

MILITARY MEMBERS' TRANSFER CREDIT AND THEIR ARTICULATION INTO
OHIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEMS: A CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

by

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ABSTRACT

The research project focused on exploring the issues that are impacting and preventing military service members and veterans from receiving credit for some of the training received in the military that could be equated to college level courses. The study population used for the research topic was United States military service members and veterans who have served in either the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Air National Guard, or Army National Guard. Being that this covers an extremely large population, the research focused primarily on members of those branches of service who have attended community colleges in Southern Ohio. The data collection process was purposive sampling, and an electronic survey questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results of the analyzed data concludes that there are multiple factors that are negatively impacting and preventing military service members and veterans from receiving credit for some of the training received in the military that could be equated to college level courses.

KEY WORDS: articulation, community college systems, military service members, transfer credit, military training and college credit

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is experiencing tremendous pressure for improved rates of degree completion in order to help the United States remain competitive in the global economy. Completion has become a high priority for community colleges due to a reform movement led by federal and state policymakers, accreditors, foundations, businesses, and educators, intended to dramatically increase the number of graduates from the nation's community colleges and universities (Danielson, 2019). Currently, several college completion initiatives exist for the various student populations, including our military service members and veterans. What impact do military service members' and veterans' student populations have on those completion rates? Are there any existing barriers that are impacting the completion rates of this student population?

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem for this study will focus on exploring and identifying the factors and issues that are impacting and preventing our military service members and veterans from receiving credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG), and Joint Service Transcripts (JTS) for training received in the military that could be equated to college-level courses.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Our United States Armed Forces recruiters often highlight to potential recruits that military training received in boot camp, technical schools, and on-the-job training (OJT) can be converted to college credit (U.S. Army, 2018). Similar messages are conveyed in some of the military recruiting commercials using television and radio advertisements, magazine advertisement, and online advertisement (U.S. Army, 2018). The educational benefits offered by the U.S. government to military service members provide them with a great opportunity. However, military service members often experience problems with receiving college transfer credit for military training they have received in boot camp, technical schools, and OJT (Military Benefits, 2020). This has been an ongoing problem over the past few decades, and some progress to make it better has been seen in the emergence of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit and Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG) (Cate et al., 2017).

Military-veteran students represent an increasing segment of the nation's nontraditional student population. Prior to the enactment of the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, military-veteran students had a significant presence at fewer than 200 U.S. colleges and universities (Brown & Gross, 2011).

In contrast, according to the Department of Defense (DoD), as of July 7, 2014, there were 2,641 colleges and universities that had a signed memorandum of understanding to abide by the requirements to receive VA funding (DoD, 2015), and military-veteran students are now estimated to exceed over 1,000,000 beneficiaries. Although they are categorized as nontraditional students, the complexity of military life can separate the military-veteran student from the more customary, civilian nontraditional student (Howard & Brode, 2013).

Military-veteran students, like civilian nontraditional students, are typically characterized by age, as well as substantial family and employment responsibilities, coupled with some previous college experience (Kim & Cole, 2013).

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions helped with gathering pertinent topical data and aided in establishing the general research framework:

1. What are the organizational processes at two Ohio community colleges that help determine college credit when evaluating military coursework credit and/or Joint Service Transcripts?
2. How does the administration and organizational culture at two Ohio community colleges view military training, experience, and coursework?
3. What recommendations to academic policies and processes should be made for awarding college credit for military training credit?
4. What state-level programs exist in Ohio that relate to awarding college credit for military coursework?
5. Once the review of military coursework is complete and credit decisions are made, is the student notified of those decisions and informed about an appeal process?

OVERVIEW TO THE STUDY

Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate,

and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Participants were determined using criterion-based selection. A total of 29 participants were involved in this research activity, which allowed enough data to be gathered to thoroughly answer the research questions. The participants represented five U.S. military service branches, which aided in providing a more holistic view of the research problem.

DATA COLLECTION

There were two phases of data collection for this research. Phase one consisted of a 25-question online survey with questions relating to the military and veteran students' perceptions and experiences with the transfer credit processes, the organizational culture, and general environment at the two community colleges. Also, participants were asked to provide transfer credit policy recommendations at the two community colleges. Phase two of the research included general knowledge conversations with applicable staff members of both community colleges.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the data collection, qualitative data analyses were used to explain the outcomes. The survey was administered via Microsoft Forms, which calculated the statistical analysis based on participants' demographics, their experiences with the institutions, and their knowledge of institutional transfer credit processes. The general knowledge conversations were conducted using the online meeting system Zoom and telephone conference calls. Once the

data were collected, a comprehensive list of themes emerged in experiences, beliefs/perceptions, formal and informal practices, campus responsibilities, and campus culture.

QUALITY CHECK GUIDE

The researcher used the following 10 suggestions offered by Bogdan and Biklen (2011) as a quality check guide:

- Force yourself to make decisions that narrow your studies—this means have the discipline to pursue only the data that supports your topic which will narrow your focus and allow you to become more efficient and effective.
- Force yourself to make decisions concerning the type of study you want to accomplish—this means we must decide if we want our study to be a full description or a study focused on generating a theory.
- Develop analytical questions—generate questions that will encourage different reactions, opinions, interpretations and encourages a deeper level of thinking.
- Plan data collection sessions according to what you find in previous observations—review your field notes periodically in order to plan for your next data collection session.
- Write many “observer’s comments” as you go—apply critical thinking to your observations.
- Write memos to yourself about what you are learning—this means keep a journal of your progress and take time to reflect on what you are learning.
- Try out ideas and themes on participants—this means you should periodically ask certain participants about the patterns and themes you have discovered in your data.
- Begin exploring the literature while you are in the field—this means periodically review your substantive literature during your study.
- Play with metaphors, analogies, and concepts—this means to explore and sometimes thoughtfully question the research.

- Use visual devices—this means to try your best to visualize what you are learning about your topic to bring more clarification to your data. (pp. 161-169)

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Military Student – This term encompasses members serving on active duty and reserve duty. It covers members from all branches of the military and includes their spouses and primary dependents (Brown & Gross, 2011). However, in this study, the term *military student* refers only to the service members, not their family members.

Veteran Student – This term includes members who have served in either an active duty or reserve status of the armed forces. Also, the term *veteran* can be applied to either retired or discharged persons (Brown & Gross, 2011).

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) – PLA measures student learning that has occurred outside the college classroom to determine whether it is appropriate for college credit. It, then, applies an equivalent number of college credits to the learning (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).

Military Training Credit – Service members and veterans are able to submit their military transcripts for possible course transfer from classes and trainings completed while in service (American Council on Education, 2020).

Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAGs) – In order to streamline the awarding, transferability, and applicability of college credit, service members and veterans are guaranteed to earn certain types of credit(s) or course(s) as specified in the Military Transfer Assurance Guides (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2019).

Joint Services Transcripts (JST), formerly SMART – The Joint Service Transcript (JST/SMART) documents the number of potential college credits the American Council on Education (ACE) recommends for formal military training and occupational experience. The primary purpose of the JST/SMART is to assist service members in obtaining college credit for their military experience (ACE, n.d.).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This study adds to the existing literature known about transfer credit relating to military service members and veterans. Military service members, veterans, and community college faculty and staff perceptions and attitudes regarding military transfer credit are likely to be conflicted and diverse. This study aims to uncover what the previously mentioned stakeholders currently believe and to provide insight about their experiences involving military transfer credit at two Ohio community colleges.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the pertinent research and literature relating to military transfer credit. It starts with an examination of the history and purposes of military education, discusses the emergence of the military guide, and provides a list of programs that support military education. Additional researched sources found in this chapter include the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits, articulated credit, and the various types of transfer credit. The chapter concludes with a review of the programs in the state of Ohio that support military education.

MILITARY EDUCATION

It has been heralded as one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever produced by the federal government—one that impacted the United States socially, economically, and politically. But it almost never came to pass. The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944—commonly known as the GI Bill® of Rights—nearly stalled in Congress as members of the House and Senate debated provisions of the controversial bill. Despite their differences, all agreed something must be done to help veterans assimilate into civilian life (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF MILITARY EDUCATION

The return of millions of veterans from World War II gave Congress a chance at redemption. But the GI Bill had far greater implications. It was seen as a genuine attempt to thwart a looming social and economic crisis. Some saw inaction as an invitation to another depression (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

Harry W. Colmery is credited with writing the draft of what became the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more popularly known as the GI Bill of Rights (Kansas Historical Society, 2011). Colmery was an attorney whose background included military service in the U.S. Army, and he served a one-year term as the national commander of the American Legion in 1936.

It was introduced in the House on January 10, 1944, and in the Senate the following day. Both chambers approved their own versions of the bill. However, the bill almost died when Senate and House members came together to debate their versions. Both groups agreed on the education and home loan benefits but were deadlocked on the unemployment provision (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

Nearly 75 years ago, on a stormy night in southern Georgia, U.S. Representative John S. Gibson was rushed by a police motorcycle escort from his hometown of Douglas to Jacksonville, Florida, where a plane awaited him. He flew off to Washington, D.C., arriving just in time to cast his vote to break the Servicemen's Readjustment Act out of a conference committee deadlock on June 10, 1944, the final day the lawmakers would meet about it. That dramatic overnight journey, arranged by the American Legion, changed the course of U.S. history (Stoffer, 2019).

The Senate approved the final form of the bill on June 12, and the House followed on June 13. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944. The Veterans Administration (VA) was responsible for carrying out the law's key provisions: education and training; loan guaranty for homes, farms, or businesses; and unemployment pay (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

Before the war, college and homeownership were, for the most part, unreachable dreams for the average American. Thanks to the GI Bill, millions who would have flooded the job market instead opted for education. In the peak year of 1947, veterans accounted for 49% of college admissions. By the time the original GI Bill ended on July 25, 1956, 7.8 million of 16 million World War II veterans had participated in an education or training program (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

In response to military recruiting shortfalls, Congress passed the Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 1984. This became popularly known as the Montgomery GI Bill®, after the chief sponsor, Congressman G. V. "Sonny" Montgomery of Mississippi. The law provided educational assistance benefits of \$300 a month for 36 months, in exchange for completing three years of active duty or two years of active duty and four years in the reserve (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.-b).

In 2008, the GI Bill was updated once again. The new law gives veterans with active duty service on or after September 11, 2001, enhanced educational benefits that cover more educational expenses and provide a living allowance, money for books, and the ability to transfer unused educational benefits to spouses or children (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2013).

HISTORY OF THE MILITARY GUIDE

In December 1945, at the request of civilian educational institutions and the regional accrediting associations, the American Council on Education (ACE) established the Commission on Accreditation of Service Experiences—renamed in 1979 as the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials—to evaluate military educational programs and to assist institutions in granting credit for such experiences. The first edition of the *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* was published in 1946 (American Council on Education [ACE], 2020).

The GI Bill, established in 1944 to aid veterans of World War II, was later extended to include veterans of the Korean War. The subsequent enrollment of many veterans in colleges and universities prompted the publication of the second edition of *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* in 1954 (ACE, 2020).

