



2021
NASPA
VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM ON
MILITARY-CONNECTED
STUDENTS

Experience, Utilize, and Value- Exploring how student veterans perceive student support services at a faith-based institution.

Dr. Doris Munoz

February 24-26, 2021 | Virtual



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Presenter

- Fayetteville, North Carolina
- 15 years in higher education
- Associate Dean of Students and Director of the Student Involvement Center
- Grand Canyon University
- Military relationship with no direct connection
- Where are all the student veterans?



She, her, hers

Learning Outcomes

- Participants will be exposed to a brief history of student veterans and Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support.
- Participants will learn how student veterans say they experience, utilize, and value student support services at a faith-based institution.
- Participants will learn ways to modify and enhance their student support service to meet the needs of student veterans.



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Background

- Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Transition from the military to the classroom
- Higher Education's response
 - Military Friendly



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Theoretical Foundation

- **Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support**

Bean and Metzner's Conceptual Model of Nontraditional Undergraduate Student Attrition (Bean & Metzner, 1985)

- Nontraditional students do not respond well to traditional student programs and services

Weidman's Model for Undergraduate Socialization (Weidman, 1989)

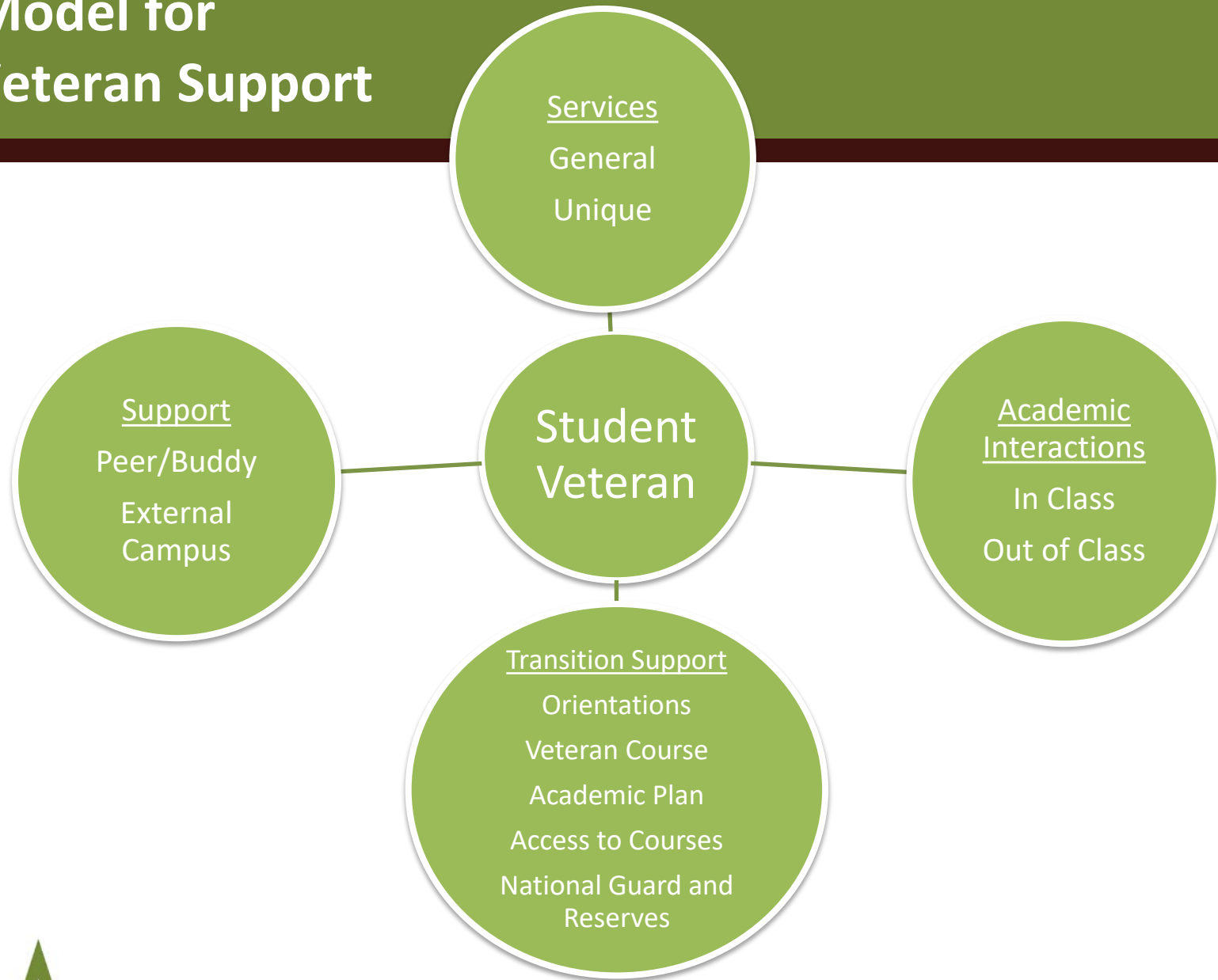
- Undergraduate students have success in their higher education experience when they socially have healthy peer and faculty relationships

Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support

Cornerstones of Support (Vacchi & Berger, 2014)

- **Services**
- **Transition Support**
- **Support**
- **Academic Interactions**

Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support



Where are all the Student Veterans?



