



Report Gives Multi-State, Cross-Institutional Picture of Veteran Student Success

Operation College Promise (OCP) and the Pat Tillman Foundation Pilot Analysis of Student Veteran Educational Progress Toward Degree in the Post-9/11 Era

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TRENTON, NJ – As the enrollment of military-affiliated students continue to surge at campuses across the country, Operation College Promise (OCP) and the Arizona-based Pat Tillman Foundation released a paper reviewing their progress toward degree completion for a pilot population.

The paper, [Completing the Mission: A Pilot Study of Veteran Students' Progress Toward Degree Attainment](#), uses OCP's Graduation Probability Indices (GPI)[™], a methodology developed in concert with campus officials and which include the following: Grade Point Average (GPA), credits earned compared to credits pursued, retention from semester to semester and utilization of campus services.

Among the findings:

- Evaluating the progress of student veteran degree attainment is an emerging science; this is the first such multi-state, cross-institutional evaluation.
- Student veterans in this study had an average GPA of 3.04. Research indicates that students with more than a 3.0 have the highest graduation rate – 77.4%.
- This cohort is being retained from fall 2010-spring 2011 at a rate of 94%. The national average for first-year to second-year retention is 75%.
- Combined, 71% of students in the pilot attained all credits pursued during the 2010-2011 academic year at an average rate of 24 credits per academic year. Based on a 6-year graduation rate, students are moving toward degree consistent with their traditional peers.
- Student veterans in the pilot reported utilizing some veteran-specific campus offering at a rate of 60% or a median of 86%.

“The GPI was crafted to begin the process of assessing the progress of student veterans toward degree completion. It takes into account common indicators research has demonstrated to be effective in predicating graduation,” said Wendy A. Lang, Director of *Operation College Promise*. “Encouraging our nation’s bravest to enroll in higher education is important, but we need to also ensure campuses are giving them the support they need to earn a degree.”



The institutions participating are: Montclair State University, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, Texas State University-San Marcos, Arizona State University, Mississippi State University and the University of South Florida. Collectively they have about 185,000 students and 6,400 veterans – 3.5% of the total population.

"Measuring the progress of student veterans toward their intended degrees is a vital step in assessing the success of the institutions, organizations and government programs that support this population," states Hunter I. Riley, Director of Programs for the Pat Tillman Foundation. "Together we can showcase the value of education as one of the most transformational steps for military veterans in transitioning back into the civilian world and finding employment."

With the renewed focus on degree attainment, the findings of this report pave the way for additional research that will broaden the scope of institutions participating and increase the number student veterans included. Baseline data will be compared to future evaluations of veteran-specific campus programming and veteran student progress toward degree. [Completing the Mission: A Pilot Study of Veteran Students' Progress Toward Degree Attainment](#) is available as complimentary PDF through OCPs www.operationcollegepromise.com/Completing_the_Mission_Nov2010.pdf and the Pat Tillman Foundation's website....<http://www.pattillmanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Completing-the-Mission.pdf>.

About Operation College Promise

Operation College Promise (OCP) is the veterans project founded by the nine ASCU state colleges and universities. More information on the project can be accessed at www.operationcollegepromise.com. ASCU is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy advocacy organization chartered by law in 1985. Its members are: The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Rowan University, Thomas Edison State College and William Paterson University. These institutions, collectively, serve about 102,000 students and 12,000 veterans.

About the Pat Tillman Foundation

Family and friends established the Pat Tillman Foundation in 2004, following Tillman's death while serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment in Afghanistan. Created to honor his legacy and pay tribute to his commitment to leadership and service, the Pat Tillman Foundation is a national leader in providing educational support and resources to veterans, active service members and their spouses. Inspired by Tillman's attributes of leadership, passion for education and spirit of service, the Foundation annually awards educational scholarships through the Tillman Military Scholars program. To date, the Pat Tillman Foundation has invested more than \$4 million in educational resources to support individuals committed to a life of service both in and out of uniform. For more information on the Pat Tillman Foundation, visit www.pattillmanfoundation.org.

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