In 1975, ACE implemented a program to evaluate learning represented by demonstrated proficiency in Army enlisted Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). Subsequently, the occupational assessment program was expanded to include Navy general rates, ratings, warrant officers, and limited duty officers; Army warrant officer MOS; Navy warrant officer and limited duty officer specialties; Coast Guard enlisted ratings and warrant officers; and selected Marine Corps MOS. A small number of Naval Enlisted Classifications (NEC) also has been evaluated (ACE, 2020).

In 1994, ACE published the *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services, 1954–1989*. It contained all courses and occupations with exhibit dates from

1954 to December 1989. In 2005, this archived edition was incorporated online into the Military Guide (ACE, 2020).

In 2006, after 60 years of publishing the *hardbound Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services*, the online version of the Military Guide became the sole source of information for all military courses and occupations that ACE continues to evaluate for the services (ACE, 2020).

PROGRAMS SUPPORTING MILITARY EDUCATION

DEFENSE VOLUNTARY EDUCATION (VOLED)

The Department of Defense (DoD) invests in off-duty, voluntary education to support military recruitment, retention, readiness, and civilian transition goals. Under the direction of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Readiness, Force Education, and Training, the department maintains and provides educational opportunities for military members worldwide (DANTES, n.d.-b):

- College and Career Counseling Program
- College and Career Readiness Exams
- Academic Skills Training Program
- Military Training Evaluation Program
- Tuition Assistance (TA) for Postsecondary Degree Certificates/Programs
- College Credit by Examination Program
- Joint Services Transcript
- Troops to Teachers Program

DANTES

The Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) is the Defense Human Resource Activity (DHRA) component that provides consolidated management of Defense Voluntary Education (VolEd) programs, which prevents duplication of effort among the services and helps service members gain the knowledge they need to achieve their education goals, advance in their military careers, and transition into the civilian workforce at the conclusion of their military service (DANTES, n.d.-a).

In simple terms, DANTES provides no-cost education and career-planning programs for the U.S. Armed Forces military member. Their defense programs can help a military member at every stage of their military career, from entry into the service to the final stage of civilian transition to their next career (DANTES, n.d.-a).

THE YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2008) website,

The Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program (Yellow Ribbon Program) . . . allows institutions of higher learning (degree-granting institutions) in the United States to voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate. The institution can waive up to 50 percent of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution.

DoD VOLUNTARY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (DOD MOU)

DoD policy requires educational institutions that wish to participate in the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) Program to sign an MOU conveying the commitments and agreements between the educational institution and DoD prior to an educational institution receiving funds from a service's TA program (Department of Defense [DoD], n.d.).

MILITARY TUITION ASSISTANCE (TA)

The Department of Defense (DoD) Tuition Assistance (TA) program provides financial assistance to service members for voluntary off-duty education programs in support of professional and personal self-development goals. TA is available for courses that are offered in the classroom or by distance learning and are part of an approved academic degree or certificate program. The courses must be offered by schools that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and are signatories to the current DoD Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (DoD, 2017).

IN-STATE TUITION

Members of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) who have been on active duty for a period of more than 30 days, along with their spouse and dependent children, are eligible to receive in-state tuition at public colleges and universities in the state where they reside or are permanently stationed.

Once the service member or family member is enrolled and paying in-state tuition, they will continue to pay the in-state tuition rate as long as they remain continuously enrolled at the institution, even if reassigned outside the state (DANTES, n.d.-c).

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF THE AIR FORCE (CCAF)

The Community College of the Air Force is a federally chartered academic institution that serves the U.S. Air and Space Force's enlisted total force. It partners with 112 affiliated Air and Space Force schools and 300 Education Service Offices located worldwide to serve approximately 270,000 active, guard, and reserve enlisted personnel, making CCAF the world's

largest community college system. The college annually awards over 22,000 Associate in Applied Science degrees from 71 degree programs (Air University, 2019).

JOINT SERVICES TRANSCRIPT (JST)

The JST is the Joint Services Transcript. It is an academically accepted document that validates a service member's occupational experience and formal military training, along with the corresponding American Council on Education college credit recommendations. It is owned and issued by the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Coast Guard and replaces the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS), the Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART), and the Coast Guard Institute (CGI) Transcript. ACE supplies data that populate the JST and performs quality checks on the transcript, but ACE cannot make changes to this document; only the applicable service representatives are allowed to update information on the document (ACE, n.d.).

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) EDUCATION BENEFITS

FOREVER GI BILL®

In 2017, President Trump signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, also known as the "Forever GI Bill®," which would bring significant changes to veterans education benefits. The law is named after the American Legion national commander who wrote the original GI Bill language in 1944 and will allow more veterans to use the GI Bill and more time to use it. Some of the changes will go into effect immediately; most will not. The majority of the changes enhance or expand education benefits for service members, veterans, and family members (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, n.d.-a).

POST-9/11 GI BILL®

The Post-9/11 GI Bill® offers higher education and training benefits to service members, veterans, and their families who served after September 10, 2001 (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020b).

MONTGOMERY GI BILL®

The Montgomery GI Bill® assists active duty and reservists with the pursuit of higher education degrees, certificates, and other education and training (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020b).

RESERVE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (REAP)

REAP provides educational assistance to members of the Reserve components called or ordered to active duty in response to a war or national emergency declared by the President or Congress. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2016 ended REAP on November 25, 2015. Some individuals were eligible for REAP benefits until November 25, 2019, while others were no longer eligible for REAP benefits (DANTES, n.d.-d).

The Post-9/11 GI Bill® in many ways has replaced REAP because it also provides educational assistance benefits for Reserve and National Guard members called to active duty on or after September 11, 2001, and in many cases provides a greater benefit than REAP (DANTES, n.d.-e).

VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VEAP)

VEAP is available for those entering the service for the first time between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985, *and* electing to make contributions from their military pay to

participate in this education benefit program. The government matches their contributions on a two-for-one basis (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020c).

ARTICULATED CREDIT AND TYPES OF TRANSFER CREDIT

ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

An articulation agreement is a formal policy between/among two or more institutions/entities of postsecondary-level learning specifying in detail how learning completed at one institution/entity will be accepted and applied by another toward its courses/certificates/degree programs. Such agreements may occur through a statewide system, among more than two institutions, or bilaterally (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020d).

ARTICULATED CREDIT

Learning that occurs other than through a college course has learning outcomes aligned with a college course(s) and is eligible for an award of credit in accordance with an articulation agreement. Articulated credit is postsecondary-level learning that results in the acceptance of that learning for college credit and its application toward courses/degree programs after the student's matriculation to the receiving institution in compliance with institutional and regulatory requirements. Therefore, learning that is articulated for credit becomes transcribed credit for the student after he or she meets the criteria for being officially enrolled at the receiving institution. Articulated credit does not include a course grade (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020d).

TRANSFER CREDIT

Transfer credit refers to units (hours) of academic credit awarded at a receiving institution in recognition of college-level credit earned at a sending institution (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020h).

COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAM PROGRAM (CLEP)

The College Board's College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) has been the most widely trusted credit-by-examination program for over 50 years, accepted by 2,900 colleges and universities and administered in more than 2,000 test centers. This rigorous program allows students from a wide range of ages and backgrounds to demonstrate their mastery of introductory college-level material and earn college credit. Students can earn credit for what they already know by getting qualifying scores on any of the 34 examinations (College Board, 2020b).

Whereas CLEP is sponsored by the College Board, only colleges may grant credit toward a degree. Not all colleges have the same CLEP policies—some colleges accept credit for a few exams, while others accept credit for all of them. A college often grants the same amount of credit to a student who earns satisfactory scores on a CLEP exam as it does for a student who successfully completes the related course (College Board, 2020b).

As a group, students affiliated with the U.S. military services experience uniquely large completion effects—2.6 (11%) and 8.6 (18%) increases in probability of earning a bachelor's and associate's degree, respectively (College Board, 2020b).

Most CLEP exams are designed to correspond to one-semester courses, although some tests correspond to full-year or two-year courses. Faculty at individual colleges review the

exams to ensure that they cover the material that is currently taught in their corresponding college courses.

The format of most questions is multiple choice. Other types of questions require students to fill in a numeric answer, to shade an answer option, or to order items correctly. Questions using these skills are called zone, shade, grid, scale, fraction, numeric entry, histogram, and order-match questions. Some of the exams also include required or optional essays. Language exams include a listening section (College Board, 2020b).

The American Literature, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature, College Composition Modular, and English Literature exams have optional essays that some colleges and universities may require. Whether a student needs to take an optional essay for the above subjects is up to the discretion of the institution they are or will be attending. The College Composition exam requires test takers to type two essays (College Board, 2020b).

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

Prior learning assessment (PLA) is known by many different names across the world. Some of the other commonly used terms are Assessment of Prior Learning (APL), Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLA), Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and the Validation and Accreditation of Experience (VAE).

In the United States, prior learning assessment has been around for over 80 years (Travers, 2011). Beginning with the College Entrance Examination Board in the 1930s, standardized exams, such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Advanced Placement (AP), have been used to determine if students had college-level knowledge in certain

areas. At the close of World War II, in order to help veterans return to work and become college-educated, the American Council on Education (ACE) began the assessment of learning acquired through military training and different occupations for college credit recommendations. About 20 years later, ACE also began assessing learning acquired through industry training and certifications (Travers, 2011).

There are other historical markers for PLA. Also, in 1945, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) began administering their college-level examinations. In the 1970s, many adult-serving institutions began individualized portfolio assessment processes for prior learning. In 1971, the Commission on Non-Traditional Study was formed, and then in 1974, the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning was developed, which later became the organization known now as the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) (Travers, 2015).

The source of prior learning can be classified in three categories: formal learning, non-formal learning, and informal learning. Formal learning is acquired through formal guided learning situations, such as classroom training or non-accredited educational courses. These learning situations usually follow a structure with well-defined learning outcomes. Non-formal learning is also guided but is usually within workshop or less-structured settings. Informal learning is often referred to as experiential learning, or learning that has not had structure, and is often self-guided or developed (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).

Through rigorous evaluation, PLA measures student learning that has occurred outside the college classroom to determine whether it is appropriate for college credit. It then applies an equivalent number of college credits to the learning. Credits earned through PLA are connected to learning outcomes, not measures of seat time. PLA is sometimes called

experiential learning or credit for prior learning (CPL) (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).

PLA is not a method of evaluation but, instead, a blanket-term for a number of methods.

Examples of PLA methods are:

- Individualized portfolio-based assessments
- Standardized exams, such as College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP) Examination Program, Excelsior College Exams, DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), and International Baccalaureate (IB)
- Published credit recommendation guides, such as the evaluation of military training and service and industrial and corporate training produced by the American Council on Education (ACE)
- Program evaluations of noncredit instruction done by individual colleges and universities
- Customized exams created by individual colleges and universities
- Evaluation of apprenticeship training (in collaboration with trade associations) (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).

In 2010, CAEL conducted a study that examined the academic records of more than 62,000 students from 48 colleges and universities. The data indicated that students with PLA credit “had better academic outcomes, particularly in terms of graduation rates and persistence, than other adult students” (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).

Listed below are some additional PLA research data:

- In 2012, ACE et al. completed their second assessment of the current state of programs and services for veterans and service members on campuses across the nation. The data, based on survey results from 690 institutions, included information about the awarding of PLA credit for military members (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).
- 83% of the colleges and universities with programs and services for veterans and military personnel awarded evaluated credit for military training.

