Participant 5 – Tsnodgrass

GIBCT – I have not used that, no

Usability testing – No

Importance of benefits:

Army

I would say its one of the big ones, one of the main ones when You’re thinking about life planning and what am I doing with my life in the short term and long term. And GI benefits are helpful for the long term. I have the opportunity to get a degree with after

Retired few years ago, I’ve done some part time work since then since I have a few children so I’m ready to start my career. I’m exploring what I want to do, where I want to go….

Factors:

#1 – because I have fixed income, make sure everything is covered no surprise fees #2 – convenience either close to me or can do online and #3 major – if it’s going to fit my goals

Alerts from VA:

That’s a good question so far my only experience has been veterans forums. I’ve seen some articles negatively portraying some schools who were trying to defraud the VA or veterans. To date, that’s my only source. I haven’t done an intake with the education office yet, so not sure if that would be a good resource. I would just go online because that’s how I do my research. I’m a member of a couple forums on LinkedIn and Facebook

Characterization:

It’s a little bit daunting or complicated sounding when you first start looking at it. Where do you find the right schools? I used to look up local schools…even those that do accept GI benefits, it’s hard to find someone to talk to about it. That’s would be my first thought. I dunno.

Task 1: 2

[Scroll down…looking through drop downs (not opening)…selected in person and online…typed Arizona State and clicked top option.] I’d probably just click the first one and see what that brings me. So these options (programs) are interesting…I don’t know what I’d be eligible for, but that would be interesting. [Clicked Arizona State….Changed in-state student to No, back to Yes, back to No….] so in-state versus out-of-state makes a difference. Looking through estimated benefits per term. Looking at that it looks pretty straightforward….it says what I would be entitled for tuition….looks like in-state it might cover everything. Nothing peculiar…mainly my question would be what Yellow Ribbon are, what Pell Grants are….[clicked Learn More on Yellow Ribbon] ...so that’s good to be able to click on that and find out. In general, I love to have more information even if its to click it into another page….This is pretty neat that they have a contact for a veterans group. Oh and they have locations with housing – that’s good to know. I like that it compares the housing for you…you can look and see exactly what your stipend will cover or what utilities will come under comfortably.

Student complaints that’s interesting….so those are red flags…that’s interesting. I have definitely heard horror stories where they get the first or second GI payment and then something happens and suddenly they are on the hook for tuition. Or they walk away. Financial issues seems to be the biggest one….So I would be curious on…maybe some anecdotal evidence…this would be fun if it was a review style…this happened to this student, if you could click on it.

Task 2: 2

[Searched Atlantic…scrolling through options….went immediately to Pensacola. No pause on flags. ] There is a flag here – that would be something to think about, some sort of issues. [She’s looking through estimated benefits . Scrolled down until hit cautionary information…] ”school accreditation has been revoked”….so students have had complaints…and most are financial which would probably be my #1 concern. At this time, since they aren’t accredited, I’d probably stay away from them. Ask my friend – have they heard of any funding issues. I do like that it says pretty blatantly that they are flagged. For me, I’d probably move on. If my friend was in it, then I might investigate more. I like that it’s kind of a bold thing. I think what I mentioned before – a quick description of the financial issues that might be interesting to see. In a quick, fire hose type search where you are looking at a bunch of options, I’d say oh they’re flagged, move along. I think that’s probably the biggest thing.

Oh that’s interesting…I would hope that they would (let you know about an issue) and possibly have steps on what is necessary to transfer or special…I don’t know…I don’t know if there’s an option to continue once there’s a flag. That’s hard on the student to change…if there was options or maybe even kind of like a case worker or liaison that would be great.

Well…knowing the VA, the first thing they are going to do is send a letter which may or may not go to the right address. I’ve had them delete my current address and revert to an old address. It’s not very reliable. I have been called on certain events, but very very rarely. That would be if they had an education liaison. Personally, I would want them to reach out to me via email or phone using contact info from va.gov. I don’t know if there’s a portal to see what your GI Bill status is for the month – like this warning, to have it come up and say contact your local education office and we have information or concerns about your school.

Task 3: 2, 1

So let’s see I would scroll down and put in phoenix, I’d search…got 13 results….so that one has no GI bill students….so I’d wonder about that. Campus closed…moving along. Brunley that’s a cautionary…but 180 students….that one has a lot of students. So right now, I would see 3 viable options…5 or 6 options with lots of kids enrolled so the school won’t be what are you doing here? I would start looking there because they have a large number of GI bill students and then look at costs to make sure everything is covered. Check out majors and start narrowing it down. I would mark these off if they’re cautionary.

[Clicked Brunley….] there’s their website…it also shows 180 GI Bill students. As much as I would like to research the school, I would love to talk to some of those students if it was possible. To get their thoughts on the ground. And it could be as a mentor or peer to peer.

[Had to be told to stop at warnings….]

Deceptive advertising….something about their advertising is off. I would definitely not want to, even wasting my time at that point. Being sued, that would worry me because what if the school goes away? Not interested in applying here. With being sued and not approved for 9/11 GI Bill, I’d move along. I know we don’t want to inundate people with pop-ups, but this stuff is really important. It might need to be right in front of your face. It could be presented earlier in the process. It could be helpful.

Cautionary warning at top – even though it was underlined, it wasn’t intuitive for me to click it. I’m fairly computer savvy, but a lot of people aren’t.

Oh here it says you aren’t approved for GI Bill…that’s pretty straightforward. Oh – can’t be used so move along.

Task 4: 2

Oh yeah, that would be good. Oh that’s even better…and it went down to one page, even better. Yeah, that’s a nice feature. It’s helpful for sure. You definitely don’t want to start down the path of a school that has a bunch of issues.

I think it’s a great idea to be alerted outside the comparison tool. It’s very very common to have blacklists in the military that rip off others. I am very supportive to putting those organizations on those list if they’re taking advantage of soldiers. The more warnings we can have, the better. To kind of see in black and white, these are the organizations…and be able to sort it by state or by region. When you go through your education briefing, to have a print-off or a link to all off-limit schools.

Cautionary warnings on search – I just want to click on it

Deceptive advertising lawsuit

* Ok they are putting out false information to lure in or rip off students…possibly GI Bill possibly VA. Lawsuit is definitely concerning. You don’t want to be going to a school that is unethical or going away. Extremely

Tuition Assistance probation

* That one is more vague. Since I’m not as familiar with the process, I would wonder if they were doing fraud saying tuition assistance was available when it wasn’t . I dunno, I would probably need more information. Probation would tell me that they had been through some legal action…if there’s a warning there, I would say they would be monitored…so Mod concern

Settled case with State Attorney General

* They paid some sort of fine for wrongdoing so they can stay in business I guess. To me, that would mean they are not being monitored anymore but I don’t know for sure. That could mean that they fixed errors, it could mean that they moved along their way. Somewhat …they’ve moved past it

Not approved for benefits

* Would absolutely stay away from school because you can’t use it there

Emergency Campus Closure

* That would be extremely concerning…there would be a lot of problems with regulations, ethics, keeping teachers. It’s just not somewhere I’d want to be/learn

Veteran forums are general – recommendations and such. She might go look and see if there are any specific ones for education.