

Military-Veteran Student Transition to Higher Education



A Kansas State University Perspective...

My Vantage Point on Military Veterans Education....

- **ROTC perspective** –former ROTC cadet & Professor of Military Science – Army ROTC program
- **Military student** – completed two graduate degrees while on active duty
 - Masters of Military Arts & Science
 - Masters of Adult and Continuing Education
- **Higher Education Administration** – serve as University Director of Military Affairs
- **Veteran student** – Recipient of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits
- **Scholarly perspective** – Doctoral student in Educational Leadership

My 6-Point Agenda

- More about who our new veteran students are..
- What we are experiencing institutionally...
- Social expectations...and implications
- The veterans lived-experience...
- What educational research tells us...
- Some compelling insights from the **K-State** experience..

Point #1:

More about who our new veteran students are...



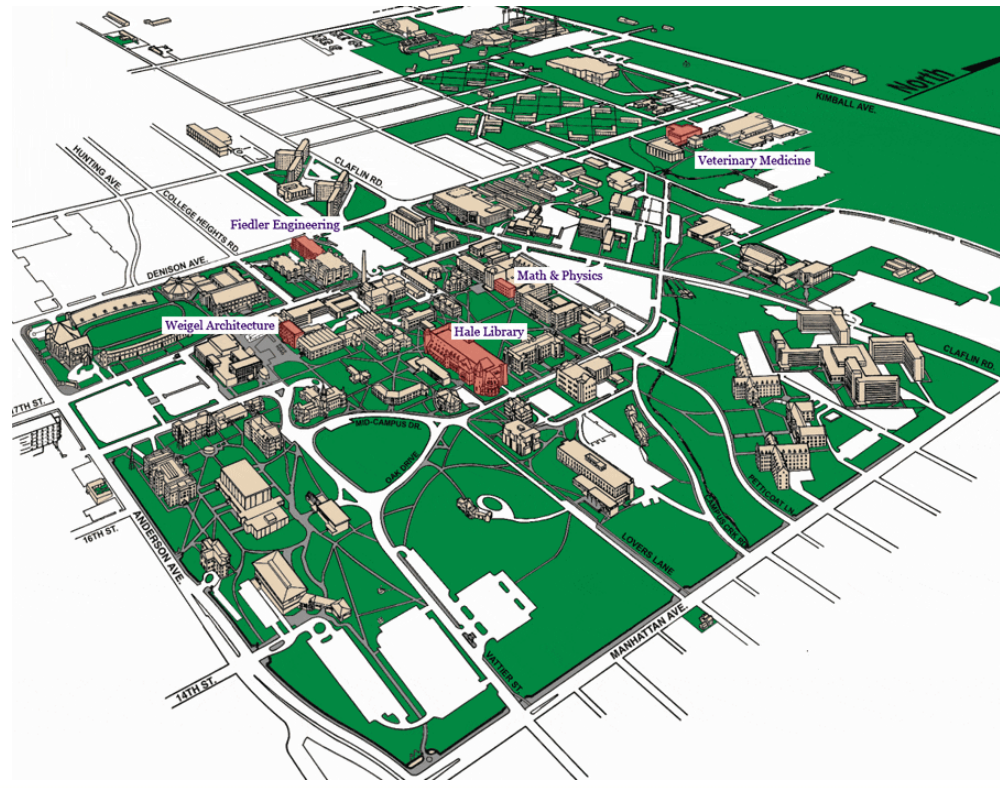
Who are our new military veteran students...

- Traditional undergraduate students?
- Under-represented minority students?
- First-generation college students?
- Students with disabilities and special needs?
- Non-traditional students?
- Graduate students?

**YES TO ALL... but are categorized by education researchers as a
sub-population of non-traditional students**

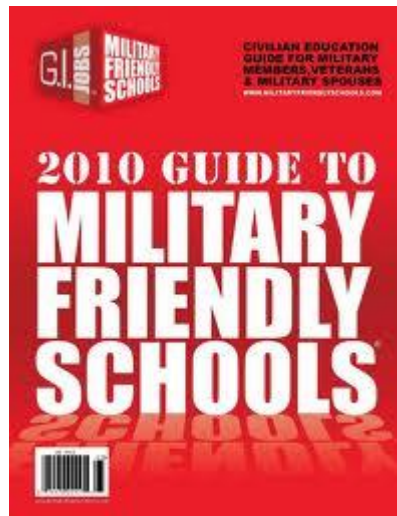
Point #2:

What we are experiencing institutionally...