- 63% awarded evaluated credit for military occupational experience (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020f).

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM® (AP)

The Advanced Placement Program® (AP) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. The program consists of college-level courses developed by the AP Program that high schools can choose to offer and corresponding exams that are administered once a year (College Board, 2020a).

The following are fact about AP courses:

- There are 38 AP courses in seven subject categories.
- Each AP course is modeled on a comparable introductory college course in the subject.
- Each course culminates in a standardized college-level assessment, or AP Exam.
- AP Exams are given in May each year at testing locations all over the world.
- Schools must be authorized by the AP Course Audit to offer approved AP courses and use the AP designation.
- Earn college credit and/or skip introductory courses in college. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States—as well as many institutions in more than 100 other countries—grant students’ credit, placement, or both for qualifying AP Exam scores (College Board, 2020a).

Universities around the world recognize AP when making admission decisions, assigning course requisites, and awarding university credit. Qualifying AP Exam scores earn university credit in nearly all universities in the United States and Canada and are recognized in 60 other countries worldwide. Each college and university determines its own policies regarding AP Exam scores (College Board, 2020a).

COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)

Competency-based strategies provide flexibility in the way that credit can be earned or awarded and provide students with personalized learning opportunities. These strategies include online and blended learning, dual enrollment and early college high schools, project-based and community-based learning, and credit recovery, among others. This type of learning leads to better student engagement because the content is relevant to each student and tailored to their unique needs. It also leads to better student outcomes because the pace of learning is customized to each student (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

STATE OF OHIO PROGRAMS SUPPORTING MILITARY EDUCATION

THE SERVICEMEMBERS OPPORTUNITY COLLEGES (SOC) CONSORTIUM

All 36 eligible Ohio public colleges and universities formerly participated in the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium. This demonstrates their commitment to awarding college credit for education and training received during military service. The SOC Consortium was dissolved when the Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding was created. The old guidelines for the SOC have been incorporated into the DoD MOU (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020b).

COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

The public colleges and universities of Ohio are committed to the acceptance and awarding of college credit for military training, experience, and coursework. The chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education signed a directive providing a baseline set of standards and procedures for the application of military credit. Having one set of standards and

procedures serves to provide uniformity and consistency to the process, makes it easier to communicate with and reach a wider audience, and highlights the priority the higher education community places on assisting veterans and active duty service members with their educational and career goals (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020b).

OHIO TRANSFER MODULE (OTM)

The Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) is defined as either a subset or the complete set of an institution's general education requirements in Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Science (AS), and baccalaureate degrees. Applied and technical studies associate degrees have a smaller general education component as previously noted; therefore, students in these degrees may choose to go beyond the general education requirements of their program or degree and complete additional courses to fulfill more or all of the OTM requirements (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020e).

The Ohio Transfer Module contains 36-40 semester or 54-60 quarter hours of course credit in English composition (minimum of 3 semester or 5 quarter hours); mathematics, statistics, and logic (minimum of 3 semester or 3 quarter hours); arts and humanities (minimum of 6 semester or 9 quarter hours); social and behavioral sciences (minimum of 6 semester or 9 quarter hours); and natural sciences (minimum of 6 semester or 9 quarter hours) (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020e).

TRANSFER ASSURANCE GUIDES (TAGS)

The purpose of the TAG is to allow students to transfer, in a simple and direct manner, a core of courses that will count toward the major program. The goal of a TAG is to recognize

comparable, compatible, and equivalent courses at or above the 70% standard of equivalency adopted by the Articulation and Transfer Advisory Council. TAGs apply across at least all public higher education institutions in Ohio and embody commonly accepted pathways to majors within the bachelor's degree. This does not alter the mission or degree authority of any institution; it does provide guaranteed pathways that enable students to reach their bachelor's degree goals in the most efficient manner (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020g).

The Transfer Assurance Guide (TAG) Approved Courses Reporting System will help students identify equivalent pre-major/beginning major courses in a specific subject area at Ohio public colleges and universities. If the current and destination institutions have approved course matches during the same time period, those courses are considered equivalent. Approved TAG courses and their associated credit hours are guaranteed to transfer and apply toward the specific major at any of Ohio's public colleges and universities (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020g).

CAREER-TECHNICAL CREDIT TRANSFER (CTAGS)

Students who successfully complete specified technical programs are eligible to have technical credit transfer to public colleges and universities. This transfer of credit is described in Career-Technical Assurance Guides (CTAGs). CTAGs are advising tools that assist students moving from Ohio secondary and adult career-technical institutions to Ohio public institutions of higher education (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020a).

MILITARY TRANSFER ASSURANCE GUIDES (MTAGs)

Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAGs) provide a statewide guarantee that certain types of military training, experience, and/or coursework align to existing college and university courses and will be awarded appropriate credit (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2019).

MTAGs currently align with the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM), Transfer Assurance Guides (TAGs), and Career-Technical Assurance Guides (CTAGs). However, this is only a small portion of an institution's course inventory. Through statewide training provided by the Ohio Department of Higher Education, institutions are required to evaluate military training, experience, and coursework for potential alignment with their own courses and programs (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2019).

TRANSFER MODULE ARTICULATION NUMBER (TMAN)

When a course at an Ohio public higher education institution is approved for an Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) course in English or mathematics that has learning outcomes specified, it is assigned a Transfer Module Articulation Number (TMAN). This common statewide TMAN is assigned to each approved course in addition to its unique institutional course number or designation, signifying in part that the course is guaranteed to apply as an equivalent course or courses bearing the same TMAN offered at other public institutions of higher education.

TMANs are assigned in two areas: TME (Transfer Module English Composition) and TMM (Transfer Module Mathematics, Statistics, and Logic) (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020i).

MILITARY TRANSFER ARTICULATION NUMBER (MTAN)

Each Military Transfer Assurance Guide (MTAG) guarantee is assigned a Military Transfer Articulation Number (MTAN) using either an identification number assigned by the American Council on Education (ACE), a course number assigned by Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), or other identification numbers assigned by the source institution or entity. A common statewide MTAN is assigned to each approved military training, experience, and coursework. At the college and university level, MTANs are assigned to each approved course, courses, or program in addition to its unique institutional course number or designation. MTANs signify that the military training, experience, and coursework is guaranteed to apply as an equivalency course, courses, or program bearing the same MTAN offered at public institutions of higher education in Ohio (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020c).

VETERANS UPWARD BOUND

The Veterans Upward Bound program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is designed to motivate and assist veterans in the development of academic and other requisite skills necessary for acceptance and success in a program of postsecondary education. The program provides assessment and enhancement of basic skills through counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and academic instruction in the core subject areas. The primary goal of the program is to increase the rate at which participants enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs (Ohio Department of Higher Education, 2020j).

Currently, Ohio is home to two Veteran Upward Bound Programs:

- Cuyahoga Community College – Veterans Education Access Program

- Cincinnati State Technical and Community College – Veterans Upward Bound Program.

CONCLUSION

This chapter demonstrates that literature does exist concerning transfer credit and the educational benefits for military service members and veterans. This review has contributed to a thorough assessment and understanding of the current state of research involving this topic. Additionally, it has helped to identify topic experts and determine the methodologies used in past studies of the same or similar topics.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This research project focused on exploring and identifying the factors and issues that are impacting military service members and veterans from receiving credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG) and Joint Service Transcripts (JST) for military training and experience that could be equated to college-level courses.

GOAL OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The goal of this research project is to answer the following questions:

1. What are the organizational processes at two Ohio community colleges that help determine college credit when evaluating military coursework credit and/or Joint Service Transcripts?
2. How does the administration and organizational culture at two Ohio community colleges view military training, experience, and coursework?
3. What recommendations to academic policies and processes should be made for awarding college credit for military training credit?
4. What state-level programs exist in Ohio that relate to awarding college credit for military coursework?
5. Once the review of military coursework is complete and credit decisions are made, is the student notified of those decisions and informed about an appeal process?

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Basic research is primarily used to increase one's knowledge of a subject, while applied research aims to improve the advancement of knowledge and practices in a discipline.

Qualitative research is an exploratory type of researching and is used to dive into the underlying causes of the problems, which helps with developing a hypothesis. Furthermore, data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted when using this researching technique. The major difference between quantitative research and qualitative research is that qualitative research primarily uses words as data and quantitative research primarily uses numbers as data. A mixed-methods research approach was applied to collect and analyze the qualitative data and quantitative data used in this study.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this project included the recruiting of potential participants by email. These participants were active-duty military, military reservist, national guards, and military veterans. Included in the email were the expectations, procedures, survey expiration dates, and consent to participate in the survey. When the participants clicked on the link located at the bottom of the consent form, they were granted access to participate in the survey. Data were collected through a series of questions using a survey questionnaire instrument. The Microsoft OneDrive Forms software was used to create the questionnaire, disseminate the questionnaire, and gather the questionnaire's data.

This design included a 25-question electronic survey. The researcher's survey was administered at two community colleges located in southern Ohio (Sinclair Community College and Clark State College), and the results were collected and incorporated into the data analysis. An invitational email was sent by the Veteran Services Offices on behalf of the researcher one week prior to the survey being sent. Additionally, one week later, an email was sent from the

Veterans Services Offices with the informed consent form and survey link attached. The survey took participants approximately 10 minutes to complete.

SURVEY RESEARCH

Survey research is defined as “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions” (Check & Schutt, 2012, p. 160). This type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behavior, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research (Singleton & Straits, 2009).

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The researcher created the survey (Appendix E) using the Microsoft Forms software. Microsoft Forms is a simple, lightweight application that lets one easily create surveys, quizzes, and polls. In educational institutions, it can be used to create quizzes, collect feedback from teachers and parents, or plan class and staff activities. In business organizations, it can be used to collect customer feedback, measure employee satisfaction, improve product or business, or organize company events (Microsoft, 2021).

SAMPLING METHOD

The process that was used for data collection was purposive sampling. Data gathering is crucial in research, as the data are meant to contribute to a better understanding of a

theoretical framework (Bernard, 2002). It then becomes important to use sound judgment in selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data will be acquired, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Tongco, 2007). The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002). It is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. Unlike random studies, which deliberately include a diverse cross section of ages, backgrounds, and cultures, the idea behind purposive sampling is to concentrate on people with characteristics who will be better able to assist with the relevant research.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Participants were selected using criterion-based selection. An equal number of participants representing each community college would be necessary to acquire a more holistic view of the topic problem. The study aimed to survey 50-100 students representing active-duty military, military reserves, national guards, and military veterans. Recruitment of

participants was accomplished through collaboration with the Veteran Services Offices at Sinclair Community College and Clark State College. This was accomplished using the following process at both institutions:

1. Veteran Services Office sent an invitational email to the specific student population that met the criteria of active-duty military, military reservist, national guards, and military veterans, and invited them to participate in the research project. The researcher created the invitational email for the Veteran Services Offices.
2. Veteran Services Offices emailed students the consent waiver form that contained the link to the survey.
3. The survey results went directly to the researcher when the participants submitted their survey.
4. The survey was accessible for a total of four weeks.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The survey was accessed and administered online, and the data results were collected electronically. The researcher asked participants to share their experiences by responding to a series of open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions relating to the factors and issues that are impacting military service members and veterans from receiving credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG), and Joint Service Transcripts for training received in the military that could be equated to college-level courses. Partnership literature and the researcher's own experiences with the institutions and work of focus helped inform the architecture of the survey questions.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used data analysis to identify themes, patterns, and relationships. Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data and involves consolidating, reducing, and

interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read; it is the process of making meaning. Data analysis is a complex procedure that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. These meanings, understandings, or insights constitute the findings of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Specifically, the most popular and effective methods of qualitative data interpretation include the following:

- *Word and phrase repetitions* – scanning primary data for words and phrases most used by respondents, as well as words and phrases used with unusual emotions.
- *Primary and secondary data comparisons* – comparing the findings of interview/focus group/observation/any other qualitative data collection method with the findings of literature review and discussing differences between them.
- *Search for missing information* – discussions about which aspects of the issue were not mentioned by respondents, although they were expected to be mentioned.
- *Metaphors and analogues* – comparing primary research findings to phenomena from a different area and discussing similarities and differences (Business Research Methodology, n. d.).

