

Attachment B: Data Brief / Overview – Serving Veterans at SUNY

“We never send a new recruit to war without proper training and equipment. We should never send a veteran to college without reasonable guidance for what lies ahead.”¹

*Ryan M. Gallucci, Deputy Director
National Legislative Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States*

In 2012, there were 22.7 million veterans living in the United States with 950,400 living in New York (ranked fourth after California, Texas, and Florida). The US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) anticipates the number of Post 9/11 veterans to reach almost 2,340,000 by the end of 2014. As illustrated in the chart below, **New York State has the 6th largest Post 9/11 veteran population** in the nation. Many of these individuals will pursue educational opportunities as they transition into civilian life and seek long-term employment. In fact, there are currently 800,000 veterans attending college in the United States. In the next decade that number is expected to increase to 1,300,000.²

Research indicates that 70% of student veterans drop out of college, compared to 25%-45% of non-veteran students³. Roughly one-third of veterans suffer from mental health conditions such as PTSD or traumatic brain injury and one-half of veterans have thought about committing suicide. Veterans have different needs than traditional college students. More specifically:

- Veterans have difficulty understanding the college application process, specifically understanding and accessing financial aid and military benefits.
- Once the application process is completed and the student is accepted, veterans have difficulty getting credit earned from military experience.
- Once enrolled, veterans often have difficulty staying in school, due to financial concerns, health/mental health concerns, balancing school/home life or adjusting to civilian life.

Projected Number of Post 9/11 Veterans by State: 2014

State	Veterans
1. California	230,360
2. Texas	209,060
3. Florida	129,454
4. Virginia	128,586
5. Georgia	92,227
6. New York	84,142
7. North Carolina	80,123
8. Pennsylvania	78,614
9. Washington	77,198
10. Illinois	76,551

Source: http://www.va.gov/VETDATA/Veteran_Population.asp

¹ Gallucci, Ryan M. (February 13, 2013). “How to Help Veterans Succeed in College”, *The New York Times*. Retrieved February 25, 2014 from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

² Frye, S., Goldman, R., Mead, M., & Smith, B. (February 28, 2012). *Supporting Veterans on Campus* [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from http://www.kognito.com/webinars/webinar_support_veterans.pdf.

³ Frye, S., Goldman, R., Mead, M., & Smith, B. (February 28, 2012). *Supporting Veterans on Campus* [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from http://www.kognito.com/webinars/webinar_support_veterans.pdf.

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Those who served in the military for at least 90 days from Sept. 11, 2001 onward now qualify for an escalating level of benefits under the **new Post-9/11 GI Bill**. As an example, veterans with three years or more of service receive 100% of in-state tuition and fees at a public school for 36 months. Recipients also receive a substantial housing stipend, adjusted for local conditions and the option to transfer their benefits to family members (note: see Attachment C: Post-9/11 GI Bill Overview for more information).

A recent US Department of Education report⁴ provides a national perspective on the prevalence and characteristics of various support services American colleges and universities offer military service members and veterans, including dependents receiving active-duty military or veteran's financial education benefits, for the 12-month period of the 2012-13 academic year. The first of its kind, this report focuses on survey findings from approximately 1,520 institutions throughout the 50 states and the District of Columbia (excluding US Military Academies).

As described in the report, “the survey covered customized support services such as academic support/tutoring, career planning/services, and mental health counseling; availability of mentoring programs; customization of admissions and orientation activities; availability of Veterans Affairs (VA) work-study opportunities; and tutorial assistance using VA educational benefits. Other topics included institutions' policies for charging veterans in-state tuition, course offerings specifically for military service members and veterans, and availability of training for postsecondary staff members on issues specific to veterans and service members. The survey also collected information about the number and type of students enrolled, and the number and type of dependents enrolled who received military or veteran's financial education benefits.”

Of particular interest are the following findings, each of which can be found with their referenced tables in the enclosed report. (See Attachment D: NCES Report 2014.)

