## SLIDE 29

* Develop consistent, plain-language educational benefits content that is crafted for an audience of Veterans and active duty service members [EPIC 1]
  + *As an…*
    - Active duty service member
  + *I want…*
    - Education benefits content on VA.gov to be tailored to my current military status,
  + *So that…*
    - I clearly understand what my options are now and in the future and can instead focus on finding the best fit for me and my career goals
  + *As a…*
    - Former service member,,
  + *I want…*
    - Education benefits content on VA.gov to be clear and consistent,
  + *So that…*
    - I understand what benefits are available to me and how I take advantage of them
* Based on that content, develop/update train-the-trainer guidelines for discussing that content with usage guidelines (e.g. when discussing A, refer to B). This would be equivalent to a document like the SCO handbook, but for more generalized usage [EPICS 1, 3]
  + *As a…*
    - *P*erson tasked with assisting Veteran’s with understanding or accessing Education benefits at the VA
  + *I need…*
    - *T*o have accurate and up-to-date reference materials which I can refer to as a guide when discussing Education benefits content with Veteran’s
  + *So that…*
    - I don’t have to worry about keeping track of an ever-changing benefits landscape
* Distribute that content for use in Military and DOD recruitment, boot camp, and transition programs [EPIC 2]
  + *As a…*
    - Prospective recruit
    - Service member
    - Veteran
  + *I Want…*
    - Information about education benefits programs to be accessible to me without my having to seek it out
  + *So that…*
    - I am learning about what my options are over the course of my personal journey to further my education
    - The process of getting benefits from the VA isn’t such a black box
* Collect contact information for customized programs and distribute/promote that content to those programs (e.g. via an e-mail newsletter) [EPIC 2]
  + *As a…*
    - Prospective recruit
    - Service member
    - Veteran
  + *I Want…*
    - *T*o be able to provide my contact information to the VA if I choose, so that I can learn about upcoming events/deadlines, changes to benefits programs, and other interesting or important information
  + *So that…*
    - I can get informed about relevant information without having to actively seek it out
* Treat education benefits content and “train-the-trainer” guides as a digital product, identify internal owners/teams, and support this product with appropriate skillsets, and when necessary, contractors [EPIC 3]
  + *As an…*
    - Education Service Product Owner managing digital benefits content
  + *I Need…*
    - *T*o be able to create and manage ALL digital education benefits content with relative ease and without the intervention of software engineers or other technical experts
  + *So that…*
    - I can make sure education content on VA.gov keeps pace with a constantly shifting benefits landscape

## SLIDE 31:

* Develop consistent, plain-language educational benefits content that is written for the audience of Veterans and active duty service members [EPICS 1, 2, 3]
  + *As a…*
    - *Po*licy expert with the Education Service
  + *I Need…*
    - *T*o be able to be able to easily distribute relevant content and important information to individuals and organizations that support Veterans
  + *So that…*
    - *F*ront-line staff have the resources they need to efficiently support Veterans in their education journey