The researcher employed those four effective methods to help with analyzing and interpreting the data.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The survey data were collected confidentially, and they did not contain information that could personally identify any of the participants. It was extremely important to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all participants. As a protective measure, the researcher did not use any language that would have compromised the anonymity of any participant when analyzing data, recording data, or summarizing data.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which those findings are presented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One of the best-known strategies for improving validity and reliability of a study is to use the triangulation method. Triangulation involves using multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories to confirm the findings. If a researcher decides to use the qualitative research approach, it is important to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Additionally, if the researcher follows the prescribed research processes, protocols, and procedures, it will help eliminate any bias in the research data.

LIMITATIONS AND BIAS

Potential research bias was the researcher's military service and interest to help the veteran military population achieve their academic goals and find gainful employment. The researcher addressed this by being honest and acknowledging some bias toward the research group. This was further addressed by completing a subjectivity statement and through self-awareness, which meant closely monitoring the researcher's behavior and biases in relation to the research.

SUMMARY

The goal or purpose of the study was to explore and identify the factors and issues that impact and prevent military service members and veterans from receiving college credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG), and Joint Service Transcripts for training received in the military that could be equated to college-level courses. Sinclair Community College and Clark State College assisted in the study by administering an electronic 25-question survey to eligible participants. The survey data were collected confidentially, analyzed, and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

This cross-case analysis was designed to determine the factors and issues that are impacting military service members and veterans from receiving college credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG), Joint Service Transcripts (JST), and Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) for military training and experience that could be equated to college-level courses. This chapter reports the findings based on the analysis of the survey responses. The survey responses aided in identifying commonalities from the participants' experiences and perceptions.

Each research question is reviewed individually regarding the survey results. The analysis of general knowledge conversations with applicable college staff members appears in the subsequent pages. Finally, related data are analyzed collectively across questions, and thematic analysis for applying the framework is discussed.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY: PARTICIPANTS AND INSTITUTIONS

This study was accomplished in two stages to enable a better understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences with military transfer credit. Stage 1 consisted of conducting an online survey that solicited responses from a diverse sample of 29 military-affiliated students at community college #1 and community college #2. Stage 2 consisted of a

series of conversations with staff members involved with transfer course equivalency processes and PLA credit at community colleges #1 and #2. The purpose of the conversations was to gain general knowledge about their processes and provide a more holistic perspective of the research topic.

SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The participant pool consisted of 29 military-affiliated students from community college #1 and community college #2. The survey was emailed to a purposive sample of participants who self-identified as community college students; 29 respondents completed the survey. The survey covered the 2020-2021 academic year at both institutions. Figures 1 and 2 and Tables 1 and 2 of this section contain useful demographic data of study participants.

Figure 1. Institution Demographics: Community College #1

Type:	4-year, primarily associate's, Public	
Awards offered:	Less than one year certificate. One but less than two year's certificates. Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree	
Campus setting:	City: Midsize	
Campus housing:	No	
Student population:	18,794 (all undergraduate)	
Student-to-faculty ratio:	15 to 1	
Special Learning Opportunities Distance education – undergraduate programs offered	Carnegie Classification Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Vocational & Technical-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	
Student Services Remedial services Academic/career counseling service Employment services for students Placement services for completers On-campus day care for students' children	Religious Affiliation Not applicable	
Credit Accepted Dual credit Credit for life experiences Advanced placement (AP) credits	Federal Aid Eligible students may receive Pell Grants and other federal aid (e.g. Direct Loans).	
	Undergraduate students enrolled who are formally registered with office of disability services 5%	
FACULTY AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS BY PRIMARY FUNCTION, FALL 2019	FULL TIME	PART TIME
Total faculty	332	810
Instructional	332	810
Research and public service	0	0
Total graduate assistants	-	0
Instructional	-	0
Research	-	0

Figure 2. Institution Demographics: Community College #2

Type:	4-year, primarily associate's, Public	
Awards offered:	Less than one year certificate. One but less than two year's certificates. Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree	
Campus setting:	City: Small	
Campus housing:	No	
Student population:	5,669 (all undergraduate)	
Student-to-faculty ratio:	14 to 1	
Special Learning Opportunities Distance education – undergraduate programs offered Weekend/evening college	Carnegie Classification Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Vocational & Technical-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	
Student Services Remedial services Academic/career counseling service Employment services for students Placement services for completers	Religious Affiliation Not applicable	
Credit Accepted Dual credit Credit for life experiences Advanced placement (AP) credits	Federal Aid Eligible students may receive Pell Grants and other federal aid (e.g. Direct Loans).	
	Undergraduate students enrolled who are formally registered with office of disability services 6%	
FACULTY AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTS BY PRIMARY FUNCTION, FALL 2019	FULL TIME	PART TIME
Total faculty	86	263
Instructional	86	263
Research and public service	0	0
Total graduate assistants	-	0
Instructional	-	0
Research	-	0

Table 1: Unduplicated Headcount of Active Duty, National Guard, Reserves, and Veterans – CC#1

STUDENT TYPE	AY 2020-21	AY 2019-20	AY 2018-19	AY 2017-18	AY 2016-17	5-YEAR AVERAGE
Active Duty	158	155	157	141	101	142.4
National Guard	87	108	114	111	95	103.0
Reserve	41	62	82	85	79	69.8
Veteran	532	567	576	698	657	606.0
Totals	818	892	929	1035	932	921.2

Table 2: Unduplicated Headcount of Active Duty, National Guard, Dependents, Spouse, and Veterans – CC#2

STUDENT TYPE	AY 2020-21	AY 2019-20	AY 2018-19	AY 2017-18	AY 2016-17	5-YEAR AVERAGE
Active Duty	36	29	27	33	39	32.8
Dependents	138	109	92	109	150	119.6
National Guard	41	58	51	52	63	53.0
Spouse	66	43	31	45	69	50.8
Veteran	153	152	161	172	214	170.4
Totals	434	391	362	411	535	426.6

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS AND RESULTS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Tables 3–7 present the participants’ responses to survey questions that relate to research questions 1–5.

Table 3: Participant Responses to Q1 – Which Military Branch Have You Served In?

BRANCH	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Air Force	7	24.14
Army	10	34.48
Army National Guard	3	10.34
Marines	4	13.79
Navy	5	17.24

Table 4: Participant Responses to Q2 – What Is Your Current Military Status?

MILITARY STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Active duty	1	3.45
Reservist	2	6.90
Retired	10	34.48
Veteran	16	55.17

Table 5: Participant Responses to Q3 – Which Community College Do You Currently Attend?

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Community College #1	25	86.21
Community College #2	4	13.79

Table 6: Participant Responses to Q4 – Did Your Military Service Have an Influence on You Choosing This College?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	20	68.97
Yes	9	31.03

Table 7: Participant Responses to Q5 – Are You Using Your Military Benefits to Help Pay for College?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	4	13.79
Yes	25	86.21

Results

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from survey questions 1–5 data:

- 58.6% of survey participants served in the Army and Air Force.
- 55.2% of survey participants reported their military status as veteran.

- 68.9% of survey participants reported that their military service had no influence on their choice to attend community colleges #1 and #2.

The preceding data are some of the combined results of survey questions 1–5. Survey questions 1–5 focused primarily on the demographics of the research study participants and contributed to providing the researcher with pertinent information that helped with further understanding this student population. For instance, the data above from the survey participants show that military veterans and the retired military populations attending community colleges #1 and #2 seem to be pursuing credentials at a much higher percentage than active-duty military and military reservists. This could suggest that community colleges #1 and #2 are not the primary educational destinations for the active-duty military and military reservist in the immediate region of Wright Patterson Air Force Base (WPAFB).

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Colleges and universities who serve, or want to serve, military and veteran students need to ensure they have the proper programs and policies in place to support them. The more challenges this unique population faces, the more likely they are to “stop gap” (take a break). This is problematic for the student and the institution because many who stop gap will never resume their college education (Cropsey, 2013).

Research shows that the longer it takes a student to earn a degree, the less likely he or she is to reach graduation. Because the average service member attends three colleges before completing a degree, transfer credit plays an important role in the time it takes a veteran to complete a degree (Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, 2012).

The United States has more than 3,000 four-year colleges and universities. The American Talent Initiative, using IPEDS data, found that fewer than 300 of these institutions graduate at least 70% of their students within six years. Nationwide, only 59% of students graduate within six years. If we include community colleges, the largest single sector within American higher education, the picture is more troubling. Only 14% of community college students who say that they plan to get a four-year degree obtain one within six years of beginning community college (Strikwerda, 2019).

It appears that student retention and program completion are still national issues. This research project attempted to identify some of the common problems associated with and contributing to military and veteran students receiving transfer credit.

In reviewing the responses, note that none of the survey responses have been altered and some may contain syntax or grammatical errors. Also, the use of the word(s) *staff* or *staff members* in this chapter refers to the selected staff members from both community colleges who participated in the general knowledge conversations about this research topic.

The goal of this research project was to answer the five overarching research questions, as presented below.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the organizational processes at two Ohio community colleges that help determine college credit when evaluating military coursework credit and/or Joint Service Transcripts?

- (Q10) Has a representative at your college explained your military educational benefits?

- (Q17) Did someone at your college explain the military transfer credit process?
- (Q18) What department is responsible for military transfer credit at your college?
- (Q19) How does your community college evaluate transfer credit?

Results

Tables 8–11 present the responses to the survey questions that relate to RQ1.

Table 8: Participant Responses to Q10 – Has a Representative at Your College Explained Your Military Educational Benefits?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	9	31.03
Unsure	2	6.90
Yes	18	62.07

Table 9: Participant Responses to Q17 – Did Someone at Your College Explain the Military Transfer Credit Process?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	23	79.31
Yes	6	20.69

Table 10: Participant Responses to Q18 – What Department Is Responsible for Military Transfer Credit at Your College?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Admissions	1	3.45
Advising Office	1	3.45
I can't remember but I know I talked to someone	1	3.45
I do not know	24	82.76
Military Family Education Center (MFEC)	1	3.45
MFEC	1	3.45

Table 11: Participant Responses to Q19 – How Does Your Community College Evaluate Transfer Credit?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
I do not know	27	93.10
I presume they look at the syllabus to determine if each class covers the same information.	1	3.45
They look at the transcripts I supplied, I sent in a training report for the 6 week/8 hr. /day Squadron Officers School and did not get credit because a final grade was not issued.	1	3.45

Analysis

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the data of survey questions

10, 17, 18, and 19:

- 62% had someone from their colleges explain their educational benefits.
 - Percentage represents 15 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 3 participants from CC#2.

