Midwestern Frontier University's Readiness to Support Student Veterans

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Abstract

America's veterans are driven to success and that drive does not end when they leave the military. They want to continue to be productive and accomplish their goals in a new way. For many veterans, higher education is the next step. In 2016, over 700 student veterans attended Midwest Frontier University and student veteran enrollment continues to increase each semester. The goal of this study was to assess how prepared Midwest Frontier University is to address student veteran needs using a cross-sectional convenience sample of faculty and staff members (*N=114*) who completed an anonymous quantitative survey. The findings are divided into three major sections: awareness, needs and barriers as identified by faculty and staff members. The awareness area is focused on existing specific services offered to student veterans. The needs section is further focused on what student veteran needs are at the university as perceived by staff and faculty members. The final section, barriers, explains obstacles that the university currently faces to address student veteran needs as highlighted by the participants. Results indicate that the university is supportive of student veteran needs, but both training for faculty and staff on the student veteran population as well as a centralized online resource are areas of greatest need.

Keywords: Student Veterans, Higher Education, University Preparedness, Staff and Faculty Awareness

Introduction

During Operation Iraq Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), thousands of Americans joined the armed forces. Since 2014, which marked the end of OEF, many of these veterans are transitioning out of the military and into higher education. With the creation of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the financial burden for veterans to earn a college degree has been significantly reduced (Vacchi & Berger, 2014). However, there are other barriers that can affect student veteran success. Such barriers include lack of institutional support, bureaucratic obstacles, poor connection with non-traditional student peers and difficulty transitioning into a civilian lifestyle (Livingston, 2009). In order to retain this group of students, higher education institutions need to be prepared to help student veterans persist in the academic setting. As one student veteran stated, "If colleges are not prepared to help transition soldiers from combat, you run the risk of losing an entire generation" (Veterans Returning, 2016, para. 5).

Student veterans can feel a sense of alienation on campus due to the differences between higher education and the military culture (O'Herrin, 2011). In Norman, et al.'s (2015) qualitative study of 31 student veterans, one of the themes that emerged from the interviews was lack of support from staff and faculty. It was suggested that staff and faculty could take a training on the military culture to better understand the strengths and barriers that student veterans face. In their book, Arminio, Grabosky, and Lang discuss the multi-case study they conducted at two college campuses. In their study of 16 higher education employees and 14 students, they found that staff and faculty do not understand student veterans as a cultural group, which led to frustration and misunderstandings among student veterans (2015, p. 39). This could be the result of staff and faculty not understanding

the depth of military training and experience that many student veterans have (Callahan & Jarrat, 2014). The disconnect between student veterans, staff, and faculty could be the result of the military-civilian gap. The United States military can be described as "the other 1% -some 2.4 million troops have fought in and around Afghanistan and Iraq since 9/11, exactly 1% of the 240 million Americans over 18" (Thompson, 2011, para. 5). As a result, the cultural importance of the military could be overlooked. Faculty and staff members can learn from trainings about military involvement and who student veterans are as a group. Once staff and faculty have a better understanding of student veteran culture, they can become more aware of how to build on student veteran strengths and thus reduce some of the misunderstandings. Educating staff and faculty about veteran experiences and culture is one of the most important factors for integrating student veterans into campus life (Parks, Walker & Smith, 2015).

Midwestern Frontier University

The university that this study focused on is in a frontier state. It provides a rural setting, small class sizes, and low-priced tuition. In 2009, stakeholders at the university began to recognize that there was a developing subpopulation of non-traditional students who were student veterans (staff Veteran Services Center, personal communication, September 8, 2016). Because of this awareness, Midwestern Frontier University already has services in place to assist student veterans. A Veteran Services Center was opened eight years ago with the intention to provide a one-stop-shop for student veterans to find resources, connect with other veterans, and have a devoted space.

The university has a long-standing history of support for military. In its early years, the university maintained military programing as required by the stipulations of being a land grant institution under the 1862 Morrill Act. The requirement to participate in military preparedness also set a tradition of student enlistment and returning to the university after service. However, the campus no longer has an abundance of staff and faculty who have a familiarity with the military culture, which has created a lack of awareness of who student veterans are and what challenges they face.

