

## Collaborative Effort: Developing a Model for Access to Higher Education for Student Veterans with Disabilities

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Dickinson College

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Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Health Sciences  
LaSalle University

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### • Presenters will discuss:

- The work of a collaborative effort in Pennsylvania
  - History of PA CARES
  - Work of PA CARES (survey)
  - Intersection with higher education
- Why collaboration on and off campus is necessary to ensure access to higher education for student veterans with disabilities
- Designing services around needs vs needs around services

### • Goal:

- Provide conference attendees with a working model so they may create and implement a collaborative effort in their state to assist student veterans with disabilities
- Demonstrate how a collaborative model can also be utilized in working with other students with disabilities (mental health disorders, TBI, Asperger's, AD/HD, etc.)

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## Why Pennsylvania?

- Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) are maintained primarily by volunteer troops
- Pennsylvania has the largest contingent of active-duty National Guard troops in the nation
- Pennsylvania leads the nation in the number of volunteer troops deployed for OEF/OIF

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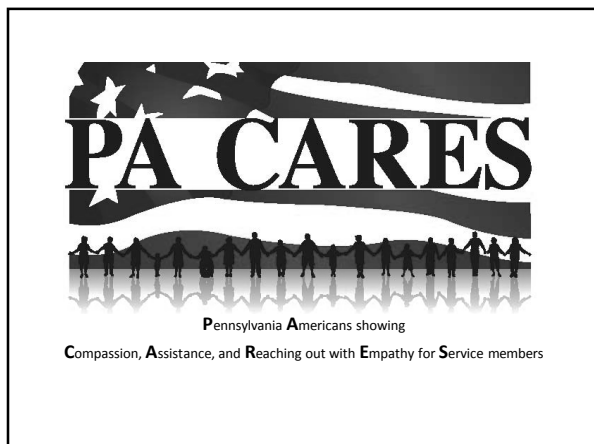
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**History of PA CARES  
Task Force**

**Larry Doperak, M.S.**  
Psychologist, Disabilities Counselor  
Community College of Allegheny County

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**PA CARES Task Force**

**Formed under the auspices of:**

- PA Dept of Public Welfare - Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- PA Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs
- US Dept of Veterans Affairs

**Purpose:**

- Collaboration with state/local agencies to ascertain and meet needs of returning service members
- Readjustment /reintegration challenges anticipated for OEF/OIF returning veterans

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## PA CARES Task Force

**MISSION:**

- Network
- Work collaboratively
- Develop initiatives to meet needs of:
  - Service members
  - Veterans
  - And their families

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## PA CARES Task Force Partners

- PA DPW, OMHSAS
- PA DMVA
- VISN 4 MIRECC
- PA State Police MAP
- PA DoH, BDAP
- County MH
- PA Psych Assn
- Higher Education
- Voc Rehab
- Employment services
- Assn for the Blind
- VA Vet centers
- PA DEd, Vet/Mil Ed
- Veterans of Wars
- YWCA Homeless Vet
- PA DoCor

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## PA CARES Task Force Partners

- VA hospital staff
- Military chaplains
- PA DPW psychiatry
- Public Psychiatry Leadership Council
- Highmark, Caring Pl.
- American Red Cross
- Military One Source
- US Army Reserves
- US Army War College
- Community College of Allegheny
- Dickinson College
- Duquesne University
- Harrisburg Area Community College
- LaSalle University

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### PA CARES Task Force Chronology

- Sept 13, 2005 - *Resources for PA Returning Military* meeting at Harrisburg State Hospital chaired by DPW, OMHSAS
- Sept 29, 2005 - Ohio CARES Work Group initiatives reviewed
- Oct 14, 2005 - PA Gov Rendell directs DPW and DVMA to facilitate OEF/OIF veteran services in return to civilian life
- Oct 17, 2005 - Summit *Identifying Resources for Returning Military* to identify needs and resources

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### PA CARES Task Force Chronology

- Feb 28 & Mar 1, 2006 - DPW, OMHSAS & WPIC sponsor *Critical Incident Stress Management* training
- Mar 16-18, 2006 - PA CARES Task Force members attend *National Behavioral Health Conference on Returning Veterans and Their Families*
- Oct 2006 - PA CARES alerts PPA to the death of 5 soldiers from one unit
- Feb 2007 - PPA sends a team of clinicians to help with the grief process

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### PA CARES Task Force Chronology

- April 2006 - 48 PA county MH agencies each given \$3000 to help develop safety net of services for returning military and their families
- May 2, 2006 - *Promoting Resiliency for Returning Military and Their Families* conference
- May 3, 2006 - *Regional Resource Day for Military and Their Families* held in central PA
- May 5-6, 2006 - Homeless Veterans Stand Down held by YWCA at PANG with support of PA CARES

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### PA CARES Task Force Chronology