- 79% reported that no one at their colleges explained their transfer credit processes.
 - Percentage represents 20 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 3 participants from CC#2.
- 100% of participants did not know the department responsible for military transfer credit.
 - Percentage represents 25 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 4 participants from CC#2.
- 93% did not know how their college evaluated transfer credit.
 - Percentage represents 24 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 4 participants from CC#2.

The data from questions 10, 17, 18, and 19 clearly demonstrate there are communication gaps in the areas of military and veterans' educational benefits, basic transfer credit processes, how transfer credit is evaluated, and the department/departments responsible for evaluating military coursework and transfer credit. This data set further highlights that none of the participants knew the department/departments responsible for evaluating military transfer credit, and a vast majority of the participants are unaware of processes used to evaluate transfer credit.

It was previously mentioned that the researcher had a series of conversations with staff members involved with transfer course equivalency processes and PLA credit at community colleges #1 and #2. Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the conversations that pertain to RQ1:

- There are formal processes in place at both institutions for determining transfer course equivalency and evaluating military coursework and PLA credit.

- The military transfer credit processes at the two institutions share some similarities and have differences.
- Both institutions utilize a Transfer Equivalency System (TES) to access course descriptions for CCAF courses and courses from accredited institutions.
- Both institutions use the Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAGs), which provide a statewide guarantee that certain types of military training, experience, and/or coursework align to existing college and university courses and will be awarded appropriate credit.
- Both institutions use the Ace Military Guide to assist with gathering additional information when evaluating Joint Service Transcripts (JST).
- Additionally, CC#2 uses the service member's duty station job responsibilities to help with further evaluating JSTs.
- CC#1 has a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) coordinator who works closely with the registration department and faculty department chairs to help determine credit approval.
- PLA credit at CC#2 is approved by the academic deans.

One of the major conclusions from the staff conversations pertaining to RQ1 is that the formal processes for determining transfer course equivalency and evaluating military coursework are similar except for the PLA credit approval processes. Although there are formal processes in place at both institutions, it is quite alarming that the survey respondents are not knowledgeable about the transfer credit processes.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

How does the administration and organizational culture at two Ohio community colleges view military training, experience, and coursework?

- (Q20) Would you consider your campus military and veteran friendly?
- (Q21) Based on your perception, how does the college view military and veteran students?

- (Q22) Based on your perception, are military and veteran students adequately supported at your community college?
- (Q23) Does the college provide the appropriate services for military and veteran students?

Results

Tables 12–15 are responses to survey questions that relate to RQ2.

Table 12: Participant Responses to Q20 – Would You Consider Your Campus Military and Veteran Friendly?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	1	3.45
Yes	28	96.55

Table 13: Participant Responses to Q21 – Based on Your Perception, How Does the College View Military and Veteran Students?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Positive	23	79.31
Unsure	6	20.69

Table 14: Participant Responses to Q22 – Based on Your Perception, Are Military and Veteran Students Adequately Supported at Your Community College?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	1	3.45
Yes	28	96.55

Table 15: Participant Responses to Q23 – Does the College Provide the Appropriate Services for Military and Veteran Students?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	2	6.90
Yes	27	93.10

Analysis

Listed below are a few interesting highlights extracted from the data of survey questions 20, 21, 22, and 23:

- 96% consider their campus military and veteran friendly.
 - Percentage represents 28 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 1 participant from CC#2.
- 20% are unsure about their college’s views of military and veteran students.
 - Percentage represents 5 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 1 participant from CC#2.
- 96% perceive that military and veteran students are adequately supported on their campuses.
 - Percentage represents 28 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 1 participant from CC#2.
- 93% believe their campus provides appropriate services for military and veteran students.
 - Percentage represents 27 participants from CC#1.
 - Percentage represents 2 participants from CC#2.

The data results from questions 20, 21, 22, and 23 strongly suggest that most of the survey participants considered their campuses to be military and veteran friendly. This data set

indicates that most of the participants believe the veterans and military students are receiving adequate support and the appropriate services are being provided. This data set also revealed that a small percentage of the participants are unsure how the two colleges view military and veteran students, and they do not believe the campuses are military friendly nor provide adequate support and the appropriate services to this student population.

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the staff conversations that pertain to RQ2:

- CC#1 – *“I think that we honor the work that they've done in the military and try to find something to award them based off of what they have in their program.”*
- CC#1 – *“I think that the college has gotten better about awarding some general credit when needed.”*
- CC#1 – *“I think, as an institution we value our transfer credits and try to assist the student the best as we can to evaluate any credit taken from any institution, whether it's an institution or military.”*
- CC#1 – *“So from my perspective, we treat them the same as any other transfer credits that we receive. And like I mentioned, we will actually forward all this information whether it is a course description or if it's the learning outcomes for their occupations that they completed through their military experience. We actually send all of that information to the chairs and departments to let us know if we can approve credit or not.”*
- CC1# – *“I've seen a huge increase in what we've been able to award and a huge increase in just awareness. Maybe cultural awareness.”*
- CC#2 – *“So we really support our military students our veterans and our, and our military students. And anything that we can do to get credits for those students we do.”*
- CC#2 – *“So anything that we can do to get credits for those students we do. And we are supported by the administration.”*
- CC2# – *“I think the administration and the organizational culture views military training credit as being highly valuable.”*

- CC#2 – *“I believe the institution values our military population. And we make every effort to award appropriate transfer credit and support their academic endeavors.”*

Based on the general knowledge conversations with the staff of the two community colleges, there seems to be support for awarding college credit for military training, military work experience, and military coursework. Additionally, the comments shared by staff members during the conversations seem to support most survey respondents’ views of their college campuses being military friendly.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What recommendations to academic policies and processes should be made for awarding college credit for military training credit?

- (Q25) What recommendations to academic policies should be made for awarding college credit for military credit?

Results

Table 16 presents the responses to survey questions that relate to RQ3.

Table 16: Participant Responses to Q25 – What Recommendations to Academic Policies Should Be Made for Awarding College Credit for Military Credit?

RECOMMENDATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Allow for credit at least for formal military courses. A procedure to evaluate them.	1	3.45
College properly evaluating DD214 and interviewing veteran to award proper credit	1	3.45
Colleges should request the MOI (a syllabus) from military schools in order to ensure proper credit is awarded to the Soldiers/Students	1	3.45
Give student credits for basic classes that are directly related to their MOS, I was a Supply Chain and Material Management Specialist, I received credit for a Supply Chain Purchasing class but not Intro to Supply Chain, that doesn't make sense to me.	1	3.45
I don't have any recommendations because my military training does not count toward any college credit.	1	3.45
I don't know. I know nothing about this but am interested.	1	3.45
I think the military should provide course descriptions taken by military members so that more can carry over	1	3.45
I'm unsure although I do know military members are typically highly educated and have received a lot of military training so it would make sense to award some credit.	1	3.45
If the credit is not evaluated by ACE, it should be reviewed by the college and attempt to line it up with a class in the degree program, especially general education, before being dismissed as not credit worthy.	1	3.45
It is difficult to make recommendations about academic policies when I am unfamiliar with what the policies for CC#1 are. I would say we need more explanation of the awarding of college credits for military experience at CC#1.	1	3.45
More research needs to be done on the amount of military training and what the training encompasses.	1	3.45

RECOMMENDATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
The veterans office at the school should walk you through it and make sure its implemented in the system	1	3.45
There should be some case-by-case submittal/approval process to recognize military experience and schooling to award credit for classes. Additionally, there should be a process to only assess some, and not all, of the veteran's military transcripts. There should also be a notification/warning that veterans understand that the assessment of their military credits could award them more credits than necessary and that credit transfer could make financial aid harder to receive. For example, upon assessment of my military transcripts, I was awarded numerous superfluous credits not needed in my current program of study. This has made it very difficult to receive financial aid because I now exceed the maximum number of credits to get financial aid for my associate's program.	1	3.45
N/A; None; Not sure	13	44.83
Well, they have to start the process before we can recommend any changes	1	3.45
Not sure. maybe specify on the transcripts what each military course entails so the civilian schools can understand the military curriculum	1	3.45
Take it all because it was all earned with hard work	1	3.45

Analysis

Survey question #25 is one of the few open-end questions included in the survey. Open ended questions often require more thought than the typical closed-end questions that allows individuals to reply with a simple “yes” or “no” response. This question intended to discover any recommendations that the participants were willing to share that could potentially improve the current academic policies for awarding college credit for military training credit. After close examination, six themes emerged from the participants’ responses to the questions. A

summation of themes data and the breakdown of the participant's percentage rates are provided below:

1. Allow credit for formal school:
 - 6.9% recommend allowing students to receive credit for formal military coursework because it took a lot of hard work to achieve it.
2. Actions colleges could take regarding awarding college credit for military training credit:
 - 17.25% recommended that the colleges should know how to properly evaluate a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD214) and interview the veteran to award the proper credit. Other suggestions included requesting syllabi from military schools and training facilities and awarding credit for courses completed that directly relate to the members' Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). An additional suggestion is for the Veteran Services Office to ensure that the awarded credit is entered into the system.
3. Actions the U.S. military could take regarding awarding college credit for military training credit:
 - 6.9% recommended that the military provide course descriptions and add them to the JST to help colleges understand military curriculum.
4. N/A or no recommendations:
 - 34.49% responded N/A or no recommendations to the question.
5. Unsure/unfamiliar with policies and need more information before making recommendations:
 - 24.15% responded that they were unsure and unfamiliar with the policies and therefore declined to make recommendations.
6. Recommendations:
 - 10.35% recommended there should be an approval process in place to assess and award some of their military experience for credit. There was a recommendation to notify or warn veteran students if the credit being awarded will negatively impact their financial aid eligibility.

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the conversations that

pertain to RQ3:

- CC#1 – *“So I feel pretty solid with what we actually have in place right now. I feel like the process especially is really improved.”*
- CC#1 – *“Okay, so there's two. I think finding a better way to find what those equivalencies are. So, the first side of it is making it very clear to program leads and lead faculty and program chairs, what exactly they did in the military.”*
- CC#1 – *“So I think that on the military side of the house, and our side of the house is educating where you can find out how to get a syllabus so, you know what it is that they did in the military, so we can actually award.”*
- CC#1 – *“I think for me a good recommendation is we need to continue to encourage our chairs and faculty to evaluate military course descriptions and occupation outcomes to determine whether or not we can award more transfer credits than what we have in previous years, because sometimes I feel like we're not always awarding more credit. And I feel like we could maybe give additional credit like maybe more direct equivalencies.”*
- CC#1 – *“So maybe just doing a little bit more legwork on our end and getting that additional information to the chairs and faculty to see if more credit can be awarded to the students because they do take a lot of stuff and they are learning a lot of things especially hands on. So, I feel like sometimes they might have a little upper hand on some of our other students because they do have that experience, but it may not be from the textbook, you know, I feel like we could award more credit.”*
- CC#2 – *“I believe that we have a comprehensive policy for awarding military training credit for college credit. And again, we make every effort to help the military population be successful. And you know, like I said, we value that population and, and we feel honored to be able to serve them.”*
- CC#2 – *“So no, no policy recommendations.”*
- CC#2 – *“So, my personal perspective, is that, you know, military credit should be awarded based off the student has trained over consistently for a period of time, and I would say, I would say, at the very least maybe two or three years.”*
- CC#2 – *“Um, I wouldn't recommend any changes at all. I think we do what we can. What everything that we can. And I would not recommend any changes at all.”*

There seems to be a common theme of the need to continue to improve military transfer credit equivalency and find better ways of consistently awarding college credit for military experience and coursework. This theme was shared by survey respondents and staff members involved with this research project.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4

What state-level programs exist in Ohio that relate to awarding college credit for military coursework? How familiar are you with those programs?

