Participant 1 – Shannon McKenna

Familiar with GIBCT:

Has used the comparison tool and is in school using the GI bill

Usability testing:

Has not done usability testing before

Was in the Army

Importance of benefits in decision to join military:

Honestly it wasn’t a huge consideration went to West Point, so undergrad was paid for wasn’t thinking about higher education at that point

Location on education journey:

I’m in my first year of graduate school. I’m doing a master’s in public administration. 3 factors – I’d say reputation of the university, location, and ability to get a job after graduating from the graduate school

Characterization of benefits:

I’d say helpful, but not adequate for graduate students. And relatively easy to obtain.

I didn’t really consider any of that. I went straight to graduate school from active duty.

I’m at Columbia University.

Pretty much every university I looked for was Ivy League or ivy league caliber. GI Bill or had yellow ribbon. Looking at employment statistics for people looking to get jobs after.

Where did you find those statistics? Mix of school’s website. And I did use the VA’s website for the comparison tool for how much tuition and my expenses would be.

Task 1:

[Opened Veteran]…keep that, looking at post 9/11…kept it all the same…I know Arizona State is a school. I’m only interested in in person only. [Typed Arizona State and clicked the option that appeared. Clicked view details. Scrolled down to Estimate your benefits.] I can see how much GI bill pays to school. I can choose if I’m a Yellow Ribbon recipient. And then it just gives me options for grad, undergrad. I clicked Graduate. And then it pretty much has everything that…

I think that this actually existed when I was looking at Columbia. I remember when I started my grad school search about a year and a half ago. I remember searching for Columbia and other schools. I printed out the pages for all of them.

Scenario 2:

What was the program again? [Jen’s thought: possibly thinks she should search by program?] So I don’t know if that’s a school or on the job, I’ll put in in person and Atlantic Institute. So I would be a little bit…ok…so there are….there are a bunch of results for it and it has a warning on it. I’m going to look at the details. So for me, that would stop me immediately. To me, that means if I applied to this school, then they might not accept them. (the benefits). Honestly, I would probably stop there. [Scrolling between top warning and more information at bottom]

I thought it was pretty clear….this is something that needs to be looked at. Especially when I saw accreditation issue.. I learned a lot from others. A lot of people just don’t care. I thought it was pretty clear when you clicked on it

Maybe making it a little more clear right up front that….from the way I understand it….if a university is not accredited, then the credits may not be accepted. I think that some people may not be as concerned. Given that the school is in a probation period.

I am wondering why its in a probation. I see that there are 5 student complaints…which doesn’t actually seem like that much…but when you look at how many students attend…that was somewhere…there it is…30 students which is a lot….I’d also talk to friends at the university if I was really set on attending this university.

I would hope they would, but I guess in my current experience, I get emails from the VA when my attendance is verified for this semester, tuition gets paid. But there isn’t any communication…or anything about benefits when you are first enrolling. I just don’t know if I would be notified. I’m not sure if the VA would be quick to inform people if there was an issue with accreditation.

My guess is phone call and maybe some kind of email. I think that right now, I only get email notifications. Other benefits I have is email, phone call and text. Mostly email (favorite) as long as its detailed enough.

Task 2:

I have 14 results….I can see all the different results. There’s one with 0 GI students, that’s interesting. And they have a lot of issues going on. And I’d just go down this list here. Looking at tuition, housing allowance…they all look the same so I’d probably look at what my interests were.

I’ve had…in my actual experience applying to grad school, all the schools I’ve applied to had a large amount of veterans. That gave me confidence that the school knows how to work with the VA and people there who could help me if there are issues. That hasn’t always been necessarily true…but at least you aren’t the only one.

I guess for Alpha university. I’d be curious which campus was closing and I would be very concerned abou the Title IV participation. I wouldn’t even look at that school.

Brunley …that information is really good. Gensley…potential lapse in approval…makes it very clear what the issue is…Oswald I’d skip that altogether with all those warnings.

Opened Brunley. Went to cautionary information. [Scrolled down to the bottom of the page.] Looks like I can learn more about the FTC suit. I’d click on the website to the school to see if they had a veterans page. If not, then I’d get in contact with the administration.

I definitely wouldn’t. (attend Brunley) I mean the first warning alone would scare me away because I would question the integrity of the school. And directly beneath it...not approved for benefits, for me I want to use my benefits.

The search results themselves. I like the information that’s on there. One thing that would be nice to have…as far as I know, I think books annually Is $1000 regardless of your school. I mean it makes it very clear. How many GI Bill students. Warnings are very clear as you are scrolling through. You can click through Yellow Ribbon and some of the other programs. One of the things I really like (to know for school selection) is location, website and program length and for profit school. That personally is something I would like to see up front because of my thoughts on for profit schools.

Without the links, I would probably have to do a lot more research on my own.

On the left hand side, there’s a button on the side that I can click to exclude schools with warnings. I think there’s a lot here. Some of them I haven’t really heard of before. You can do different combinations of things (programs). I would hope it would show schools both online and yellow ribbon. To really narrow down criteria.

I think they should absolutely let me know about schools that have problems. Especially if they aren’t well educated in how benefits work. Then they are forced into a decision of do I stay or go. Balance of allowing people to choose their schools but helping them make good use of benefits.

The warnings are good. I don’t know how else you would do it.

I’d say that as all service members are leaving the military they have to go through ETAP. I think there was the GI Bill included…but that could be a way that could be done. Even if the instructor just provided a link to schools that had issues. Maybe just on the website…here’s. a link of current institutions that have warnings. My experience is that most people Google GI Bill and end up at the VA website.

It would be because of location or the school had a very specific program I was looking for. Or finances. Undergraduate is different. This is the program I want, etc.

Potential loss of accreditation

* That means it wouldn’t be recognized as legitimate institute of higher learning. I would be extremely concerned

Not approved for post

* That’s pretty clear. It doesn’t mean it wouldn’t’ be approved in the future. Very concerned.

School closing soon

* I would have questions if the whole school was closing. Campus closing or school was moving to a different location. Would it have other locations. Moderate concern.

Heightened cash monitoring

* I actually don’t even know what that’s referring to. I would need to do some research. I would probably contact the VA and ask them. Mod concern I really don’t know what that is

Accredation issue

* I think maybe that it was pending…pending accreditation process. Or lose accreditation. Mod concern, It doesn’t seem as concerning

Emergency campus closure

* I’d be extremely concerned. But to be fair….I don’t know if its ever going to reopen I’d pass over school completely

School settle case with FTC

* I would look into to see what the case was about. I wouldn’t jump to conclusions…and the school is still open Somewhat concerned.

A campus closing soon

* I would want to know which campus is closing. If it wasn’t the one I was going to, I wouldn’t be as concerned.

Loss of Title IV patrt

* This would scare me – I am personally very well aware of Title IV means and the implications for it. I am currently enrolled in Title IV office. I’d be very concerned.