

# Strategies to Build Academic Confidence

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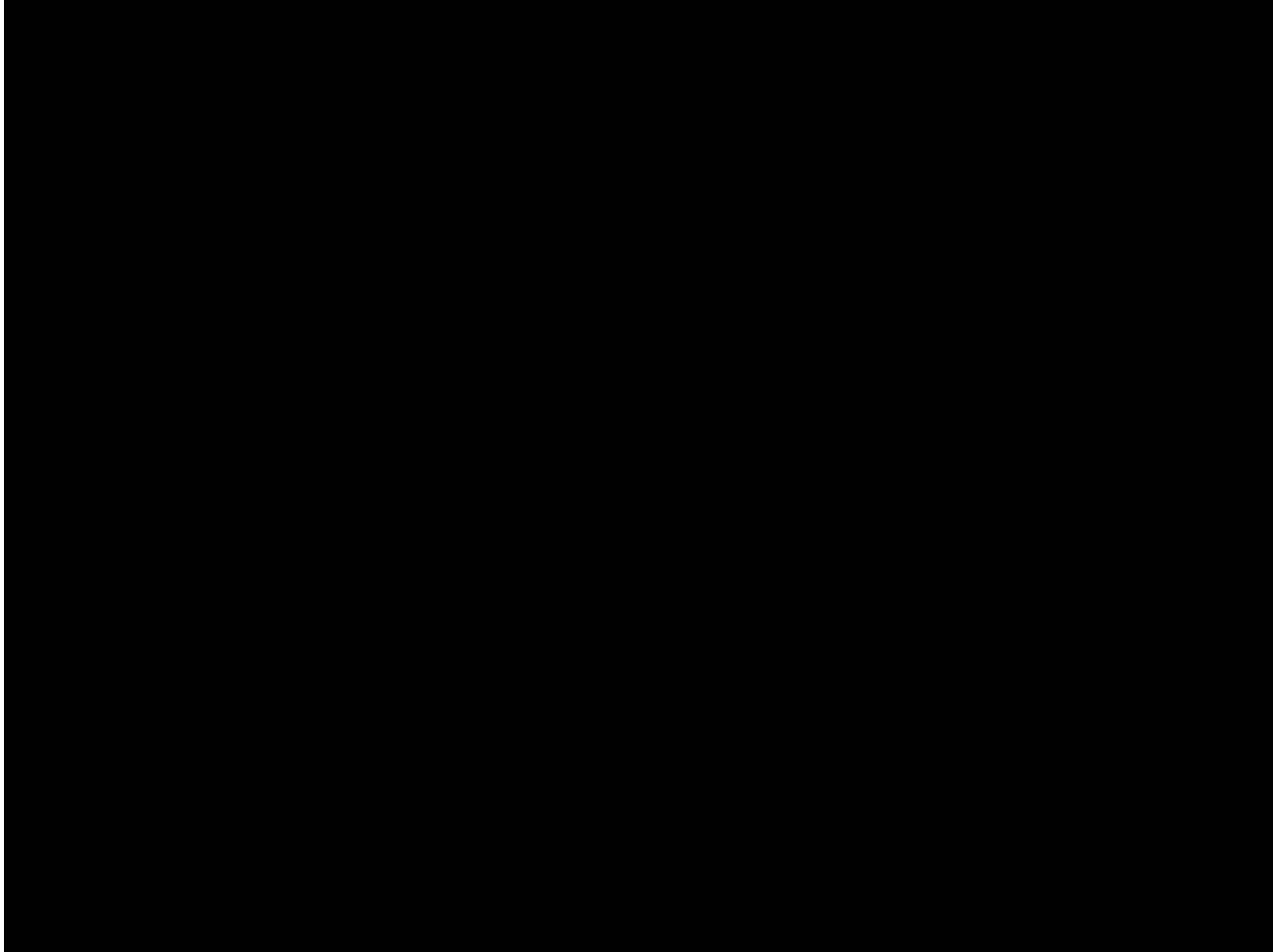