- (Q12) Have you received any Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit for your military experience?
- (Q13) Have you received any college credit from the Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG)?

Results

Tables 17–18 present responses to survey questions that relate to RQ4.

Table 17: Participant Responses to Q12 – Have You Received Any Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Credit for Your Military Experience?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	16	55.17
Unsure	10	34.48
Yes	3	10.34

Table 18: Participant Responses to Q13 – Have You Received Any College Credit From the Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG)?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	15	51.72
Unsure	13	44.83
Yes	1	3.45

Analysis

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the data of survey questions 12 and 13:

- 10% of respondents have received PLA credit for military experience.
- 3% of respondents have received college credit through MTAG program.

This data set highlights that over 50% of the respondents have not received any college credit for their military experience through the PLA or MTAG programs. It states that 30-40% of the respondents are unsure whether they have received college credit through those programs.

- CC#1 – *“So I know that there's several state and statewide initiatives that are happening.”*
- CC#1 – *“So there's been a lot of discussions about different things in Ohio, probably the one that's valid and exist is the MTAGs so the military training assurance guides.”*
- CC#1 – *“Only one I can think of is the MTAGs that was implemented a few years back with the military training that the state came out with that which has been helpful.”*
- CC#1 – *“So, the state level program that exists in Ohio is the Military Transfer Assurance Guide also called in TAG or you might hear MTAGs. So that's very beneficial for our institution because the provost office can work with the departments, send all that information out to the Higher Education Board of Regents, and then start working on getting approvals. Then it's guaranteed that a student who takes a course through the military and wants to transfer here that we may already have the course tag approved so it would automatically transfer. So that's definitely as one of our Ohio programs that exists.”*

- CC#2 – *“So, I am familiar with MTAGs the military transfer assurance guide through the through the state of Ohio through ODHE.”*
- CC#2 – *“So, we’re talking about the military transfer assurance guides for the MTAGs. Then, basically, the statewide programs. We also have there’s also things like Transferology which, again, we use, we get we take that information from the beams that we get in and upload those equivalencies had to Transferology as well.”*
- CC#2 – *“Okay, so the Ohio Department of Higher Education ODHE. They have a variety of resources to inform military students of their options for receiving college credit for their training.”*

The conversations with the staff about RQ4 demonstrate that they are familiar with MTAGs, but the levels of understanding of MTAGs vary based on their frequency of accessing and utilizing the guides. There seems to be vague familiarity with other state-level programs related to military transfer credit and college credit for military experience and coursework.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5

Once the review of military coursework is complete and credit decisions are made, is the student notified of those decisions and informed about an appeal process?

- (Q11) Have you received any college credit for your military experience?
- (Q14) Was your military transfer credit only applied as electives?
- (Q15) Did you receive adequate transfer credit for your military experience?
- (Q16) Did you receive the appropriate transfer credit for your military experience?

Results

Tables 19–22 present the responses to survey questions that relate to RQ5.

Table 19: Participant Responses to Q11 – Have You Received Any College Credit for Your Military Experience?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	13	44.83
Unsure	2	6.90
Yes	14	48.28

Table 20: Participant Responses to Q14 – Was Your Military Transfer Credit Only Applied as Electives?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	12	41.38
Unsure	8	27.59
Yes	9	31.03

Table 21: Participant Responses to Q15 – Did You Receive Adequate Transfer Credit for Your Military Experience?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	16	55.17
Unsure	7	24.14
Yes	6	20.69

Table 22: Participant Responses to Q16 – Did You Receive the Appropriate Transfer Credit for Your Military Experience?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	15	51.72
Unsure	9	31.03
Yes	5	17.24

Analysis

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the data of survey questions 11, 14, 15, and 16:

- 48% of respondents have received some college credit for military experience.
- 31% of respondents state that the credit they received was only applied as transfer credit.
- 20% of respondents say they received adequate credit for their military experience.
- 17% of respondents say the credit received was appropriately applied.

The data set for this series of questions points toward a few alarming facts. Slightly less than half of the participants have not received any credit for their military experience, and of those who received credit, 40% of it was applied as an elective. It shows that over 50% of the participants feel they did not receive adequate credit and it was not correctly applied to their programs of study.

- CC#1 – *“Yes, the students are notified via email to their letting them know that the evaluation of transfer credits for whatever military branch they were affiliated with has now been completed. And then in that email we explain to the student that they can go to their, account and they can actually go in and view under their program evaluation, how the course is transferred in in our meeting requirements, as well as there is a transfer evaluation out there that they can actually view and see how each course came into. As far as the appeal process, there is one.”*
- CC#1 – *“Yeah, my understanding is once registration gets the results from the department chair’s evaluation they send an email and a paper copy but I’m not positive, but yeah, they contact the student with the results of evaluation and they encourage them to contact their academic advisor if they have questions, just like they would for institutional transcripts. They follow the same process for military transcripts.”*
- CC#2 – *“After the transcripts are evaluated credits are posted. They get an email notifying them that their transcripts have been evaluated. It explains that courses applicable to their chosen major have been added to the record. The email further explains that CC#2 does not transfer in courses that are not applicable to their chosen major. The email does not provide information about our transfer credit*

appeals process. However, we do have an official appeals process in place. And that can be found on our website.”

- *CC#2 – “So the first part of that are they notified of the decisions. Absolutely. They get an email that tells them that their credits their transcripts have been evaluated and directs them to our self-service, so that they can access that to see what credits have been transferred in. If they don't agree with anything or have questions that email also directs them to contact us for any questions.”*

The staff’s responses to RQ5 demonstrate that students are notified after their transcripts and coursework has been reviewed, and they are notified of the outcome and the option to file an appeal.

RESEARCH QUESTION 6

For RQ6, the following survey questions were not mapped to the research questions.

- (Q6) How frequently do you interact with the Military and Veteran Services Office on your campus?
- (Q7) Where did you first learn about your military educational benefits?
- (Q8) Are you planning to complete an associate’s degree or certificate?
- (Q9) Are you planning to use your benefits to complete a bachelor’s degree?
- (Q24) What barriers have you experienced that are most likely preventing students from receiving transfer credit for military experience?

Results

Tables 23–27 present responses to the survey questions that relate to RQ6.

Table 23: Participant Responses to Q6 – How Frequently Do You Interact with the Military and Veteran Services Office on Your Campus?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Every semester	20	68.97
I do not interact with the Military & Veteran Services Office	6	20.69
Monthly	3	10.34

Table 24: Participant Responses to Q7 – Where Did You First Learn About Your Military Educational Benefits?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Active duty	1	3.45
Army	1	3.45
Army/Ft. Bragg/Recruiter	1	3.45
BCT	1	3.45
Before joining the Marines, in 1997	1	3.45
Dayton VA hospital	1	3.45
From my Voc rehab counselor	1	3.45
From the VA website	1	3.45
In the Air Force	1	3.45
In boot camp	1	3.45
In general, I joined the military to get the GI Bill. Then I make sure every school I attend uses them.	1	3.45
In service	1	3.45
Military Education Office	1	3.45
Military transition course	1	3.45

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Mostly through self-research	1	3.45
My recruiter	1	3.45
On Active Duty	1	3.45
Only benefit I am aware of is early registration and I found out about that upon registering for my second semester.	1	3.45
Researching VA Benefits	1	3.45
Sinclair Military & veteran services	1	3.45
Through a state Vocational Rehab councilor.	1	3.45
VA hospital	1	3.45
Website	1	3.45
While in the military, it was explained.	1	3.45
While serving active duty	1	3.45
While serving in the military	1	3.45
Online searching	1	3.45
va.gov	1	3.45
When I enlisted	1	3.45

Table 25: Participant Responses to Q8 – Are You Planning to Complete an Associate’s Degree or Certificate?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Associates degree only	12	41.38
Bachelor transfer	1	3.45
Both Associates and Bachelors	1	3.45
Both Associates degree and certificate	14	48.28
Multiple associates degrees and bachelor’s degree	1	3.45

Table 26: Participant Responses to Q9 – Are You Planning to Use Your Benefits to Complete a Baccalaureate Degree?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
No	8	27.59
Yes	21	72.41

Table 27: Participant Responses to Q24 – What Barriers Have You Experienced That Are Most Likely Preventing Students from Receiving Transfer Credit for Military Experience?

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
A lot of my experience comes from special operations and as such it seemed that colleges have no idea the amount of training/schooling I have had due to it being uncommon.	1	3.45

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Around half of my transfer credits were listed as general education instead of something more specifically related to what they were. Multiple courses had no transfer at all (i.e. Marine Corps Instructor Development Course). In my opinion colleges do not understand military training and its applicability to civilian jobs or education (ex. Public Speaking is a big part of becoming an Instructor, yet nothing transferred that applied to the Public Speaking class that is part of my curriculum).	1	3.45
I don't believe that my military training counts toward any credit.	1	3.45
I don't know anything about this, so answering some of these questions without an "I don't know" is really difficult and will be misleading to your results (like 22 and 23 above). I guess the biggest barrier thus far is inadequate knowledge.	1	3.45
I have not experienced any barriers.	1	3.45
I only received elective credits.	1	3.45
I was told, the school only recognizes "traditional" learning. For example, I have 14 years of military aviation experience as maintenance shop shift supervisor, quality assurance inspector, pilot in command, and air mission commander. Additionally, I have attended and graduated numerous aviation leadership courses in the military. That experience could not be converted to the two-credit hour requirement for a course named "principles of aviation leadership." Obviously, there is a disconnect somewhere.	1	3.45
Incorrect information or guidance.	1	3.45
Instructors know nothing about the tuition process and even how to fix a problem or who to talk to. We are left in the dark to find for ourselves.	1	3.45
Lack of information on the subject.	1	3.45

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Lack of knowledge of college staff on what is involved in military training. They would not give me a communications credit for SOS due to no final grade. I would rank that SOS course with presentations, paper writing, test taking, leadership events right up with any communications course. The school still would not give me credit for it.	1	3.45
Not knowing this was an option and/or how it would have benefitted me, I don't feel I can answer this question adequately.	1	3.45
Schools not knowing how to properly evaluate the transcripts to where they award credit for advanced classes but not the basics.	1	3.45
So, courses given in the military are equivalent to the colleges and I felt the military was more extensive.	1	3.45
Some of the more involved academic schools in the military aren't evaluated by ACE and the school won't individual evaluate them to give credit. An example for me would be recruiting school, which has a lot of transfer application towards communication, small group leadership, sales and business.	1	3.45
Students not knowing about veteran office.	1	3.45
The military training courses do not equal to school's courses. I have an Electronic Systems Technology Associate's degree from the Community College of the Air Force but the school told me that none of my courses are equal to their school, example— management and leadership courses, electronic technical courses.	1	3.45
Unknown; I don't know; Unsure	5	17.24
N/A; None	6	20.69
No one asked for or informed me about it.	1	3.45

Analysis

Listed below are a few pertinent highlights extracted from the data of survey questions

6, 7, 8, 9, and 24:

- 69% of respondents reported that they interact with Military and Veteran Services Office every semester.
- 48% of respondents are planning to complete an associate degree and certificate.
- 72% of respondents are planning to complete a bachelor's degree.
- 17% of respondents learned about their military education benefits through various interactions with the Veterans Administration (VA).
- 31% of respondents reported lack of knowledge about the topic as the biggest barrier preventing students from receiving transfer credit for military experience.