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Research Gap

- Campbell and Riggs (2015)
 - Examined- What effects psychological distress and social support had on a student veteran's academic transition from the military.
 - Found- Student Veterans need support through their academic transition to cope with anxiety and post-traumatic symptoms.
 - Recommended- research needs to understand what support services student veterans and **utilizing**.

Research Gap

- Bagby, Barnard-Brak, Thompson, and Sulak (2015)
 - Examined- 11 different student veterans during their transition from the military to a small private university
 - Found- Student veterans have unique needs and require tailored services to address the challenges they face in the transition to college life.
 - Recommended- Research needs to examine student veterans at **private faith-based institutions.**

Research Gap

- Taylor, Parks, and Edwards (2016)
 - Examined- How college administrators reported a change in the psychological characteristics of student veterans since the implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2009.
 - Found- It is important to offer support services to meet student veterans' needs from the professional's point of view.
 - Recommended- Research needs to understand specifically from student veterans how they **perceive** veteran specific support services.

Research Gap

- Albright, Fletcher, Pelts, and Taliaferro (2017)
 - Examined- the relationship between mental health symptoms and the use of mental health services on campus.
 - Found- Student veterans did show signs of utilizing mental health services to meet their mental health needs.
 - Recommended- Research needs to learn **how to best support** student veterans throughout all services being provided.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to explore how student veterans attending a **faith-based** higher education institution **experience**, **utilize**, and **value** the student support services being provided in the Southeastern United States.

- Bagby et al. (2015)
 - Private faith-based institution- **Location**
- Taylor et al. (2016)
 - Perceive the services- **Experience**
- Campbell & Riggs (2015)
 - Utilize the services- **Utilize**
- Albright et al. (2017)
 - How to best support- **Value**

Significance of the Study

- Fill the gap
 - Experience-** feelings and opinion
 - Utilize-** use or do not use
 - Value-** beneficial or not
- Help educators **support, prepare, and offer** support services
- Help faith-based institutions **meet the needs** of their student veterans.
- **Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support**
 - Found the cornerstones throughout the experiences

Study Facts

- Methodology/Design
 - Qualitative Descriptive Study
- Population of Interest
 - Student veterans enrolled at a faith-based higher education institution in the Southeastern United States.
 - Purposeful Sampling
 - Veteran Status
 - Undergraduate at a faith-based institution in Southeastern United States
 - Used at least one support service
 - Completed 3 academic semesters at the faith-based institution

Study Facts

- Sample Size
 - Recruitment methods
 - 16 student veterans
- Data Sources
 - Interviews- 10 student veterans
 - Focus Group- 8 student veterans
 - 2 subjects participated in both

Research Questions

- Interview
 - **RQ1:** How do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution experience student support services?
 - **RQ2:** How do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution utilize student support services?
- Focus Group
 - **RQ3:** What do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution believe is the value of the student support services provided?

Research Question 1. How do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution experience student support services?

Awareness

- Knowing about student support services
- Word of Mouth
 - Peers
 - Class Exposure
 - Faculty



Friendliness

- How faculty and staff treated student veterans
- How the institution operated itself as a military friendly institution
 - 6 yes, 3 maybe, 1 no



Friendliness Quotes

Treated

"People don't even know how much kindness matters. If I'm a veteran and you're giving me a lot of attitude, I'd rather just not deal with it. Most veterans are very passive, passive aggressive people. That because we've been living our lives to be aggressive, but not to authority". - Mary Ann

Definition of Military Friendly

"It means that veterans aren't frowned upon. You're, they're not pushed away. They're not looked at different. We are invited in as a family, like the students who have never had the opportunity to be in the military". - Butterfly

Research Question 1. How do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution experience student support services?

Feelings- “I feel”

- Awareness
 - *“there should be more programs to help veterans find the services”- Violet*
- Diverse range of feelings



Opinions- “I think”

- More accommodating for non-traditional students
- Recommendations for improvements
 - *Orientation, flexible hours, online classes, and child-care*



Research Question 2. How do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution utilize student support services?



