CT Discovery – User Interview Notes

October 2020

Participant 1 - Travis

1. Wants to be able to search by / distinguish types of degree programs (Associates, Bachelors, Masters)
2. Wants information on available scholarships (Not just space to input scholarship amount)
3. Wants a cost-comparison of out of pocket costs
4. Wants a side-by-side comparison
5. Recalls previous education experience wwas "more work than anticipated for not a prestigious degree"
6. School accreditation is important to him
7. Notes that Student Complaints doesn't specify whether it's just GI Bill students (assumes yes)
8. Appreciates the "single point of contact" – walked him through application process
9. Wants ability to check eligibility status in the CT

Participant 2 – Steven

1. Wants to see "school near me"
2. Interested in degree programs school offers
3. Wants to know where to start? "What do I need to do to get everything going?"
4. Wants to know "how do I apply to the program?"
5. Wants to know "How do I apply for benefits?"
6. Able to use filters for country / state in SRP
7. Interested to know more about the student complaints (where they come from, background)
8. Suggests a "Vets apply here" with a link and contact number
9. Has confidence that VA will provide good, helpful information for the education process

Participant 3 – Ramon

1. Loves the cautionary information section
2. Would like GED programs included in CT
3. Interested in knowing length of programs

Participants 4 – Tessa

1. Looking to optimize benefits
2. Biggest challenge – trying to figure out credit for classes taken in the military
3. Wants to find a school "30-40 minutes away" (geolocation)
4. Important to find the right POC – "Education guy in Austin isn't user-friendly"
5. Wants link "to their military person"
6. Wants link to apply for GI Bill benefits
7. Wants to compare costs and what's covered

8. Wants cost comparison "side-by-side" and "lined-up"
9. Would be interested in filtering by "Military credit"

Participant 5 – Matthew

1. Chose school primarily based on location
2. Would've liked more information about the professors and campus culture before selecting
3. [EYB] "is definitely cool." Knowing benefits definitely would help with decision-making
4. "cool to see how many people are receiving GI Bill benefits at the school
5. Diversity of student body is important to him [student profile]
6. Would like to see results of prior students [outcomes]
7. Interested in test scores… how do I stack up as a student
8. Would like to "favorite" a few schools
9. Would like more info on the programs the school offers
10. Knows the SCO personally – communicates with her directly

Participant 6 – Lisa: "People don't know all their benefits. They get tired and stop trying."

1. User can't find Vocational Rehab / Chapter 35 in Benefits dropdown
2. Says she's "Blessed" to have access to good people who showed her how to optimize benefits
3. Veteran / student reviews and ratings would be great
4. Wasn't aware the school she went to wasn't accredited
5. Wants side by side comparison… should include # of GI Bill students, housing, YR participation, Veteran programs
6. Diversity of student body is important to her
7. A large number of GI Bill students gives her confidence the school knows what they're doing
8. Wants more info on the Contact Information area
9. Likes "Single point of contact for Veterans" – thinks it should have contact info.
10. Thought "Protection against VA late payments" was about $ going to the student

Participant 7 – Jonathon

1. Interested in optimizing benefits – looking for maximum value
2. When looking for school, wanted 1 place to find all info and compare side-by-side
3. Had scholarships but couldn't use them to offset or extend GI Bill Benefits.
4. Likes seeing # of GI Bill students – conveys community
5. EYB / Total paid to you calculations aren't clear to him… don't appear to add up.
6. YR Learn more link isn't what was expected (goes to benefits.va.gov)
7. Recognizes SCO's name, says the info on the profile page is accurate.
8. Wants to compare schools side-by-side.
9. Was interested in finding schools close to where he had family: WI, MI, FL, GA.
10. Would be helpful to have info on local area (what's average rent in the area)

Participant 8 – Christopher

1. Was interested in finding a school based on geography (in Maryland).

2. Hardest part: getting credit for military training & transfer credits
3. Most interested in $$ - 100% tuition and housing allowance
4. Wanted a large GI Bill population: for community, people who run the Veteran Center will know what they're doing
5. Want's contact info for Veteran Center, SCOs. "No one's going to send a piece of mail with a question in it."
6. Really likes that the school has priority enrollment: Signing up 2 weeks before other students I key.
7. Notes "0 complaints in the last 24 months. That's good."
8. Wants contact info for Single Point of contact. Found the person previously by going to the office and asking.
9. Wants more info about the Veteran community. Small perks mean a lot at Veteran Center (free printing!)
10. Would be good to know hidden costs – parking on campus is $400/year

Participant 9 – Calvin

1. Was looking for good schools with specific programs (political science, economics)
2. Used U.S. News & World Report to help with research
3. Would've liked more information on what student life is like, how professors act.
4. Would be helpful to have a tuition calculator that incorporates GPA, Test Scores (what aid the school will give)
5. Contact info is helpful – would be better to have an email address
6. Cautionary information is pretty straight-forward
7. 1000 GI Bill recipients would give me the confidence [GWU] knows what they're doing
8. Anticipated filters on SRP were relevant to GWU – school he was looking at
9. Wonders if GI Bill benefits will change if he gets a certain amount of aid from the school (or elsewhere)
10. Updated benefit calculations don't jump out at him after changing inputs

Participant 10 – Paula

1. Biggest challenge is finding out if ITT Tech credits will transfer.
2. Wants online classes with an in-person option
3. Interested in accredited schools only!
4. Likes "other locations" display – very interested in locations
5. Likes breakdown of payments.
6. Contact details
7. Would like link to a map for details of local area – mentions school location is not walkable & there aren't places to eat
8. Thinks a list of amenities for students (like priceline!) would be helpful
9. Doesn't immediately [know to?] click through to profile page.
10. Institution code is helpful for FAFSA