



# VETERAN INFLUX: SUPPORTING VETERANS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION PIPELINE

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**NASPA 2016**  
**Tuesday, March 16, 2016**  
**10:00 AM**

# AGENDA

- Learning Objectives
- Brief Overview of the of the VCCS-WDS Veterans Demonstration Project
- Characteristics of Today's Veteran Students
- Overview of Types of Campus Climates
- What are Veterans and Administrators Saying?
- Wrap-Up



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

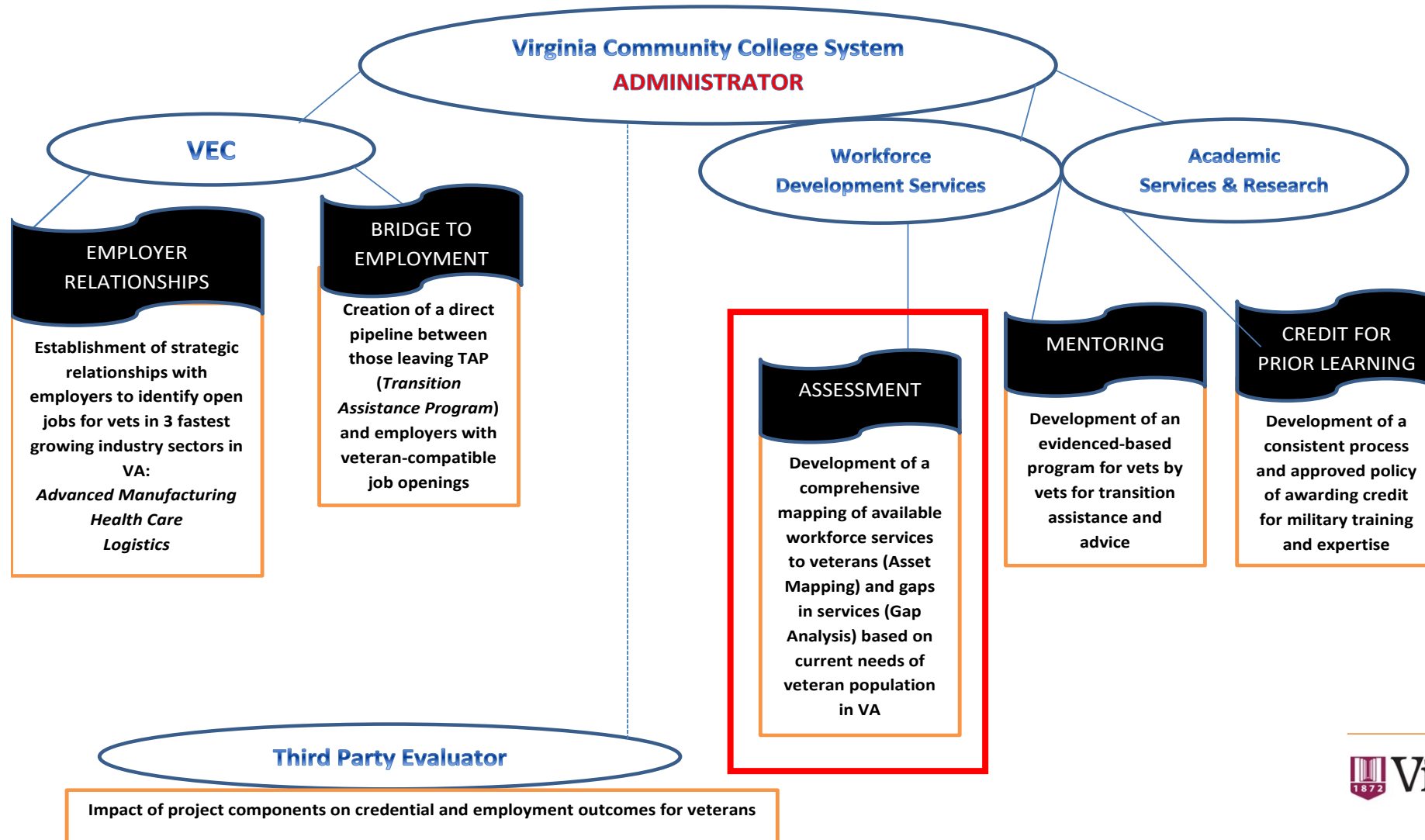
- As a result of this presentation participants will be able to:
  - Discuss the experiences of Veteran Students and Transitioning Service Members (TSMs)
  - Examine how characteristics of Veteran Students/TSMs affect their work
  - Identify the types of campus climates and their characteristics
  - Apply an understanding of the types of programs available to support veterans and TSMs to overcome barriers