- Oct 21, 2006 - *Regional Resource Day for Military and Their Families* held in western PA
- Oct 24, 2006 - presentation on military culture
- Oct 25, 2006 - presentation *Psychological First Aid* for central area community agencies serving veterans
- Oct 26, 2006 - first chaplaincy presentation to faith based community leaders, five followed over the next year

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### PA CARES Task Force Chronology

- January 4, 2007 - Task Force report to OMHSAS on mental health needs of PANG veterans OEF/OIF
- November 1, 2007 - conference on *Post Combat Resiliency*
- Task Force continues to meet monthly
- Task Force supports area veterans resource days
- Task Force continues to support homeless vet services

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## PA CARES Task Force Chronology

- June 2008 - Education Subcommittee formed
- Spring 2009 - 140 PA colleges and universities surveyed re initiatives for veterans
- April 2009 - Military Child Subcommittee formed

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## PA CARES Task Force Direction

- **PA CARES**
  - is recruiting new leadership from among its members
  - Continues to meet monthly
  - Will survey trade and technical schools
  - Will do a higher education veterans satisfaction survey
  - Will disseminate survey findings to PA institutions of higher education
  - Will work collaboratively with state education agencies to train teachers to be sensitive to military child issues (proposed legislative initiative)
  - Will work with primary care physicians to meet the needs of military families

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## PA CARES Task Force

### *Survey of Veterans' Educational Needs*

Diane Wieland, PhD, PMHCN-BC  
Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Health Sciences  
LaSalle University

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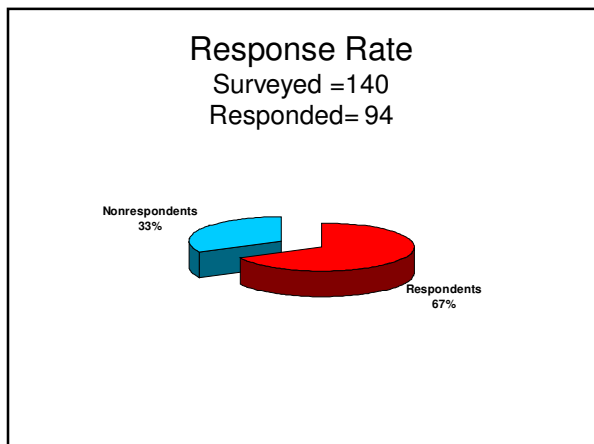
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**ADMISSION / OUTREACH**

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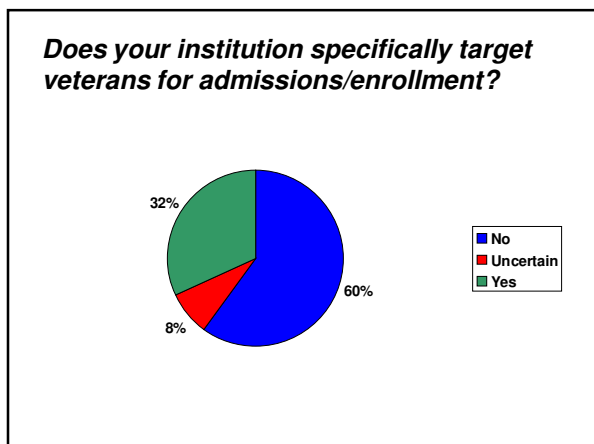
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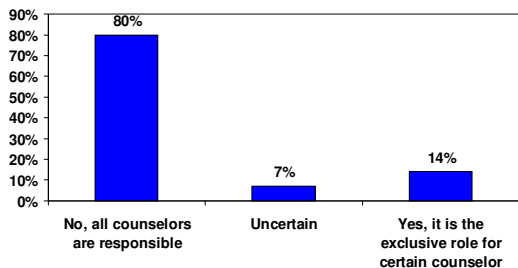
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***If yes, does your institution have an admissions counselor/officer whose sole role is to recruit veterans? (N=59)***




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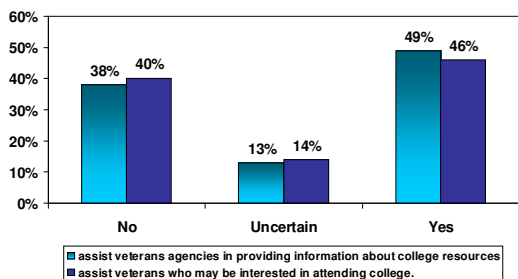
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***Institution has a representative who works with Veteran agencies in the local community or state to...***




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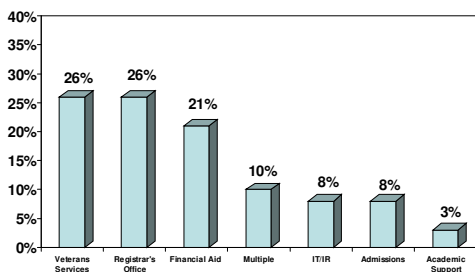
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***If have a veterans office on campus, please list job title.***

Open-ended question; titles categorized under functional unit (N=39).




