

Improving College Opportunities for Veterans: Commitments Update

At the inaugural Improving College Opportunities for Veterans conference in November 2018, seven organizations [announced the steps](#) they would take to increase the enrollment and graduation of Veterans from high-graduation rate colleges and universities.

These organizations have made significant progress towards their goals, including:

American Council on Education (ACE)

ACE conducted 21 workshops connecting with over 2,000 participants. These workshops explain the rigor behind military education evaluations/credit recommendations and how to read/interpret the Joint Services Transcript and other military transcripts.

They have also created two micro-courses and one toolkit to help inform higher education professionals on transitioning to academic life, support systems, and faculty perspectives on military students. All three are available on the [ACE Engage platform](#).

ACE also hosted a [panel discussion](#) on “Connecting Veterans with Quality Higher Education Institutions” at their March 2019 ACE Conference. The panelists were from the Heinz Endowments, Syracuse University, Service to School, Ithaka S+R, and a student Veteran from The University of Pennsylvania.

American Talent Initiative

The Veterans Community of Practice within the American Talent Initiative (ATI) has brought together 41 member institutions focused on increasing access and success for student veterans. To date, members of the community have come together both in-person and virtually on multiple occasions to set objectives and share best practices related to enrolling and supporting student veterans.

In 2019, members participated in the first iteration of an annual Veterans data collection and began incorporating veterans-related goals into the broader goal-setting frameworks for their institutions. In addition, we hosted an inaugural full day convening for the community of practice, which brought together 85 participants from ATI member institutions, external organizations, and experts to discuss strategies and best practices that can facilitate enrolling and supporting student Veterans. We have also launched a resource repository focused on Veterans, and are planning for future research efforts for the upcoming year.

Coalition for College

The Coalition for College is taking tangible steps toward improving college opportunity for veterans. First, they have continued to prioritize enhancements to their application to better serve transfer students, which has increased our transfer application volume by more than 150% over last year at this time. Most Veterans apply to school with transfer credits.

They are also leveraging partnerships to extend outreach to Veterans and early outreach to those currently serving in the military. They have partnered with the Corvias Foundation to hold a "Coalition Day" celebration at Fort Bragg this spring, to introduce the free college planning resources to the men and women stationed there.

They are also participating in the CLEP Student Search pilot, which enables them to introduce the free MyCoalition resources to Service members and Veterans who have opted into share their contact information through that new initiative.

Finally, they are collaborating with college access organizations, including Service to School, to launch a pilot project this summer. This pilot will further tap the potential of the MyCoalition platform to facilitate direct communication between students and Coalition members early in the college planning process, so that applicants may share relevant information and examples of their talents, achievements and life experience to get differentiated advice and feedback.

College Board

College Board launched its military landing page, www.cb.org/military, in November 2018. This website includes "Operation College," information for Service members and Veterans to make informed higher education decisions.

Starting in February 2019, Service members were given the option to participate in Student Search Service® when they register for [College Level Examination Program](#) (CLEP). In the first ten months, almost 6,500 Service members have opted-in to Search and took a CLEP exam. Over 70 percent of these Service members have a year or more left in their military service, which means schools have time to discuss the transition to higher education and influence Service members decisions.

Three Veteran service organizations (Posse Foundation, Service to School, and Warrior-Scholar Project), 26 four-year schools, and 16 two-year schools are participating in the Search pilot.

Posse Foundation

Posse recently established an advisory council. Members of the council will focus on program development (e.g., recruitment, college/university partnerships, etc.), program support (e.g., access to veteran networks, networking opportunities, etc.), and Scholar support (e.g., volunteering as a career coach, networking with Scholars, recommending internship opportunities, etc.);

They implemented a program to Identify and train Posse Veterans Scholars and alumni as ambassadors. In the past couple recruitment cycles, they have seen an increase in the number of nominees who have been nominated or recommended by current Scholars and alumni.

They also established a formal, robust nominator network. Nominators include education service officers and transition staff at military bases, veterans services office staff at community colleges, and veteran service organization staff. They will nominate Service members and Veterans for the Posse Veterans Program, track them through the three-round interview process, and be a main point of contact for Posse staff.

These steps will allow Posse to double and possibly triple the size of the Veterans Program by the year 2025.

Service to School

Service to School's mission is to prepare transitioning Service members and Veterans for their next chapter of leadership by helping them gain admission to the best college or graduate school possible. In 2019, they committed to continuing to impact as many veterans as possible by making sure they had access to a great education and vowed to improve services specifically for women veterans.

To this end, Service to School teamed up with the COMMIT Foundation and Promote Leadership to host a two-day transition workshop for 35 women Service members and Veterans. Participants worked with executive coaches and mentors to identify pathways to new careers or into institutions of higher education. This workshop built confidence and expanded future possibilities while sparking the imagination and creating new professional relationships.

In addition to this successful workshop, they served more than 75 women with one-on-one mentorship and college advising resulting in college and graduate school acceptances and enrollments at Stanford, Amherst, Columbia, Princeton, Harvard, Georgetown, Syracuse, Dartmouth, and other ATI member colleges.

Warrior-Scholar Project

Over 250 Veterans participated in a 2019 Warrior-Scholar Project (WSP) academic boot camp, hosted at one of 18 top-tier institutions (including Columbia, Yale, Harvard, and Princeton). Of those 253 participants:

- 100% would recommend both Humanities & STEM programs to other Veterans
- 94% gained confidence to apply to colleges previously thought out of reach
- 98% feel more capable as a result of WSP
- 100% have identified abilities, skills, and experiences that will help in college
- 99% are more informed consumers of higher education
- 94% of STEM participants feel more like they belong in the field of science

There are 320 veterans scheduled to participate in a 2020 (WSP) academic boot camp; they are adding programs at Caltech, University of Michigan, and Williams College. There are over 100 Veterans who will participate in WSP community college workshops throughout the country in 2020.