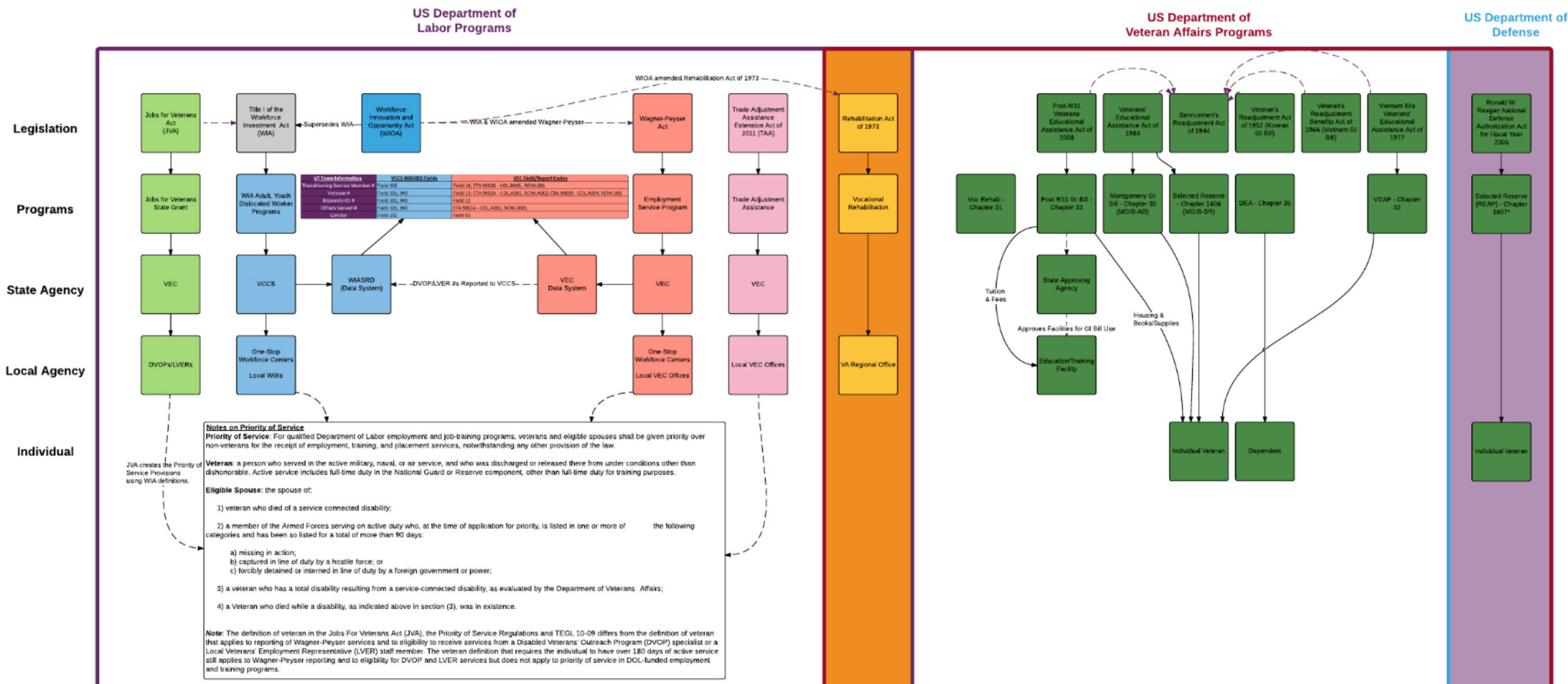
# **THE VCCS-WDS VETERANS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

