We serve Military-Affiliated Students at UC San Diego:

- Approximately 1600 students
- About 25% veterans and 75% family members
- About 1/4 graduate and 3/4 undergraduate
- Nearly all undergraduates are transfer students
- Many are first-generation college students
- Most veterans are older than their peers with unique life experiences
- Many (not all) student veterans have jobs, homes, and families of their own
- Graduation rates are approximately 5 points lower for student veterans than other transfers; our goal is to close that gap
Intrinsic Veteran Strengths

• More mature and focused
• Resilient
• Internal motivation
• Organized and accountable
• Respectful of rank and authority
• Goal-oriented
• High level of integrity
• Self-sacrificing through military service
Barriers to Learning: External

- Classroom environment
  - Seating choices
  - Distractions
  - Classmates are disruptive; lack of respect
  - Instructor is late
  - Policies or expectations are unclear or inconsistent
- Uncomfortable conversations
  - Instructor’s comments about war or veterans
  - Insensitive questions
- Outside distractions (family, relationships, childcare, work, finances, housing, etc.)
- Duty obligations and missed classes
Barriers to Learning: Internal

• Culture & Value differences
• Post-deployment adjustment
• Re-negotiation of identity
• Physical disabilities
  • Hearing loss (#1 injury, over 60%)
  • Significant back & knee problems
• Hidden disabilities
  • Anxiety, depression, suicide risk, addictions, survivor’s guilt, health problems, traumatic stress injuries, traumatic brain injuries
About the Student Veterans Resource Center (SVRC)

• Provides a “safe space” for military-connected students
• The SVRC serves approximately 50 students every day
• Average of 3 hours per visit
• The center is usually full during peak hours
• 68% of visitors report that they use the space primarily to study
• 10% report that they use the space primarily to socialize or relax
SVRC Amenities

- Free printing
- Coffee & kitchen
- Convertible pool/study/work table
- Quiet study room & back office
- Check-out items
- Earplugs, whiteboards, blue books etc.
- Bulletin board resources & referrals
- Facebook and newsletter @UCSDveterans
- 24 hour access
Services and Programs

• Support Services (walk-in, no wait!):
  • Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)
  • Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
  • School Certifying Official (SCO)
  • VA Benefit Counseling
  • Career Advisor

• Events and Initiatives:
  • Military-Connected Welcome Aboard
  • #UCSDVeteransWeek
  • Military-Connected Graduation Celebration
  • Quarterly Workshops
  • Partnership with UCSD Veteran Staff Association and Student Veterans Organization
  • Collaboration with Admissions on Outreach Events (e.g. Warriors to Campus, CCC Region X, etc.)

• NEW Programs:
  • Peer Navigators Program
  • Supporting Student Veterans on Campus
  • Upcoming: Student Success Series
How Can YOU Help?

• Understand the issues

• Recognize student strengths

• Identify and improve existing campus services, to:
  • Foster Peer Support
  • Offer Transitional Support
  • Provide Academic Support

• Create a veteran-friendly space

• Make appropriate referrals

• Reach out to SVRC
Tips for Academic Support

• VA doesn’t pay for “extra” classes; consult with School Certifying Official (Lisa Linares)
• Help students schedule classes with time blocks for appointments or job
• Avoid the “hard” classes in the first term; take a light load
• Recommend vet-friendly professors
• Recognize & mitigate common internal and external learning barriers
• Provide flexibility for military duty
• Normalize & encourage tutoring
• Coordinate any accommodations
THANK YOU!

Iris Ayala-Swindell
iayalaswindell@ucsd.edu
4-5460

Lisa Linares, Benefits Coordinator
llinares@ucsd.edu
4-0077