Our **veteran-student educational expectations** are being defined more by marketing messages than by advisement....



TOP 25 MILITARY FRIENDLY COLLEGES

FIND OUT WHO MADE THE CUT



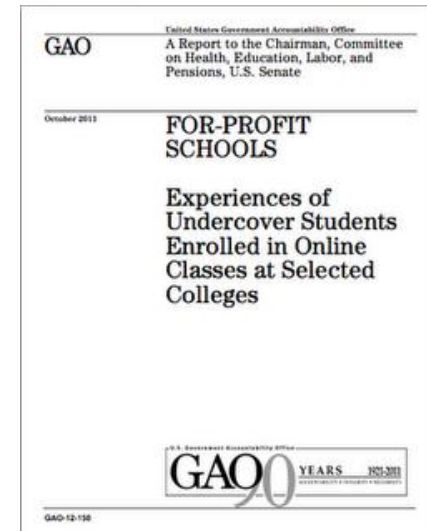
Fastest –
Cheapest –
Easiest to
Complete

Reform initiatives ..

Senators propose new rules to prevent colleges from exploiting veterans for benefits

Published March 10, 2012

| FoxNews.com



What we are seeing on our campus...

- Increased **enrollments**..
- High expectation for **transfer credit**..
- Need to bond with a **military cohort** upon arrival..
- Lack of desire to fully participate in traditional campus life..
- Difficulty adjusting to **freedom and autonomy**..
- Lack of willingness to learn new institutional functions..expect campus systems to work like highly-structured military system
- High need for **financial advising** and management..
- **Identity issues**—some wish to blend in..other are advocates for veterans..
- Need and respond well to mentorship by veteran administrators and faculty..
- Reluctant to seek **academic assistance**...

Overall Observation... They experience dissonance from what they believe and what they are experiencing... the key appears to be to mitigate while we educate them towards proper expectation and goal development

Point #3:

Social expectations...and implications....



Social Implications of Veteran Re-integration into Civil Society

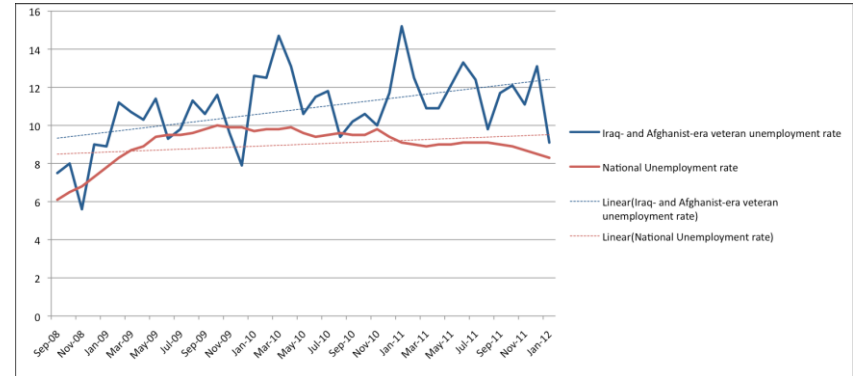
The Role of Higher Education



Post-service education

2.2 M Vets

Preparing the “next generation”