- Among institutions that enrolled military service members, veterans, or dependents and that have in-state tuition, 52 percent reported that veterans who currently reside in the state receive in-state tuition rates regardless of length of residency, 76 percent reported that veterans who previously resided in the state and were stationed elsewhere receive in-state tuition rates immediately upon return to the state, and 96 percent reported that veterans who maintained the state as their home of record during active-duty service receive in-state tuition rates (table 13).
- Institutions that enrolled military service members, veterans, or dependents reported that the following customized or additional support services were offered specifically for military service members and veterans: financial aid counseling (44 percent), academic advising (27 percent), career planning/services (24 percent), mental health counseling (22 percent), assistance finding non-work-study employment (19 percent), academic support/tutoring (17 percent), other support services (15 percent), and study skills workshops (12 percent) (table 7).
- Forty-nine percent of institutions provided information about or referrals for off-campus medical/health services for military service members or veterans, and 55 percent provided information about or referrals for off-campus counseling or mental health services (table 8).
- Institutions that enrolled military service members, veterans, or dependents reported offering training for faculty or staff in mental health issues associated with military

⁴ Queen, B., and Lewis, L. (2014). *Services and Support Programs for Military Service Members and Veterans at Postsecondary Institutions, 2012-13* (NCES 2014-017). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved February 25, 2014 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

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service (21 percent), physical health issues resulting from military service (14 percent), and student transition from military life to civilian life (21 percent) (table 9).

It should also be noted that there is bi-partisan legislation pending at both the Federal and State levels that will allow for honorably discharged veterans who are not residents of a particular state to benefit from in-state tuition rates at postsecondary institutions. This was caused by a change in 2011 to the GI Bill Benefits. Prior full tuition was covered by the GI Bill for both in-state and out-of-state students. Now the GI Bill only covers the cost of in-state tuition for veterans attending public universities (it still covers the entire tuition at private universities). The students are either paying the difference through loans or scholarship but according to the campuses, more and more are opting to attend private universities where the tuition is covered in full. Less than 250 out-of-state veterans were enrolled in Spring 2013, 133 are enrolled at community colleges.

SUNY supports offering in-state tuition rates to veterans, however we have concerns the bill could create burdensome reporting and administration issues. In principle, we believe that individual states or state institutions should retain their autonomy to determine in-state residency status. SUNY's Office of Government Relations will soon draft a memo on this legislation.

Serving Veterans at SUNY Community Colleges

This document describes some of the unique needs of our SUNY community college students who identify as veterans, active-duty military and dependents, as we currently understand them, as well ways in which many of our campuses are addressing these needs. A follow-up discussion could focus on system-wide policies, resolutions and recommendations that the Community College Committee could establish in order to better serve this small yet important subsection of our student body.

As described in the enclosed Long Island Newsday article⁵, many of our students returning from Iraq and Afghanistan often find it difficult to assimilate to life on a college campus. Many feel as the Farmingdale State College and Nassau Community College students interviewed in the article do – that they cannot relate to the other students; that they have combat-related anxieties that prevent them from engaging with their classmates; that they are so few in number that they'll continue to isolate and struggle until they have no choice but to drop out. Knowledgeable faculty and administration can help ease the transition of students separating from military service. And campus-based veterans associations, clubs, and lounges can provide a safe space for students sharing their military experience in common – particularly when these support services are led by the students themselves. (See Attachment E: News Articles.)

Analysis of **enrollment data from Fall 2012**⁶ indicates that just over 4,100 veterans were enrolled in SUNY community colleges – approximately 1.7% of the total community college student body. Of these, 74% were full-time students. Suffolk County Community College had the largest enrollment (498), while five colleges had fewer than five veterans enrolled in their programs. Data also showed that a total of 745 students (.3%) identified as being Active Duty/Reserve/ National Guard, and more than 1,200 students (.5%) identified as dependents of

⁵ Evans, Martin C. (February 15, 2014). "Vet Groups on Campuses Ease Transition", *Long Island Newsday*. Retrieved February 25, 2014 from <http://www.newsday.com/long-island>.

⁶ SUNY System Administration Office of Institutional Research: Feb 6, 2014, SUNY OBIEE Data Warehouse.

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Active Duty soldiers around the state. (See Attachment F: Fall 2012 CC Veterans Enrollment for additional, more comprehensive campus-by-campus enrollment data.)