The theoretical framework that drove this study is Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support. In 2014, Vacchi & Berger developed a model of support that includes four key areas that college campuses should address in order to support student veteran persistence: services, support, transition support, and academic interactions. Services include the needs of student veterans such as educational benefits, health care, and disability services. Support for student veterans has two areas: peer support and general support. Peer support includes student veteran centers, groups, and veteran cultural events. General support is faculty, staff, and student understanding of the student veteran population. Transition support helps student veterans adjust from the military mindset to the campus culture. This includes veteran specific orientation and courses, outreach options, and a liaison to assist student veterans in navigating the campus. Academic interactions include the classroom setting, interactions with faculty and staff, advising and the campus climate. Using the Model for Student Veteran Support, the level of the university's preparedness to address student veteran needs can be better evaluated.

Most research on student veterans has focused on barriers that student veterans face in a higher education setting (Livingston, 2009). Further, previous studies have targeted student veteran's perceptions of higher education settings readiness to address their needs (Zinger & Cohen, 2010). It is clear that research has not focused on staff and faculty perceptions of how prepared higher education settings are to address student veteran needs (McBain, Kim, Cook, & Snead, 2012). There continues to be an increase of student veteran enrollment nationally and at the university at the center of this study. With the understanding of what student veteran needs are, the intent of this

research was to focus on how prepared staff and faculty are to assist in the effort to support student veteran persistence.

Research Questions

This exploratory study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) How aware are the faculty and staff of what student veteran needs are; and (2) what barriers does the university face when serving the needs of student veterans?

Methods

Design

A cross-sectional convenience sample of 114 faculty and staff members were recruited from Midwest Frontier University who completed an anonymous survey (either online using SurveyMonkey or a paper survey).

Recruitment

Both online and paper surveys included the same questions. Prior to starting the survey, there were five eligibility questions to determine if the participant is a staff or faculty member and if they have interacted with or have specialized knowledge of student veterans. Both the electronic and paper versions took approximately the same time to complete. Some of the response categories in the surveys were adapted from McBain et al. (2012), previously used to assess services to student veterans on campuses.

Online surveys. A recruitment email with the researcher's contact information and a link to the online survey was sent out to university-wide staff and faculty listservs. Once the participant received the email request, which also served as the informed consent for participants, they were redirected to the survey. Word of mouth was also utilized to increase the response rate as well a flyer targeted at faculty and staff members. The flyer provided the link to the online survey as well as a QR code that linked directly to the survey.

Paper surveys. The paper surveys were available around the campus with two locked drop boxes. Only the researcher had access to the completed surveys. Each survey had a cover letter that served as the informed consent for participants. Drop boxes were collected at end of the study period.

In appreciation of their time, participants were offered a chance to enter a drawing to win one of five $20 gift certificates from the campus book store. Contact information of those who chose to participate in the drawing was kept separately from the surveys to protect their identity.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted using IBM's SPSS Statistics 24 (2015) software. The survey data that was collected were compiled into data summaries presented in form of tables to reflect views of the participants. The open-ended questions were summarized to generate common themes.

Results

Participant Characteristics

A total of 114 staff and faculty members completed the survey. Of the 114 participants, 63 identified themselves as staff, 45 as faculty members, and 1 participant identified as other. Out of the 114 participants, 105 took the survey online.

Table 1 Staff Type (n=63)

Characteristics

Type	N	%
Full-Time	60	95.2%
Part-Time	3	4.8%

Table 2 Faculty Type (n=45)
Characteristics

Type	N	%
Professor	13	28.9%
Associate Professor	11	24.4%
Assistant Professor	8	17.8%
Academic Professional	12	26.7%
Academic Advisor	1	2.2%

Note. 5 participants skipped the question.

The majority of staff members (almost 90%) indicated that they had interacted with student veterans at the university, but few indicated they have specialized knowledge of the student veteran population. Almost all of the faculty participants have interacted with student veterans at the university. Very few (< 20%) had specialized knowledge of the student veteran population.

The findings are divided into three major sections: awareness, needs and barriers as identified by faculty and staff members. The awareness area is focused on existing specific services offered to student veterans. The needs section is further focused on what student veteran needs are at the university as perceived by staff and faculty members. The section on barriers explains obstacles that the university currently faces to address student veteran needs as highlighted by the participants.

Awareness

Participants identified ways in which the university already provides programming and support services to student veterans.

Staff. Over half were aware of the Veteran Services Center. Nearly fifty percent were aware of tutoring services to student veterans and 60% were aware of any academic advising for student veterans (SV). At the same time, half of staff participants were not aware of student specific orientation or employment assistance. Nearly half of the participants identified that there are no veteran specific tutoring options. 65% of the faculty participants were aware of VA educational benefit counseling for student veterans at the university (see Table 2 below).