## SLIDE 34:

* Add an Apply for Benefits button to the Comparison Tool (CT) school profile page
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran
  + *I Want…*
    - *T*o be able to apply for education benefits from within the GI Bill Comparison Tool
  + *So that…*
    - I can initiate the benefits application at the point in the workflow where I’m viewing information about a particular school
* Simplify and restructure the CT school profile page against the highest priority elements as identified by Veterans; assess the SEO of CT school profile pages against the most common Google behaviors of Veterans and service members. Redesign (or build in parallel) the profile page to prioritize appropriate content
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran user of the CT
  + *I Want…*
    - The most important and relevant information about a school or program displayed with the most prominence,
  + *So that…*
    - I am able to quickly grasp the most important information about a school or program
  + *As a…*
    - Product Owner with Education Service
  + *I Need…*
    - To be able to add and emphasize school/program offerings and issues to the CT in a concise way
  + *So that…*
    - Future benefit programs can be incorporated in a thoughtful consistent manner
* Create custom SEO optimized landing pages for key Veteran comparison search behaviors. Example: list the most attended Veteran schools, or list schools that are receiving the fewest Principles of Excellence complaints
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran or service member
  + *I Want…*
    - Direct links to content on VA.gov to populate the results when I search for particular information about VA Education benefits
  + *So that…*
    - I get information that is both trust-worthy and relevant to me given my current military status
* Partner with a school ranking site to improve CT data accuracy, surface CT profile content (such as Principles of Excellence complaint rates, benefit rates, etc.)
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran
    - *Service member*
  + *I Want…*
    - School rankings from an objective, trust-worthy source included within the CT
  + *So that…*
    - I can use real world experiences as a component of my decision making process
* Create functionality and editorial reminders for schools to self update with VA review and approval
  + *As a…*
    - School participating in VA benefits programs
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to manage and edit information about my school (profile) as I see fit
  + *So that…*
    - I can ensure that my school’s profile is always up-to-date and accurate
* Create a map view for the CT showing schools based on geographic location similar to Columbia University's Veteran Transition Tool (https:// ahemap.veterans.columbia.edu/)
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran
    - Service member
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to see schools positioned on a map
  + *So that…*
    - I have the most important information available to me when I am making a decision about where to pursue my education
* Provide direct links from school sites (Veteran support pages) to the VA CT profile page for that school by giving them embeddable, VA branded code (e.g. a badge) that reads something similar to “Estimate your GI Bill Benefits for [School/College]”
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran
    - Service member
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to access information about coverage and what the VA pays to a school directly from the school/program’s own website
  + *So that…*
    - The critical information about cost and coverage is accessible to me in the place when I naturally go to learn about a school or program offering
* Integrate school and CT data points into the facility locator
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran
    - Service member
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to find and filter school and programming offerings by location, and proximity
  + *So that…*
    - *I know where they are in relation to my home address*
* Purchase (or request a donation of) Google Ads for search combinations that do not favor a particular school but are aligned with search behaviors
  + *As a…*
  + *I Want…*
  + *Because…*

## SLIDE 36

* Add data and/or highlight information about which schools accept military transcripts to the CT [EPIC 4]
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran evaluating schools and program offerings
    - Active duty service member
  + *I Want…*
    - *T*o know which schools accept military transcripts
  + *So that…*
    - I can better assess the total cost of education at one school versus another
* Eliminate content on va.gov, benefits.va.gov, and other VA websites that’s devoted to school selection as VA is not where Veteran and active duty students make this decision; investing time and energy in this space does not align with the natural behaviors of Veterans or students [EPICS 1, 4, 5]
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran selecting a school
    - Active duty service member selecting a school
  + *I Want…*
    - [The VA to share/distribute benefits information and data to 3rd party organizations?]
    - [VA.gov to provide tools and resources on par with the myriad options offered by 3rd parties?]
    - [To be able to access all of the information/data I need about benefits, programs, schools, costs, etc., in a single place]
  + *So that…*
    - [I can make this major life decision in a natural, organic way, instead of being forced to wade through policy and confusing legalese?]
    - [I can spend as little time as possible interacting with VA?]
    - [I can get definitive answers about my benefits AND the information I need to select a school without having to navigate a hodge-podge of unrelated websites?]