A closer look at this data set revealed that 20% of the participants do not interact with the Military and Veterans Services Office located on their campuses. Further examination of the data also revealed that 31% of respondents learned about their military education benefits either online, during active duty status, or from various sources while serving in the military.

SUMMARY

The electronic survey instrument provided data that demonstrated that barriers do exist and are preventing our military and veteran students from receiving transfer credit for their military experience. The research highlighted a need for improving the communication gap among the military branches, military training facilities, Veterans Administration, and community colleges. Additionally, the overall data sets revealed the need to find better ways of educating service members about their educational benefits and communicating the campus transfer credit processes.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the findings of this study that involved exploring, identifying, and analyzing the factors and issues that are impacting and preventing our military service members and veterans from receiving credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG), Joint Service Transcripts (JTS), and Community College of the Air Force Transcripts (CCAF) for training received in the military that could be equated to college-level courses.

The work for this chapter starts with an overview of the information presented in the previous chapters and includes the conclusions interpreted from the findings of the study's research questions. This chapter concludes with the limitations of this research, the researcher's reflections, and a summary of this chapter.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This cross-case analysis was designed to examine the perceptions of college transfer credit received by military service members and veterans for military training that has been considered equivalent to college-level courses. The goal of the study was to discover if any issues existed that related to military transfer credit that could potentially negatively impact

this student population. The findings of the study emerged from the five overarching research questions listed below:

- RQ1. What are the organizational processes at two Ohio community colleges that help determine college credit when evaluating military coursework credit and/or Joint Service Transcripts?
- RQ2. How does the administration and organizational culture at two Ohio community colleges view military training, experience, and coursework?
- RQ3. What recommendations to academic policies and processes should be made for awarding college credit for military training credit?
- RQ4. What state-level programs exist in Ohio that relate to awarding college credit for military coursework? How familiar are you with those programs?
- RQ5. Once the review of military coursework is complete and credit decisions are made, is the student notified of those decisions and informed about an appeal process?

Those five questions served as the core of this study, and the conclusions that the researcher developed centered on the following three themes: student's perceptions of college credit for military training, experience, and coursework; staff's perceptions of college credit for military training, experience, and coursework; and barriers to awarding college credit for military training, experience, and coursework.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, AND COURSEWORK

Since 1944, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (also known as the GI Bill[®]) has provided educational assistance to service members, veterans, and their dependents through stipends for tuition and other expenses for college or trade schools. This assistance has expanded access to higher education for veterans and their families. In 2018, over 650,000 veterans used military benefits to pursue higher education (Postsecondary National Policy Institute, 2020).

Under the “new GI Bill®,” the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides eligible military service members and veterans increased financial support for postsecondary education, including a housing allowance, a stipend for books and supplies, and full payment of their tuition and fees (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2020a).

The original and revised GI Bills have been game changers for military service members, veterans, spouses, and dependents. It has become one of the major recruitment selling points for military branches, and it has encouraged enrollment of service members and veterans at community colleges and four-year colleges and universities (Morris, 2015). A vast majority of the survey respondents of this study support college credit being awarded for some of the training, experience, and coursework completed by military personnel and veterans. However, the survey data did reveal that the overall perceptions of the respondents hint that they do not know enough about military transfer credit to be able to offer useful suggestions for improvements. In addition, the few respondents that had some knowledge of the topic did express concern about receiving an inadequate amount of credit or inappropriately applied credit and suggested examining and applying fixes to the transfer credit processes at the military and community college levels.

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, AND COURSEWORK

The general knowledge conversations with staff members of CC#1 and CC#2 allowed the researcher an opportunity to learn about their perceptions of the research topic. Collectively, the staff members support military service members and veterans receiving college credit for

military training, experience, and coursework. Staff members of both institutions believe that the administrators view their campuses as military friendly. All the staff members seemed familiar with Ohio's statewide transfer guarantee known as Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAGs), but their levels of understanding of the program seem to differ based on their roles at their respective colleges. Overall, most of the staff members recommended changes to their transfer credit processes, and only a few recommended that no changes were necessary.

BARRIERS TO AWARDED COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING, EXPERIENCE, AND COURSEWORK

Review and analysis of the data revealed a few common themes as academic barriers to the survey participants. One of the major barriers shared by the survey participants was their lack of knowledge about military transfer credit, MTAGs, PLA credit, how college credit is equated, and the department responsible for equating transfer credit. It became very apparent from their responses to the survey questions that communication gaps existed, in addition to inconsistencies about their education benefits and the various sources used to educate them about those benefits. Another barrier that was shared were inconsistencies with the amount of credit awarded for military training, experience, and coursework.

LIMITATIONS

This study had the following limitations. The survey was limited to 25 questions that consisted of a combination of open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions, closed-ended questions, and demographic questions. The survey was designed to be completed within 6-10 minutes, and it was administered electronically. Another limitation was that the survey was administered during exam week at CC#1 and during the first two weeks of summer semester at

CC#2. The researcher had planned to administer the surveys after spring break at both institutions but had to wait for the IRB approvals, which happened toward the end of spring semester 2021. The sample size for the study was 29 students, which may have been impacted by the time of year that it was administered. Another limitation was the limited amount of existing research information and resources available.

DELIMITATIONS

This study had the following delimitations. The researcher decided to sample military service members and veterans that met the survey participation criteria. Two community colleges in the state of Ohio were the research sites. The research topic focused on learning about the sample pool members' experiences with receiving college transfer credit for military training, experience, and coursework, and random, purposive sampling was used. Because the survey was administered regionally, it cannot be inferred that these issues are universal. If there were equal representation from other regions and institutional types, a more complete picture would have been obtained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the data analysis, the researcher suggests the following recommendations. First, there need to be plausible means for educating military service members and veterans about ways to maximize their educational benefits. Another area of concern highlighted by the data was the communication issues experienced by the participants. There were inconsistencies with how they initially learned about the benefits and who explained the benefits to them. A solution is to put a process in place that ensures that the

correct, updated, and latest information is being disseminated to military service members and veterans. This can be accomplished by having a central location for retrieving information, such as the federal Veterans Affairs website. In addition, appropriate personnel should be designated to discuss the educational benefits and should be professionally trained and qualified to do this important task, and this should include applicable members of the military, Department of Defense (DoD), and higher education representatives, whose jobs involve working with this student population. Lastly, there needs to be more communication between the military and higher education institutions regarding the awarding of college credit for military training, experience, and coursework.

REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The study shows that there are opportunities for improvement in various areas relating to transfer credit and college credit for military training, experience, and coursework. Several examples of those areas were mentioned in the barriers section of this chapter, and if they are ignored or forgotten, they could have a negative impact on future generations of military service members and veterans. Portions of the analyzed data demonstrated some of the practices that both institutions are *doing right*, such as creating a military-friendly environment, notifying students after their military coursework has been reviewed, and informing them of the credit appeal process. Overall, this study allowed the researcher the opportunity to further understand the intricate, interdependent, and interrelated transfer credit processes from the perspectives of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Ohio Department of Higher Education, two Ohio community colleges, and the participants involved in this research study.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the challenges that was encountered during the literature review phase of this project was the limited amount of research information that exists about this topic. As an attempt to add to the existing research, the researcher suggests the following topics as potential areas of further research. Is there a link between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and community colleges? During the literature review there were a few sources that showed an indirect link between the two entities, and the analysis of the survey data showed comparable results. A second item that could be useful is if higher education institutions develop best practices for equating and awarding military transfer credit and college credit for military training, experience, and coursework.

CONCLUSION

A great deal of attention is being paid to enhancing the experiences and educational outcomes of student veterans and active-duty military students. Unfortunately, the data available to support these important activities remain limited. Real progress will require an effective system for collecting and analyzing data across institutions (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators [NASPA] Research and Policy Institute, 2013). Thankfully, the knowledge learned from the participants of this study will be added to the existing data, which further advances the knowledge base of this study group.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill® has produced nearly a half million postsecondary certificates and degrees since it was established. In addition, the Post-9/11 GI Bill will help annually produce approximately 100,000 postsecondary certificate and degrees, barring any changes to the benefit or influence from outside factors. This includes approximately 20,000 post-

baccalaureate degrees each year for the foreseeable future (Cate et al., 2017). It has been an honor to make a positive contribution toward the educational pursuits of military service members and veterans.

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APPENDIX A: FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307

www.ferris.edu/irb

Date: March 16, 2021

To: Susan DeCamillis, EdD and Randall Fletcher

From: Gregory Wellman, R.Ph, Ph.D, IRB Chair

Re: IRB Application *IRB-FY20-21-109 Military Members Transfer Credit and Their Articulation into Ohio Community College Systems: A Cross-Case Analysis*

The Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application for using human subjects in the study, *Military Members Transfer Credit and Their Articulation into Ohio Community College Systems: A Cross-Case Analysis (IRB-FY20-21-109)* and approved this project under Federal Regulations Exempt Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation.

Your protocol has been assigned project number IRB-FY20-21-109. Approval mandates that you follow all University policy and procedures, in addition to applicable governmental regulations. Approval applies only to the activities described in the protocol submission; should revisions need to be made, all materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. In addition, the IRB must be made aware of any serious and unexpected and/or unanticipated adverse events as well as complaints and non-compliance issues.

This project has been granted a waiver of consent documentation; signatures of participants need not be collected. Although not documented, informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and participant rights, with the assurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must be provided, even when documentation is waived, and continue throughout the study.

As mandated by Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46) the IRB requires submission of annual status reports during the life of the research project and a Final Report Form upon study completion. Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines and best wishes for a successful research endeavor. Please let us know if the IRB can be of any future assistance.

Regards,



APPENDIX B: SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE IRB APPROVAL

April 22, 2021

Randall Fletcher
Senior Advisor/Advising Manager
Sinclair Community College

RE: Military Transfer Credit Articulation ad Community Colleges

Dear Randall:

As chair of the Sinclair Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB00005624), I am writing to inform you that I have reviewed your proposal and approved the protocol as it meets the criteria for exempt status as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under category two. Please note that exempt proposals need not be reviewed by the full IRB (see Section 101, subsection b.1). Your planned research is fully compliant with Sinclair protocols. Please note, that to preserve anonymity, any grouping of respondents that numbers less than ten should not be reported—if there are only two female Air Force veterans at Sinclair, reporting their outcomes could permit their identification.

