

Does “Military Friendly” Matter? An Investigation of College Choice Among Student Veterans

Dr. Phillip A. Olt
Dr. Seth Kastle

Fort Hays State University

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Introductions

Dr. Phillip A. Olt

Assistant Professor of Higher Ed Student Affairs

paolt@fhsu.edu

US Army, Active Duty (2001-2006)
Sergeant (E-5)

Dr. Seth Kastle

Assistant Professor of Leadership Studies

Director of Military Program Innovation

sdkastle@fhsu.edu

US Army Reserve (1998-2014)
First Sergeant (E-8)



Discussion

What factors do you think are most important to student veterans in making the decision to attend your institution?

What are things your institution does to try and attract student veterans that work well? that do *not* work well?

How would you rate your institution's understanding of student veteran college choice? Is this a demographic they have invested in *understanding*?



Background in the Literature

College Choice

Initial College Choice Framework

College Choice Models

Student Veterans and College Choice



Preliminary Findings: Demographics

67 total respondents

37.5 years old

38 male, 21 female, 1 non-binary / third gender

53 Not Hispanic/Latinx, Spanish; 3 Hispanic/Latinx, Spanish, 3 Other

53 White, 4 Black or African American, 3 Other, 2 American Indian / Alaskan Native, 1 Asian, 1 Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander

30 Army, 10 Navy, 6 Marines, 13 Air Force, 1 Coast Guard



Preliminary Findings: Educational Background

3.7 average total institutions attended (ten attended 6 or more)

Current Enrollment Delivery: 18 Face-to-Face Only, 2 Remote Pandemic Pivot, 12 Face-to-Face Mostly, 7 ~Evenly Mixed, 7 Online Mostly, 14 Online Only

Current Degree Level: 16 Undergraduate, 20 Master's, 24 Doctoral / Pre-Professional

Current Institution Type: 0 Private Vocational, 1 Public Two-Year, 14 Private Four-Year, 45 Public Four-Year



Preliminary Limitations

These findings are *preliminary* based on a *small* initial data set

The findings are skewed by those who completed them. At this point, the following groups are overrepresented from the veteran population:

- Women
- White
- Graduate students
- 4-year institutions



Preliminary Findings: Time Context

First decided to take college classes? 37 Before Military, 20 During, 7 After

First attended college class? 36 Before, 19 During, 9 After

Chose current institution? 2 Before, 18 During, 44 After



Preliminary Findings: Informational Context

Rate each of the following items for how important they were in deciding which institution you would pursue your current / most recent degree program at:

College / university employee responsiveness to my inquiries	3.53
The prestige or reputation of the institution and/or program	3.40
Campus environment	3.33
Family members	2.15
Marketing from the college / university	2.07
Friends who are not military-connected	1.98
U.S. News Best Colleges for Veterans List	1.93
Student veterans / military members I personally know	1.90
Military base education center	1.85
Military Times Best for Vets Colleges List	1.82
Victory Media Military Friendly Schools List	1.80
Best Colleges Guide for Servicemembers and Veterans List	1.73
Veteran social media groups	1.60



Preliminary Findings: Opportunity Context

Rate each of the following items for how important they were in deciding which institution you would pursue your current / most recent degree program at

Availability of my desired academic program	4.52
Cost / affordability	3.58
Military tuition discount / scholarship	3.3
Perceived availability of the institution's support services for student veterans	3.17
The geographic proximity to where I live now	3.15
Transfer policies related to military training (JST, CCAF, etc.)	3.1
The geographic proximity to where I first moved after military service	2.51
The geographic proximity to where I entered the military from	2.08
Previous enrollment (i.e., you were enrolled here while on active duty)	1.85
Veterans Upward Bound program	1.58

Discussion

What things surprised you from the findings? What didn't?



Applications

Meaningful conversations with campus stakeholders on ROI for “Military Friendly”-type things

Allocate resources for areas with high potential ROI (reaching closer to home, etc.)

Recruitment materials designed to emphasize areas of strength with high potential ROI (explain/show what makes you military friendly rather than a third-party recognition)

What mattered to one person was the key deciding factor, but was irrelevant to others. Be wary of anecdotes, but also don't ignore them.

- 1s and 5s response clustering (rather than clustering near the average)



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Q&A (and *Take / Share the Survey!*)

https://fhsucahss.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7Ptfs3InvNayMYu

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