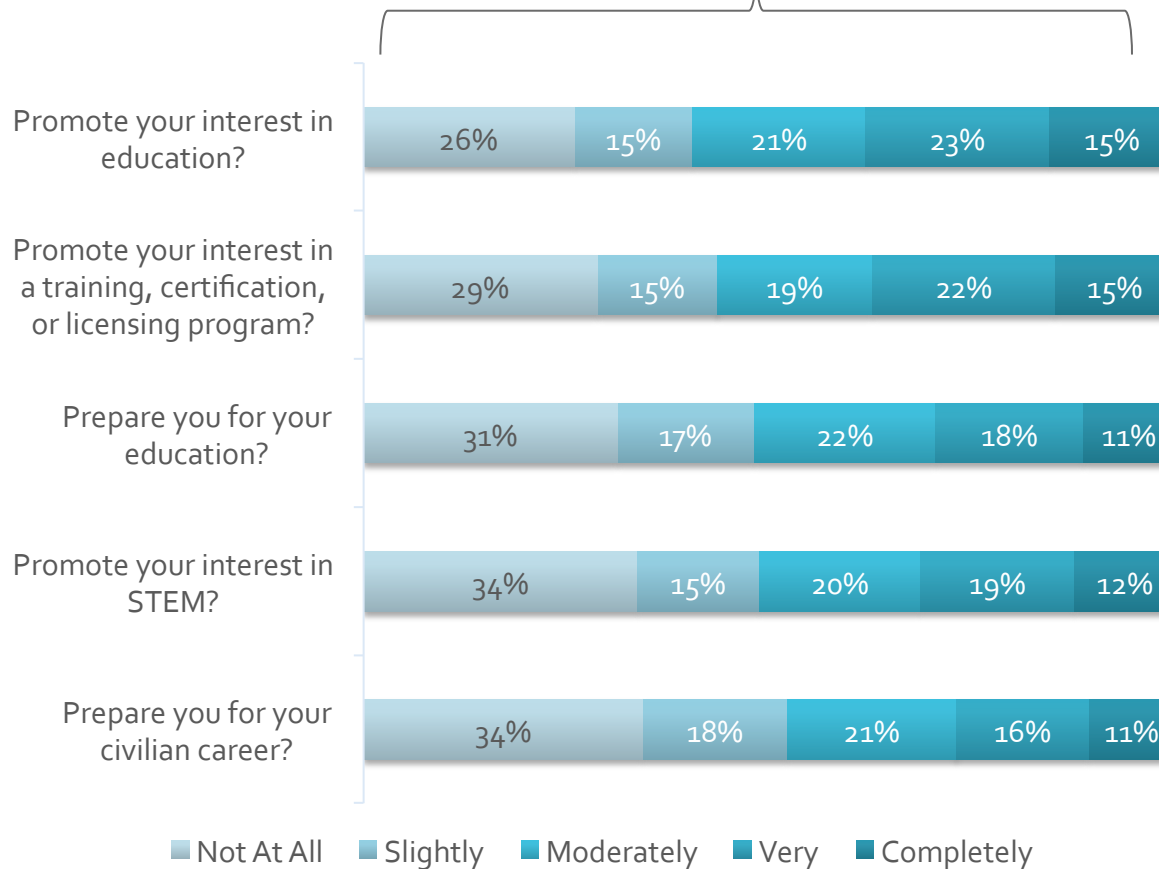
- 74% indicated that their military specialization or job promoted their interest in education (rated from *Slightly* to *Completely*)
- 71% indicated that their military specialization or job promoted their interest in training, certification, or licensing program
- 69% indicated that their military specialization or job prepared them for their education
- 66% indicated that their military specialization or job promoted STEM compared to the **34%** that indicated that it did not.
- 66% indicated that their military specialization or job prepared for their civilian career compared to the **34%** that indicated that it did not.

Skills Developed During Service

Q. In thinking about your skills developed during service, please select all those that were strengthened or enhanced by your military experience. Select all that apply.

Skill	Percentage
Work ethic/discipline	85%
Teamwork	85%
Leadership and management skills	80%
Mental toughness	79%
Adaptation to different challenges	77%
Self-Discipline	76%
Professionalism	75%
Ability to get things done	74%
Training & teaching others	73%
Coping with adversity	72%
Confidence and self-esteem	72%
Perseverance	71%
Ability to complete the mission	69%
Working effectively with supervisors and other authorities	69%
Dealing with uncertainty	68%
Camaraderie and supporting peers	68%
Crisis management	68%
Making decisions in time and resource-constrained environments	67%
Social/Communication skills	67%
Resilience	67%
Time management	65%
Moral code and social responsibility	63%
Level-headedness and perspective	62%
Organization	62%
Cultural understanding	62%
Delegating responsibilities	61%
Goal Setting	56%
Technical expertise	54%

Top 5 Skills Acquired

- Work ethic/
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Mental Toughnesss
- Adaptation

2. Post-Service Transition

TAP Preparation

Q. Was the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) helpful to you?

Q. Do you have any recommendations for TAP? (Optional)

Had TAP	72%
Does not apply	28%

Pie chart:
- Very helpful 15%
- Helpful 15%
- Somewhat helpful 37%
- Not helpful 33%
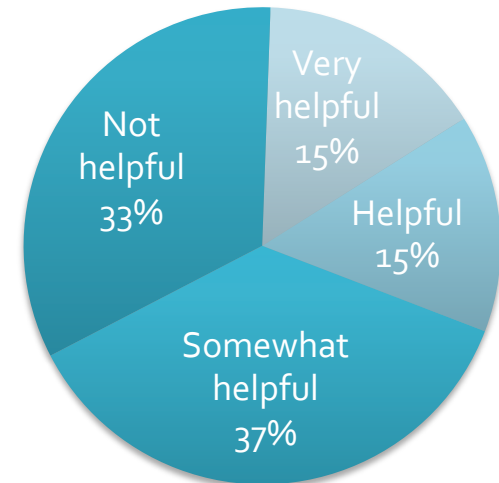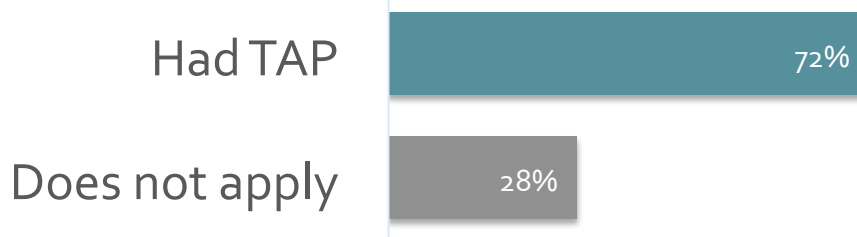
72% indicated had TAP while 28% said TAP does not apply. Of those that had TAP:
- 33% said TAP was not helpful
- 37% said TAP was somewhat helpful
- 30% said TAP was helpful or very helpful

➢ The VA briefing was outstanding at Fort Polk. The TAP portion could have benefited from a mock interview, and one-on-one resume and cover letter counseling.
➢ YES. Increase knowledge/awareness of the Yellow Ribbon Program and provide a complete list of schools
➢ Navy boot camp was 8 weeks, TAP was one week. There needs to be training on how to be a civilian again taught by civilians. Not the military and not some garbage government contractor.

Top Ranked Key Challenges in Transition

Q. From the following choices, what are the key challenges in your transition? Rank top five.

Challenge	Percentage
Navigating VA administration or benefits	42%
Getting a job	41%
Financial struggles	27%
Getting socialized to civilian culture	27%
Depression	22%
Skills translation	21%
Contradictory information from different sources	19%
Employment preparation	18%
Disability	18%
Civilian day-to-day life	17%
Understanding GI Bill benefits	17%
Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) and combat stress	16%
Transition Assistance Program inadequate	15%
Using and accessing GI Bill benefits	14%
Mental health issues and behavioral adjustment	12%
Transferring military course credits	12%
Family, children & dependent obligations	11%
Information about education opportunities	11%
Anger management	10%
Stigma of being a service member	10%
College/university culture and climate	9%
Physical injuries	7%
Academic preparation	6%
Education administrative obstacles	6%
Getting along with others	5%
Military Sexual Trauma (MST)	4%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	3%
Other	2%

Top ranked challenges revolve around Administration/ Benefits, Employment, Assimilation, and Wellness

Top 5 Ranked Key challenges
- Navigating VA administration or benefits
- Getting a job
- Financial struggles
- Getting socialized to civilian culture
- Depression
- Skills translation

