Mission Status Curious: Evaluating Causes of Veteran Students’ Underperformance in College Classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

- Veterans using GI Bill benefits increased by 566,393 between 2000 to 2013.

- Indicates a trend in increasing enrollment for vets.

- As a vet myself, I found both advantages and disadvantages to being a vet in school.

- I was curious to see how similar my experience is to other vets in school.
INITIAL INVESTIGATION

• Original Question:
  – In general, how well do veterans transition from military to college as reflected by graduation rates and grades nation-wide?

• Complications
  – Lack of national data of veteran performance in school.
  – Some graduation rates exist, but can be misleading. GPA levels of vets not reported.
  – No clear indicator of student veteran performance nationally.

• Solution
  – Scope of research reduced to a single community college in a suburban area of Southern California.
  – GPA data was obtained from the school’s Registrar in order to compare GPA rates of veterans and non-veterans

[Image: college.usatoday.com]
Breakdown of GPA

- GPA for each demographic broken down into 0.5 point ranges.

- Exception to range parameters is the pie piece of “< 2.0” which is made up of all students in each demographic who earned a GPA of less than a 2.0.

- Non-Vets who earn below a 2.0 GPA are placed on academic probation and could lose financial aid.

- Vets earning below a 2.0 GPA are placed on academic probation by the VA and could lose GI Bill benefits.
A Closer Look

- Stats are clearer when we compare Honors Program eligibility and at risk status of GPA at or below 2.5

- The percent of non-vets eligible for the Honors program is the exact same as the percent of vets in the at risk category.
IMPLICATIONS

• There is an inversion of GPA between veterans and non-veterans.

• Close to half of the non-vets could be honors students while close to half of the vets could lose GI Bill benefits.

• Further research was needed to try and determine why this gap exists.
RESEARCH OVERVIEW

What is this research investigating?

• Primary questions:
  – What factors are the GPA performance drivers?
  – How different are these factors between vets and non-vets?
  – How could this translate into help for either student type who might be struggling?

– **Hypothesis**: Tutorial and Health Services would be biggest drivers of GPA for vets

Method of Research

• Survey
  – Random participants
  – Limited to a single campus

• Regression Model Comparison
  – Compared relationship of single factors to GPA
  – Relationship strength relative to other models.
  – Single variable regressions
Branch of Service

Air Force: 28.00%
Army: 27.50%
Marine Corps: 11.50%
Navy: 22.50%
Coast Guard: 10.00%
Gender

![Bar chart showing gender distribution]

- **Male**: 90.00%
- **Female**: 60.00%
- **Neither**: 0.00%

Legend:
- Veteran
- Non-Veteran
- Non-Veteran 21-40
Learning Style

Auditory

Visual

Active

Veteran
Non-Veteran
Non-Veteran 21-40

0.00%
10.00%
20.00%
30.00%
40.00%
50.00%
60.00%
70.00%
80.00%
90.00%
100.00%
FACTORS EXAMINED

- Age
- Time between high school and college enrollment
- Time between military service and college enrollment
- Total time in military service
- Extent of disabilities if present
- College performance compared to expected performance
- Performance in high school
- Confidence in achieving academic goals
- Stress levels
- Perceived impact of military skills learned
- Perceived impact of military experiences
- Usage of campus facilities and services
- Social connection to other students on campus
- Social connection to other veterans on campus
- Level of connection to professors
- Perceived level of campus support
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**GPA VS CONFIDENCE IN ACADEMIC GOALS**

“What is your level of confidence in your ability to achieve your academic goals?”

(Likert Scale: 1 = no confidence to 5 = utmost confidence)

**Veteran**

R Square: 0.33  
Adjusted R Square: 0.29  
Significance F: 0.01

**Non-Veteran 21-40**

R Square: 0.10  
Adjusted R Square: 0.09  
Significance F: 0.00
GPA VS CONNECTION TO PROFESSORS

“In general, how connected do you feel to your professors?”
(Likert Scale: 1 = no confidence to 5 = utmost confidence)

Veteran

R Square: 0.06
Adjusted R Square: 0.00
Significance F: 0.34

Non-Veteran 21-40

R Square: 0.00
Adjusted R Square: -0.01
Significance F: 0.82
GPA VS CONNECTION TO OTHER STUDENTS

“In general, how would you describe your level of social connection with other students on campus?”
(Likert Scale: 1 = no connection  to 5 = very close connection)

Veteran

R Square: 0.29
Adjusted R Square: 0.25
Significance F: 0.02

Non-Veteran 21-40

R Square: 0.00
Adjusted R Square: 0.00
Significance F: 0.51
GPA VS CONNECTION TO OTHER VETERANS

“In general, how would you describe your level of social connection to other veterans on campus?”

(Likert Scale: 1 = no confidence to 5 = utmost confidence)

R Square: 0.09
Adjusted R Square: 0.04
Significance F: 0.22
Conclusion

• These results are by no means a final answer to the question.

• Results indicate which areas to focus on for further research and which areas to spend less time studying.

• Additional research needed on even more specific social connection factors to see how those specific factors influence both GPA and study habits for veterans.
Works Consulted

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