University of California’s Support & Resources for Military-Affiliated Students
“I never would have made it without all of the help and support I received on campus. They kept me going and saw me through to the end. I wanted to be a mentor so I could give back.”

~ Tan Mai, 2012 UCR alumnus, USMC veteran, and Wounded Warrior
Institutional partnerships create transfer pathways for veterans.

- Regional conferences and workshops help transitioning veterans identify and evaluate regional academic options.
- Veterans learn about college admissions processes, financial aid, degree programs, and transfer opportunities from the experts: college staff, not VA counselors.
Intercampus collaboration fosters student engagement.

- Early engagement opportunities with UC campuses help streamline the transfer process.
- UC students have internship & VA work-study opportunities at local community colleges and in the community.
Students help students transition and learn more effectively.

- Seven of the UC campuses hold veteran-specific orientation programs.
- Eight of the UC campuses offer peer advising and/or mentorship programs.
- All ten UC campuses host a student veteran organization.
- Peer support is key to campus acculturation.
Community partnerships connect students to needed resources.

- UC campuses offer a full range of support services on campus.
- UC campuses also partner with community service organizations to provide specialized support when needed.
Enhancing services for our student communities:

Beyond “The Right Thing To Do”
• Historically Underserved
• First Generation College
• Low Income (Pell Grant Eligible)
• Student Parents
• Of Re-entry Age (25+)
• Service-Connected Disabilities
• LGBT

Rich Diversity Among Veterans

UC Berkeley:
51% First Generation
65% Pell Grant Eligible
92% Graduation Rate
Transition & Orientation
• High Touch & High-Tech

Academic Engagement & Enrichment
• Campus Veteran Services Offices
• Bridging Community & VA Resources

Co-curricular Leadership & Public Service
• Student Veteran Organizations
• Veteran-to-Veteran Mentorship

Alumni Partnership & Collaboration
• Networking & Mentorship
Blue: Completion & Career Transition
Outcome-driven programs help ensure student success.

• Successful campus programs emphasize student strengths.

• Early academic intervention helps struggling students get back on track.

• Financial support helps students focus on finishing.

• Undergraduate research, internships, and veteran-specific career development programs help veterans land jobs after graduation.
Veteran graduation rates are improving.

- The Post-9/11 GI Bill has enabled more veterans to stay in school and complete their education.
- Improved veteran-specific campus services also help ensure student success.
But… things could be even better.

**Challenges**

- Veterans need better access to current entitlement & eligibility information
- Schools have limited ability to assist veterans without current and accurate information
- Students & schools need access to current eligibility documentation under new nonresident tuition law

**Recommendations**

- Improve VA benefits portal for better user experience, easier authentication, and current (real-time) information on eligibility, payments, and remaining entitlement.
- Give veterans the option to share portal information with schools.
- Ensure efficient access to eligibility documentation prior to implementation of the nonresident tuition law.
Restrictive benefits limit military service members’ options.

**Challenges**

- Complexities of DOD Tuition Assistance memoranda make it challenging and cost-prohibitive for low-enrollment institutions to comply, limiting student access and options.
- Restrictive DOD regulations do not fit traditional models of public education.

**Recommendations**

- Streamline DOD Tuition Assistance processes for “deemed approved” institutions with few beneficiaries on campus.
- Allow flexibility in DOD regulations for the wide variety of academic models, including flat-rate tuition.
Collaboration is good for everyone.

**Challenges**

- Inaccurate “success” measures and “comparison” tools make it difficult for veterans to evaluate options.
- Outdated VA administrative portal requires manual data entry for every VA beneficiary, every term, and has limited functionality.

**Recommendations**

- VA should collaborate with educational organizations and other partners to establish better comparison tools.
- VA and the Department of Education should collaborate to provide more seamless service to veterans and their dependents, and develop an efficient, integrated system for the administration of federal educational benefits.
Together, we make a great team.
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