Evaluation of Support Service Utilization & Satisfaction Among Daemen College Student Veterans

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INTRODUCTION
Since the passage of the original GI Bill in 1944, which provided funding for veterans to pursue college degrees upon their return to civilian life, millions of veterans have had the opportunity to beneﬁt from this legislation. The GI Bill has expanded to include educational beneﬁts for veterans, their families, and dependents. As a result, the number of veterans attending college has increased, and institutions of higher education have had to adjust their programs to meet the needs of this diverse population.

BACKGROUND
Student Veterans: Over the last decade, there has been a growing recognition across social institutions in the U.S. that the readjustment process to civilian life can be difﬁcult for veterans. Higher education has been notable in its efforts to address the unique needs of veterans, including academic and personal development. Many students and institutions have also made efforts to encourage veterans to continue their education.

RESEARCH AIMs
Aim 1: Provide baseline data to Daemen College regarding the needs of student veterans that are currently attending college.
Aim 2: Evaluate the perceived effectiveness of Daemen College in surveying the needs of the student veterans.
Aim 3: Provide empirically supported suggestions for improving services based on the needs of student veterans provided by Daemen College.

METHODOLOGY
Sampling Method: A convenience sample of Daemen College faculty were recruited via an email announcement to all full-time faculty currently teaching at the Amherst, NY campus.
Measurement: A 50-question survey, utilizing a mix of Likert-scale, closed-ended questions and open-ended questions, was developed to assess student veterans’ perceptions of their expectations and experiences with regard to Daemen College’s “Military Friendly” designation.

RESULTS
Participation was deemed low, with only 12 out of 80 (15%) student veterans on the main Daemen College campus completing the survey. Mean age of participants was 34 (range = 26-52), attended at least one college prior to Daemen College (75%), and married/cohabiting (75%) and have children (66%).

One hundred (100) percent of subjects reported that attending a “Military Friendly” college was important, and 88% indicated that their military experience was important to their sense of self. Only 17% of respondents recalled Veteran services or the Student Veteran Association club being discussed during new-student orientation, respectively.

Respondents reported feeling comfortable sharing their military experiences with faculty (99%) and classmates (83%), but tend to feel their professors are prepared to work with student veterans (42%).