Helpful Transitional Resources

Q. How helpful were the following resources in your transition? Rate only those relevant.

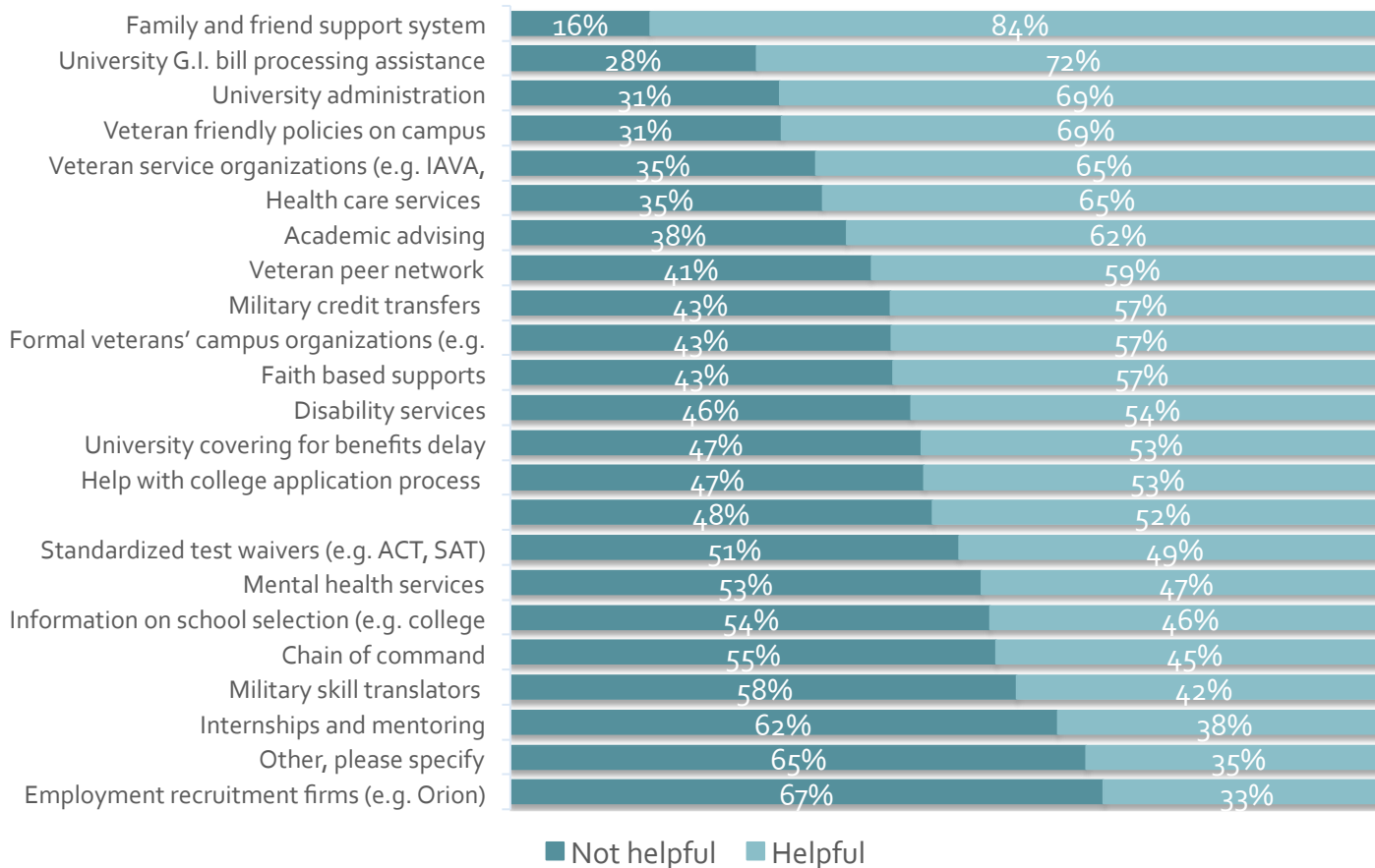| Resource	Not helpful	Helpful
Family and friend support system	16%	84%
University G.I. bill processing assistance	28%	72%
University administration	31%	69%
Veteran friendly policies on campus	31%	69%
Veteran service organizations (e.g. IAVA,	35%	65%
Health care services	35%	65%
Academic advising	38%	62%
Veteran peer network	41%	59%
Military credit transfers	43%	57%
Formal veterans' campus organizations (e.g.	43%	57%
Faith based supports	43%	57%
Disability services	46%	54%
University covering for benefits delay	47%	53%
Help with college application process	47%	53%
	48%	52%
Standardized test waivers (e.g. ACT, SAT)	51%	49%
Mental health services	53%	47%
Information on school selection (e.g. college	54%	46%
Chain of command	55%	45%
Military skill translators	58%	42%
Internships and mentoring	62%	38%
Other, please specify	65%	35%
Employment recruitment firms (e.g. Orion)	67%	33%

■ Not helpful ■ Helpful

Top resources in transition

- ❖ Family and friend support (84%)
- ❖ University G.I. bill processing assistance (72%)
- ❖ University Administration (69%)
- ❖ Veteran friendly policies on campus (69%)
- ❖ Veteran service organizations (65%)
- ❖ Health care services (65%)
- ❖ Academic advising (62%)

Educations' Role in Post-Service Transition

Q. How much do you agree with the following statement: education should play a role in post-service transition?

Response	Percentage
Strongly Agree	74%
Agree	18%
Neutral	7%
Disagree	0%
Strongly Disagree	1%
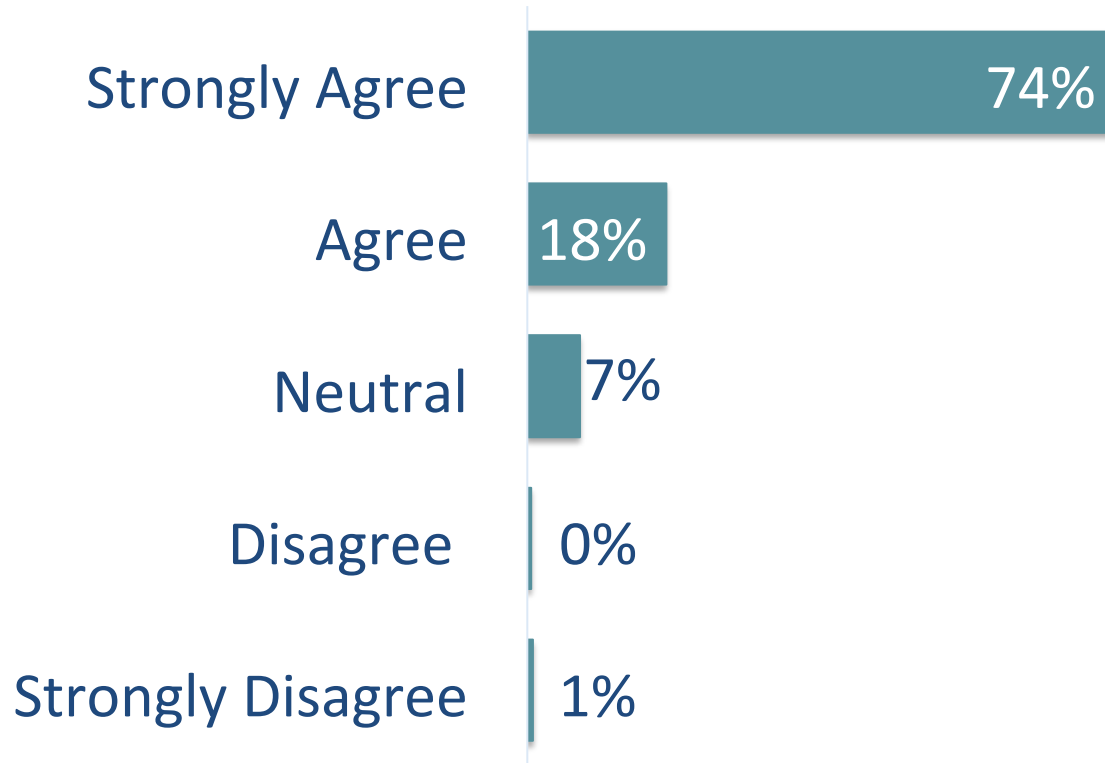
Sources of Information Most Valuable

Q: What sources of information about your transition were most valuable? Select all that apply.

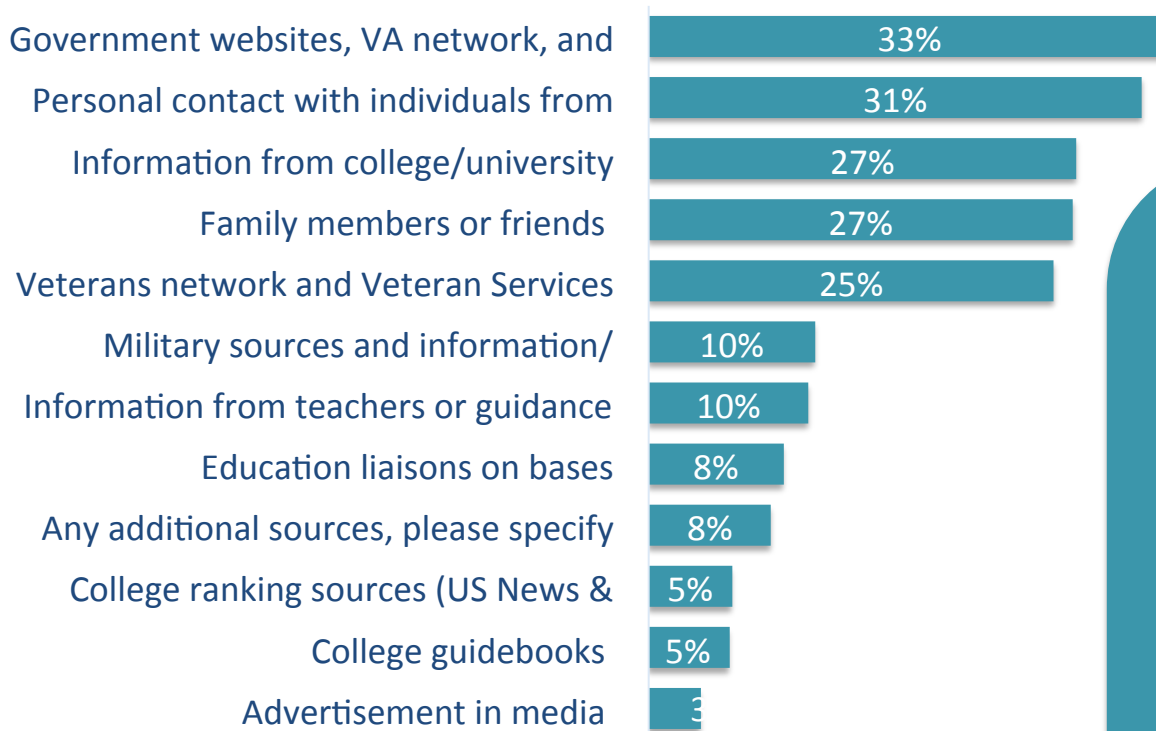| Source	%
Government websites, VA network, and	33%
Personal contact with individuals from	31%
Information from college/university	27%
Family members or friends	27%
Veterans network and Veteran Services	25%
Military sources and information/	10%
Information from teachers or guidance	10%
Education liaisons on bases	8%
Any additional sources, please specify	8%
College ranking sources (US News &	5%
College guidebooks	5%
Advertisement in media	3