Table 2 SV specific services provided by campus (n=63)
Programs Specific for Student Veterans as indicated by staff members

Programs	N	%
Academic Advising	38	60.3%
Tutoring	31	49.2%
Career Planning	26	41.3%
Orientation	31	49.2%
Financial Aid	39	61.9%

VA Education Benefit Counseling	41	65.1%
Employment Assistance	30	47.6%
Student Lounge	35	55.6%
Transition Assistance	34	54%
None of the above	1	1.6%
Other	9	14.3%

Faculty. Faculty marked lower than staff about what services are currently available to student veterans. There is student veteran specific tutoring and academic advising, but over half of faculty participants were unaware of these services. Faculty is aware of programs and services available on campus for student veterans and are aware of the dedicated student lounge for student veterans, which is the Veteran Services Center.

Faculty is less informed about services available to student veterans at the university. Half of faculty participants were unaware of financial aid services provided to student veterans. Fifty-two percent were aware of academic advising for student veterans. Over half of the faculty participants were aware of VA educational benefit counseling for student veterans at the university (see Table 3 below).

Table 3 SV services provided by campus (n=50)
Programs Specific for SV

Programs	N	%
Academic Advising	26	52%
Tutoring	18	36%
Career Planning	21	42%
Orientation	22	44%
Financial Aid	25	50%
VA Education Benefit Counseling	29	58%
Employment Assistance	16	32%
Student Lounge	21	42%
Transition Assistance	22	44%
None of the above	5	10%
Other	6	12%

Needs

Staff and faculty identified financial stress related to education expenses and delayed benefits as the most pressing issue affecting student veterans at the university. Staff and faculty did not see adjustment to the campus culture as a need.

Staff. Staff did not identify social acculturation as the top need of student veterans. Receiving financial aid and degree retention were identified as the top needs for SVs (see Table 4)

Table 4 Are you aware of issues related to SV that have been identified as priorities (n=63)
Priority Issues

Priorities	N	%
Social Acculturation	19	30.2%
Academic Advising	22	34.9%
Financial Aid	24	38.1%
Degree Retention	24	38.1%
Health Care	21	33.3%

Disability Services	23	36.5%
Unsure	23	36.5%
Other	1	1.6%

In Table 5, staff identified financial stress related to tuition and educational expenses as most pressing issue affecting student veterans at the University. Over fifty percent of staff participants did not see inclusion to the campus climate as an issue for SVs. Nearly half of the staff participants felt that student veterans do not have a clear understanding of VA educational benefits and saw it as an area of need.

Table 5 Most Pressing Issue Affecting SV (n=63)
Most Pressing Issues

Issues	N	%
Financial issues related to tuition/education expenses	36	57.1%
Financial issues related to housing	22	34.9%
Financial issues related to delayed benefits	27	42.9%
Appropriate housing	14	22.2%
Child care	18	28.6%
Clear understanding of VA educational benefits	30	47.6%
Health issues related to service	23	36.5%
Inclusion to campus climate	27	42.9%
Faculty/staff understanding	27	42.9%
Academic related stress	28	44.4%
Degree retention/completion	23	36.5%
Job placement after graduation	17	27%
Other	2	3.2%

Faculty. Nearly 80% of faculty did not see social acculturation as a need of student veterans. Faculty (30%) saw degree retention for student veterans as an issue. Over half of the participants were unsure of what issues SV face, which highlights that faculty is not aware of what SV needs are (see Table 6).

Table 6 Are you aware of issues related to SV that have been identified as priorities (n=50)
Priority Issues

Priorities	N	%
Social Acculturation	11	22%
Academic Advising	10	20%
Financial Aid	13	26%
Degree Retention	15	30%
Health Care	16	32%
Disability Services	11	22%
Unsure	26	52%
Other	1	

Fifty-two percent of faculty participants identified financial stress due to delayed VA benefits as a pressing issue for student veterans. Nearly half of them saw inclusion to the campus climate as an issue for student veterans. This contradicts the earlier finding that social acculturation was not a need (see Table 7).