While complete data has not yet been collected from all 30 community colleges, **enrollment reports for Fall 2013** show increased numbers for veterans, Active Military (including Reserve and National Guard), and dependents across the board. The chart on the following page shows the data collected thus far, including State-Operated and Doctoral Degree Granting institutions.

Fall 2013 Enrollment by Institution	Veterans	Active Military	Dependents	Total
Grand Total	8,236	968	2,702	11,906
Community Colleges Total	5,526	612	1,641	7,779
State-Operated Total	2,710	356	1,061	4,127
Doctoral Degree Granting Total	736	11	197	944

Fall 2013 Enrollment by Institution	Veterans	Active Military	Dependents	Total
Community Colleges Total	5,526	612	1,641	7,779
Adirondack	119	20	11	150
Broome	137	3	14	154
Cayuga County	194	4	10	208
Clinton	60	16	29	105
Columbia-Greene	23	1	1	25
Dutchess	221	33	24	278
Erie	472	44	83	599
Fashion Institute	36	3	34	73
Finger Lakes	206	2	19	227
Fulton-Montgomery	68	1	11	80
Genesee				0
Herkimer County	57	2	8	67
Hudson Valley	258	52	42	352
Jamestown	150	7	31	188
Jefferson	465	288	857	1,610
Mohawk Valley	179	15	41	235
Monroe	945	37	59	1,041
Nassau	281	5	16	302
Niagara County	155	0	42	197
North Country	26	0	14	40
Onondaga	234	30	116	380
Orange County	200	0	65	265
Rockland	155	3	7	165
Schenectady County	113	0	28	141
Suffolk County	424	14	26	464
Sullivan County	14	0	7	21
Tompkins Cortland	103	3	20	126
Ulster County	80	10	7	97

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Westchester	151	19	19	189
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Fall 2013 Enrollment by Institution		Veterans	Active Military	Dependents	Total
Research University Centers Total		715	11	195	921
	Albany	216	2	67	285
	Binghamton	42	8	19	69
	Buffalo Univ	298	0	60	358
	Stony Brook	159	1	49	209
Other Research/Doctoral Institutions Total		21	0	2	23
	Downstate Medical	7	0	0	7
	Envir Sci & Forestry				0
	Optometry	1	0	0	1
	Upstate Medical	13	0	2	15
Comprehensive Colleges Total		1,419	311	682	2,412
	Brockport	126	15	26	167
	Buffalo State				0
	Cortland	21	0	40	61
	Empire State	900	200	28	1,128
	Fredonia	20	12	31	63
	Geneseo	5	19	9	33
	New Paltz	76	1	33	110
	Old Westbury	26	8	12	46
	Oneonta	13	6	33	52
	Oswego	117	19	367	503
	Plattsburgh	63	30	123	216
	Potsdam	61	0	7	68
	Purchase	12	1	13	26
Technology Colleges Total		555	34	182	771
	Alfred State	67	3	27	97
	Canton	93	2	35	130
	Cobleskill	39	7	23	69
	Delhi	35	2	6	43
	Farmingdale	175	0	5	180
	Maritime	52	9	0	61
	Morrisville	48	11	76	135
	SUNYIT	46	0	10	56

Note: This is University Life data not IR data, which is why the fall 2012 data is so low in comparison.

System-level Efforts to Enhance Support for Students Who Are Veterans and Active Military

SUNY System Administration's University Life and Enrollment Management Office has engaged in multiple university-wide activities to help our campuses best serve our military students.