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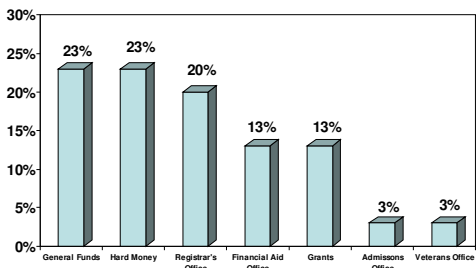
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***If have a veterans office on campus,  
funding source (n=30).***

Open-ended question




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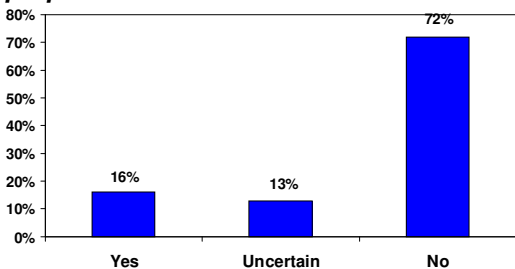
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***Does your institution obtain information  
on local veterans from the Veterans  
Administration for recruitment  
purposes?***




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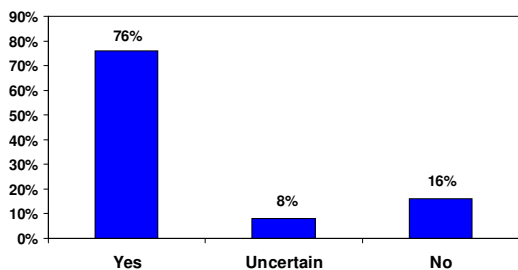
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***Does your institution keep data on  
the number of veterans on campus?***




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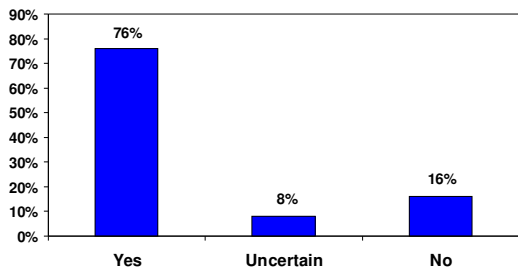
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**Does your institution keep data on the number of veterans on campus?**




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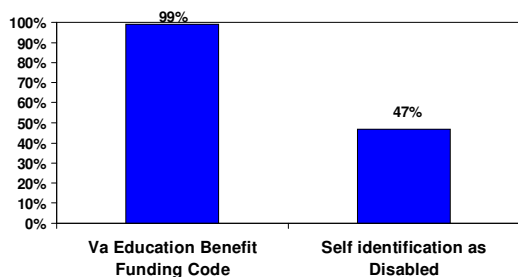
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**What type of data do you record about veterans?**




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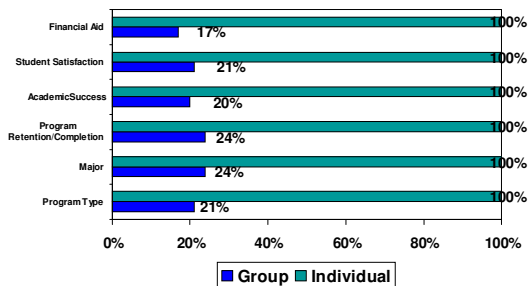
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**What type of data do you record about veterans?**




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### Other Data Tracked

- Certification Benefit History
- Need for Supportive Services
- Early Intervention for At-Risk Veteran Students

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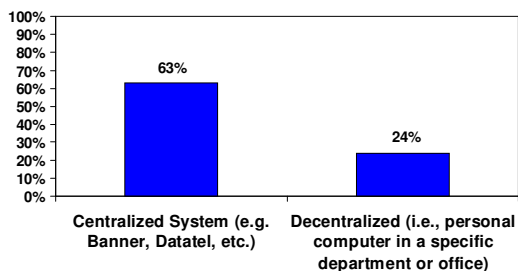
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***If you do record veterans status (identifier) and related information, where is this information stored?***




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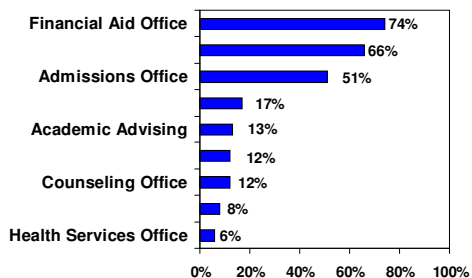
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***Who receives information about students with an identifier that they are veterans?***