Table *7* Most Pressing Issue Affecting SV (n=50)

Most Pressing Issues

Issues	N	%
Financial issues related to tuition/education expenses	22	44%
Financial issues related to housing	15	30%
Financial issues related to delayed benefits	26	52%
Appropriate housing	13	26%
Child care	14	28%
Clear understanding of VA educational benefits	21	42%
Health issues related to service	24	48%
Inclusion to campus climate	24	48%
Faculty/staff understanding	20	40%
Academic related stress	26	52%
Degree retention/completion	24	48%
Job placement after graduation	10	20%

Barriers

Overall, the participants identified the lack of training on the student veteran culture as a barrier to providing service to this important group on campus. Staff participants (44%) identified the lack of training on the student veteran population as a barrier. Faculty and staff insensitivity towards the student veteran population is also identified as a barrier (44%). Twenty-eight percent were unsure of what institutional barriers are related to student veterans (see Table 8).

Table 8 Staff members' awareness of institutional barriers related to SVs at the university (n=63)

Institutional Barriers

Barriers	N	%
Faculty/staff insensitivity	28	44.4%
Staff not trained to address SV needs	28	44.4%
Insufficient Staffing for SV programs	18	28.6%
Course withdraws due to deployment	20	31.7%
Issues locating funding sources	20	31.7%
Lack of access to campus resources	10	15.9%
Unsure	18	28.6%
Other	2	3.2%

Thirty-eight percent of the staff population was aware of the eligibility for student veterans to qualify for instate tuition. Half of staff also knew that there are veteran specific scholarships on campus (see Table 9).

Table 9 Financial assistance for SV as perceived by staff (n=63)

Financial Specific for SV

Financial Assistance	N	%
Discounted tuition rates	13	20.6%
Eligibility for instate tuition	24	38.1%
Scholarships	32	50.8%
Tuition waiver	5	7.9%
None of the above	3	4.8%
Other	8	12.7%

Sixty percent of the staff participants saw funding as the greatest challenge that the university faces when addressing student veteran needs. Nearly half identified that there is a lack of space on campus for a student veteran center. Forty-six percent recognized identification and tracking of student veterans as a challenge. Seventy percent did not see cultural competency as a challenge while providing services to student veterans (see Table 10).

Table 10 Campus Challenges in Addressing SVs Needs as perceived as staff members (n=63)
Challenges

Challenges	N	%
Space availability on campus for SV center	29	46%
Funding	38	60.3%
Identification/ tracking SVs	29	46%
Degree retention/completion	29	46%
Cultural competency	19	30.2%
Other	4	6.3%

Faculty. Half of the faculty participants identified faculty and staff insensitivity towards the student veteran population as a barrier that the university may face while providing services to student veterans. This challenges the previous finding that staff and faculty understanding is not a need. Nearly half reported that the lack of training for staff and faculty on the student veteran population is a barrier. Forty-two percent identified issues locating funding sources as an intuitional barrier (see Table 11).

Table 11 Are you aware of institutional barriers related to SVs at MFU? (n=50)
Institutional Barriers

Barriers	N	%
Faculty/staff insensitivity	25	50%
Staff not trained to address SV needs	24	48%
Insufficient Staffing for SV programs	17	34%
Course withdraws due to deployment	21	42%
Issues locating funding sources	21	42%
Lack of access to campus resources	10	20%
Unsure	13	26%
Other	3	6%

Faculty were unaware of financial assistance for student veterans. Sixty percent were not aware that student veterans can qualify for instate tuition and over half did not know that there are veteran specific scholarships available (see Table 12).

Table 12 Financial assistance for student veterans (n=50)

Financial Assistance	N	%
Discounted tuition rates	16	32%
Eligibility for instate tuition	20	40%
Scholarships	19	38%
Tuition waiver	5	10%
None of the above	2	4%
Other	8	16%

Fifty-two percent of the faculty participants also saw funding as the greatest challenge that university faces when addressing student veteran needs. Half of faculty participants saw degree retention and completion as a major challenge. Forty percent saw identification and tracking of student veterans as a challenge (see Table 13).

Table 13 Campus Challenges in Addressing SVs Needs (n=50)
Campus Challenges

Challenges	N	%
Space availability on campus for SV center	16	32%
Funding	26	52%
Identification/ tracking SVs	20	40%
Degree retention/completion	26	52%
Cultural competency	19	38%
Other	9	18%

Discussion

The findings from this study (to assess how prepared Midwestern Frontier University is to address student veteran needs) are focused on three areas: awareness of existing support services for student veterans, needs of student veterans, and barriers that the university faces when addressing those needs as perceived by a sample staff and faculty members recruited using electronic surveys.

