

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS:

STRATEGIES FOR SERVING VETERAN & MILITARY-AFFILIATED STUDENTS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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WHO ARE VETERAN AND MILITARY-AFFILIATED STUDENTS?

VETERAN AND MILITARY-AFFILIATED STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

HOW YOUR LIBRARY CAN SUPPORT VETERAN AND MILITARY-AFFILIATED STUDENTS

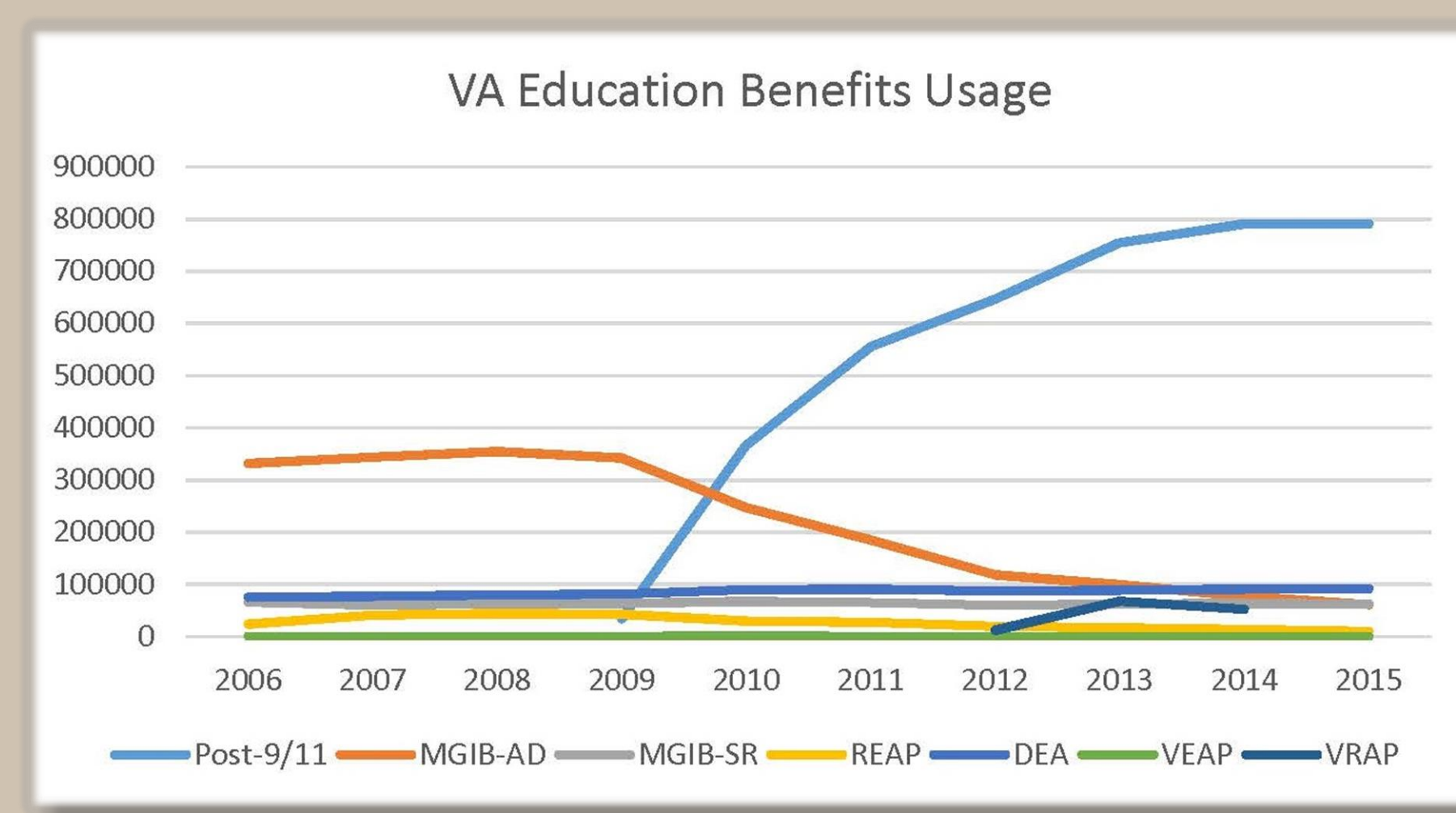
The category “veteran and military-affiliated students” includes the following:

- Military veterans (separated from the military)
- Active duty service members
- Reservists (National Guard and Reserves)
- Military spouses
- Military dependents
- Military survivors

Student veterans and service members are unique:

- Far more likely than civilian students to be over 25
- More likely to be first-generation students
- Mostly male (~75%), but women veterans overrepresented (Kim & Cole, 2013)

Veteran and military-student enrollment in higher education:



(U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, 2010; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration, 2016).

NOTE: This is an incomplete picture, as it only includes veteran and military-affiliated students enrolled using federal education benefits through the VA.

Veteran and service members as at-risk students:

Veteran and service member students frequently are nontraditional students. Research by the American Council on Education suggests that veteran, active duty, and reservist students are likely to have at least one, and often multiple, Department of Education-identified risk factor such as:

- Delayed enrollment in college
- Part-time enrollment in college
- Financial independence
- Having dependents (Molina & Morse, 2015)

Academic outcomes of veterans and service members:

Research by the American Council on Education suggests that student veterans and service members have considerable demands on their time, but they spend as much time as their civilian peers on their coursework and preparing for class (Kim & Cole, 2013)

Research by Student Veterans of America suggests that:

- Student veterans tend to take a different path to degree attainment, including switches between full- and part-time enrollment and temporary withdrawals
- Student veterans have a similar likelihood of degree completion to other students, but it can take longer for student veterans (Cate, 2014)

How colleges and universities are responding:

Many colleges and universities have developed programs and services in response to the influx of student veterans and service members. Common strategies include:

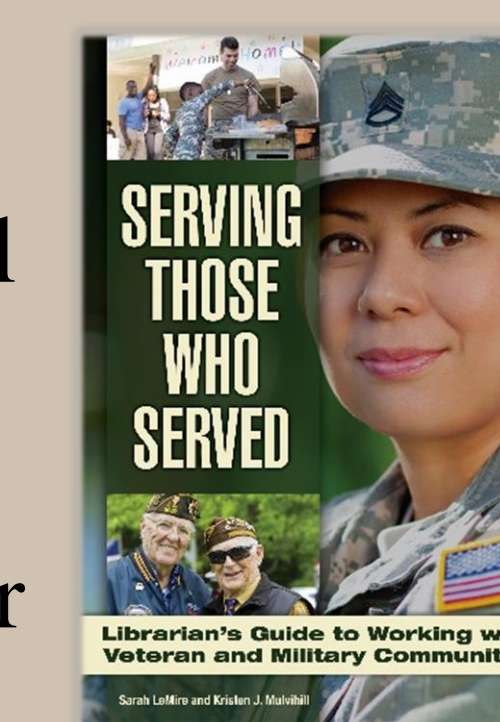
- Dedicated office or center for veteran support
- Veterans benefits and financial aid counseling
- Veterans lounge or other dedicated space
- Veteran-oriented events on campus (e.g. Veterans Day events)
- Veteran-specific orientation (McBain et al., 2012)

Examples of what your library can do:

- Dedicate study spaces for student veterans and service members (WVU Libraries, 2017)
- Highlight veteran and military-friendly study spaces in the library (LeMire, 2015)
- Collect materials of interest to veterans and service members, including such topics as VA benefits, coping with military-related impairments, and family support (Sopiarz, 2016)
- Develop targeted outreach for student veterans and service members, including participation in any campus orientations for veterans
- Embed information literacy content in any campus courses targeting student veterans and service members

Want to learn more?

In our recently-published book, Kristen Mulvihill and I share our perspective as librarians and veterans ourselves and the strategies we use to serve the veteran and military communities in our libraries.



References

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