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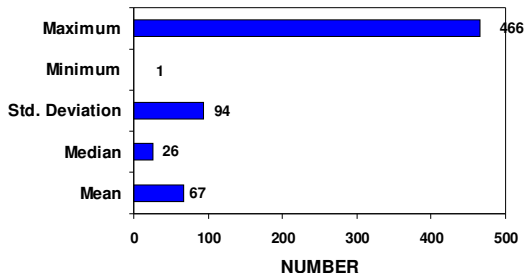
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**Please specify the number of veterans and the percentage of the undergraduate student body that veterans constitute (N=54).**




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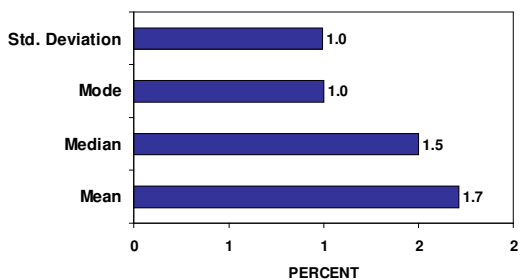
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**Please specify the number of veterans and the percentage of the undergraduate student body that veterans constitute. (N=40)**




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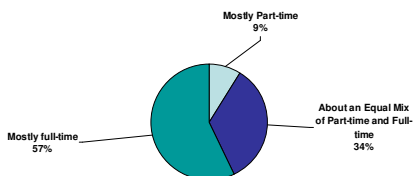
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**Do the veterans at your institution attend on a part-time or full-time basis?**




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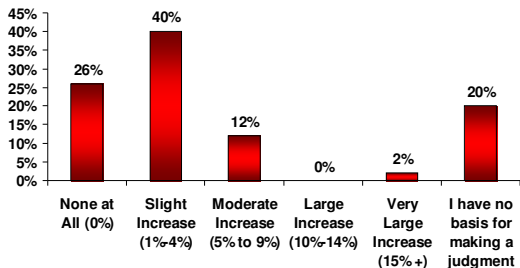
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**Over the last several years, have you seen an increase in the number of veterans enrolled at your institution ?**




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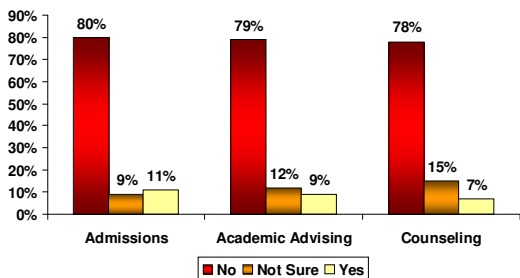
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**Do you recruit veterans or families of veterans on staff at your college/university to assist veterans with any of the services that you offer?**




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**SERVICES**

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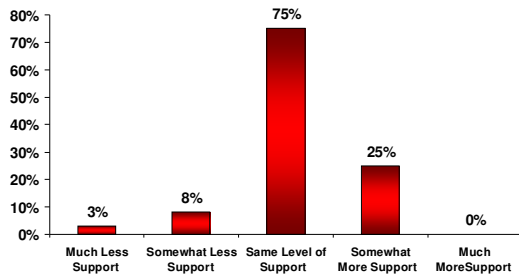
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**Compared to other students, what degree of support do veterans require to progress successfully to degree completion?**




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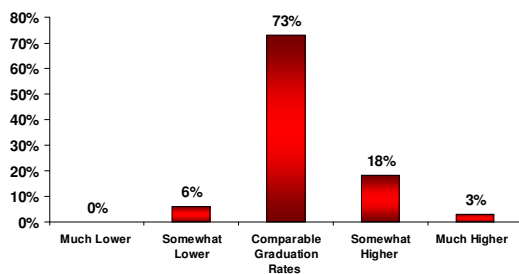
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**Do the veterans enrolled at your institution graduate at the same rate as traditional students?**




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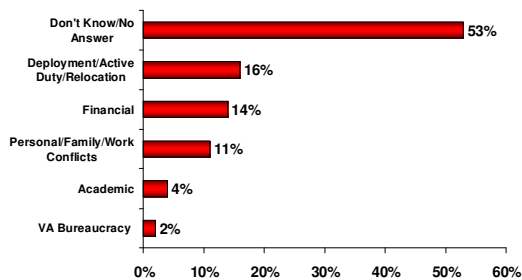
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**What are the primary reasons why veterans dropout? (open-ended)**