Top sources of valuable information :
➤ Government websites, VA network, and online sources (GI Bill website) (33%)
➤ Personal contact with individuals from college/ university (31%)
➤ Information from college/ university websites (27%)
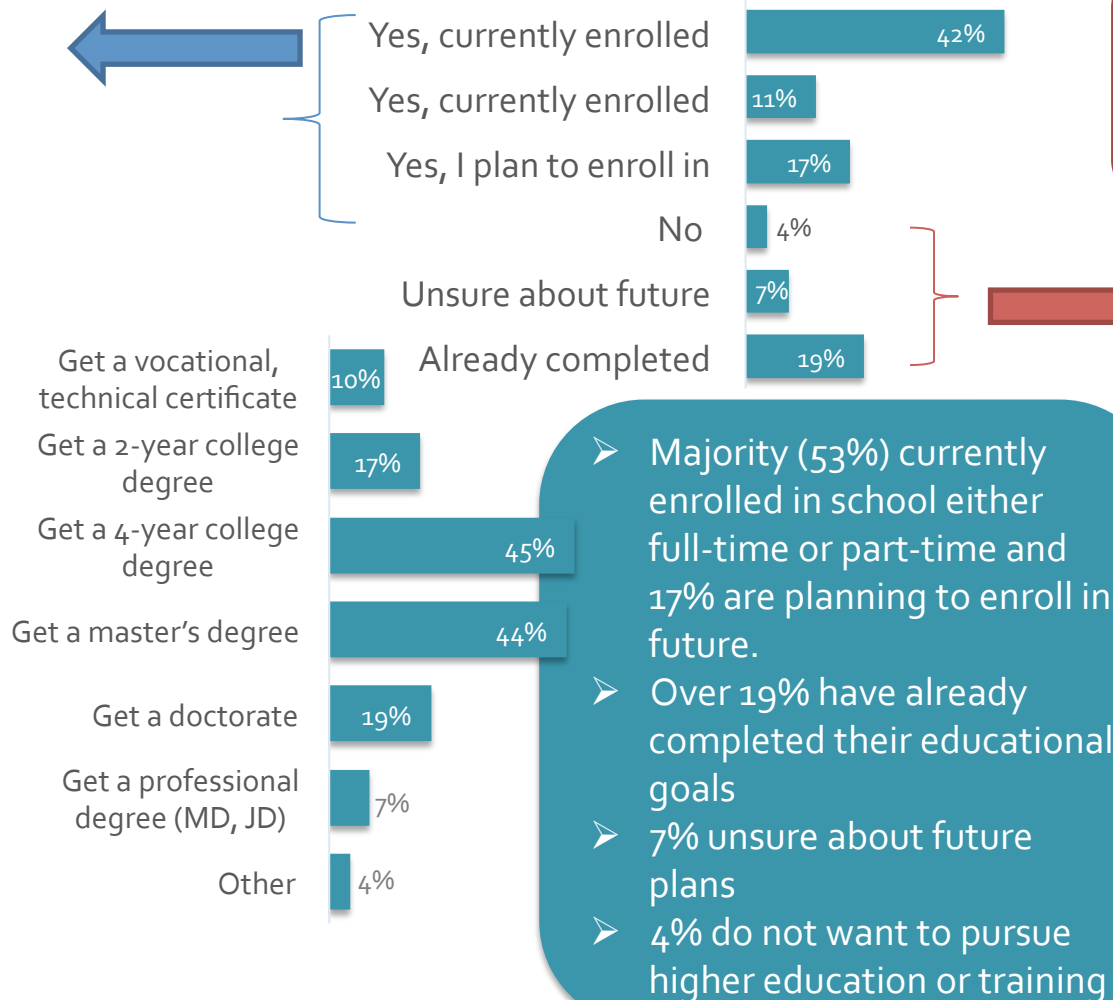➤ Family members or friends (27%)

3. Post-Service Academic Goals, Motivations, and Barriers

Pursuing Higher Education
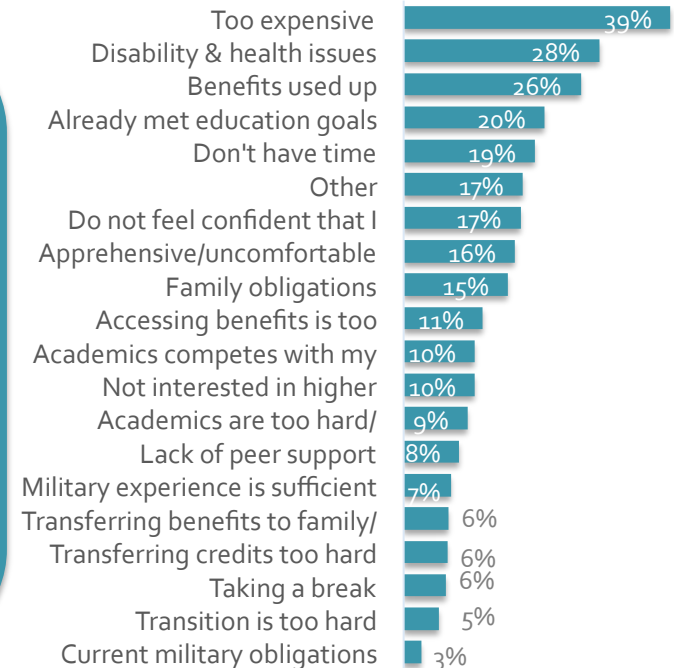
Q: Do you want to pursue higher education or training?

Q: What are your goals for your current or future education? Select all...

Yes, currently enrolled — 42%
Yes, currently enrolled — 11%
Yes, I plan to enroll in — 17%
No — 4%
Unsure about future — 7%
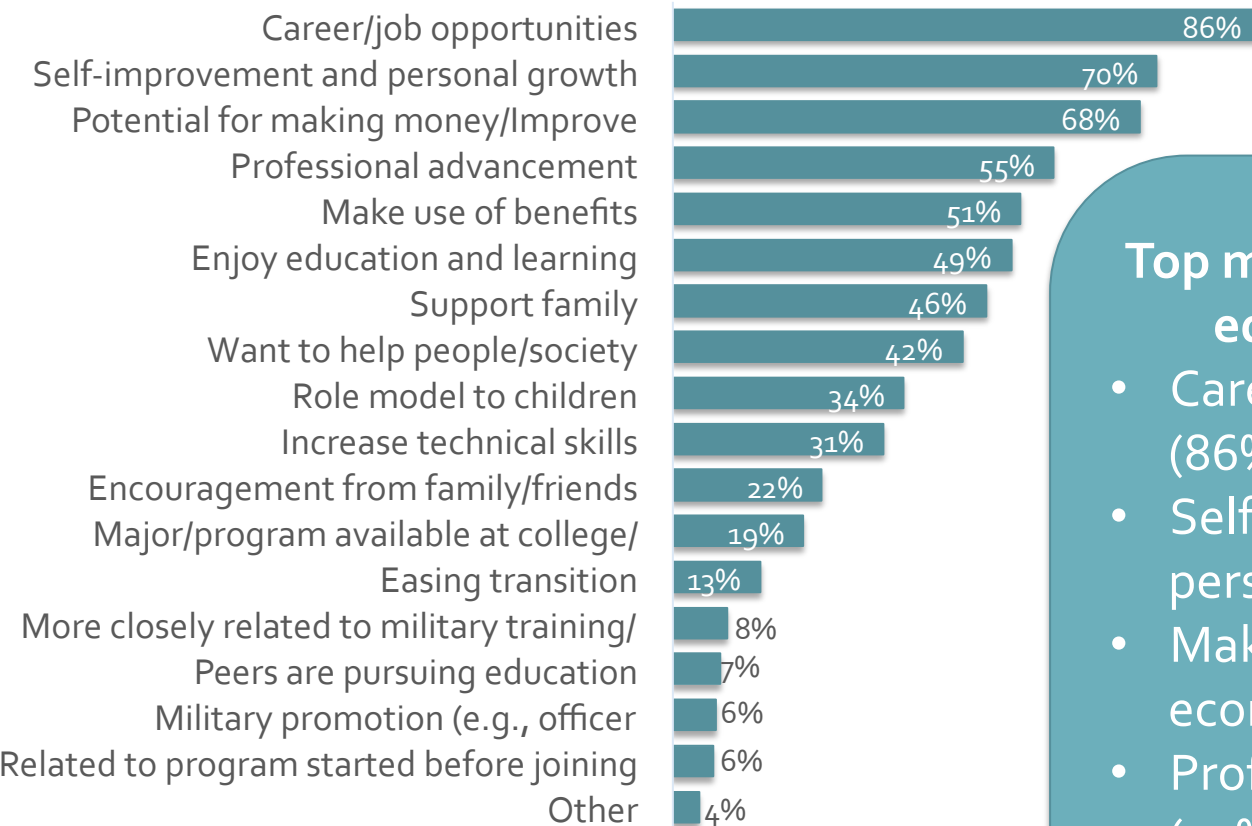**Already completed** — 19%

Top 3 reasons:
1. Too expensive (39%)
2. Disability & health issues (28%)
3. Benefits used up (26%)

Q: If no or unsure, why? Select all that apply.

