



V.E.T.S. in College Update

VCU-RRTC

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Virginia Commonwealth University-RRTC, a grantee of the CNI Trust Fund (#10-176), is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution providing access to education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's status, political affiliation or disability.

Profile of a Student Veteran

An IED during OIF1 left Joe* with a spinal cord injury (SCI), mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), and a need for a career opportunity that accommodated his new circumstances. Before enlisting six years ago, Joe completed 67 credits at a university in North Carolina. He always intended to finish his degree in Information Security; however, two deployments and a series of promotions took precedence. Joe is currently completing his degree through a combination of distance learning and face to face courses as he continues to receive outpatient medical treatment at McGuire VA.

"The first semester back was the hardest. In the military, everyone tells you what to do, but in civilian life, you're on your own." The complex process of receiving educational benefits, registering for classes, or even choosing the right degree program can cause varying levels of confusion among veterans who are also learning to manage life with an acquired disability. "It would have helped to have known how things were going to work. I had to take the initiative to piece together the resources I needed." Some opportunities exist for veterans transitioning from the military to the civilian world; however, the need for career and educational planning services may not be recognized until much later after discharge. "When they are in the process of transitioning, many veterans just breeze through the transition checklist so that they can finish and go home," the veteran admitted. With the assistance of his VETS in College education coach, Joe has learned to use a LiveScribe pen to assist with both his in-class and online assignments. His education coach is also helping him to work with the college registrar's office so that he can get credit for some of his relevant military training.

Meaningful supports can benefit veterans at a personal level. "It would have been helpful to have had a career advisor before who could have helped me determine what careers best suit me and my personality." Joe does have some other advice for veterans making the transition with a disability: "Research your disability so you can advocate for yourself and take advantage of all the resources available through the school, community, and V.A." *Profile composed from aggregate data

Demographic of Veterans Served

Average Age	39
Majority Male	
White	7
Black	9
Other	3
No. of currently enrolled students	3
OIF/OEF Veterans	9
SCI	8
TBI	3
SCI & TBI	2
TBI & PTSD	6
Total active	19
Referrals to date	42

Updates

- The program is currently serving a veteran as far away as Maryland through the mobile model
- Most veterans reside in the Richmond metro area
- Most referrals are currently originating from McGuire Veterans Administration Medical Center

V.E.T.S. in College works with student vets attending any college, university or vocational program

Project staff members have attended:

- Education Fair at McGuire VAMC
- Veterans Outreach Event at VCU
- MCV/McGuire Spinal Cord Injury Conference
- Spinal Cord Injury Expo
- Mental Health Fair at McGuire
- PTSD Introductory Seminar at the American Legion

About Us

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Veterans Education and Transition Supports (V.E.T.S.) in College is a supported education program for service members or veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) who wish to obtain postsecondary education or training. The program uses a flexible, individualized approach to achieving academic and career goals.

Program staff members, also known as Education Coaches, work with student veterans in their home communities, at VA Medical Centers, and on college campuses wherever the student veteran has chosen to attend. Services provided are based on the goals of each student veteran, but may include educational and career planning, development of learning and study strategies, and coordination of on- and off-campus resources.