Awareness

As identified by faculty and staff members, the university has support services for student veterans. Staff members seemed to be more aware of specific services currently available to student veterans compared to faculty members. While the participants (both staff and faculty members) were aware of most services, they were unsure of specific student veteran services such as, employment services, specific academic advising, and counseling services. Awareness of what services are available and how to access them, helps to create an atmosphere of support for student veterans (Coll & Weiss, 2015). More than half of the faculty participants were unaware of student veteran specific tutoring services, academic advising, educational benefits, or financial aid available to student veterans. A basic awareness of the available resources is one-way faculty can help student veterans succeed (Vacchi, 2012). Over half of the participants were not knowledgeable about transition services provided to student veterans. The transition from service member to student is critical. One way to assist in this transition is by increasing faculty and staff understanding of student veterans. Positive interactions with faculty can be a key factor to helping student veterans to socially adapt to campus life and can aid in their persistence (Vacchi & Berger, 2014). In this study, to increase faculty and staff support of student veterans, there needs to be awareness about different support systems available to student veterans at the university. The programs the university has in place for these students does not change the level of awareness staff and faculty have of what student veteran needs are and how to support.

Needs

Staff and faculty saw degree persistence as a priority issue for student veterans at the university (34.2%). Issues related to tuition were perceived as a need for student veterans by faculty and staff (50.9%). Academic related stress was another perceived area of need (47.4%). The data does show a discrepancy between staff and faculty understanding versus staff and faculty insensitivity. Half of the staff, and nearly half of the faculty, felt that staff and faculty insensitivity

towards student veterans was a barrier; sixty percent of faculty did not feel like understanding of the student veteran culture was a need. Staff and faculty did not see adjustment to civilian norms as a need for student veterans. Student veterans must adjust to not only civilian norms, but also to the social norms and the cultural environment of higher education (Morreale, 2011). This highlights that staff and faculty at this university may understand student veterans as a cultural group. For student veterans, difficulty adjusting is related to the socialization differences found between the military and higher education (Vacchi & Berger, 2014). The lack of understanding of what student veterans' needs are can cause miscommunications and increase student veteran alienation on campuses (Parks, Walker & Smith, 2015). The majority of staff and faculty (43% of the sample) respondents were unaware of what student veteran needs are. The lack of training identified highlights how limited staff and faculty knowledge is of what student veteran needs are.

Barriers

Staff and faculty identified funding for student veterans as an institutional barrier. Sixty percent of staff and fifty percent of faculty saw funding as a barrier to addressing SV needs. Because many use the GI Bill, these results could indicate that there is an issue with the timeliness and quality of how the university is processing the educational benefits (Vacchi & Berger, 2014). Issues with processing GI Bill funding is a barrier to supporting these students. It could also represent the lack of understanding that staff and faculty have about student veterans and the GI Bill structure. Both study populations (staff and faculty members) reported a lack of training about the student veteran population, 72.8% reported that there is no faculty training provided and 69.3% marked that there is no staff training on student veterans. Training for staff and faculty on the military culture could help them to understand student veterans' skills and strengths that can benefit the academic environment (Norman, et al., 2015). Staff and faculty identified that there is a lack of sensitivity for student veterans on campus (46.5%). Increasing the awareness of staff and faculty about veteran experiences and culture is critical. It is one of the most important factors for integrating student veterans into campus life (Parks, Walker & Smith, 2015). Without understanding what student veteran needs are, there is a barrier to assist them. The findings show that both staff and faculty members identified that services could be improved by providing some type of training on student veterans.

Limitations

The present study utilized non-probability, convenience sampling to recruit participants. As a result, self-selection bias was introduced to the study. Additionally, this study only captured the perceptions of faculty and staff members of Midwest Frontier University, therefore the results may not be generalizable.

Implications

Midwestern Frontier University

In its mission statement, Midwestern Frontier University determined four areas of focus: exposing students to educational opportunities; individual interactions among students, faculty, and staff; providing an environment that promotes diversity and respect; and opportunities for personal growth and leadership development.

As identified in the university's mission statement, there is a focus on creating interaction between staff and faculty and students. For student veterans, this interaction can be strained if staff and faculty do not understand the veteran population. The lack of understanding of the student veteran population is one of the greatest barriers that student veterans face on campuses (Parks, Walker & Smith, 2015). The university recognizes that diversity and mutual respect are values on

campus. The student veteran population is diverse, and they bring rich experiences to the higher education setting (O'Herrin, 2011). The final focus of the university is to promote opportunities for growth. In order to successfully transition into the student role, student veterans must feel like they belong and are supported in the university community.