Recent efforts include:

- Founding member of the State-wide Work Group on Veteran's issues created by the Office of Mental Health;
- Conducted initial assessments on campus-based services for veterans;
- Worked with the NYS Office of Veterans' Affairs on training sessions for SUNY professionals working in student accounts offices;
- Added the position of Assistant Director of Student Affairs Programs (2011), which has responsibility for supporting students who are veterans.
- Created a University-wide Veterans & Active Military Advisory Council, comprised of eight campus professionals and students and chaired by the Assistant Director of Student Affairs Programs. The Council explores current issues and best practices, recommends ways to support and enhance current campus practices, and provides future guidance with regard to veterans and active military students to enrich their college experience. Topics for discussion include websites, credit transfer for military experience, recruitment, financial aid, mental health, and support services;
- Collected and compiled contact information for the professionals at each of our sixty-four campuses that directly interact with veterans, active military, and their families. Created a listserv to share updates, best practices, and exchange information;
- Successfully applied for and was awarded a grant from the Higher Education Service Corporation (HESC) to create a program entitled **SUNY Invest in Vets**. The goal of the program was to increase the number of veterans and active military who apply and enroll at SUNY and enhance the support these veterans receive so that they can complete their degree and enter the workforce. The HESC grant included funding for advertising to recruit more veterans to apply to SUNY. These funds were used to enhance the SUNY.edu/student website and created additional materials to support recruitment efforts;
- Hosted the first system-wide veterans' affairs conference – *Meeting the Needs of SUNY Student Veterans* – in May 2013 (funded by HESC grant). Held in Syracuse, this two-day conference attracted 100 individuals from 53 campuses and included ten workshops including sessions on accessing benefits, certification, meeting the needs of veterans, credit transfer, and best practices for student success. Feedback based on conference evaluations was positive; suggestions for future training options were captured;
- Actively assisted in the creation of the SUNY Veterans and Service Member Organization (SUNY VSO). The SUNY VSO is comprised of campus professionals that work directly with veterans, active military, and their families. Additionally, the State University assisted with advising and sharing of best practices, as well as serving as host for their meetings; and
- The State University, in a continued effort to support the Governor's veteran's initiatives, serves as a member and hosted the New York State Council on Returning Veterans and the Families, as well as member of the Experience Counts working group for New York State.

Campus-Level Activities: Veterans Support Services and Recognition Overview

When asked about the student support services they provide on their campuses, SUNY institutions provided the following list of best practices that pertained to students self-identifying as veterans. Two services, in particular, are of interest:

President Obama's Principles of Excellence - educational institutions should provide meaningful information to service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members about the financial cost and quality of educational institutions to assist those prospective students in making choices about how to use their Federal educational benefits; prevent abusive and deceptive recruiting practices that target the recipients of Federal military and veterans educational benefits; and ensure that educational institutions provide high-quality academic and student support services to active-duty service members, reservists, members of the National Guard, veterans, and military families. *SUNY System Administration signed off on this for all state-operated campuses.*

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) - provide educational opportunities to servicemembers who, because they frequently moved from place to place, had trouble completing college degrees. This includes guidance for evaluating prior learning/experience for credits. (See page 12 for more information about the SOC Consortium.)

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Adirondack Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Broome Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Cayuga Community College

- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Student Veterans Club
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Event at Orientation for Veterans
- 2013 Walmart Veteran Vocational Accelerator Grant Recipient
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Clinton Community College

- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

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Columbia-Greene Community College

- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Insignia on Student ID Card
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Corning Community College

- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Dutchess Community College

- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Mental Health Resources
- Dedicated housing for veterans & their families
- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Erie Community College

- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Fashion Institute of Technology

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Finger Lakes Community College

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

Fulton-Montgomery Community College

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

Genesee Community College

- Student Veterans Club
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member

Herkimer Community College

- Loan Program (while waiting for benefits)
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

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Hudson Valley Community College

- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Peer Mentoring
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

Jamestown Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Loan Program (while waiting for benefits)
- Peer Mentoring
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Jefferson Community College

- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Extension Site at Fort Drum
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Mohawk Valley Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Monroe Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Event at Orientation for Veterans
- Veterans Events
- Peer Mentoring
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Specific Career Fairs; Job Assistance
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
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Nassau Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Event at Orientation for Veterans
- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Specific Career Fairs; Job Assistance
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Niagara County Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

North Country Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Onondaga Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Loan Program (while waiting for benefits)
- Peer Mentoring
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Orange County Community College

- Student Veterans Club
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Mental Health Resources
- Peer Mentoring
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Rockland Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Lounge for Student Veterans

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- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Peer Mentoring
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Schenectady County Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

Suffolk County Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Sullivan County Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member