Services Used

Veteran Services
Writing Center
Library
Extra-Curricular Activities



Services Not Used

Student Health
Campus Recreation
Disability Services
Tutoring Center



Accessibility

Can I use it?
Is it for me?
When is it open?

Research Question 3. What do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution believe is the value of the student support services provided?

Beneficial Services

- Library, Career Services, Veteran Services, Academic Affairs, Writing Center

Non-Beneficial Services

- Bookstore, Religious Life, Student Health, and Tutoring Center



Research Question 3. What do student veterans attending a faith-based higher education institution believe is the value of the student support services provided?

Lack of Inclusion from the University



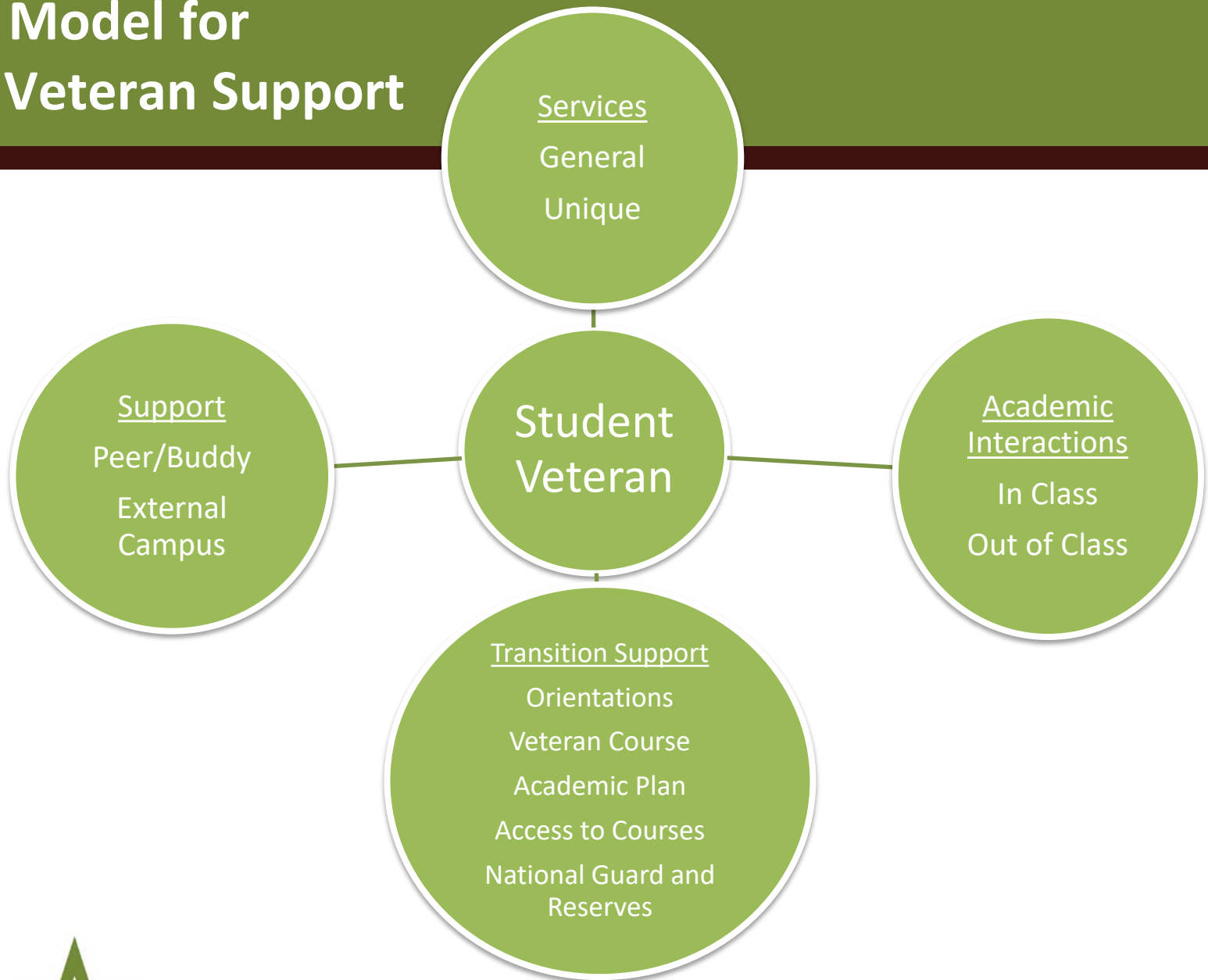
- Veteran's center location
- Difference in the programs and support services for traditional students verses non-traditional students
 - “geared towards straight out of high school, but you have a large population of people in the gray?” (Samantha).
- A lack of awareness and accessibility for student support services.