Any serious adverse events or issues relating from this study must be reported immediately to the IRB. Additionally, any changes to protocols or informed consent documents must have IRB approval before implementation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me. Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,



Chad Atkinson, Ph.D.
Manager of Research
Sinclair Community College, Research, Analytics, and Reporting
Chair, Sinclair Institutional Review Board
Phone: 937-512-4118
chad.atkinson4026@sinclair.edu

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT SURVEY WAIVER



FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH

1010 Campus Drive FLITE 410 Big Rapids, MI 49307 | (231) 591-2553 | www.ferris.edu/irb

Informed Consent

Survey Waiver

Project Title: Military Members Transfer Credit and Their Articulation into Ohio Community College Systems: A Cross-Case Analysis

IRB Approved Project #: FY-20-21-109

Student Researcher: Randall Fletcher, DCCL Program, Ferris State University

Email: randall.fletcher@sinclair.edu Phone: 937-626-3707

Principal Investigator(s): Susan DeCamillis, Ed.D.

Email: decamis@ferris.edu

You are invited to participate in a voluntary survey about Military Members Transfer Credit and Their Articulation into Ohio Community College Systems. You are being asked to participate because you meet the criteria of active duty military, military reservist or military veteran. The researchers are interested in exploring and identifying the factors and issues that are negatively impacting and preventing our military service members and veterans from receiving credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG) and Joint Service Transcripts for training received in the military that could be equated to college level courses. Information will be collected by a survey questionnaire. We estimate that it will take approximately 10 minutes to answer the survey questions and your participation will be complete when your individual questionnaire is submitted. Information collected in this survey could directly benefit our military members by identifying problematic areas involving military transfer credit, and the research has the potential to pinpoint some possible solutions.

The survey data will be confidential and will not contain information that can personally identify you. The survey will be accessed and administered online and will be digitally recorded. Information you provide in this study will be maintained and secured by the study team for 3 years. You may refuse to answer any question you do not wish to answer or you may exit the survey at any time. Participation or nonparticipation in this study will not impact your relationship/employment/academic standing with Ferris State University in any way.

If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher, Randall Fletcher, listed above. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, contact the Ferris State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at: 1010 Campus Drive, FLITE 410G, Big Rapids, MI 49307 (231) 591-2553 or IRB@ferris.edu.

By clicking NEXT, I am indicating my understanding of this information and give my consent to participate in this study.



APPENDIX D: EMAIL INVITATION FOR SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Dissertation Study Email Invitation for Survey Participation

Dear Participant (student)

Our office is working together with Randall Fletcher, Ferris State University doctoral student and asking for your participation in a study that is researching *Military Members Transfer Credit and Their Articulation into Ohio Community College Systems*. You are being selected as one of the participants because you meet the criteria of active-duty military, military reservist or military veteran, and could provide valuable insight into this subject. Next week, an email will be sent from our Military Family Education Center with the Informed Consent Form and survey attached.

The survey is 25 questions in total, and typically takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Participation is both completely voluntary and completely confidential.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office or Randall Fletcher via email at: randall.fletcher@sinclair.edu

We greatly value your time and appreciate any consideration you might give to completing the survey.

Cordially,

Military Family Education Center

Student Researcher: Randall Fletcher

APPENDIX E: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

Military Transfer Credit Survey - Draft

The research problem for this study will focus on exploring and identifying the factors and issues that are negatively impacting and preventing our military service members and veterans from receiving credit using Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG) and Joint Service Transcripts for training received in the military that could be equated to college level courses.

Thank you for participating in this important research! This survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

The following questions will help with gathering pertinent data and aid in establishing the general research framework.

* Required

1. Which military branch have you served in?

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marines
- Coast Guard
- Air National Guard
- Army National Guard

3/2/2021

2. What is your current military status?

- Active duty
- Reservist
- Veteran
- Retired

3. Which community college do you currently attend?

- Sinclair Community College
- Clark State Community College

4. Did your military service have an influence on you choosing this college? *

- Yes
- No

5. Are you using your military benefits to help pay for college?

- Yes
- No

3/2/2021

6. How frequently do you interact with the Military & Veteran Services Office on your campus?

- I do not interact with the Military & Veteran Services Office
- Annually
- Monthly
- Every semester

7. Where did you first learn about your military educational benefits?

8. Are you planning to complete an associate's degree or certificate? *

- Associates degree only
- Both Associates degree and certificate
- Certificate only

Other

9. Are you planning to use your benefits to complete a bachelor's degree? *

- Yes
- No

3/2/2021

10. Has a representative at your college explained your military educational benefits? *

- Unsure
- N/A
- No
- Yes

Rectangular Snip

11. Have you received any college credit for your military experience? *

- Yes
- Unsure
- No
- N/A

12. Have you received any Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit for your military experience? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- N/A

3/2/2021

13. Have you received any college credit from the Military Transfer Assurance Guides (MTAG)? *

- No
- N/A
- Unsure
- Yes

14. Was your military transfer credit only applied as electives? *

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

15. Did you receive adequate transfer credit for your military experience? *

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

3/2/2021

16. Did you receive the appropriate transfer credit for your military experience? *

- No
- Unsure
- Yes

17. Did someone at your college explain the military transfer credit process? *

- Yes
- No

18. What department is responsible for military transfer credit at your college? *

- I do not know
-
- Other

19. How does your community college evaluate transfer credit? *

- I do not know
-
- Other

3/2/2021

20. Would you consider your campus military and veteran friendly? *

- Yes
- No

21. Based on your perception, how does the college view military and veteran students? *

- Positive
- Negative
- Unsure

22. Based on your perception, are military and veteran students adequately supported at your community college? *

- Yes
- No

23. Does the college provide the appropriate services for military and veteran students? *

- Yes
- No

3/2/2021

24. What barriers have you experienced that are most likely preventing students from receiving transfer credit for military experience? *

25. What recommendations to academic policies should be made for awarding college credit for military credit? *

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APPENDIX F: STATE OF OHIO EXECUTIVE ORDER – 2013-05K



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

Executive Order 2013-05K

Directing State Departments, Boards and Commissions to Streamline the State Licensing Process to Take into Account Relevant Military Education and to Direct the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, in Collaboration with Presidents of the University System of Ohio, to Simplify the Process for Awarding College Credit for Military Education for Veterans and Service Members

WHEREAS, Ohio has nearly 900,000 military veterans residing in the state and another 80,000 residents currently serving in the United States Armed Forces, which includes active duty members as well as National Guard and Reserve forces.

WHEREAS, more than 75,000 Ohioans have served in the United States Armed Forces in support of combat operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world since September 11, 2001.

WHEREAS, the 2012 annual unemployment rate among all Ohio veterans was 7.6% and post-9/11 veterans' unemployment rate was 12.8%.

WHEREAS, Ohio employers report a deficit of job-seekers and workers with 21st century education and skills that can be filled by access to a highly-trained and educated cohort of veteran employment candidates.

WHEREAS, current and former military members have received extensive education and skills training in a broad range of areas that directly correlate to private sector occupations and as a result of their military experience have gained leadership and management perspectives that are invaluable to today's employers.

WHEREAS, the State of Ohio is committed to ensuring access to quality and affordable higher education for veterans of the United States Armed Forces through the University System of Ohio.

WHEREAS, more than 22,000 people are attending institutions of higher education in Ohio, utilizing federal veteran education benefits.

WHEREAS, all public institutions of higher education in Ohio have begun to use the American Council on Education *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* in evaluating and awarding academic credit for military training and experience.

NOW THEREFORE, I, John R. Kasich, Governor of the State of Ohio, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this State, do hereby order and direct that:

1. State departments, boards and commissions that issue occupational certifications or licenses shall:
 - a. To the extent permitted by law, review and revise policies and procedures to streamline the certification and licensing process to take into account relevant military education, skills training, and service when determining equivalency for purposes of issuing certifications and licenses.
 - b. Identify state and federal laws that are barriers to the revision of policies and procedures to further streamline the issuance of certifications and licenses based upon relevant military education, training, or service, and advise the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation regarding any such barriers and recommended actions for reform by December 31, 2013.
2. The Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, in collaboration with the presidents of the University System of Ohio institutions, shall:
 - a. Based on information provided in the resources of the American Council on Education, conduct a thorough review of current institutional policies on identifying military education and training to qualify for college credit, identify institutional policy recommendations to simplify that process, and make available additional awards of college credit that correspond to academic programs offered at the institution.
 - b. Identify state and federal laws that are barriers to the revision of institutional policies and procedures to further streamline the award of college credit, and advise the Board of Regents regarding any such barriers and recommended actions for reform by December 31, 2013.
3. The Ohio Department of Veteran Services, Ohio Board of Regents, University System of Ohio institutions, the Department of Job and Family Services, the Adjutant General's Department and the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation will conduct coordinated outreach to service members, veterans and veteran organizations to ensure they are aware of available employment, licensure and academic benefits.

I signed this Executive Order on June 11, 2013, in Columbus, Ohio, and it will not expire unless it is rescinded.




John R. Kasich, Governor

ATTEST:

Jon Husted, Secretary of State

APPENDIX G: STATE OF OHIO – HOUSE BILL 488

The **board of trustees of each state institution of higher education** shall do all of the following by December 31, 2014:

- (A) Designate at least one person employed by the institution to serve as the contact person for veterans and service member affairs. Such a person shall assist and advise veterans and service members on issues related to Am. Sub. H. B. No. 488 130th G.A.
- (B) Adopt a policy regarding the support and assistance the institution will provide to veterans and service members.
- (C) Allow for the establishment of a student-led group on campus for student service members and veterans and encourage other service member- and veteran-friendly organizations.
- (D) Integrate existing career services to create and encourage meaningful collaborative relationships between student service members and veterans and alumni of the institution, that links student service members and veterans with prospective employers, and that provides student service members and veterans with social opportunities; and, if the institution has career services programs, encourage the responsible office to seek and promote partnership opportunities for internships and employment of student service members and veterans with state, local, national, and international employers.
- (E) Survey student service members and veterans to identify their needs and challenges and make the survey available to faculty and staff at the state institution of higher education. And periodically conduct follow-up surveys, at a frequency determined by the board, to gauge the institution's progress toward meeting identified needs and challenges.

The chancellor of the Ohio board of regents shall provide guidance to state institutions of higher education in their compliance with this section, including the recommendation of standardized policies on support and assistance to veterans and service members.

The person or persons designated under division (A) of this section shall not be a person currently designated by the institution as a veterans administration certifying official. (R.C. 3345.421)

[S]hall establish an appeals procedure for students who are veterans or service members for resolving disputes regarding the awarding of college credit for military experience. (R.C. 3345.423)

State institutions of higher education shall do all of the following by December 31, 2014:

1. [E]ach state institution of higher education, as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code, shall provide a student who is either a veteran or a service member with priority for course registration. (R.C. 3345.422)
2. [N]o state institution of higher education, as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code, shall charge a student who is a veteran or a service member any fee for the evaluation of, transcription of, or application for college credit for military experience. (R.C. 3345.424)

State institutions of higher education shall do all of the following by July 1, 2015 (R.C. 3333.164 C):

1. [E]nsure that appropriate equivalent credit is awarded for military training, experience, and coursework that meet the standards developed by the chancellor pursuant to this section. (R.C. 3333.164 C)