# THE VCCS-WDS VETERANS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Performance Period: April 1, 2014-March 31, 2016; Award: \$3,444,620



# VCCS-WDS PROJECT - FUNDING STREAMS, LAWS, & DATA FIELDS

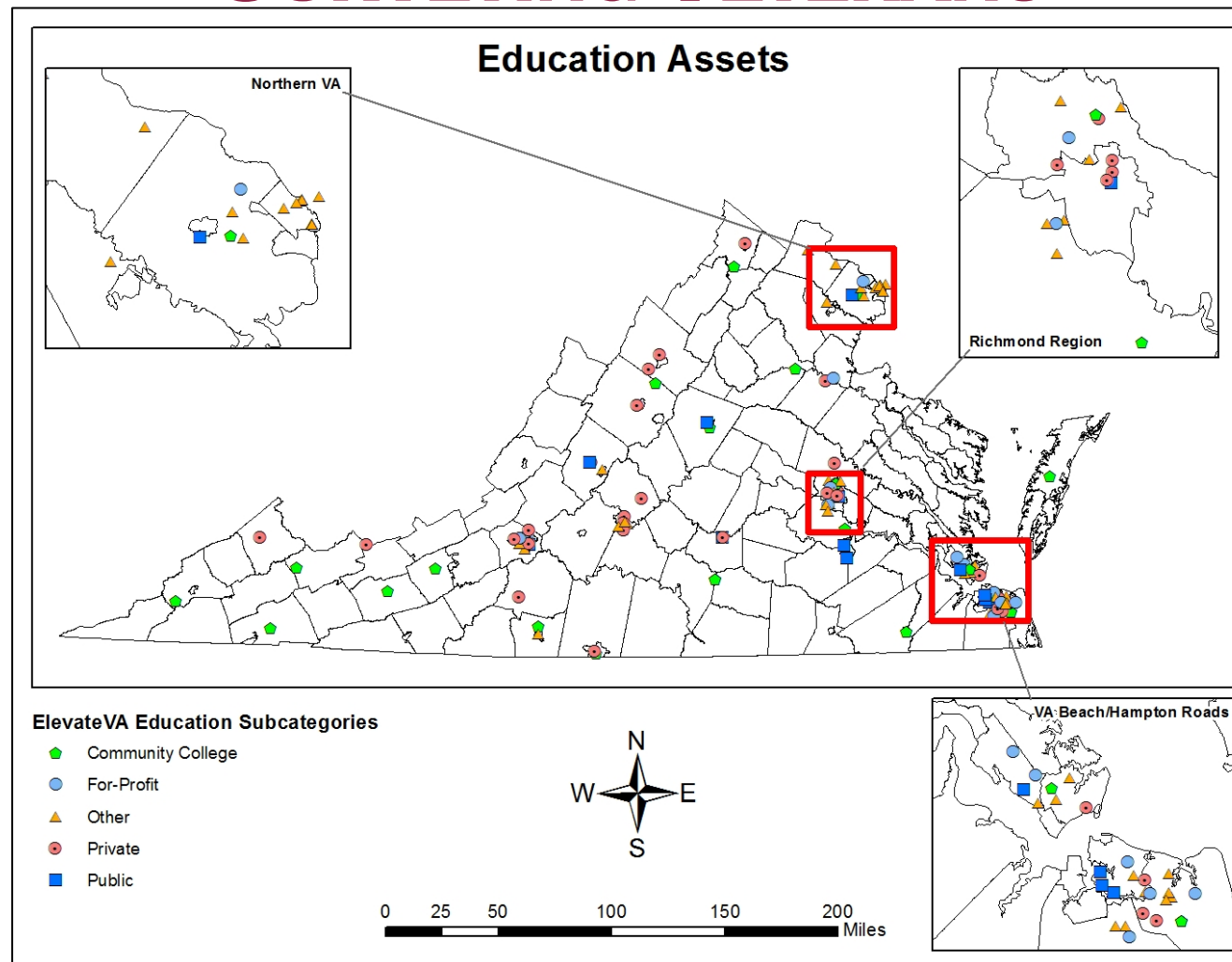


# VCCS-WDS MAPPING OF ASSETS

Category	Number of Programs	Examples
Transition Programs	26	Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program (TAP) on military installations (i.e. Quantico or Langley Air Force Base)
Education	226	Virginia Community College System; Public, Private, and For-Profit Institutions that lead to an associates, bachelors, masters, or other degree or certificate
Employment Services	403	Refers to programs and employers that focus on hiring veterans and specific fields that require job specific licenses through an accrediting board.
Training Programs	322	Programs that provide training that leads to the skills necessary for work
National Guard Readiness Centers	61	Formerly known as the National Guard Armories
Entrepreneurship	27	Veteran Business Outreach Centers, Small Business Development Centers, other entities that support entrepreneurship
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1065</b>	

# DRAFT PROTOTYPE OF THE GEO-CODING OF ASSETS

## SURVEYING VETERANS



Prototype created by  
Virginia Center for Geospatial Information Technology





# GAP ANALYSIS OF VIRGINIA'S PROGRAMS

- Semi-Structured Interviews with Veterans, Employers, Service Providers and Trade Associations to inform survey and focus group protocols
- Focus Groups (16 in-person, One Electronic)
- Survey of Veterans
- Comprehensive Review of the Literature (General about Veterans, Higher Education, Employment, and Entrepreneurship)

# **CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S VETERAN STUDENTS**



# CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S VETERAN STUDENTS

- May have served multiple tours of duty
- Many are married and have children
- May have physical disabilities like missing limbs or mental health issues like PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs), or depression

# CHARACTERISTICS OF TODAY'S VETERANS

- Typically enroll in their Mid to Late Twenties delaying college by five years
