UNDERSTANDING & MEETING THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF VETERANS AT BCC
Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan

- 95% of Active Duty have seen a dead body
- 93-97% have been shot at
- 89-95% have been ambushed
- 86-87% know someone who was injured or killed
- 77-87% have fired on the enemy
- 20% of returning veterans will experience a war-related disability
Veterans as a Diverse Group

Continuum of Exposure
to
Physical and Emotional Trauma

Intense Exposure -----------------------Little to No Exposure

Result: Responses and Needs will vary
Transition
Establishing “New Normal” for Some Veterans

- Home issues
  - Divorce rate
  - Homelessness
- Isolation
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
- Injuries
  - Traumatic Brain Injury (bombs not bullets) TBI
  - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBIm) – mild brain injury
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Loss of limbs or other physical injuries
Student Veterans at BCC

- **Enrollment,**
  - Spring 2012 = 275

- **Majors** (most popular)
  - AS in Professional Studies General Curriculum
  - AS Professional Studies Criminal Justice
  - AS Professional Studies Business
  - AA Liberal Arts General Curriculum

- **Current Standing**
  - Dean’s List = 33
  - Honor Roll = 28
  - Good = 173
  - Probation = 25
  - Suspended = 13
  - Dismissed = 3
BCC Supports Veterans

- Veterans’ Connection
  - [www.bergern.edu/pages1/pages/5245.aspx](http://www.bergern.edu/pages1/pages/5245.aspx)

- Veterans’ Initiative Committee

- Veterans’ Day Recognition

- “Combat Papers” – sponsored by the Art Department
BCC Supports Veterans

- Academic Advising
- Priority Registration (after 1st semester)
- Counselors
- Dedicated Study Room in Library
New Initiatives

- Establish connections between veterans and teaching faculty.
  - Provide information for faculty members to help improve the experience of student-veterans on campus.
- Further development of Veterans’ Connections website
- Establishment of a Student Veterans’ Center
  - Centralized location for student veterans to receive information and support services.
Positive Benefits of Veterans on Campus

- **Focus**
  - Older students who benefit from real world experience.
  - Education funded by GI Bill, so they are typically not balancing work and school.

- **Leadership**
  - Many veterans are happy to bring their leadership skills to the campus community.

- **Experience**
  - Many veterans have successfully navigated stressful situations.
Today’s Focus: Faculty and Student-Veterans

Time

- **Military Culture**
  - Structure, time demands, absolute schedules
  - Well-equipped at a moment’s notice ready for action
  - Living day to day (syllabus)

- **College Culture**
  - Less structured, ill equipped, classes at random
  - Out of theater hard to plan and adjust – living a semester at a time (overwhelming)
  - Too much info can be overwhelming (syllabus)
Issues for Some Student-Veterans

- **Hierarchy – rules and structure**
  - College classes may be more community based rather than hierarchical
  - Rules keep you alive – may be disconcerting for some students if professor moves off of syllabus

- **Ideology**
  - Success is only outcome. Failure is not an option.
    - What happens with “fail” experiences in class?

- **Fire alarms**
  - Same sound as incoming assault

- **Seating**
  - Prefer back of room/near door

- **Groups**
  - Reluctant to work with other students that are non-military or are less engaged
Issues for Some Student-Veterans

- Laser pointer
  - Looks like target on head/chest “in theater”
- Walking through halls
  - Smells, music, large groups of people
- Peers
  - morbid curiosity
Best Practices

- Faculty
  - Respect the individual’s rights not to disclose or discuss their experiences. **DO NOT IDENTIFY VETERANS.**
  - Be aware of own political views
  - Separate war from warrior
  - Respect need for camaraderie
  - Group projects may be problematic
Best Practices

- Statement for Syllabus (2 possibilities)
  - BCC welcomes all student veterans. We thank you for your service. If there is any way that I can support you in your time here at BCC, please feel free to contact me.
  - I recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you are in need of special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.
Helping Students

- Referrals
  - VA Benefits
    - Heidi Flynn X7997; Mike Martinez X7647
  - Center for Student Success, A118
    - Personal Counseling – John Giamo X 7458
    - Academic Advising – Tim Foote X9285
  - Office of Specialized Services
    - Academic Advising – Beth Pincus X7844
    - Accommodations Specialist – Jennifer Flynn  X3778
Additional Resources

- “Colleges Expand Services for Veterans” (Chronicle)
- “Program Teaches Veterans How to Survive the Classroom” (NPR)
- “Soldiers in the Classroom Redux” – Mike Rose blog
- Facebook Group: Allies of Veterans in Academia
- Allies of Veterans in Academia Wiki
  - http://alliesofveteransinacademia.wikispaces.com/
- Post 9/11 GI Bill