STUDENT VETERANS OF AMERICA 
PRESENTS A PROFILE STUDY OF THE 
CONTEMPORARY STUDENT VETERAN 
BASED ON RESEARCH RESULTS FROM THE 
NATIONAL VETERAN EDUCATION SUCCESS TRACKER 
AND 2016 SVA CENSUS.
WE ASKED

1. How well do student veterans perform in higher education?
2. What is the demographic profile of the contemporary student veteran?
Our results show not only that student veterans are performing well compared to their peers but that the public’s premise about student veterans is wrong.
MYTH
Veterans are less likely than their peers to persist and earn a degree.

FACT
Veterans are more likely to graduate than their peers.

TAHLIA BURTON
Columbia University | Air Force Veteran | BA in Political Science, 2017
When we compare student veterans’ graduation rates to the graduation rates of older, non-traditional students, student veterans far outpace students in similar age groups and life situations.
To date, using the GI Bill, more than 340,000 veterans have completed a post-secondary degree or certificate.
STUDENT VETERAN POST-SECONDARY OUTCOMES SINCE 2009

Success Rate: A “success” in this report is defined as any student veteran who has completed a post-secondary certificate or degree, or who was enrolled in a postsecondary program during the academic term prior to the data match.
WE PROJECT THE POST-9/11 GI BILL WILL FUND 100,000 DEGREES EVERY YEAR.
PERCENTAGE WHO ARE FEMALE IN EACH GROUP

- CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE MILITARY: 16-18%
- ARE/HAVE UTILIZED GI BILL: 20%
- COMPLETED A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE WITH GI BILL: 23%

- 20%
- 23%
MYTH
Veterans do not perform well academically in post-secondary education.

FACT
Veterans have a higher GPA than the national average.

NICOLAS MARINELLI
University of Massachusetts Lowell | Army-National Guard Veteran studying Chemical Engineering with a concentration in Nanomaterials
NATIONALLY, POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS EARN A 2.94 GPA (GRADE POINT AVERAGE). STUDENT VETERANS HOLD THEMSELVES TO A HIGHER STANDARD: THEY’RE EARNING A 3.35 GPA.

Non-veteran GPA Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics
MYTH

STUDENT VETERANS PREFER TO EARN DEGREES THAT ARE SIMILAR TO THE JOB(S) THEY HAD WHILE IN THE MILITARY.

FACT

A majority report that their major or field of study is not at all similar to their specialization in the military.
PERCENT OF STUDENT VETERANS IN FIELDS OF STUDY SIMILAR TO THEIR MILITARY SPECIALIZATION

63% NOT SIMILAR AT ALL
17% A LITTLE SIMILAR
11% SOMEWHAT SIMILAR
8% VERY SIMILAR
2% EXACTLY THE SAME

Figures do not total 100% due to rounding.
MYTH
STUDENT VETERANS PURSUE LESS ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS DEGREES.

FACT
A majority pursue degrees in business, STEM, and healthcare-related fields.

CHIBUZOR OZILIGBO
Georgia Tech | Navy Veteran | Top 10% in Class | MS in Engineering, 2016
Of the 453,508 degrees and certificates student veterans have earned, more than 51,486 of them, or approximately 14%, were in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math) fields.

STEM is defined by the conservative grouping of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math that excludes the social sciences.
SO WHAT DOES THE CONTEMPORARY
STUDENT VETERAN
LOOK LIKE?
HOW LIKELY ARE THEY TO

- Be **OLDER** than their fellow students
- Have a **DISABILITY**
- Be **MARRIED** and have **CHILDREN**
- Be **WORKING** full- or part-time
- Be a member of other **VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**
- Have **EDUCATIONAL LOANS**
- Have a **PARENT** who earned a degree
- Be a **FIRST-GENERATION** student
Today’s student veteran is more likely to be over the age of 25, married, and pursuing an undergraduate degree that’s different than their occupation in the military.
Disability can be seen or unseen. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), a disability rating is determined by VA for an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service.
MARRIED OR HAVE CHILDREN

45% ARE MARRIED.
31% ARE SINGLE.
MORE THAN 10% ARE DIVORCED.

46% HAVE CHILDREN;
THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY ARE IN DUEL-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS.

A majority of children are six or older.
EMPLOYMENT

46%

WORK FULL OR PART-TIME WHILE IN SCHOOL.
COMMUNITY SERVICE

12% are members of Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

13% belong to the American Legion

13% are members of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
EDUCATIONAL FUNDING

32% USE FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS AND PERSONAL SAVINGS

70% USE THE GI BILL

9% RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS FROM THEIR SCHOOL
PARENTS’ EDUCATION

67% HAVE A PARENT(S) WITH SOME COLLEGE TRAINING WHO DID NOT EARN A DEGREE.
Demographic data source: 2016 SVA Census
Student veteran outcome data: National Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST)
Learn more at research.studentveterans.org

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