Motivation from the Individual



- Value is found when student support services are used

Vacchi's Model for Student Veteran Support



Theoretical Implications

Vacchi's Model of Student Veteran Support

Cornerstone Service

General Services
Writing Center

Unique Services
Veteran Services

Unique Modification to Services
*Veteran Writing Lap
and Hours of Operation*

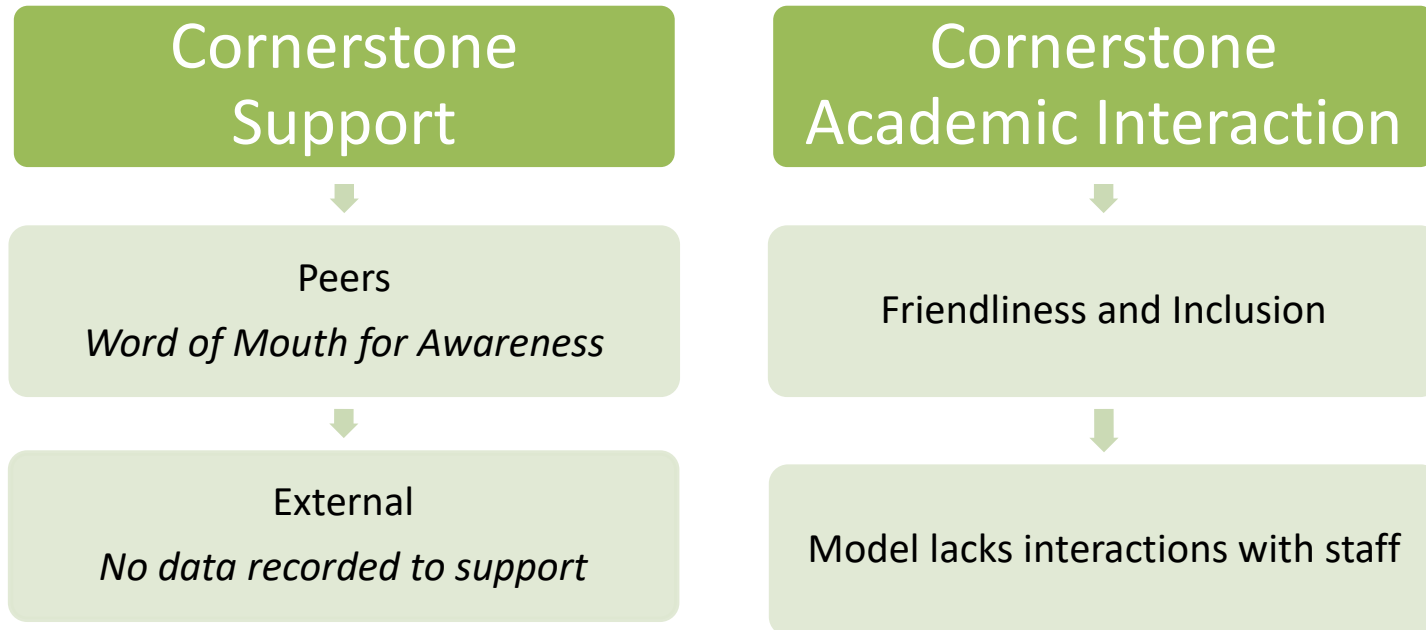
Cornerstone Transitional Support

Student Veterans of America
Student Organization

Need for specialized orientation
*Awareness, Accessibility, and
Inclusion*

Theoretical Implications

Vacchi's Model of Student Veteran Support



Suggestions moving forward

- Awareness and accessibility
 - Brochures
 - Presentations
 - Hours of Operation
 - Events
 - Word of mouth
 - Orientation
- Student veterans want friendliness and to feel included by the university.
 - Green Zone Training
 - Faculty, Staff, and Students
 - Clubs/Organizations
 - Orientation Leaders
 - “Go to” students
 - Location of the veteran center
 - Visual representation and appreciation

Suggestions moving forward

- Unique modifications tailored specifically for student veterans works.
 - Veteran Writing Lab
 - Student Veterans of America
 - Branding
- Documented student support service experiences telling us what support services are used, services not used, beneficial, and non-beneficial.
 - Do your own evaluation
 - Meet with support service offices
 - Is it for me?

Sharing is caring. Power is gained by sharing knowledge.

- Unique Services
- Accessibility
- Awareness
- Friendliness



Questions?



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Resources

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