Get a vocational, technical certificate — 10%
Get a 2-year college degree — 17%
Get a 4-year college degree — 45%
Get a master's degree — 44%
Get a doctorate — 19%
Get a professional degree (MD, JD) — 7%
Other — 4%

> Majority (53%) currently enrolled in school either full-time or part-time and 17% are planning to enroll in future.
> Over 19% have already completed their educational goals
> 7% unsure about future plans
> 4% do not want to pursue higher education or training

Too expensive — 39%
Disability & health issues — 28%
Benefits used up — 26%
Already met education goals — 20%
Don't have time — 19%
Other — 17%
Do not feel confident that I — 17%
Apprehensive/uncomfortable — 16%
Family obligations — 15%
Accessing benefits is too — 11%
Academics competes with my — 10%
Not interested in higher — 10%
Academics are too hard/ — 9%
Lack of peer support — 8%
Military experience is sufficient — 7%
Transferring benefits to family/ — 6%
Transferring credits too hard — 6%
Taking a break — 6%
Transition is too hard — 5%
Current military obligations — 3%

Motivations for Education or Training

Q: Identify your motivations for education or training programs? Select all that apply.

Motivation	Percentage
Career/job opportunities	86%
Self-improvement and personal growth	70%
Potential for making money/Improve	68%
Professional advancement	55%
Make use of benefits	51%
Enjoy education and learning	49%
Support family	46%
Want to help people/society	42%
Role model to children	34%
Increase technical skills	31%
Encouragement from family/friends	22%
Major/program available at college/	19%
Easing transition	13%
More closely related to military training/	8%
Peers are pursuing education	7%
Military promotion (e.g., officer	6%
Related to program started before joining	6%
Other	4%

Top motivations for pursuing education or training:

- Career/job opportunities (86%)
- Self-improvement and personal growth (70%)
- Making money/Improve economic status (68%)
- Professional advancement (55%)
- Make use of benefits (51%)

Top Ranked Problems/Barriers to Achieving Goals

Q: Of problems or barriers identified, rank those that you have selected up to five.

Barrier	%
Lack of financial resources/ Financial burden	59%
Personal/family obligations	31%
GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree	28%
Conflict between job and school	25%
Health/disability issues	23%
Bureaucracy associated with VA paperwork and	22%
Inflexibility in class schedules	15%
Lack of confidence	12%
Difficult courses	12%
Don't feel like I 'fit in' or feel like I'm welcome on campus	11%
My school doesn't award credit for military training or	10%
College/university culture	9%
Poor instruction	8%
Lack of administration support	8%
Lack of role models and/or mentors	8%
Deployments/military obligations	7%
Lack of academic interest	6%
Other, please specify	6%
Lack of faculty support	5%
Poor grades	5%
Underrepresentation of groups like me (gender, race/	5%
Lack of peer support	4%
Guard/Reserve training/deployments disrupt school	4%

Top ranked problems or barriers hindering pursuit or achieving education goals

- Lack of financial resources/ Financial burden (59%)
- Personal/family obligations (31%)
- GI Bill benefits expire before I complete my degree (28%)
- Conflict between job and school (25%)
- Health/disability issues (23%)
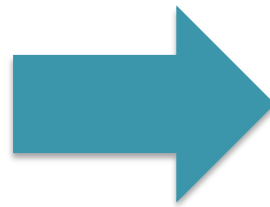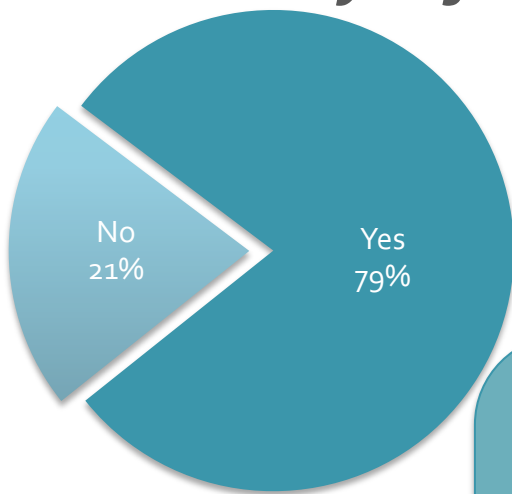- Bureaucracy associated with VA paperwork and processing (22%)

4. Academic Experience: Perception & Culture

Comfortable at School

Q: Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?
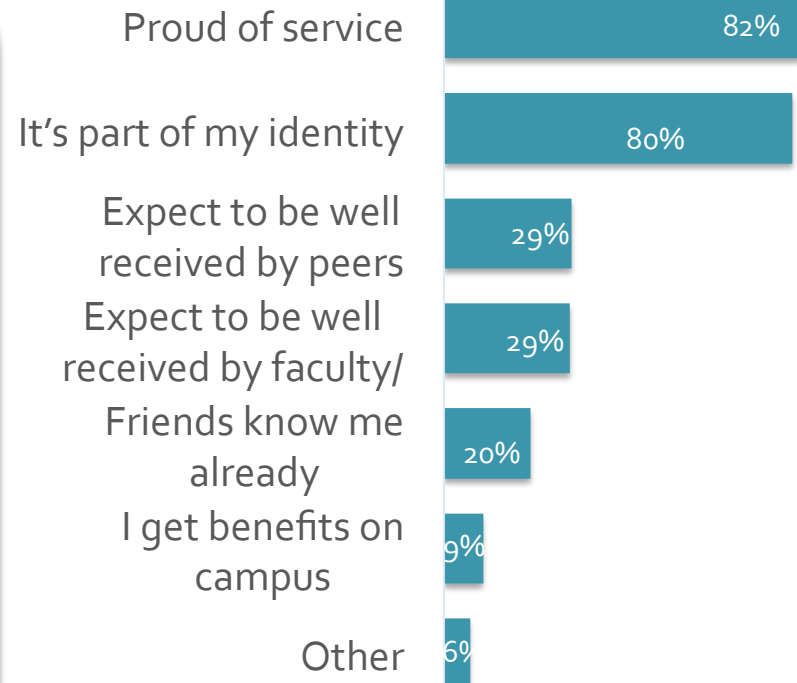

No
21%

Yes
79%

Q. Why do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?

Majority (79%) said they feel comfortable sharing their experience as a servicemember at school.

Top reasons were:
- proud of service (82%)
- part of identity (80%)
- expect to be well received by peers (29%)
- expect to be well received by faculty/ staff (29%)

Reason	%
Proud of service	82%
It's part of my identity	80%
Expect to be well received by peers	29%
Expect to be well received by faculty/	29%
Friends know me already	20%
I get benefits on campus	9%
Other	6%

Not Comfortable at School: *Why?*

Q: Do you feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/ service member at your school?

Yes 79%

No 21%

Q: Why do you not feel comfortable sharing your experiences as a veteran/service member at your school?