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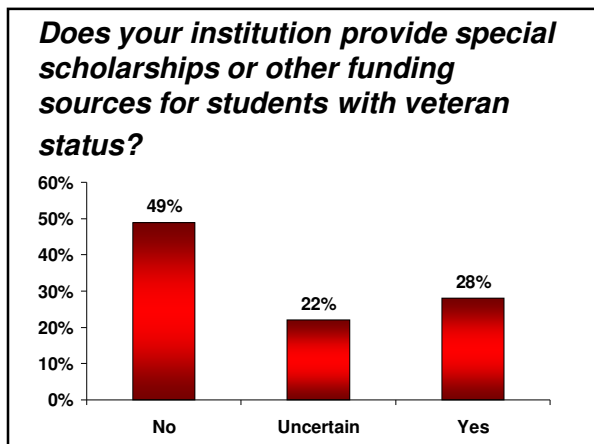
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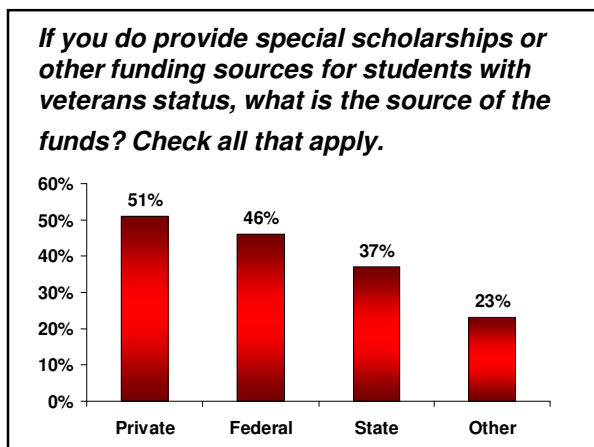
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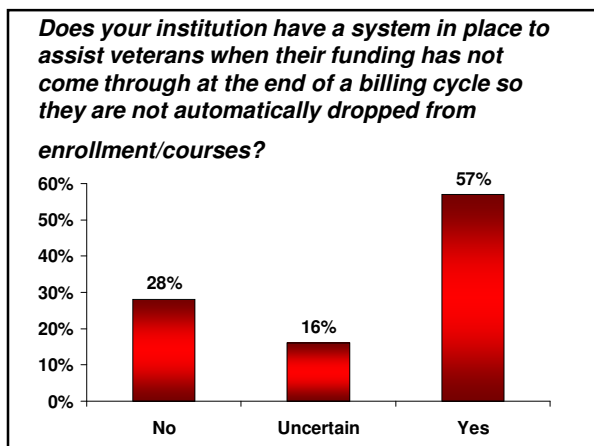
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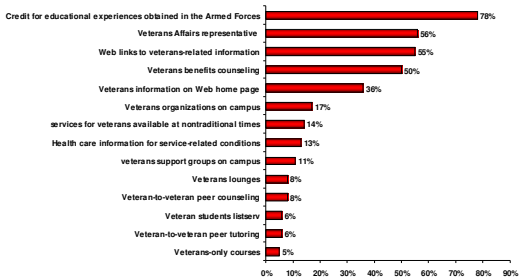
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**Please indicate the type of outreach programs your institution provides to veterans.**




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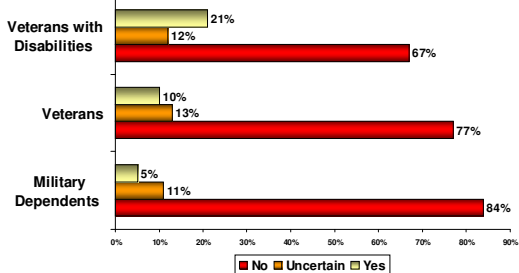
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**Does your institution provide training to faculty on how to work with the following?**




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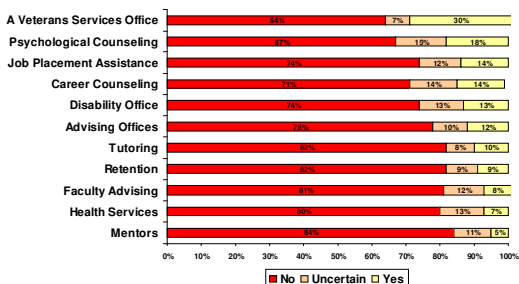
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**Does your institution provide services intended specifically for veterans through any of the following functions/offices.**




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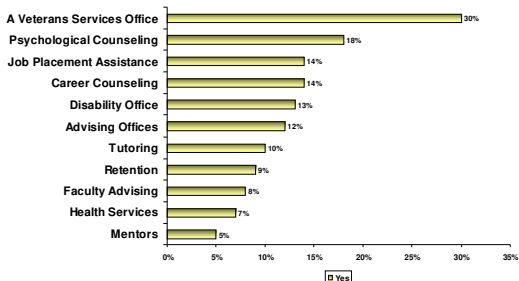
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**Does your institution provide services intended specifically for veterans through any of the following functions/offices :YES**




