Many institutions of higher education claim to be “military friendly.”

Service members, who are busy adult learners, would be better prepared to differentiate questionable marketing claims from truly military-friendly institutions if an objective and standardized instrument were available and used.

I am conducting a grant-funded study to test an instrument recently developed by myself and a colleague. The instrument includes a draft of practices demonstrated by military-friendly institutions of education.

Today, you will learn about and participate in Phase I of a two-phase research study that will result in a pragmatic military-focused educational profile containing a list of practices (policies, procedures, and other traditions supported by experts, military, and advocacy groups) institutions of higher education implement to best serve the needs of military students.

The educational profile will be a rating system individual service members can use to make data-driven decisions about enrolling in educational institutions that might best align with their unique needs; universities will be able to use the profile to ensure their institution demonstrates the practices needed to improve military-student learning outcomes and track progress over time.
Educational Practices Needed to Improve Military-student Learning Outcomes

October 4, 2013

Leslie A. Miller, PhD, PHR
Who am I?
The problem
The benefits and value of a tool
The tool development process
The tool
Your participation
Why do traditional students go to college?

What outcomes can traditional students expect to achieve?

What do colleges “do” to support traditional students during their college education?
“We've got to prepare our people with the skills they need to compete in this global economy…”

“We seek to help an additional 5 million Americans earn degrees and certificates in the next decade…”

*President Barack Obama*
*July 14, 2009*
THE PROBLEM

• **We Have the Best Military in the World** – U.S. service members selflessly place their lives in danger to protect our freedom. In return for their courage and dedication, service members qualify for generous financial assistance to further their education and earn their degrees

• **Unique Needs and Challenges** – Money is not frequently enough; service members experience unique challenges and have unique needs not common to typical college students that hinder degree completion

• **The “Military Friendly” Institution of Higher Education** – Many sources are available for identifying what military-friendly institutions “do” to retain military learners and help them earn degrees

• **Rating System** – Lacking is a comprehensive educational profile/rating system that includes commonly agreed upon observable and measurable best practices (associated with empirically-tested desired outcomes) that service members and educational institutions can use to evaluate schools
THE BENEFITS

American Taxpayers—With billions of U.S. tax dollars invested in educational benefits for military personnel each year, the U.S. government can demonstrate fiscal responsibility by proactively evaluating how well academic institutions adapt to the needs of our country’s service members.

Individual Service Members—With a standardized rating system, military personnel will be empowered to make data-driven decisions about which educational institutions best align with their individual needs.

Colleges and Universities—By deepening their understanding the unique needs of military personnel, academic institutions can develop military-focused programs and curriculum to improve learning outcomes and track progress over time.
Flexible — Since the needs of military learners vary, the profile can be easily customized to meet different service members’ unique situations and requirements (e.g., active duty, deployed, retired, disabled, etc.).

Modular — By focusing on best-practice categories, educational institutions can strategically use portions of the profile to regularly assess, align, and improve their curriculum and support services.

Benchmarks — The profile’s standardized metrics provide comparative performance information to stakeholders so they can evaluate a variety of educational institutions.

“A living tool” — Adopting an industry-wide standard encourages collaboration between the military and academic institutions to update the profile continuously and provide service members with the best educational experience.
Two-phase quantitative descriptive correlational study to (a) describe the practices experts, members of the military, educational institutions, and advocacy groups collectively agree 21st century service member focused institutions of higher education demonstrate, and (b) examine the relationship between institution of higher education demonstration of agreed on practices and key service member outcomes (e.g., grades, retention, and degree completion).

**Initial Development Process**

- Conducted thorough review and documented military-friendly practices
- Organized and combined practices and created practice categories
- Had CEVHE Board conduct initial review and revision
- Finalized practices and practice behaviors

**Current Development Process**

- Gathering data to describe the practices experts, members of the military, educational institutions, and advocacy groups collectively agree 21st century service member focused institutions of higher education demonstrate
- Conduct correlational study to examine relationship between demonstration of practices and key educational outcomes
### THE TOOL: PRACTICE CATEGORIES

**"Top Gun" Institutions of Higher Education**

**Directions:** For each institution of higher education, read the items in the 12 best practice categories below. Indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement by circling the most appropriate response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution of Higher Education:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1: Accreditation Practices</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2: College Readiness Practices</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Part 3: Admission and Transfer Credit Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 4: Transition Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 5: Economic Assistance Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 6: Campus Culture Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 7: Academic Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 8: Educational Program Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 9: Health Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 10: Employment Practices</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Part 11: Family Support Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Part 12: Community Partnership Practices</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Able to Rate |
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
**Part 1: Accreditation Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 2: College Readiness Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 3: Admission and Transfer Credit Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 4: Transition Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 5: Economic Assistance Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 6: Campus Culture Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 7: Academic Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 8: Educational Program Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 9: Health Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 10: Employment Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 11: Family Support Services** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
**Part 12: Community Partnership Practices** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | NA |
### SCORING

To score the assessment, for each category, first add the number of the circled items together. Enter the sum for each category in Column B. Second, for each category, enter the number of items you were unable to rate. Third, divide the total points in Column B by the difference between Column A and the number in Column C. Enter the result in column D. Column D represents the institution of higher education’s category rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total number of practices</th>
<th>Total points</th>
<th>Total number of “not able to rate”</th>
<th>Median Practice Category Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accreditation Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. College Readiness Practices</td>
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<td>3. Admission and Transfer Credit Practices</td>
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<td>4. Transition Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
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<td>Sum Practice Category I ~ VIII</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Informed Consent Form
Survey

For each question, select one answer by filling in the oval.

1. A B C D
2. A B C D
3. A B C D
4. A B C D
5. A B C D
• Employers / researchers – study how the changing nature of work will impact future skills

• Employers / researchers - educate future and current workers

• Employers – offer TAP and tie to strategic objectives such as increasing the number of employees with specific degrees, and who can speak specific languages