2010

Troops to Trojans

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Recommended Citation

McCarthy, Karen, "Troops to Trojans" (2010). *Collected Faculty and Staff Scholarship*. 246.

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“Troops to Trojans”

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USC Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice
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Perfect Storm

- **Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 - August 1st, 2009**

- It is estimated that over **2 million veterans** from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) will enroll in postsecondary education in the coming years (Madaus, 2009).

- **18%** Private University

- **USC Veteran Enrollment:**
  - 111-130 (2008 Pre Post 9/11 Bill)
  - 255 (Fall 2009)
  - 248 (spring 2010)
  - 325 (Fall 2010)
  - **400 approx. (Spring 2011)**
Outline

• Health and Disability

• Lifestyle

• Transition

• What USC Veterans had to say

• What USC is doing well
Health & Disability

• Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 10-30%
• Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) 11-20%
• Veterans with multiple deployments: risk of mental health problems increases 60% with each consecutive deployment (Coleman, 2008)

“Returning veterans will have a wide range of medical diagnoses and related health problems that will have a temporary or chronic impact on their living, working, learning, and relationship functions.” (Church, 2009)
• Depression
• Attempted suicide/ suicide (risk of suicide nearly twice the nonveteran population, a rate so high it has been labeled an “epidemic”)
• Learning disability
• Sensory impairments (hearing, vision, etc)
• Burns
• Physical Impairments

Lifestyle

• Alcohol / drug use
• Job acquisition
• Homelessness
• Family/ marriage difficulties: 90% divorce rate
Transition

• Marine: You can’t get a better high. It’s like crack, you know? Once you been shot at, you really can’t come down. You can’t top that.

Embedded Documentarian: How you gonna go back to the civilian world, then?

Marine: I have no idea.

-Restrepo, National Geographic Films
Grand Jury Prize for U.S. Documentary, 2010 Sundance Film Festival Nominee, Documentary (Feature), 83rd Academy Awards

• “One day you’re carrying a rifle over your shoulder, and the next day you’re sipping a Slurpee.” -Gregg Taylor, Army Reservist
Transition

• “Moving In (college)”
  – Connecting with peers
  – Blending in
  – Faculty

USC Student Veteran Interviews - Summer 2009

- Participant Demographics

**USC:**
- 4 undergraduate transfer students
- 1 graduate student
- Marine corps
- Latin American
- Engineering, Economics (2), Public Policy & Planning, Social Work

**Vets Panel:**
- 6 students in city colleges (Pasadena City College, Long Beach City College, Santa Monica City College, LA City College)
- 5 Marines, 1 Airforce
- 3 Latin American, 3 Caucasian
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Social Support and Networking with Vets
  - Student veteran organization
  - Speakers and events targeted to student vets
  - 1st year mentor at USC
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Visibility of Resources
  • Improved internet resources
  • Veteran website: sait.usc.edu/ca/tvsp
  • Veteran center- central location for resources
  • Orientation session for Veterans or information packet at orientation
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Workshops or classes for Veterans
  • “How to translate what you have learned in the military to everyday life”
  • Transition course- similar to “Boots to books”
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Increased Recruitment of Veterans
  - Leadership skills
  - Experience
  - Diversity – 22% African-American, 11% Latino, 4% Asian, 3% other (NCD, 2009)

- Veterans had more interactions with students of different races/ethnicities than non vets and more conversations with people of different religion/political beliefs/personality than non vets

What Student Veterans Had to Say:

- Increased VA benefits and work opportunities
  - More information on scholarships
  - Yellow Ribbon Program-
    - Participants: Occupational Therapy, Rossier, School of Social Work, Marshall
    - The VA will match the amount given
  - Work study positions for veteran students
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Mental Health Services
  • Resources identified at Orientation
  • Veteran counselor at Counseling Services
  • PTSD specialty/ experience with veteran needs
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Faculty Education & Support
  • Disability related issues
  • Hypervigilance (PTSD)
  • War topics may trigger PTSD / anger
  • Distraction free environment for learning
  • Support of Faculty Veterans- symbol to identify as veteran
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• Lifestyle Needs
  • Exercise and Physical Fitness
    • Physical training class geared for veterans
  • Substance Use
  • Marriage/ family counseling
  • Job Skills
What Student Veterans Had to Say:

• **Lifestyle Needs**
  • Time Management
  • Money Management
  • Techniques to handle stress
  • Cooking
  • Reestablishing identity: hobbies, goals
What USC is doing well!

- Veteran Appreciation Day Nov 11! 4th Annual
- Remembrance Day Roll Call
- USC Student Veterans Committee
- Veteran Affairs Office- financial assistance
- USC Veterans Association (student club)
- Yellow Ribbon Program
- Transfer and Veteran Student Programs
- Orientation participation
- Lifestyle Redesign® for Veterans: OT
Upcoming Events

• VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION 11.11.11
  *Remembrance Day Roll Call*: 9am-4pm :: 11am National Moment of Silence :: (Hahn Plaza (across from Tommy Trojan)
• *Discussion with author Thomas Steinbeck & Book Signing*: 12:30pm-2pm : Doheny Memorial Library 240
  Join us hear from noted author and Vietnam Veteran Thomas Steinbeck on his new book, The Silver Lotus & his experience as a veteran.
• *Veterans Day Reception*: 5pm-7pm :: Radisson Midtown Hotel at USC
• Veteran Student Symposium: A panel discussion with student Veterans
  Tuesday, November 15, 2011 :: 4pm-6pm :: Doheny Memorial Library 240
• Troops to Trojans: Veteran Resume Workshop & Discussion
  Thursday, November 17, 2011 :: 4pm to 6pm :: Tutor Campus Center
Areas of Growth

- Transition programs and workshops
- Female Veteran programs
- Veteran specific counseling
- Yellow Ribbon
- Priority Registration
- Faculty Education
- Mentor program
- Other?


Suicide Among Male Veterans: A Prospective Population-Based Study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 2007.*

http://jech.bmj.com/content/61/7/619.abstract?ijkey=e2f2f4b217096a
fe60eb32e1d5181e78f070254f&keytype2=tf_ipsecsha


Veterans in College Perceive Lower Levels of Campus Support and Interact Less with Faculty than Nonveterans, Survey Finds. *National Survey of Student Engagement, 2010.*

THANK YOU!

Questions? Comments? Ideas?

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