The majority (79%) said they feel comfortable sharing their experience as a veterans/service member at school:
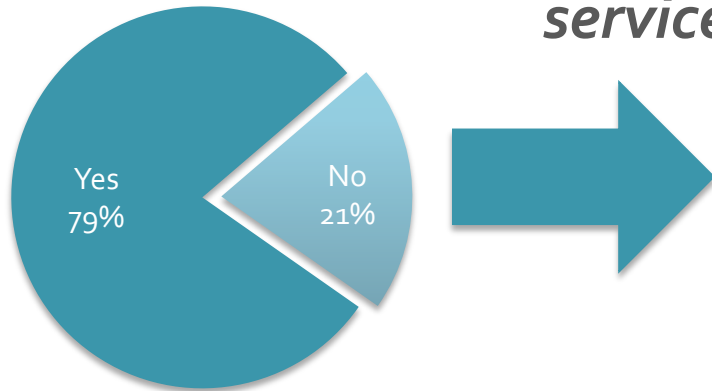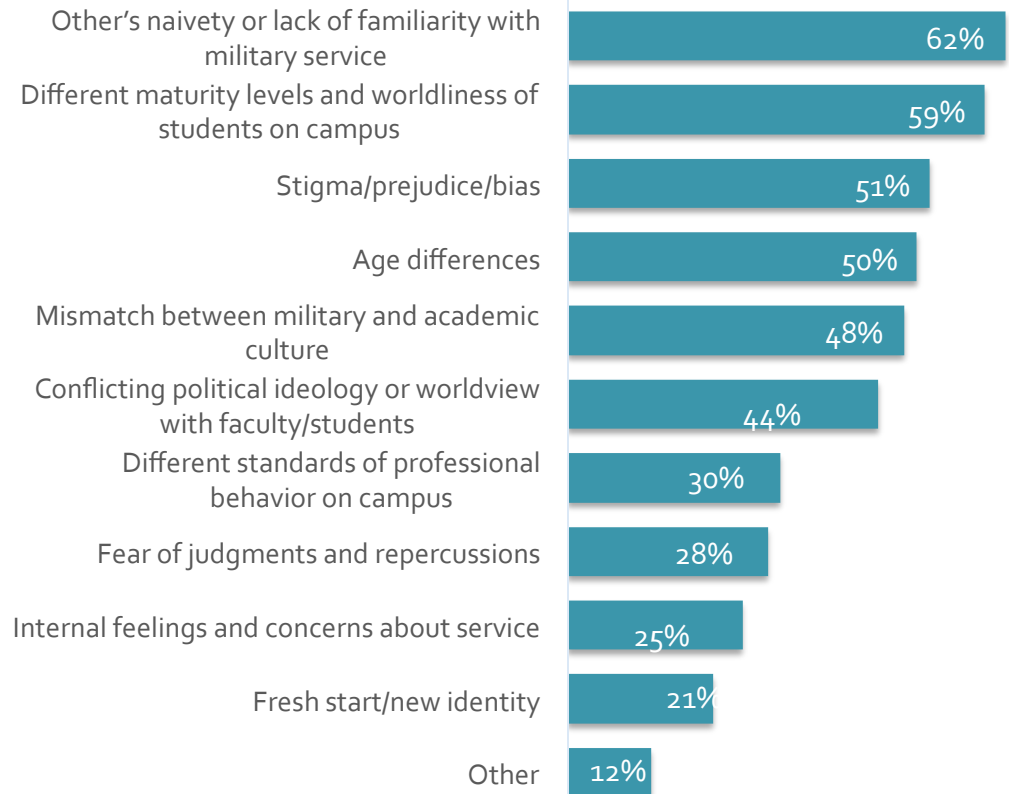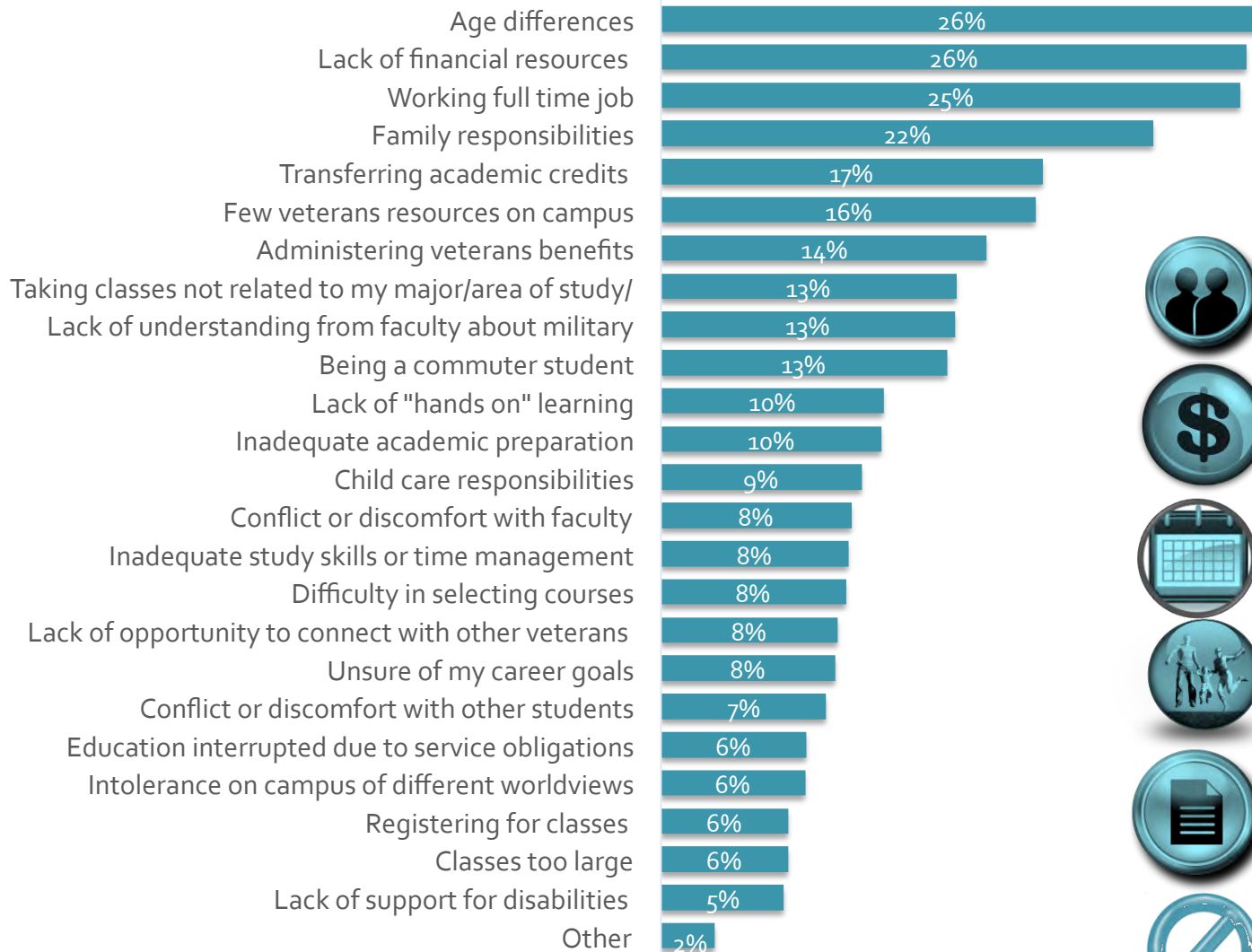
- ❑ But one in five (or 21%) do not feel comfortable.
- ❑ Top reasons why were:
- ❑ Other's naivety or lack of familiarity with military service (62%)
- ❑ Different maturity levels & worldliness of students on campus (59%)
- ❑ Stigma/prejudice/bias (51%)
- ❑ Age differences (50%)

Reason	%
Other's naivety or lack of familiarity with military service	62%
Different maturity levels and worldliness of students on campus	59%
Stigma/prejudice/bias	51%
Age differences	50%
Mismatch between military and academic culture	48%
Conflicting political ideology or worldview with faculty/students	44%
Different standards of professional behavior on campus	30%
Fear of judgments and repercussions	28%
Internal feelings and concerns about service	25%
Fresh start/new identity	21%
Other	12%

Top Ranked Problems Encountered at School

Q: Of those selected, rank those that you have selected up to five.

Problem	Percentage
Age differences	26%
Lack of financial resources	26%
Working full time job	25%
Family responsibilities	22%
Transferring academic credits	17%
Few veterans resources on campus	16%
Administering veterans benefits	14%
Taking classes not related to my major/area of study/	13%
Lack of understanding from faculty about military	13%
Being a commuter student	13%
Lack of "hands on" learning	10%
Inadequate academic preparation	10%
Child care responsibilities	9%
Conflict or discomfort with faculty	8%
Inadequate study skills or time management	8%
Difficulty in selecting courses	8%
Lack of opportunity to connect with other veterans	8%
Unsure of my career goals	8%
Conflict or discomfort with other students	7%
Education interrupted due to service obligations	6%
Intolerance on campus of different worldviews	6%
Registering for classes	6%
Classes too large	6%
Lack of support for disabilities	5%
Other	2%

Top ranked problems encountered at school while pursuing education:

- Age difference (26%)
- Lack of financial resources (26%)
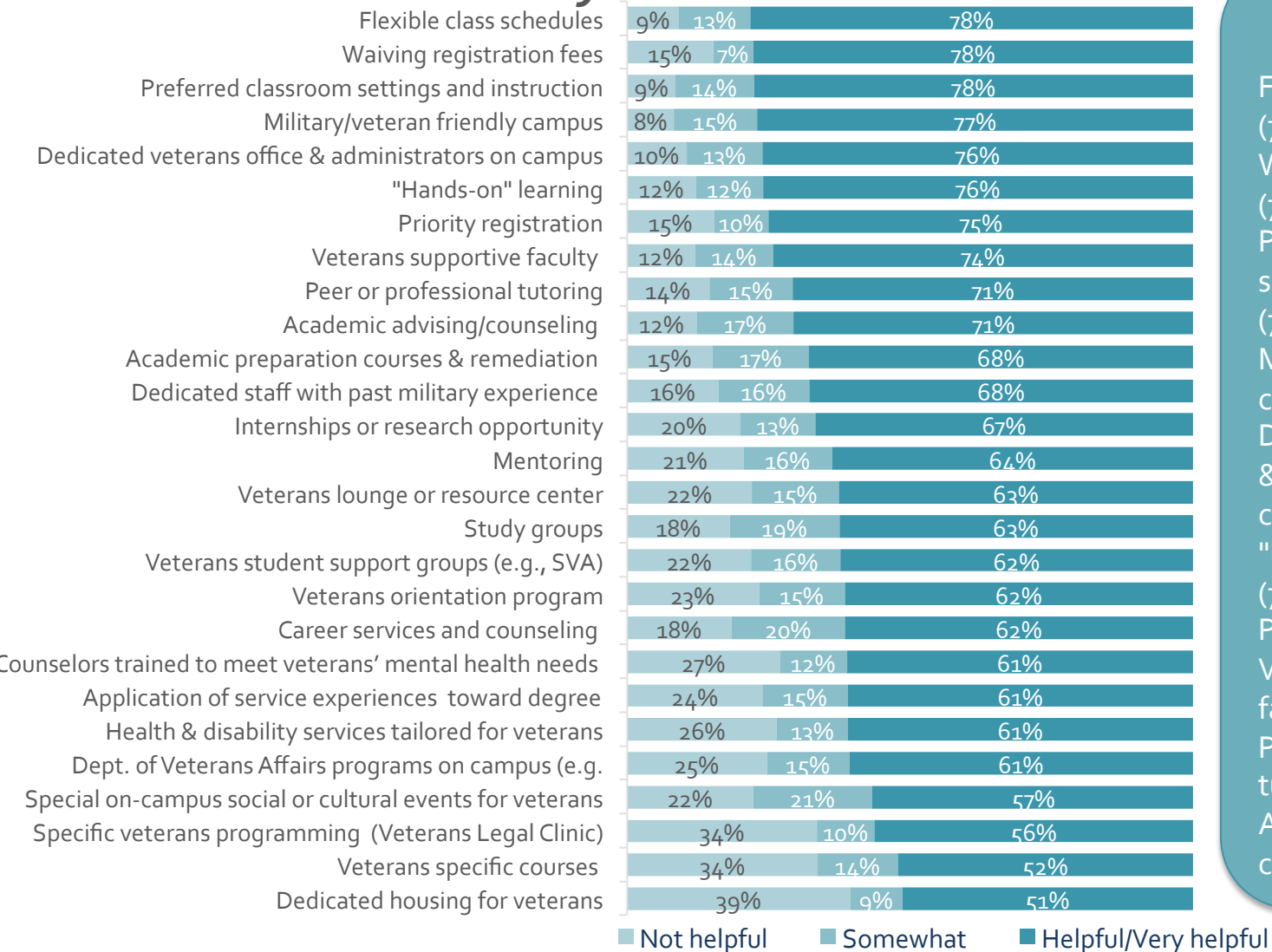- Working full time job (25%)
- Family responsibilities (22%)
- Transferring academic credits (17%)
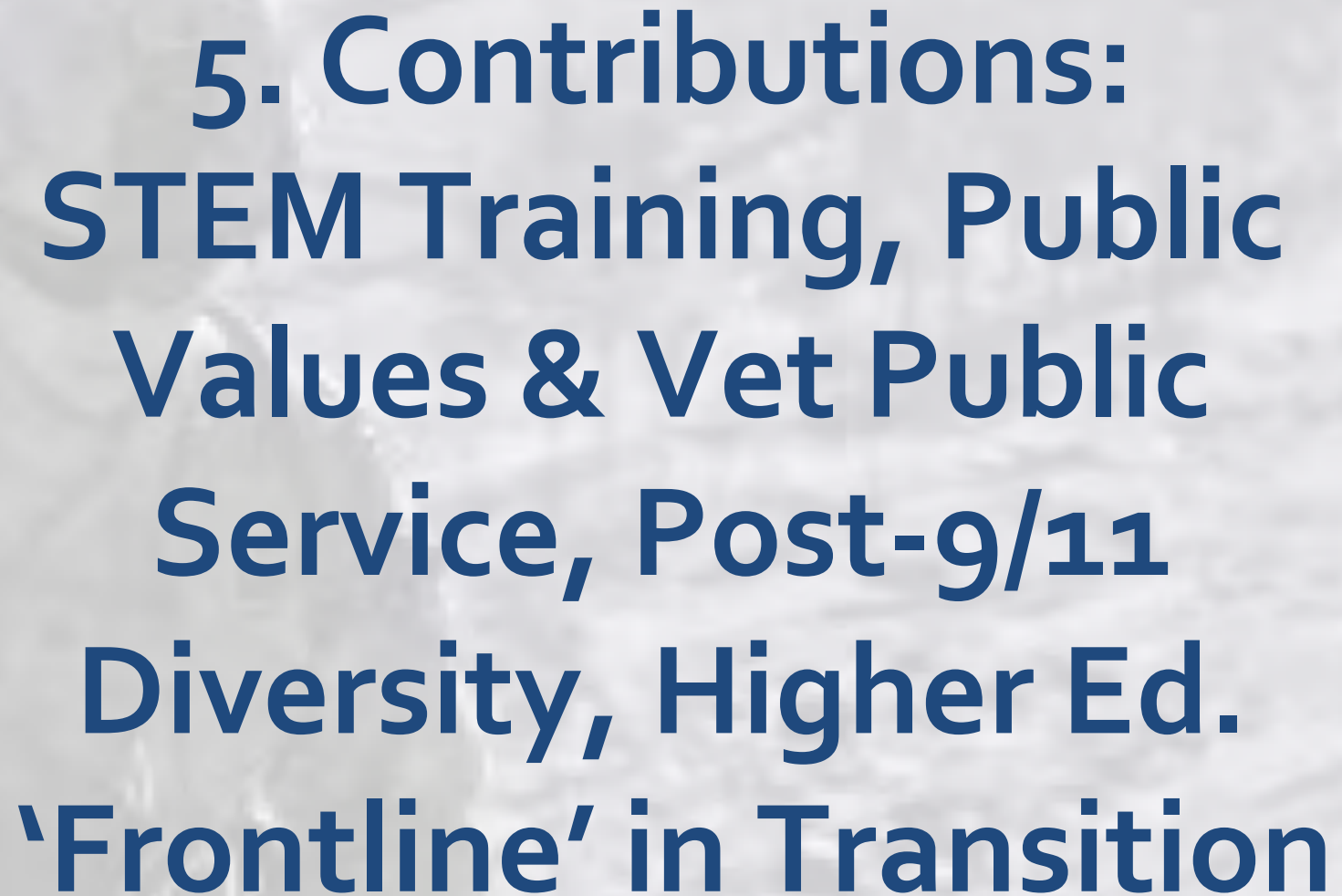- Few veterans resources on campus (16%)

Helpful Campus Resources

Q: Rate how helpful these resources are for your education success. Rate only those that are relevant.

Resource	Not helpful	Somewhat	Helpful/Very helpful
Flexible class schedules	9%	13%	78%
Waiving registration fees	15%	7%	78%
Preferred classroom settings and instruction	9%	14%	78%
Military/veteran friendly campus	8%	15%	77%
Dedicated veterans office & administrators on campus	10%	13%	76%
"Hands-on" learning	12%	12%	76%
Priority registration	15%	10%	75%
Veterans supportive faculty	12%	14%	74%
Peer or professional tutoring	14%	15%	71%
Academic advising/counseling	12%	17%	71%
Academic preparation courses & remediation	15%	17%	68%
Dedicated staff with past military experience	16%	16%	68%
Internships or research opportunity	20%	13%	67%
Mentoring	21%	16%	64%
Veterans lounge or resource center	22%	15%	63%
Study groups	18%	19%	63%
Veterans student support groups (e.g., SVA)	22%	16%	62%
Veterans orientation program	23%	15%	62%
Career services and counseling	18%	20%	62%
Counselors trained to meet veterans' mental health needs	27%	12%	61%
Application of service experiences toward degree	24%	15%	61%
Health & disability services tailored for veterans	26%	13%	61%
Dept. of Veterans Affairs programs on campus (e.g.	25%	15%	61%
Special on-campus social or cultural events for veterans	22%	21%	57%
Specific veterans programming (Veterans Legal Clinic)	34%	10%	56%
Veterans specific courses	34%	14%	52%
Dedicated housing for veterans	39%	9%	51%

Legend: Not helpful · Somewhat · Helpful/Very helpful

Top helpful campus resources:

Flexible class schedules (78%)

Waiving registration fees (78%)

Preferred classroom settings and instruction (78%)

Military/veteran friendly campus (77%)

Dedicated veterans office & administrators on campus (76%)

"Hands-on" learning (76%)

Priority registration (75%)

Veterans supportive faculty (74%)

Peer or professional tutoring (71%)

Academic advising/counseling (71%)

5. Contributions: STEM Training, Public Values & Vet Public Service, Post-9/11 Diversity, Higher Ed. 'Frontline' in Transition

STEM Research & Findings

Premises & Preliminary Findings:

❖ Education and career trajectories of military servicemembers post-service comparison with civilian STEM pipeline (degrees and occupations).

❖ Changing nature of military service is increasingly technical and scientific.

❖ **Recommendation:** Policy mechanisms needed to link ample hands-on science and technology training and experience during service with STEM pipeline.

STEM Findings

❖ Women servicemembers more likely to pursue STEM degrees post-service.

❖ Servicemembers more likely to pursue STEM education & careers vs. civ.

❖ STEM education & careers lead to higher salaries

STEM MOS: Servicemembers…

➢ 43% respondents have STEM MOS assignments

➢ Those with STEM MOS more likely to pursue STEM degrees after service

➢ Those with STEM MOS: more likely to say military left a lasting impression on career goals and promoted interest in STEM.

Active Duty: Those serving longer more likely to report military impact on career goals and interest in STEM

➢ Time on Active Duty positively related to desire to pursue education after service *and* likelihood of choosing STEM degree.

Positive Experiences in Military: Those with positive military experiences more likely to report military impact on career goals and interest in STEM

Public Value Theory
Premises & Findings:

❑ Finding: public service continues after military service has ended among servicemembers: most are employed in public sector (49%), followed by private sector at 37%, non-profit sector at 8%.

❑ Post-9/11 GI Bill and higher ed. outcomes for veterans as public value

❑ GI Bill is a policy lever designed to encourage volunteering for military service—and ultimately contributes to greater public interest in an all-volunteer vs. compulsory force

❑ Military service and benefits may encourage public service and public value of service generally and in Veterans post-service transition.

❑ Results: Education benefits most common motivation to encourage individuals to join the military.

Public Value Theory

❑ Servicemembers who join military to serve their country more likely to report positive overall experience of national service.

❑ Respondents who join to earn GI Bill ed. benefits are more likely to use those benefits—but benefits use does not influence the overall military experience.

❑ Military experience influences ed. motivations: those who joined to earn education benefits more likely to pursue education to help society.

❑ Those with service-connected injuries are more likely to pursue education to help society.