Tompkins Cortland Community College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Ulster County Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Received a \$12,000 grant from NYS Industries for the Disabled
- Recognition from Congressman Chris Gibson's office
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Westchester Community College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Veterans Events
- Specific Career Fairs; Job Assistance
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs

RESEARCH UNIVERSITY CENTERS

University at Albany

- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Lounge for Student Veterans

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- Veterans Events
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Binghamton University

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Event at Orientation for Veterans
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

University at Buffalo

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

OTHER RESEARCH/DOCTORAL INSTITUTIONS

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

College of Environmental Science and Forestry

- Mental Health Resources
- Creating a special 40-credit program for veterans in conjunction with NYSDEC, hopefully launching in Fall 2014
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

College of Optometry

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Upstate Medical University

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGES

SUNY Brockport

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Veterans Events

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- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Buffalo State College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Event at Orientation for Veterans
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

SUNY Cortland

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Empire State College

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Prior Learning Assessment
- Extension Site at Fort Drum
- Recognition at Graduation
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence
- Many on-going efforts, contact Cariann for more information

SUNY Fredonia

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Prior Learning Assessment
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SUNY Geneseo

- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

SUNY New Paltz

- Veterans Committee/Task Force
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Old Westbury

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

College at Oneonta

- Mental Health Resources
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

SUNY Oswego

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Student Veterans Club
- Lounge for Student Veterans
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Campus Scholarships for Veterans
- Extension Site at Fort Drum
- Recognition at Graduation
- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

SUNY Plattsburgh

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

SUNY Potsdam

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
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- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
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- Extension Site at Fort Drum

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Purchase College

- Veterans Events
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

TECHNOLOGY COLLEGES

Alfred State College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence
- Yellow Ribbon Participant

SUNY Canton

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Specific Career Fairs; Job Assistance
- Extension Site at Fort Drum
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SUNY Cobleskill

- Veterans Specific Office/Professional Staff
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- Mental Health Resources
- Veterans Events
- Peer Mentoring
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SUNY Delhi

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Farmingdale State College

- Named on Military Advanced Education: Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
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- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Maritime College

- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

Morrisville State College

- Partner with State/Federal VA to Offer Services
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

SUNYIT

- Veterans Events
- Recruitment Efforts: Early Registration/Registration Days
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges Member
- Named Military Friendly by G.I. Jobs
- Participant in President Obama's Principles of Excellence

In 2014, 39 SUNY colleges and universities were designated as

Military Friendly Schools

including 20 community colleges:

University at Albany	Maritime College
Alfred State College	Mohawk Valley Community College
Binghamton University	Monroe Community College
SUNY Brockport	Nassau Community College
Broome Community College	Niagara County Community College
University at Buffalo	North Country Community College
Buffalo State College	College at Oneonta
SUNY Canton	Onondaga Community College
Clinton Community College	Orange County Community College
SUNY Cobleskill	College at Oswego
Columbia-Greene Community College	SUNY Plattsburgh
Corning Community College	SUNY Potsdam
SUNY Delhi	Rockland Community College
Empire State College	Schenectady County Community College
Erie Community College	Stony Brook University
Farmingdale State College	SUNYIT
SUNY Fredonia	Tompkins-Cortland Community College
Hudson Valley Community College	Ulster County Community College
Jamestown Community College	Westchester Community College
Jefferson Community College	

What does it mean to be a Military Friendly School?

Military Friendly Schools® are the top 20% of schools nationwide that deliver the best experience for military students. The list measures the programs and services important to the military community, including a school's flexibility, veteran student support, academic accreditation, percentage of student veterans, tuition discounts and military spouse policies. A Military Friendly Schools® Academic Advisory Board helps determine the survey questions and weightings.

As reported on their website (<http://militaryfriendly.com/methodology/schools>), the 2014 list of Military Friendly Schools® was compiled through extensive research and a free, data-driven, voluntary survey of more than 10,000 VA-approved schools nationwide.⁷ The survey results that comprise the 2014 list were independently tested by Ernst & Young LLP based upon the weightings and methodology established by Victory Media. Each year, schools taking the survey

⁷ Since the list of all schools responding to the survey is not available, it is impossible to determine whether a school is not on the list because it did not respond or because it did not score highly enough to earn the designation.