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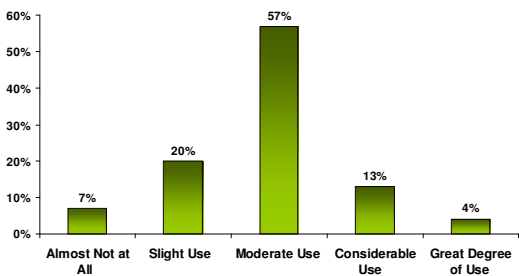
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**Do veterans make use of the services available to them on campus?**




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**CROSSTABS**

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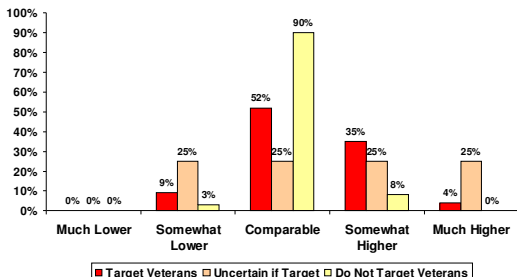
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### Perceived Graduation Rates of Veterans by Whether Institution Targets Veterans




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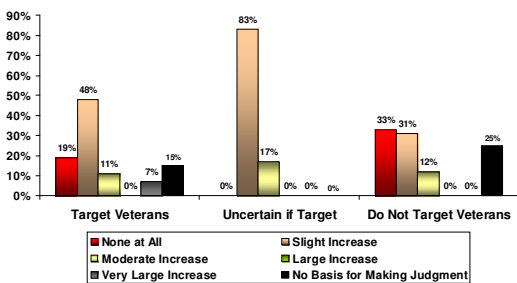
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### Change in Enrollment of Veterans by Whether Institution Targets Veterans




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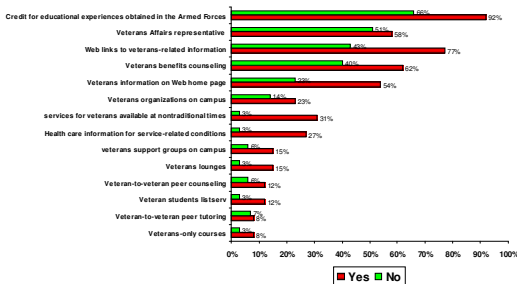
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### Type of Outreach Programs by Whether Institution Targets Veterans




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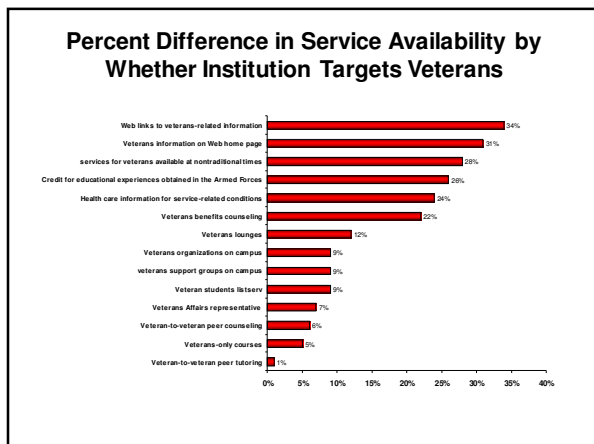
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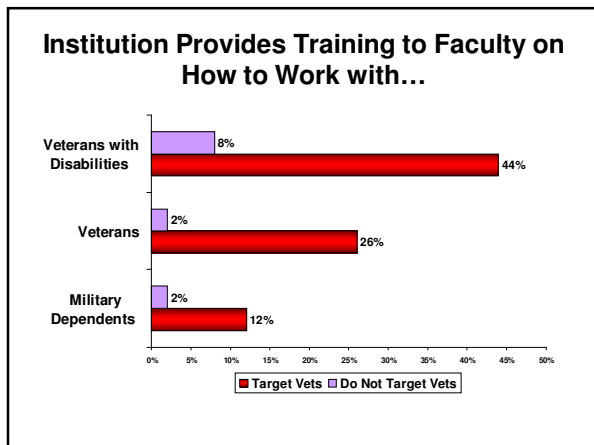
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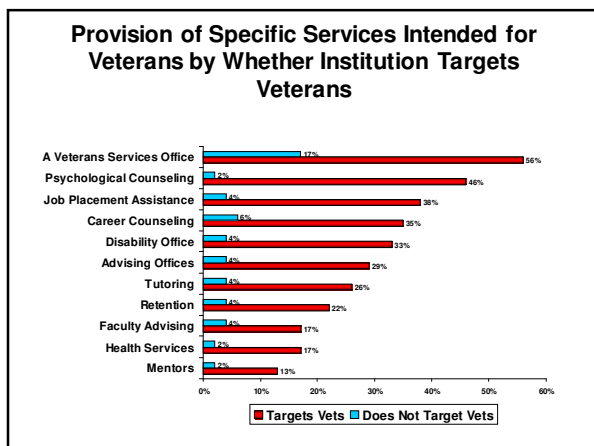
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**SAMPLE**

