**Insight Questionnaire for Military & Veterans’ Services Specialists**

Thank you for joining us today. My name is [NAME] and we also have [NAME OF OTHERS OBSERVING] observing and taking notes for this session. We are conducting research on behalf of a team at the VA that is enhancing the VA.gov website. We'll be looking at the GI Bill comparison tool and are interested in your feedback on what works well and where enhancements might be made to make it more useful for Veterans.

[If questionnaire is sent via email, replace above with the following] Thank you for your willingness to assist the VA.gov team with the GI Bill Comparison Tool enhancement process. Any insights you can provide on how the GIBCT is used will be helpful!

Her Role: Assistant Director at the student veterans center. At uni for 18 years. Now she has a staff of 2 full-time employees and 7 work-study students. Still does occasional certifying, but she’s mostly a troubleshooter now.

**The Veteran Experience with the GIBCT**

1. Based on your experience, what aspects of the GIBCT work well for Veterans?

**Housing rate**…**They’re trying to figure out which benefit they’re trying to use.** Should they use the post 9/11, or the Montgomery bill? We simply provide the information and they’re to make the decision on their own. We are seeing less of that because of 2011 when they changed once you make a decision…we’re seeing less of that as time goes on.

It’s mainly just the veterans using it. We don’t have a purpose for it.

That, in itself, does. This is something that we, COs, have thought for a while. It’s the **graduation rate… it is grossly inaccurate**. For example, it says here at FSU, we have 0% graduation rate, which is inaccurate. Ours is actually 69%. 89% of our veterans graduate from us. It’s across the board. I belong to an association called nasva. While there, we talk with legislators. This was one of our topics this year, because our community colleges have the same issue because veterans transfer out of there.

**Solution? It’s difficult to measure success for these students. They’re non traditional. Our recommendation was to have nothing on there instead of false information.**

Other challenges? It doesn’t seem to be a problem. **I do know that the housing rate for our area is not matching what you pull up on the dod site.** Dod site says 1380 but the va site says 1311. That’s actually what they’re paying. It’s on the tool that way, but that’s actually what they’re paying.

1. What questions do Veterans have as they use the GIBCT?
2. What modifications would make the GIBCT more useful to Veterans?
3. What additional features would enhance the value of the GIBCT?

I know **the programs are always of interest.** **Yellow ribbon seems to be a common question that they’re asking, and it’s really interesting the misunderstanding of yellow ribbon. I don’t know what they think it is.** The way they ask the question is very odd. They think of it as a supplemental scholarship type thing, and now with the choice act, it doesn’t really come into play very often. It’s an out of state feature and it’s associated with 9/11 very often.

With the choice act, we give out of state waivers if you’re living in the state of florida. The YR program for a public institution covers the out of state fee.

Active duty members are covered under the choice act where we waive that out of state fee. Very few are eligible.

1. Do you have any other recommendations on how the GIBCT can most effectively offer Veterans the information needed to make an informed decision?

**Your Experience with the GIBCT**

I have to think about how a student would get there. I don’t know. I always put in scenarios to try to get it to come up with different things. I do see that yellow ribbon is on here.

**Their vet success person has been gone for years. [she was concerned about the programs available on the school profile page]. [Bad data on the page.]**

WEAMS is constantly being updated. There’s a POC at the Panama City office. I sent in an updated elr which will create a new, updated WEAMS. Whenever we update a program, we have to do an updated Weams. It goes through so many hands. By the time it gets through all those hands, I can’t tell you the amount of errors. I have one person that goes through weams to make sure the info is accurate. When there’s an error, we send it back to ERL telling them this is wrong. Ever since “deem approved” went away, it’s been a constant battle. We have 800 graduate programs. When you have to deal with that kind of number and give that information to the VA...

**Most of this is part of our WEAMS. We won’t even go there, it’s part of the issue.**

1. What are some reasons why you use the GIBCT?
2. Do you feel that Veterans are aware that this tool is available?

You’d have to take a survey. I don’t know. **I do tell them to use it with caution since there’s some invalid information there.**

1. When you use the GI Bill Comparison Tool, what information are you seeking and what questions are you trying to answer?
2. What modifications to the GIBCT would make your job easier?

Many thanks for your feedback and insights!

* The VA.gov team

I tell them to avoid sites like military.com or sites that aren’t from the VA.