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are held to a higher standard than the previous year via improved methodology, criteria and weightings developed with the assistance of an Academic Advisory Board (AAB) consisting of educators from schools across the country. This year's Military Friendly Schools® list criteria also incorporate a survey of over 4,000 actual student veterans. This feedback provides prospective military students with insight into the student veteran experience at particular institutions based on peer reviews from current students. Research findings are compiled and weighted according to the following categories to determine a final score:

24% - Military Support on Campus	5% - Veteran Graduation Rates
20% - Academic Credibility	5% - Student Tuition Assistance
10% - Percent of Military Students	5% - Student Survey
10% - Academic Credit for Military Service	5% - Employment Rates
10% - Flexibility for Military Students	5% - Military Spouse Policies
	1% - Government Approvals

Military Support on Campus (non-financial): Defined as programs and policies which provide support to enrolled military students. This category includes support of specific military installations (such as on-base programs) and the number of full-time veteran counselors or advisors on staff at the school. Also included is assistance with career placement, mentoring and on-boarding programs for new military students, networking events, clubs and associations. Veteran-specific resources, including a page on the school website, are also measured.

Academic Credibility: Defined as the school's level of academic accreditation: Regional, National, Hybrid and/or Programmatic.

Percent of Military Students⁸: Defined as the number of military or veteran students enrolled at each school as a percentage of total enrollment. This category includes separate categories for both full-time and part-time students.

Academic Credit for Military Service: Defined as credit for CLEP and/or DSST exams. Also included is the award of ACE credit for military training and credit transfer policies.

Flexibility for Military Students: Defined as policies for military students removed from school due to deployments and PCS orders. This category includes availability of evening, weekend and online academic programs; it also includes requirements for living on campus.

Veteran Graduation Rates: Defined as graduation rates for military students.

Government Approvals: Defined as government approval in a variety of areas, including VA approval, TA (Tuition Assistance) and MyCAA. This category also includes SOC consortium membership and participation in the DANTES external degree catalogue.

Student Tuition Assistance: Defined as scholarships and tuition discounts for military students and veterans. This category includes in-state tuition without residency requirements for active-duty military students and/or dependants, as well as Yellow Ribbon Program participation.

Student Survey & Employment (job placement) Rates⁹ & Military Spouse Policies: Defined as participation in the Military Friendly Schools student survey of enrolled military students. This

⁸ Survey values are banded around an optimal enrollment of 10 percent military students; schools reporting a higher or lower number of military students receive diminishing survey values.

category includes post-graduation employment rates of military students, as well as policies for military spouses and dependants.

The SOC Consortium – Providing Educational Opportunities for Servicemembers

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges¹⁰ (SOC) was created in 1972 to provide educational opportunities to servicemembers who, because they frequently moved from place to place, had trouble completing college degrees. SOC functions in cooperation with 15 higher education associations, the Department of Defense, and Active and Reserve Components of the Military Services to expand and improve voluntary postsecondary education opportunities for servicemembers worldwide.

The SOC Consortium is made up of approximately 1,900 appropriately accredited colleges and universities providing associate, bachelor's and master's degrees for servicemembers and their adult dependent family members. Consortium members are those colleges and universities with flexible policies that allow mobile servicemembers and their families to complete degrees rather than just accumulate course credit. Member commitment also includes:

- **Reasonable Transfer of Credit:** avoid excessive loss of previously earned credit and avoid course work duplication
- **Reduced Academic Residency:** limited to no more than 25% of degree requirements with no final year or semester in residence (may require 30% for undergraduate degrees offered 100% online)
- **Credit for Military Training and Experience:** recognize and use ACE's Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services in evaluating and awarding academic credit for military training and experience
- **Credit for Nationally-Recognized Testing Programs:** award credit for at least one nationally-recognized testing program such as College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), DSST Examinations, Excelsior College Examinations (ECE)

⁹ This category will receive increased weighting as participation from institutions regarding job placement data is made available.