## SLIDE 38

* Recommendation: Add an Apply for Benefits to the Comparison Tool (CT) school profile page.
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To apply for an educational benefit while reading about that benefit on the school/institution profile page
  + *So that…*
    - I can save time on my application
    - I can apply for benefits when I learn enough VA information to feel confident in my choice of school
* Recommendation: Simplify and restructure the CT school profile page against the highest priority elements as identified by Veterans
  + *As a…*
    - As a Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To quickly be able to assess the following information
      * Out-of-pocket costs
      * Housing allowance
      * Tuition paid to school
      * Presence of a Veteran support office
      * General presence of yellow ribbon programs and support for my program of interest
      * Veteran graduation rate as calculated by the school
      * Veteran graduation rate as calculated by the VA
  + *So that…*
    - I can select the school that best meets my logistical needs
    - Apply for my benefits after already having selected a school
    - I can apply for benefits when I learn accurate information about them
* Recommendation: Assess the SEO of CT school profile pages against the most common Google behaviors of Veterans and service members. Redesign (or build in parallel) the profile page to prioritize appropriate content.
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran searching Google
  + *I Want…*
    - To find official VA information about my benefits in search results based on common search behaviors that include the school/institution name (including variants) and common search term/phrase combinations, including
      * schools/colleges in [area of study] + veteran(s)/military friendly
      * [state name] schools/colleges + veteran(s)/military friendly
      * [state name] schools/colleges+ veteran(s)/military friendly
      * schools for [area of study]+ veteran(s)/military friendly
      * [school/college name] [area of study]+ veteran(s)/military friendly
      * [school/college name] [state name] average tuition per semester+ veteran(s)/military friendly online schools/colleges in [area of study]+ veteran(s)/military friendly
  + *So that…*
    - I can find links I can trust about my benefits
    - Connect my school choice clearly to my benefits
    - Connect my school choice to my budget
    - Connect my school choice to my location
    - I can apply for benefits when I learn what information I’m looking for
* Recommendation: Provide direct links from school sites to the VA CT profile page for that school by giving them embeddable, branded code (e.g. a badge) that reads something similar to “Estimate your GI Bill Benefits for [School/College]”
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran on a school's website
  + *I Want…*
    - To go directly from learning information about Veteran support services on a school or institution's website to getting accurate benefits information for that school and for my service record
  + *So that…*
    - I can assess if the school is a school I can trust
    - I can assess if the school will help me with my benefits application and management
    - I can learn about accurate benefits when I find a school I’m interested in
* Recommendation: Address usability issues for the CT tool identified in this research, including
  + Support zip code search
  + Name match issues (UMBC, for example)
  + Clarify in-state vs. out-of-state benefits for public schools
  + Reduce confusion by changing or eliminating null data (currently reads “no data”)
  + Address graduate vs. undergraduate cost and program-specific cost expectations
  + Improve design of student outcomes
  + More clearly address non-traditional semesters (summer, winter, trimesters, etc.)
  + Display program information by school   
      
    **User stories for these usability issues**
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to find schools close to me by using zip code, and see those schools on a map
  + *So that…*
    - I can attend a school that is convenient to me
    - I can assess how much travel will be necessary for me to attend a particular school
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to find the school I’m interested in by name
  + *So that…*
    - I don’t have to know the way the school is named in the system
    - I don’t have to guess what the school is called
    - I can find the school I’m looking for
    - I can assess my benefits for the school I’m looking for
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To be able to understand when I qualify for in-state benefits, and what those in-states benefits would be
  + *So that…*
    - I can accurately make a decision about my finances as it relates to how much education I can afford
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To understand the information I’m reading if some information happens to be missing or there is an error in the information
  + *So that…*
    - I can decide if the missing information is important enough to me to seek it out, or continue to apply for benefits without that information
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To understand what my benefits are for a graduate degree
  + *So that…*
    - I can assess my benefits accurately if I’m more interested in graduate school as opposed to undergraduate school
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To understand what my benefits are for a graduate degree
  + *So that…*
    - I can assess my benefits and costs accurately if I’m more interested in graduate school as opposed to undergraduate school

* + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To understand what student outcomes mean, such as
      * Graduation rate (national average, cumulative, and Veteran)
      * Job placement rate (national average, cumulative, and Veteran)
  + *So that…*
    - I can accurately assess the difference in student outcomes between two different schools
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To know if my school benefits are offered during winter, summer, or other non-traditional types of semesters (trimesters, quarters, etc.)
  + *So that…*
    - I can accurately assess what benefits I will be paid when, and how much of my education will be covered
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using the GIBCT
  + *I Want…*
    - To know what programs are available at a school related to my career or educational goals
  + *So that…*
    - I can accurately use that information to decide if a school is of interest to me
    - I can make sure the benefits and costs I’m reading apply to the program that I’m interested in attending
* Recommendation: Address usability issues for the Edu hub identified in this research, including label confusion around “Check post 9/11 Benefits.” This is to check the status of benefits, not the benefits themselves. Revise to “Check status of Post 9/11 benefits application” or similar
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using VA.gov
  + *I Want…*
    - To understand the difference between checking the status of an existing benefit I'm already receiving, checking the status of a submitted benefit application, and checking the status of my eligibility for benefits.
  + *So that…*
    - I can quickly ascertain where I am in the benefits process without wasting time
* Recommendation: Rename or provide explanatory content for “Careerscope,” or make plans to retire the name. Some Veterans thought this referred to graduate programs. Others ignored it completely.
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using VA.gov
  + *I Want…*
    - To research the relationship between a career and a particular program of study
  + *So that…*
    - I can make get the correct degree for my goals

## SLIDE 41

* Recommendation: Create a digital Certificate of Eligibility (COE) confirmation process:  
  Create a digital workflow for SCOs to authenticate and confirm Veteran benefit eligibility status, eventually eliminating the need for a paper COE. This could be implemented both pre- and post- applying to a school. Investigation with the Veteran developer API efforts is required to assess the ability for APIs described within developer.va.gov to support this business process.
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran authenticated on VA.gov
    - School Certifying Official
  + *I Want…*
    - (Veteran) To create a digital, temporary Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter that is not tied to a specific school
    - (Veteran) To create a digital, temporary certificate of eligibility (COE) letter that I can forward via e-mail to a School Certifying Official
    - (SCO) To receive a digital, temporary certificate of eligibility (COE) letter for a Veteran to associate with their application to school
  + *So that…*
    - (Veteran) I can apply to school when I’m ready and reduce the amount of time the school and the VA takes to process the VA benefits to which I’m entitled
    - (SCO) I can expedite Veterans’ applications to my school when they select my school

## SLIDE 43

* Recommendation: Run quarterly usability testing on all benefit applications towards iterative improvement, including all live benefits applications (1995, etc. ) and make iterative improvements based on the results.
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran using VA.gov to apply for educational benefits
  + *I Want…*
    - To identify and complete the correct education benefit application
    - To complete the education benefit application correctly
  + *So that…*
    - Reduce the time it takes to get the benefit application processed
    - Reduce the time before I’m able to attend school
* Recommendation: **Assess interest in chat-based support** A chat bot with natural language processing could answer common call center questions around benefits, including basic steps, requirements, and (with authentication) Veteran and application status. This experiment could be run by Serving live text chat to a limited percentage of people in flow for application to assess willingness to get help this way (% of requests over time)
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran filling out a VA.gov education application
  + *I Want…*
    - To chat live with an education benefits expert who can help me complete my application
  + *So that…*
    - I can reduce the likelihood I will make errors in my application
* Recommendation: Create a digital Certificate of Eligibility (COE) confirmation process:  
  Create a digital workflow for SCOs to authenticate and confirm Veteran benefit eligibility status, eventually eliminating the need for a paper COE. This could be implemented both pre- and post- applying to a school. Investigation with the Veteran developer API efforts is required to assess the ability for APIs described within developer.va.gov to support this business process.
  + *As a…*
    - Veteran authenticated on VA.gov
    - School Certifying Official
  + *I Want…*
    - (Veteran) To create a digital, temporary Certificate of Eligibility (COE) letter that is not tied to a specific school
    - (Veteran) To create a digital, temporary certificate of eligibility (COE) letter that I can forward via e-mail to a School Certifying Official
    - (SCO) To receive a digital, temporary certificate of eligibility (COE) letter for a Veteran to associate with their application to school
  + *So that…*
    - (Veteran) I can apply to school when I’m ready and reduce the amount of time the school and the VA takes to process the VA benefits to which I’m entitled
    - (SCO) I can expedite Veterans’ applications to my school when they select my school