The university is supportive of student veterans, but there are still barriers. Many faculty and staff members recommended having online resources for quick reference on how to assist student veterans. Increasing the coordination and visibility of student veteran services, campuses can be better prepared to address student veteran needs (Selber, Chavkin & Biggs, 2015). To fulfill its mission statement the university will need to work on reducing the barriers to address student veteran needs.

Recommendations

Discussion Panels

Staff and faculty at the university are required to participate in many trainings. Because of this, training on the student veteran population would need to be concise, engaging and impactful. Other higher education institutions have implemented "discussion panels" that consist of key speakers who are knowledgeable about the student veteran population, as well as student veterans who want to be involved in providing insight about the student veteran culture (Osborne, 2013). Topics could include characteristics of the student veteran population, aspects of the military culture, transition assistance, resources available on campus, as well as a question and answer segments. These discussions should highlight the importance of not generalizing student veterans, rather identifying them as a diverse and unique student group on campus (Vacchi & Berger, 2014). Given the busy schedule of orientation, these discussion panels should be held at the end of the fall semester or the beginning of the spring semester for stronger faculty, staff and student attendance. These could be done on a yearly basis that can provide a forum for staff and faculty to not only ask questions, but also engage with representatives of the student veteran population.

Virtual Role-Plays

Another option that has been used by other college campuses is online trainings for staff and faculty to learn skills through simulated role playing on how to assist student veterans. Researchers Cate and Albright (2015) completed a quasi-experimental post hoc study on 758 faculty and staff from 20 different college campuses to see how an online training would prepare participants to address student veteran needs. The study evaluated Kognito's online training titled, "Veterans on Campus." This online simulated role-play was created with a partner organization, Student Veterans of America. It takes 30 minutes to complete and walks participants through three conversations with student veterans facing different obstacles in their higher education. Results from this study showed that staff and faculty gained cultural competency about the military and veteran culture, gained skills to discuss needs and barriers with student veterans and knowledge of how and when to refer a student veteran for resources available on campus (the training can be adapted to specific campus resources). The scenarios in the training could give staff and faculty the opportunity to simulate what a supportive interaction with student veterans could be. It could also give staff and faculty the chance to explore their assumptions of the veteran culture without negatively impacting a potential relationship with a student veteran. This training could be useful because staff and faculty have many demands and utilizing an online training could be a more flexible option. The training should be accessible for faculty and staff on a student veteran specific website that is linked on the university's homepage.

Veteran Specific Website

Finally, several staff and faculty participants identified a gap in their ability to refer resources because they were unaware of what is available to student veterans. The Veteran Services Center at the university provides a website that is geared towards student veterans. On it are resources, such as a link to the student veteran financial aid information, disability support services, and to the counseling center, to name a few. Responses from the staff and faculty participants indicate either the website is not accessible, or the website is vague about where to locate resources. A simple solution for this could be to add a "faculty and staff resources" section to the current website that provides information on programs, university specific resources, contact information, and best practice resources.

Areas for Further Research

This exploratory study aimed to determine the level of staff and faculty awareness of what student veteran needs are at Midwestern Frontier University. Future studies could focus on a pretest-posttest design involving staff and faculty to measure the level of awareness and preparedness before and after training(s) on the student veteran culture have been implemented. Additionally, a qualitative study could explore staff and faculty member's experiences with assisting student veterans. This could provide important information about what is and is not working to assist student veterans. Another area of research on the student veteran population at this university could be to evaluate student veteran degree completion to see if the current support in place is effective. Nationally, there have not been many studies conducted with staff and faculty and their perceptions of student veterans (McBain et al., 2012). Further studies could be done on a national level to evaluate staff and faculty awareness of student veteran needs and how staff and faculty can impact the barriers in place for veterans to achieve a college degree.

Conclusion

The study results illustrate that Midwestern Frontier University has support services in place for student veterans but is not adequately prepared to address student veteran needs on campus. By using the Model for Student Veteran Support to evaluate the university, it can be determined that all four areas of support are not in place. The findings indicate that the services that are available, such as educational benefit processing, may not be working efficiently. While there are staff and faculty interactions with student veterans, there is also a lack of training on the student veteran population. Faculty and staff members have a desire to accommodate student veteran needs, but they do not have the knowledge base to do so. Having brief trainings and a centralized online resource could improve this knowledge gap and thus to increase awareness of the student veteran culture on campus. To effectively support the student veteran population, the university must reevaluate their current efforts.

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