- Many times classified as transfer students
- Approximately 59% veterans use the GI Bill to fund their education
- Primarily attend community colleges and for-profit institutions and private and public institutions at lower rates.

# OVERVIEW OF CAMPUS CLIMATE TYPES



# OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF CAMPUS CLIMATES

- **Supportive climate** - “Veteran-friendly” because of the efforts made at an institutional level by faculty and administrators to support them
- **Ambivalent climate** - Typically an urban or commuter campus that has a large population of non-traditional students
- **Challenging Climate** - Veteran students conceal their military identity to avoid judgement, confrontation, and criticism on campus and within a potentially hostile classroom atmosphere



# HOW TO BE A “VETERAN-FRIENDLY” SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS?

- Academic credit for military education and training
- Disability services
- Having appointed Military/Veteran student representatives in offices
- Creating Military and Veteran Student Offices



# MILITARY AND VETERAN STUDENT OFFICES & SERVICES

- Serve as a “one-stop shop” for GI Bill Certification, act as a referral agent on campus
- Student Veteran Organizations
- Peer Mentorship Programs
- Veteran Orientation Programs
- Green Zone Programs



# **WHAT ARE VETERANS AND ADMINISTRATORS SAYING?**



# FINANCIAL & FAMILY CONCERNS

- Finances are a major concern returning to college
- Can use GI Bill up quickly if not careful
- Building institutional financial support to supplement veterans GI Bill
- Focused on getting their degree to get a job, not concerned with some of the services we provide because they need to support their families



# FINANCIAL & FAMILY CONCERNS

- Concern about how the families are doing because there is little to no spousal or family support (for relocating, finding a job, assistance with housing, childcare, etc.)
- Proximity to base is important because family considerations are important
- Integrating family into the students' experiences
- Medical Resources and/or no insurance for families
- VA hospital may not be close to campus