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# First-Gen Student Veteran Perspectives



# Research on Building Academic Confidence

- In a 2006 study,<sup>1</sup> Bermeo, et. al identified three crucial steps to support first-gen students: (1) Raising aspirations for college, (2) Navigating the college admissions process, (3) Easing the initial transition to college.
- In a 2014 study,<sup>2</sup> Ford & Vignare noted key challenges students face with respect to coursework, including: lack of knowledge regarding academia and academic culture, rusty study habits, and difficulties balancing school and life.
- In 2020, Moneva, J. & Tribunalo, S., found a significant relationship between level of confidence and performance tasks: students with high levels of self-confidence can easily accomplish tasks in school and are not afraid to participate in activities, but those with low self-confidence showed low performance tasks and were hesitant to participate in activities.<sup>3</sup>
- In an article discussing retention theories for first-gen students, Longwell-Grice & Longwell-Grice (2007) lay out the cultural, social, and academic transitions first-gen students undergo, as well as the role of faculty in building self-confidence.<sup>4</sup>

1. Bermeo, A., Grigsby, M., Mortenson, T., Muraskin, L., Stokes, L., Tinto, V. & Upshaw, W. (2006). What Works for First-Generation College Students. The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education.

2. Ford, K. & Vignare, K. (2014). The evolving military learner population: a review of the literature. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*. 19(1), 7-30. DOI: 10.24059/OLJ.V19I1.503.

3. Moneva, J. & Tribunalo, S.M., Students Levels of Self-confidence and Performance Tasks. (2020). *Asia Pacific Journal of Academic Research in Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, No. 1.

4. Longwell-Grice, R., & Longwell-Grice, H. (2007). Testing Tinto: How do retention theories work for first-generation, working-class students? *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice*, 9(4).

# Four Models

## Warrior-Scholar Project

- Hosts college prep boot camps for enlisted vets in partnership with top colleges and universities.
- Verified data shows connection between increased confidence gained during courses and degree persistence rates (90%+)
- Participants noted how WSP helped them “feel more confident participating in lectures and interacting with peers,” and others noted how WSP gave them confidence to apply to top-tier schools, apply themselves in the classroom, take risks that felt uncomfortable

## Syracuse University

- Office of Vet and Military Affairs Support helps vets acclimate through Peer Advisors for Vet Education (PAVE), WSP, resource fair, student vet organization, and campus events
- Cuse-First-Pre-Welcome Program supports first-gen students (19% of Syracuse students) with tailored support: navigating resources (e.g., location of the financial aid and student services offices) and understanding terminology (e.g., what MWF means), and gives students a sense of community and a glimpse of what campus and student life will be like.

## Columbia University Center for Vet Transition and Integration

- Launched to have a direct and lasting impact on the issue of veteran transition and upward mobility by creating best-in-class programming veterans need as they transition from active service to college and the workforce.
- CVTI curriculum participants report several key indicators of persistence: lower rates of academic distress, lower rates of academic probation, increased performance coming out of probationary status, and critically, earlier outreach to support

## Texas A&M

- The #FirstGenVets Leadership Scholars learning community is a yearlong program that supports students academically, physically, mentally, and interpersonally.
- Participants gain skills and resources to be successful veterans and first-generation college students.
- Focus on optimizing students’ opportunity for academic success, leadership development, and career preparation.
- Outcomes: professional guidance and development; community and support networks; academic success; leadership skills.

## Other Considerations

- Access = Admission + Support + Resources
  - It's insufficient just to admit students to college or university
- Taking a broader view of “benefits”
  - Benefits are more than just the funds to pay for college – they also include the support programs that help ensure success once on campus
- Institutions are not on their own
  - IHLs should leverage support offered by nonprofits such as WSP, CVTI, and IVMF to ensure students succeed
  - There is value in IHLs themselves gaining confidence in their ability to fully serve student veterans
- When serving these populations:
  - Know your research
  - Know what first-gen students are up against
  - Take steps to make them feel like they belong