❑ Underrepresented groups (African American, Latino) are more likely to pursue education to help society

❑ Veterans Preference dramatically increases likelihood of selecting a public sector job

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6. Survey Two, Higher Education Perspectives

Survey 2: *Campus Policies & Programs for Student Veterans' Success Survey*

Overview: Institutional profile & self-assessment of how schools manage their military students—active duty, veterans, family members.

❖ Targets campus-based Veterans Program Administrators & Certifying Officials.

❖ Given institution-wide scope of survey, multiple admin. staff in different roles & offices (i.e., registrar, bursars, research) will contribute to survey.

❖ Findings capture schools' challenges, innovations, best practices in vets educational attainment; inform our recommendations; build national dialogue.

Approach:

• Sample: Developed database of academic administrators (2,335 campuses) that serve servicemembers across U.S. using Dept. of Education IPEDS data (1437 four years; 898 community colleges); and VA's Web Enabled Approval Management System (WEAMS).

• Each POC received our email (10/1/2014) with link to online Qualtrics survey & fillable PDF survey response form; Reminder emails sent 2-weeks later (10/15)

• **As of June 2015: Number of responses 451; Completed 79; Percentage that completed the survey is 18%**

• **Of the 2,335 campuses that received Survey 2, only 19% had responded (n=451) and 3% completed the survey (n=79)**

Survey 2: Preliminary Findings (cont.)

Multiple extensions were given for Survey 2: Oct 2014, Dec 2014, Feb 2015.

Disappointing Response Rates→ Colleges/Universities not participating in survey have identified main reasons due to:

➢ No data collection mechanisms/means
➢ No staff support or time available to complete survey
➢ No significant veterans population
➢ Programs is in development/transition
➢ "Not ready yet"

College/University administrators want to talk with us: email correspondence is being tracked for survey response—these emails are *qualitative data*.

- Received various emails from universities and colleges requesting more time for survey
- Low response rate was another reason for extension.

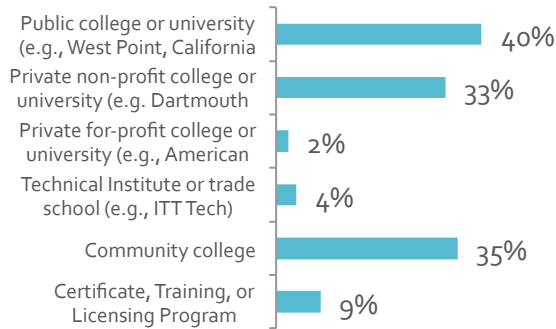# Survey 2: Servicemember to Student Survey (cont.)

(From 451 Institutions)
(Note few institutions answered every question)
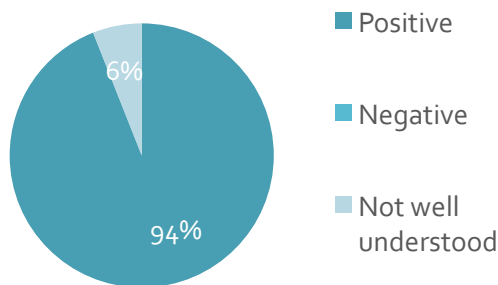
Preliminary Results:

Demographics
Types of Institutions

- Public college or university (e.g., West Point, California: **40%**
- Private non-profit college or university (e.g. Dartmouth: **33%**
- Private for-profit college or university (e.g., American: **2%**
- Technical Institute or trade school (e.g., ITT Tech): **4%**
- Community college: **35%**
- Certificate, Training, or Licensing Program: **9%**

Value of GI Bill

How do you perceive the value to your institution in receiving GI Bill?

- Positive: **94%**
- Negative
- Not well understood: **6%**

Note: 0% indicated "Negative"

Leadership

Current or Former Servicemembers in Senior Leadership at School?

- Yes: **56%**
- No: **17%**
- Do not know: **27%**
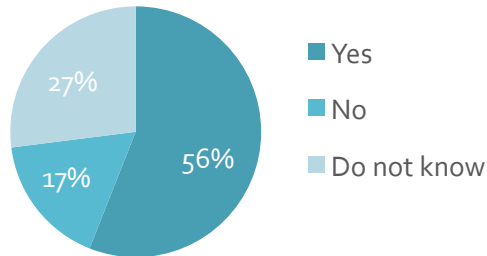
Is there a central place for veterans' leadership and high achievement?

- Yes in both: **46%**
- Yes in leadership: **10%**
- Yes in achievement: **4%**
- No: **40%**
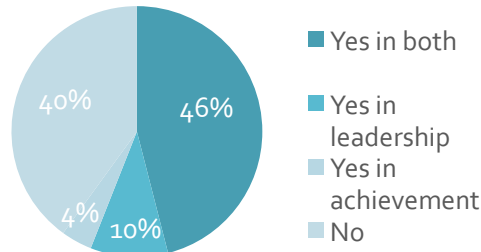
Military Friendly Campus

Do you believe that your institution is military friendly?

- Strongly Agree: **36%**
- Agree: **47%**
- Neutral: **13%**
- Disagree: **1%**
- Strongly disagree: **3%**
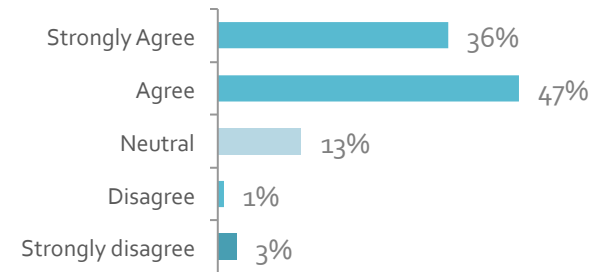
Data and Program Assessments

Conduct assessments, reviews, or elicit feedback from servicemembers on their educational experience?

- Yes: **50%**
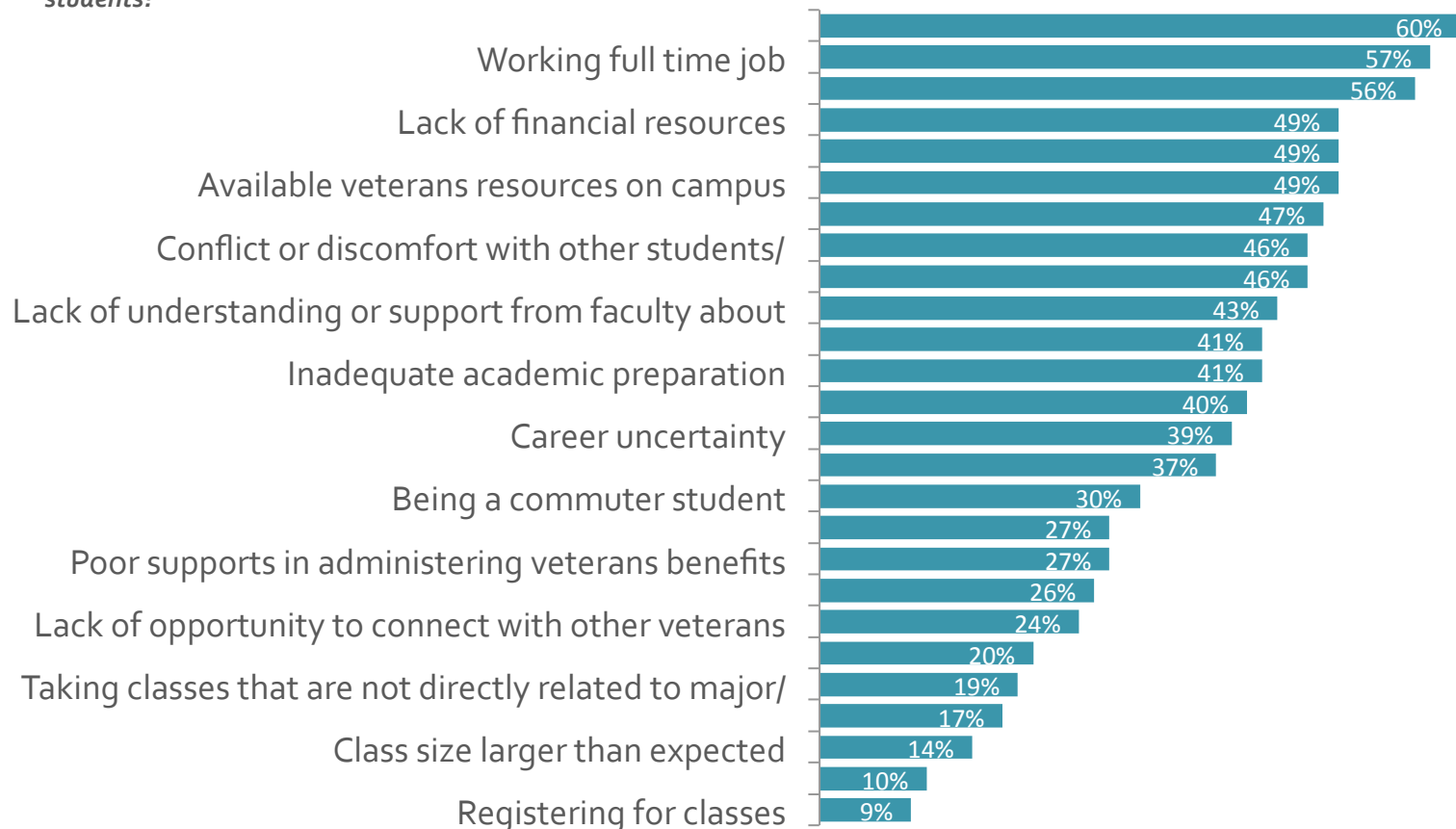- No: **19%**
- Do not know: **9%**