# EDUCATING THE CAMPUS & ROLE OF VETERANS

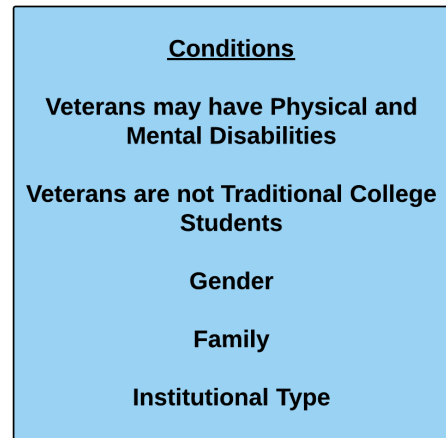
- Lack of understanding by faculty, staff, and other students
- Veteran & Military Student Services Office staffed with veterans
- Veteran Peer Mentoring & Student Organizations are important
- Green Zone programs led by veteran students and administrators
- Veterans Caucuses
- Treat veterans with “kid gloves”

# PARTNERING WITH VETERANS TO ADDRESS CAMPUS ISSUES WITH OTHER STUDENT GROUPS

- One Veteran Student organization advisor challenged the veterans to work with other groups on issues of inclusion and diversity because of their experiences in the military with other races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, etc.
- Started “Honest Space” discussion sessions with Veteran students and non-veteran groups to share views and find ways to work together
- Groups included the African American campus group during the last year of protests
- Planned group discussions include transgendered students and other underrepresented populations