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- Participants**
- UNKNOWN (6)
  - Albright College
  - Allegheny College
  - Arcadia University
  - Baptist Bible College
  - Bloomsburg University
  - Bryn Mawr College
  - Bucknell University
  - Butler County Community College
  - California University of Pennsylvania
  - Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary
  - Carlow University
  - Chestnut Hill College
  - Cheyney University of Pennsylvania
  - Community College of Allegheny County
  - Community College of Philadelphia
  - Curtis Ins Bus of Mass
  - Delaware Valley College
  - DeSales University
  - Dickinson College
  - Duquesne University
  - East Stroudsburg University
  - Edinboro University
  - Elizabethtown College
  - Geneva College
  - Gwynedd Mercy College
  - Harrisburg Area Community College
  - Immaculata University
  - Indiana University of PA
  - Indiana College
  - Keystone College
  - Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
  - La Roche College
  - La Salle University
  - Lafayette College/Moravian College
  - Lebanon Valley College
  - Lehigh Carbon Community College
  - Lehigh University
  - Lincoln University
  - Marywood University
  - Misericordia University
  - Montgomery County Community College
  - Moravian College
  - Mount Royal College
  - Neumann College
  - Northampton Community College
  - Peirce College
  - Penn State Altoona
  - Pennsylvania Highlands Community College
  - Pennsylvania Institute of Technology
  - Philadelphia Biblical University
  - Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
  - Philadelphia University
  - Pittsburgh Technical Institute
  - Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
  - Point Park University
  - Reading Area Community College
  - Robert Morris University
  - Rosemont College
  - Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary
  - Saint Vincent College
  - Seton Hill University
  - Shippensburg University
  - Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania
  - Susquehanna University
  - Sweethome College
  - Temple University
  - The American College
  - The Art Institute of Philadelphia
  - The Art Institute of Pittsburgh
  - The Pennsylvania State University
  - The University of Pittsburgh
  - The Westmoreland School of Multi-lingual College
  - Thiel College
  - University of the Sciences in Philadelphia
  - Valley Forge Christian College
  - Valley Forge Military College
  - Wilmore University
  - Waynesburg University
  - West Chester University
  - Westminster College
  - Westmoreland County Community College
  - Widener University
  - Wilkes University
  - Wilkes College
  - York College of Pennsylvania

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**PA CARES**  
**Intersection with Higher Education**

**Jorja Waybrant, M.Ed.**  
**Assistant Director of Advising,**  
**Coordinator of Disability Services**  
**Dickinson College**

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**Developing a Collaborative Effort**

- **Why?**
- **How?**
  - **Off campus**
    - Community agencies (federal, state, local)
    - Other institutions of higher education
  - **On campus**
    - Disability service advisory council
    - Faculty
    - Staff
    - Veterans

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**Benefits of Off-Campus Collaborations  
Community Agencies (federal, state, local)**

- Knowledge of disability services as an asset
- **Sharing of information/concerns with community agencies**
  - War wounds may be viewed as an impediment
  - Agencies may be unaware of disability services
  - Veterans may lack knowledge about disability services
    - Unaware services are provided in post-secondary
    - Typically not a student with a disability at K-12 level
    - Unaware that they may qualify as disabled under ADA
    - Unaware of how to access services on campus to help them be successful
- **Provide support and information to ensure access to higher education**
  - Brochures
  - Blogs

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**Benefits of Off-Campus Collaborations  
Other Institutions of Higher Education**

- Knowledge on readjustment/reintegration issues becomes a valuable asset
- **Networking**
  - What are other schools doing?
  - How can we improve services and retention?
  - How can we share knowledge and information?

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### Benefits of On-Campus Collaborations Your Campus

- **When veterans enroll on your campus**
  - Specialized programs for veterans vs 1:1 hands on assistance
  - Large school vs small school
  - Student veteran population
- **Navigating college campuses and services**
  - Why accessing services may be difficult for student veterans with disabilities
  - Tailoring services to needs vs needs to services
- **Sharing information regarding SVWD**
- **Information and knowledge is helpful for supporting all students with disabilities**
  - Increased knowledge
  - Improved services for your students
    - Benefits students veterans with disabilities
    - Benefits students with disabilities

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### Types of Disabilities and/or Functional Limitations a SVWD May Encounter