(From 451 Institutions)
(Note few institutions answered every question)

Preliminary Results:

Student Veterans Challenges

In your opinion, what are the most significant challenges for student veterans in higher education as compared to nonveterans students?
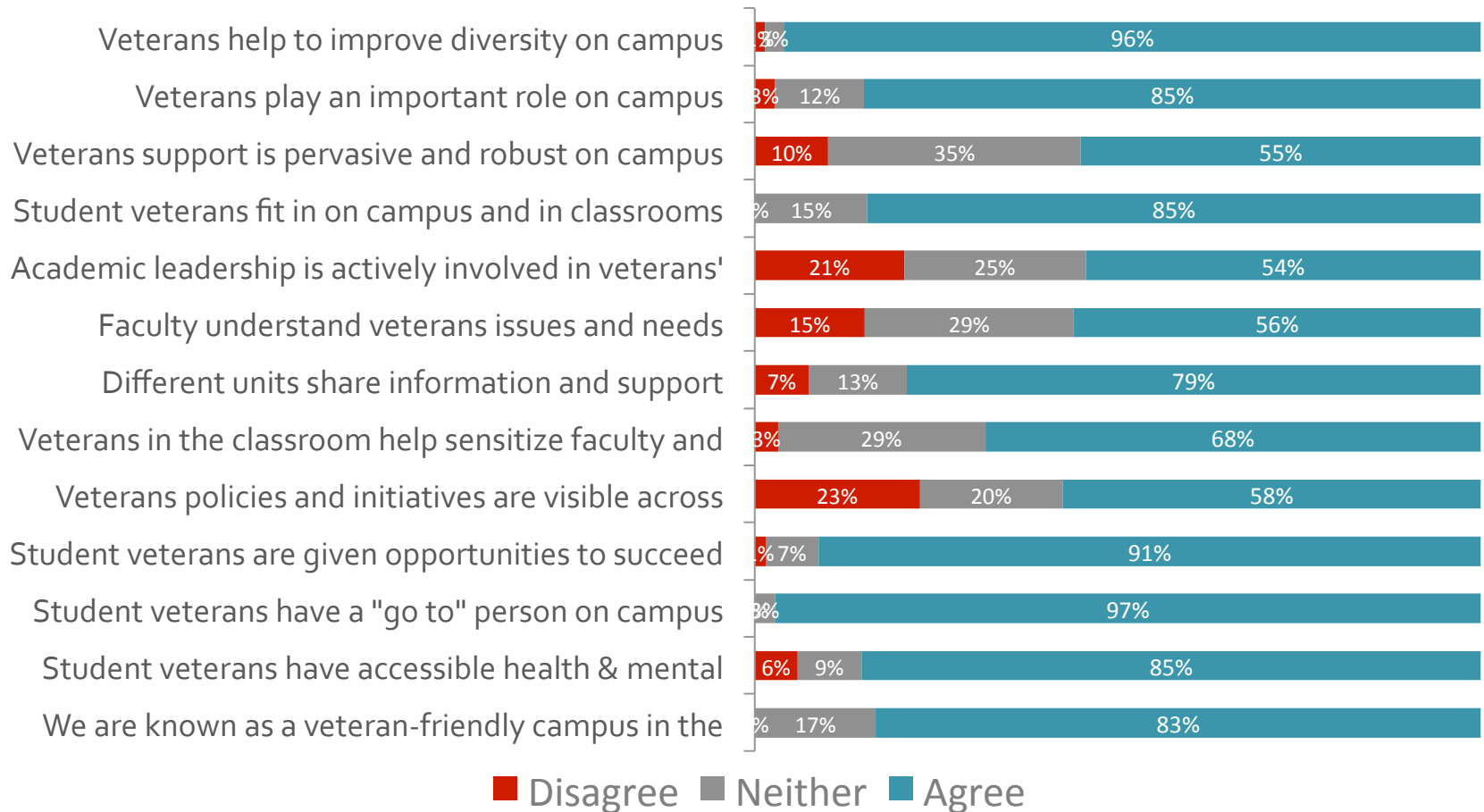
Challenge	Percentage
Working full time job	60%
	57%
	56%
Lack of financial resources	49%
	49%
Available veterans resources on campus	49%
	47%
Conflict or discomfort with other students/	46%
	46%
Lack of understanding or support from faculty about	43%
	41%
Inadequate academic preparation	41%
	40%
Career uncertainty	39%
	37%
Being a commuter student	30%
	27%
Poor supports in administering veterans benefits	27%
	26%
Lack of opportunity to connect with other veterans	24%
	20%
Taking classes that are not directly related to major/	19%
	17%
Class size larger than expected	14%
	10%
Registering for classes	9%

Survey 2: Servicemember to Student Survey (cont.)

Preliminary Results:

Campus Environment

(From 451 Institutions)
(Note few institutions answered every question)

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Statement	Disagree	Neither	Agree
Veterans help to improve diversity on campus	2%		96%
Veterans play an important role on campus	3%	12%	85%
Veterans support is pervasive and robust on campus	10%	35%	55%
Student veterans fit in on campus and in classrooms	%	15%	85%
Academic leadership is actively involved in veterans'	21%	25%	54%
Faculty understand veterans issues and needs	15%	29%	56%
Different units share information and support	7%	13%	79%
Veterans in the classroom help sensitize faculty and	3%	29%	68%
Veterans policies and initiatives are visible across	23%	20%	58%
Student veterans are given opportunities to succeed	% 7%		91%
Student veterans have a "go to" person on campus	3%		97%
Student veterans have accessible health & mental	6%	9%	85%
We are known as a veteran-friendly campus in the	%	17%	83%

■ Disagree ■ Neither ■ Agree

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Interview Instrument 3: *Stakeholders & Thought Leaders for Inclusive Higher Education*

- 78 universities selected for site visits based on innovative practices, servicemember population & commitment to serving student veterans.
- Email invitations for research team campus visit to conduct focus group/qualitative interviews on veterans & programs.
- To date, we have completed 12 site visits (15% of sample).
- Site visits : October 2014 through June 2015.
- *Deliverable:* Semi-structured open-ended interview questions that probe school's policies, programs, challenges, best practices from administrators' perspective. Interview protocol questions designed to encourage organic discussion among respondents with limited intervention from the moderators.
- *Training:* Research Team trained on focus group interviewing.

Instrument 3: College/University Site Visits (cont.)

Research Question 1: What do campus administrators say about their policies, practices and programs to help student veterans succeed and excel?

Bringing Rigorous Research to the Subject of Veterans Education:

Calling the question: Which universities have the most effective and innovative policies supporting the success of student veterans?

Who can provide knowledge/experience with this issue? Marry up data from survey 1, survey 2, and National Student Clearinghouse, using a uniquely developed selection criteria, to identify top 20-25 institutions, and interview key staff members and thought leaders to capture the specifics of their approach in supporting student veterans

How do we amplify the message? Best practices and innovative initiatives gleaned from the site visits will be published on a publicly accessible online toolkit
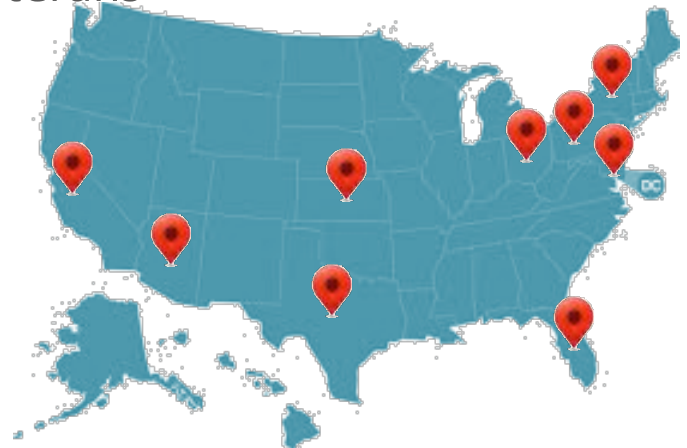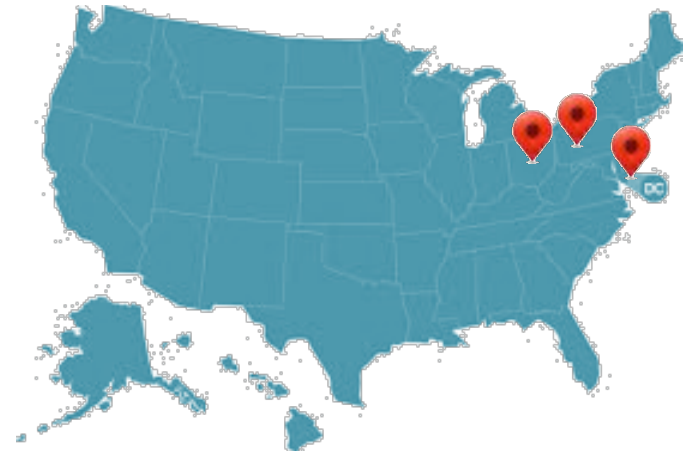
Instrument 3: Responses & Rate (cont.)

Research Question 2: What are veterans program leaders and administrators' perceptions of student veterans' needs, challenges & supports in the higher education domain?

As of **June 2015:**
- ❑ Number of campuses contacted for site visits : 78
- ❑ Number of site visits: 12
- ❑ Percentage of completion: 15%

Google Research Partners: Awardee

 Institute for Veterans and Military Families

 Google

 Student Veterans of America

 Veterans of Foreign Wars

 The Posse Foundation