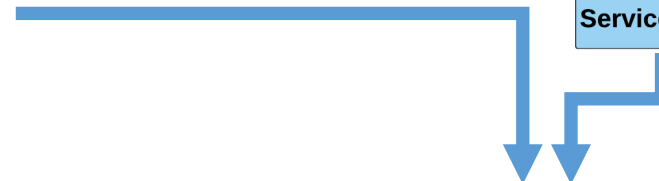
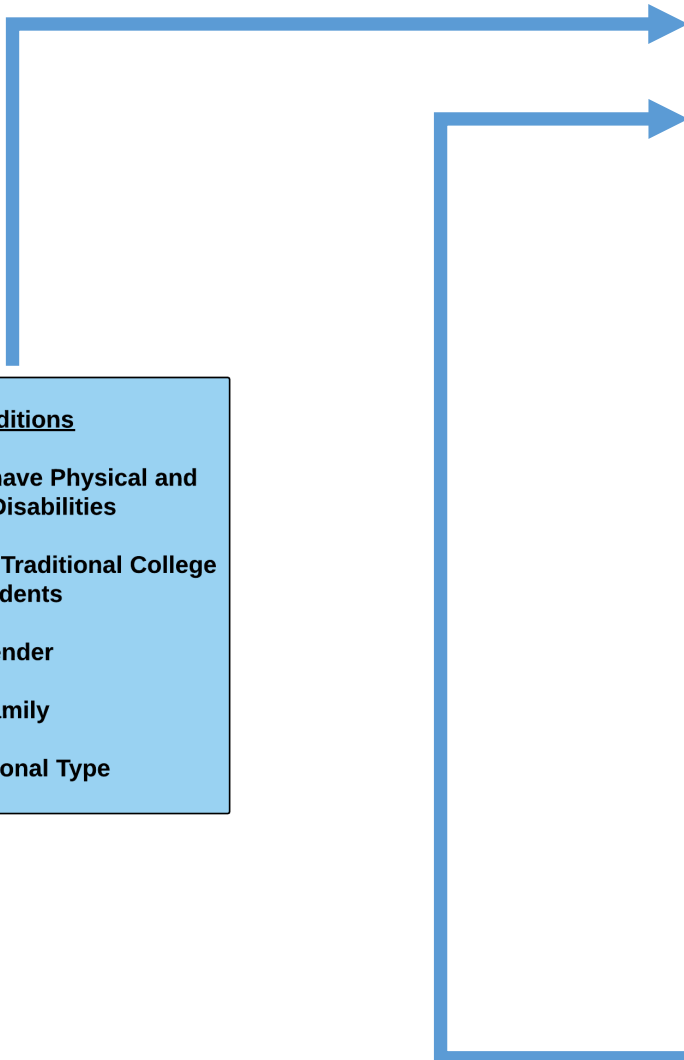
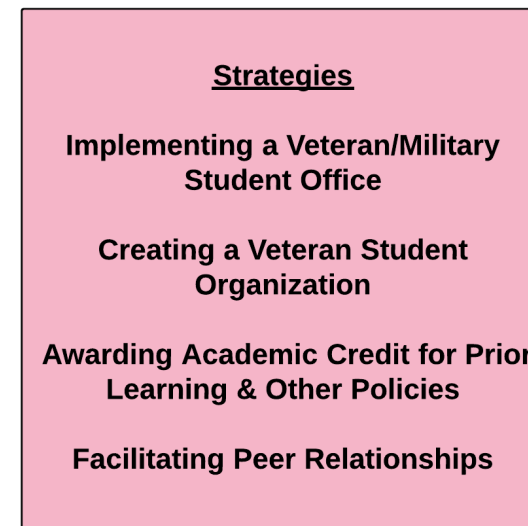
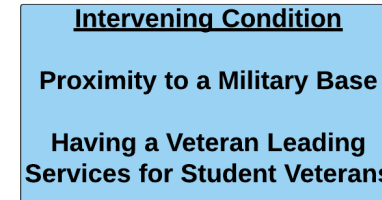
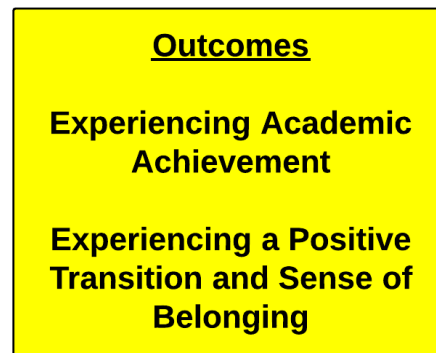
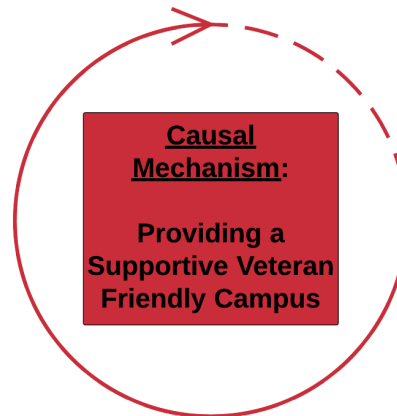
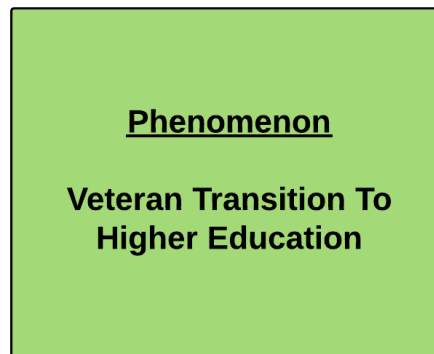
# WRAP-UP

# LITERATURE ABOUT VETERANS



Context

Reduction in the military through Troop Draw-downs and Transitions out of the Military





# TAKEAWAYS FROM VETERANS & ADMINISTRATORS

- Veteran's Finances & Family are intertwined issues
- Need to provide a holistic view of services for Veterans and their families
- Centralized services staffed and/or led by veterans
- Need to educate faculty, staff, and other students about veterans and their experiences
- Veterans are focused on getting their degree and are not focused on the other services provided

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## QUESTIONS?

# INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INFORMATION

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*For Additional information on the study please contact Project Director Mary Beth Dunkenberger, [mdunkenb@vt.edu](mailto:mdunkenb@vt.edu) or Martha Mead, Engagement Manager, [mmead@streamlinesllc.com](mailto:mmead@streamlinesllc.com).*