¹⁰ SOC is funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) through a contract with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

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A total of 38 SUNY schools, including **21 community colleges**, are participating Consortium members:

Adirondack Community College

Alfred State College

Binghamton University

University at Buffalo

SUNY Brockport

Broome Community College

Buffalo State College

SUNY Canton

Clinton Community College

SUNY Cobleskill

Columbia-Greene Community College

SUNY Delhi

Dutchess Community College

Empire State College

Farmingdale State College

SUNY Fredonia

Genesee Community College

Herkimer County Community College

Hudson Valley Community College

Jamestown Community College Jefferson Community College

Mohawk Valley Community College

Monroe Community College

Morrisville State College

Nassau Community College

Niagara County Community College

North Country Community College

Orange County Community College

College at Oswego

SUNY Plattsburgh

SUNY Potsdam

Purchase College

Schenectady County Community College

SUNYIT

Suffolk County Community College

Sullivan County Community College

Tompkins Cortland Community College

Ulster County Community College



Created by the American Council on Education (ACE), **The Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions** is an online resource¹¹ is designed to help institutions of higher education build effective programs for veteran students and share information. It highlights a variety of best practices including veterans-specific orientation offerings, on-campus veterans service centers, prospective student outreach efforts, faculty training, and counseling and psychological services for veteran students. It also includes video clips, profiles of student veterans programs

across the U.S., and a searchable database of tools and resources.

Many colleges and universities have taken significant steps toward providing supportive programs and services for returning veterans. But what's working, and what's not? How does an institution know that its efforts and resources are really making a difference? And what does it mean when a school is labeled "veteran friendly?" After all, the term "veteran friendly" has no established criteria and can be used as a recruiting tactic with little accountability.

ACE has learned the definition of "veteran friendly" is as diverse as today's higher education community. Factors such as campus culture, academic environment, student body size and composition, location and more all play a role in what programs and services characterize a "veteran friendly" institution. Today's colleges and universities need to define "veteran friendly" in a manner that addresses both their institution's and students' needs. This toolkit aims to assist institutions in determining just that.

Recognizing that each institution has diverse strengths, needs and resources, the Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions provides a range of tools to help schools build or enhance a veterans program that is right for them. It contains real-life examples of successful veteran policies and programs while highlighting promising practices, community resources and success stories.

ACE intends for this website to be a collaborative environment for institutions of higher education and their key audiences, including but not limited to:

- Campus leadership and academic faculty in the U.S. and overseas
- Federal, state and local governments especially those that play a key role in the reintegration of student veterans
- Higher education practitioners in areas such as student affairs, veterans affairs, financial aid and career counseling
- Student veteran support audiences and collaborators including such non-government organizations as the Student Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America and other veteran service and/or higher education organizations

A total of seven SUNY institutions, including **four community colleges**, have contributed resources to the growing online toolkit. Each campus is listed on the following page, along with the titles of documents they've uploaded for public use.

¹¹ <https://vetfriendlytoolkit.acenet.edu/about/Pages/default.aspx>

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Cayuga Community College:	Deployment Policy
Finger Lakes Community College:	FLCC Veteran Advocacy Council
Herkimer Community College:	Vet Friendly Introductory Training Memo
Onondaga Community College:	20 Useful Internet Sites Veterans Resource Guide OCC's Veterans Lounge Description Student Communications Student Veteran Finances VA Work-Study Program at OCC
SUNY Potsdam:	Academic Support Services Career Planning Services Military & Veteran Student Service Coordinator SALUTE Veteran Honor Society Accommodative Services Adult Learn Association
SUNY Canton:	Veteran Student Service Coordinator Veterans Association Academic Support Services Admissions Programs Career Services Mental Health Services Veterans Lounge
Empire State College:	MBA Pathways Programs for Veterans Online Military Transition Resource Center Military Transition Resource Center After Injury Transition Resource Transitions: Career and Educational Skills Trauma and Stress Resource Veteran Services Information Guide Graduate Certificate in Veterans Services

Note: This Data Brief/Overview was prepared by the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges in close collaboration with colleagues from the Offices of University Life and Enrollment Management, Institutional Research, and Government Relations.