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)</li> <li>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)</li> <li>Depression</li> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Speech Impairment</li> <li>Hearing Impairment</li> <li>Deafness</li> <li>Auditory processing impairment</li> <li>Ringing in the ears</li> <li>Vision Impairment</li> <li>Blindness</li> <li>Low vision</li> <li>Visual processing impairment</li> <li>Problems with perception</li> <li>Decreased hand-eye-coordination</li> <li>Reduced visual perimeter</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical/mobility Impairment</li> <li>Inability to walk or limitations in walking</li> <li>Inability or reduction in use of arms/hands/shoulders</li> <li>Fine motor skill deficits</li> <li>Decreased physical stamina/tires easily</li> <li>Fatigue</li> <li>Headaches</li> <li>Dizziness/Vertigo</li> <li>Alteration of senses (taste)</li> <li>Seizures</li> <li>Burns – Disfigurement</li> </ul> |
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### Types of Disabilities and/or Functional Limitations a SVWD May Encounter (continued)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive Impairment</li> <li>Executive functioning deficits</li> <li>Impairment of working memory</li> <li>Loss of memory</li> <li>Processing speed impairment</li> <li>Difficulty processing information</li> <li>Difficulty with abstract concepts</li> <li>Impaired decision making</li> <li>Loss of cognitive flexibility</li> <li>Distractibility</li> <li>Poor concentration</li> <li>Shortened attention span</li> <li>Inability to focus</li> <li>Inability to reason</li> <li>Poor, organizational, time management, and goal setting skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional/psychological</li> <li>Mood swings</li> <li>Impulsivity</li> <li>Inappropriate behavior</li> <li>Impatience</li> <li>Social isolation</li> <li>Irritability, reduced tolerance for stress</li> <li>Lack of initiative and apathy</li> <li>Inflexibility</li> <li>Lack of inhibition</li> <li>Inability to block out environmental stimuli</li> <li>Difficulty handling time pressures</li> <li>Problems interacting with others</li> <li>Problems responding to feedback</li> <li>Difficulty dealing with change</li> <li>Denial</li> </ul> |
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### Some suggestions for campus services and supports

- **BE PREPARED!**
- Establish a central point of contact
- Create a welcoming environment on campus
- Be an effective advocate for your students
- Make sure your institution has a written policy
  - Grievance policy
  - Documentation
  - Handbooks
    - Faculty
    - Students
- Provide clear written information about all services available on campus
- Update your website
- Form an interdepartmental disability advisory council
- Get out and walk your campus
- Provide a referral/resource list
- Establish an assessment system
- Share information on campus about transition issues for student veterans
- Provide faculty and staff in-servicing
- Create a veterans' resource center
- Create a veterans' support group
- Work to remove stigma
- Offer individualization of services and accommodations
- Offer a reduced course load
- Offer temporary accommodations
- Provide adaptive software
- Offer to teach time management and organizational skills
- Guide students to available services on campus
- Faculty should be proactive
- Have faculty include a statement in their syllabus about disability services/accommodations
- Service animal policy - establish one
- Don't assume anything

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### PA CARES: Educational Subcommittee Members

- James E. Joppy, Jr., MSW - CPT, MS, PAARNG - Behavioral Science Officer – Pennsylvania Army National Guard
- Jane Bishop - (PA CARES) Department of Welfare
- Larry Doperak (Chair) - Rehabilitation Counselor/Psychologist, Community College of Allegheny County
- Jeff Culp – Director of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Division of Veterans/Military Education
- Colonel Denise Gross (focuses on K-12 issues with regard to children of deployed service members)
- Vanessa Johnson – Military Program Coordinator, Duquesne University
- Mary Jane Snyder – Director of Military Education Programs, Duquesne University
- Jorja Waybrant – Disability Service Coordinator, Dickinson College
- Diane Wieland – Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Health Sciences, LaSalle University

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**“Having Education as an outlet when you come home from a combat zone is one of the most grounding and focusing avenues a veteran has to his [/her] advantage.”**

**Rick Scavetta, veteran of the Army Reserves  
*Chronicles of Higher Education* – June 6, 2007**

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**PA CARES:  
Educational Subcommittee Members**

- Jane Bishop, RN - Emergency Behavioral Health Manager, Department of Welfare, (Co-Chair of PA CARES)
- Jeff Culp – Director of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Division of Veterans/Military Education
- Larry Doperak, M.S., (Chair, PA CARES Educational Subcommittee) - Rehabilitation Counselor/ Psychologist, Community College of Allegheny County
- Lenthel C Drachler, TSgt, USAFR – Student veteran, Luzerne County Community College
- Denise A Gross, COL RES USAR USARC (focuses on K-12 issues with regard to children of deployed service members)
- Vanessa Johnson – Military Program Coordinator, Duquesne University
- James E. Joppy, Jr., MSW - CPT, MS, PAARNG - Behavioral Science Officer – Pennsylvania Army National Guard, (Co-Chair of PA CARES)
- Jorja Waybrant, M.Ed. – Assistant Director of Advising & Disability Service Coordinator, Dickinson College
- Diane Wieland, PhD, PMHCNS-BC - Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Health Sciences, LaSalle University

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