Guiding a Latino Student Veteran through the Higher Education Journey: Supporting the development of an underrepresented community

Tuesday, March 12, 2019 | 10:10 – 11:00 a.m.
LACC, 501 B

Eliberto Calderon
Leonel Diaz Jr
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The University of New Mexico
Leonel is...

- ABD Doctoral Student
- SA Pro since 2012, but it really started as an undergrad in 2006
- Interdisciplinary background: student engagement, leadership development, advisement, orientation, academic success, retention, marketing and communication, health research, college access research, freelance photographer
- 1st Generation Student
- Straight Outta Compton!
Texanna is...

- Doctoral Student
- Worked in a variety of areas: human resource management, leadership, retention public and private agency, marketing and networking, advisement, program coordinator, and student success.
- Research focus: women in leadership, higher education infrastructures and policies, underrepresented communities, and veteran wellness
- Daughter of Vietnam Veteran
- 1st Generation Student

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Eliberto is the advisee/mentee:

- Doctoral student
- Army veteran
- Latino identity derived from Ramona Trevizo; a single Mexican mother from Chihuahua, Mexico. From her I emulate: resiliency and strong work ethic.
- 2016-2018 Elected President of Student Veterans of UNM Association
- Transitional leader that the student association needed:
  - Communication skills
  - Profession identity
  - Organization and university structures
- Research areas: Veteran Structures in Higher Education.
Program Outline

● Learning Outcomes
● Icebreaker
● Review of current higher education literature on student veterans
● Discuss identity development of the Latino (Mexican American) student veteran experience
● Share advisor/mentor experiences supporting challenges
● Focus on best mentoring practices for student veterans
● Discussion
● Share achievements of the student veteran group in supporting the student veteran community
● Reflection
● Panel discussion - Q & A
Learning Outcomes

Participants will be able to:

1. Explore opportunities to engage student veterans & student veteran groups within their own colleges or universities.
2. Gain awareness of student veteran organizational growth and opportunity for student engagement.
3. Learn and engage in conversations about best practices on supporting student veterans.
4. Understand student veteran transition literature.
5. Use effective advising/mentoring strategies with student veterans.
Ice Breaker

In think-pair-share

1) reflect with a colleague about what you know about Latino student veterans or student veterans in general;

2) share thoughts on what you would like to learn more about in this session.
Veterans

- Population: 21,369,602 (U.S.); 172,717 (U.S. Census, 2015)
- Female veterans: 7.3%(NM); 8.4% (U.S.) of the Veteran population (U.S. Census, 2015)
- Characteristics (Livingston et al., 2011; McCaslin et al., 2014; Schiavone & Gentry, 2014):
  - Non-traditional students who are generally older (20+)
  - Have a wealth of knowledge prior to college enrollment
    - Likely to be married with families compared to traditional students
    - Diverse life experiences and specialized skills
  - Possible service related mental/physical health problems
  - May experience difficulties transitioning from military life to civilian life (Faulkner & McGaw, 1977)
Supporting Student Veteran Success

“The enrollment of veteran students in college has nearly doubled in the past three years (Sander, 2012), many of these students still face particular challenges such as feelings of isolation on campus and confusion over their benefits (Fusch, 2012) and the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) reported that veteran students received lower levels of institutional support than nonveterans” (Lang & Powers, 2011).

“Higher education professionals can support the transitional journey of students by properly mapping their paths at the college,” (Pusser, Breneman, Gansneder, Kohl, Levin, Milam, & Turner, 2007).

“The existence of dedicated personnel that have the time, desire, and ability to advocate for the veteran student is a key component,” (Daly & Garrity, 2013).
Mentorship

A good mentor is someone that has experience in the field and uses it as a tool to counsel and guide others that lack the experience (Lipscomb & An, 2010).

Key functions of an mentor:
•  Encouraging and Inspiring
•  Providing corrective feedback
•  Open door philosophy
•  Active listener
•  Understands goals of the current reality
  (Lipscomb & An, 2010)

As the mentee, one would seek an individual with interest in the field and understanding of goals to overcome roadblocks they encounter as a change agent. -Eliberto C.
Advisement

“Not all research has focused on institutions’ preparedness to serve the military student,” (Richardson, Ruckert, & Marion, 2015, p. 65).

The role of the advisor and mentor had a significant impact to this one student veteran that needed more support than the traditional college student that included: guidance and mentorship on personal-development (Schiavone & Gentry, 2014). Students need support with their role changes (relationships, academics, gender), learning to cope with uncontrollable situations, concurrent stress, the self, physical health, psychological health, and self-efficacy.

Brown and Gross (2011) evaluate the best practices for serving our veterans and military students to ensure that we not only recruit them to our campuses but retain and graduate them. Their best practices includes having military-related degree paths, collaboration with the Veterans Administration (VA), deferred tuition payments, a one-stop center, and creating seamless processes for military students.

The Latino student veteran’s thought process was that someone without veteran-military knowledge would be able to provide an unbiased perspective, create opportunities, and have access to gate-keepers within UNM.
Latino Theory

Changes in relationships: “Shifts in relationships, mainly with peer group members, appear to produce a comparable interaction. If Latino students find congruence between their old and new beliefs within their peer groups, positive relationship outcomes are possible. If conflicts are not resolved, relationships will likely be negative” (Torres, 2003 as cited in Evans et al., 2010, p. 264).

Latino-integrated: “Persons with this orientation have a holistic self-concept that successfully integrates their Latino identity with other identities. They understand the racial constructs that exist in the United States, are willing to challenge racism, and see themselves within a larger multicultural framework inclusive of all people” (Ferdman and Gallegos, 2001 as cited in Evans et al., 2010, p. 281).
Student Veteran Theory

Moving from the War
1. Loss of Time
2. Loss of Self
3. Loss of Others

Moving Back into the World
1. Discontinuity in systems of relevance.
2. Unsharability of the war experience.
3. Various forms of exclusion by the “home” society.

Moving Toward Reintegration
1. Refocusing of energies.
2. Educational-occupational and family-friendship separations.

Figure 1
Uneasy homecoming: Stages in the reentry transition of Vietnam veterans

Student Veteran Theory

The Student Veteran Academic and Social Transition Model (SVASTM)

- **Cornerstones**
  - **Military Influence**
    - Academic Emphasis
    - Maturity
    - Difficulty Relating to Peers
    - Pride
  - **Invisibility**
    - Connection to Campus
    - Selective Identity

- **Auxiliary Aid**
  - **Support**
    - Importance of Fellow Vets
  - **Navigating Re-enrollment**
    - Unique Experience
    - Structure and Routine
    - Change
    - Remembering and Forgetting
    - Financial Considerations

- **Environment**
  - **Campus Culture**
    - Perception of Campus Attitudes

Livingston et al. (2011)

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Discussion

Share your experiences with student veterans at your own institution (5 minutes).
Results of Advisement & Mentorship

- Student Veteran Support Building
- Capital Outlay funding: $170,000.00
- Student Veteran Retreat funds raised: $50,000.00
- Student Veteran Organizations:
  - Student Veterans of UNM
  - Women Student Veterans of UNM
- Student Veterans of America:
  - Selected top chapter leader.
  - 6 Student Veterans attended the 2019 SVA National Conference.
  - Raised $10,000.00 for SVA NatCon

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Mentorship Takeaways

Professional development included:

- **Purpose:**
  - Why is the veteran pursuing a degree?
  - Reason for taking a leadership role?

- **Environmental perspectives:**
  - Defining what it means for the veteran adapting to campus life
  - Engagement in community through a top down perspective

- **Transition: projecting based on the degree profession that they have chosen.**
  - Audience awareness
  - Professional dress
  - Learning the organizational hierarchy
  - Talking ques to avoid militant communication
Advisement Takeaways

- Importance of networking and social capital.
- Learning about the needs of your constituents through office hours and survey instrument.
- Attitudes and behaviors that are conducive to collaboration.
- Developing relationships with stakeholders.
- Knowing that it is okay to say “I don’t know,” (Bree & Roman, 2017, p. 561) to the advisee/mentee and advisors/mentors.
- The importance of following up and responding to requests in a timely manner.
In small groups (2 - 4 people) share what resources already exist on at your institutions that could help a student veteran.
Panel Discussion

Ask us questions!
References


References


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Latinx/a/o Knowledge Community & Veteran Knowledge Community
Thank you!

See you next year in Austin, Texas!