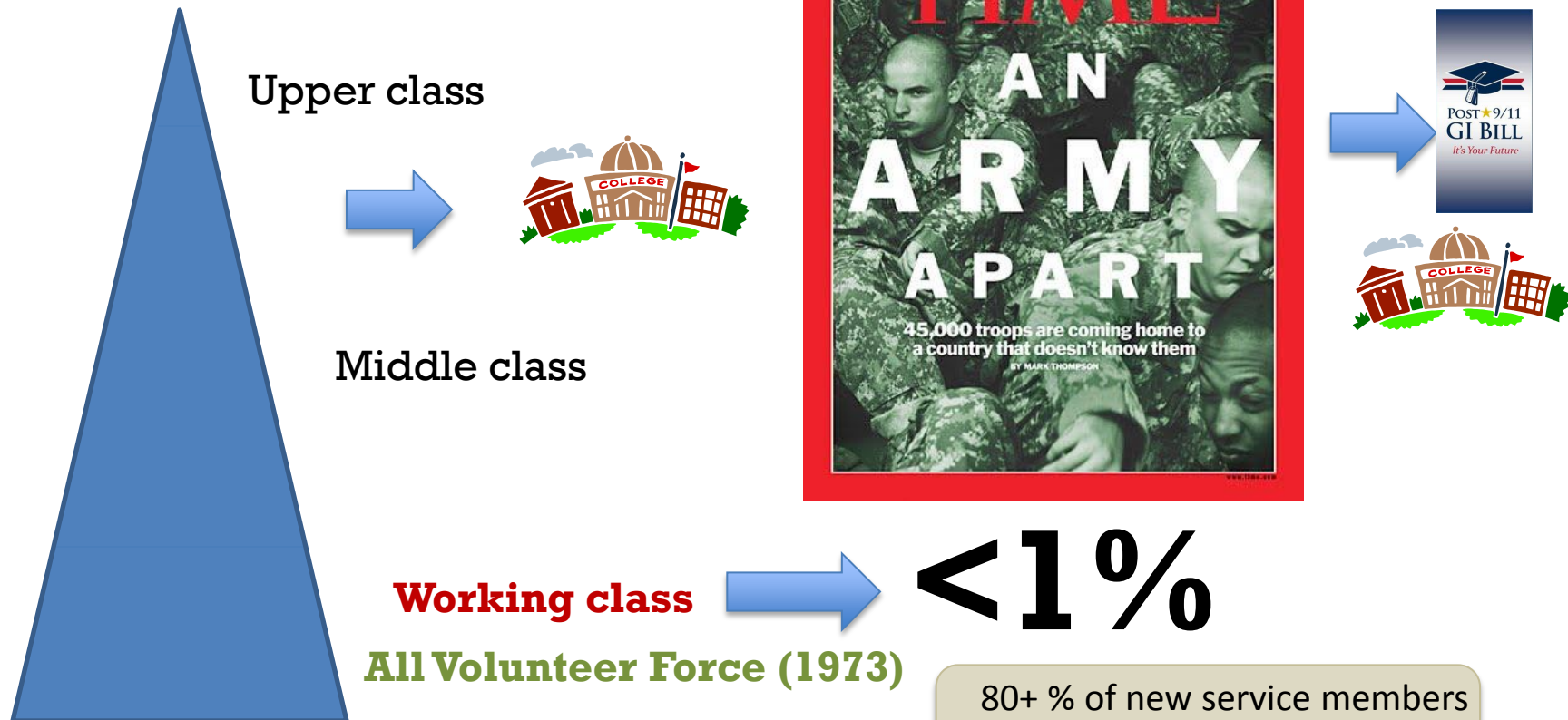
Post-service employment



Future Volunteers to Serve

A compelling observation...

Social Reproduction of our Volunteer Military Class...



POST - 9/11 GI BILL

A NEW BILL FOR A NEW CENTURY



The Post-9/11 GI Bill will not have the same social impact as Post WWII GI Bill..

The Generation

The Veteran-student

Readiness

Work Force

Traditionalist
(1922 -1945)



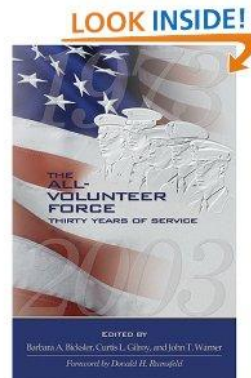

values/world view

draft/volunteer

prior-education

opportunity

Generation Y
(1981 -2001)



Point #4:

The veterans lived-experience...



Key Stages of the Veteran-student experience..



Transition to College

- institutional selectivity
- institutional commitment
- goal refinement & commitment



Persistence @ College

- pre-college characteristics
- social engagement
- self-efficacy



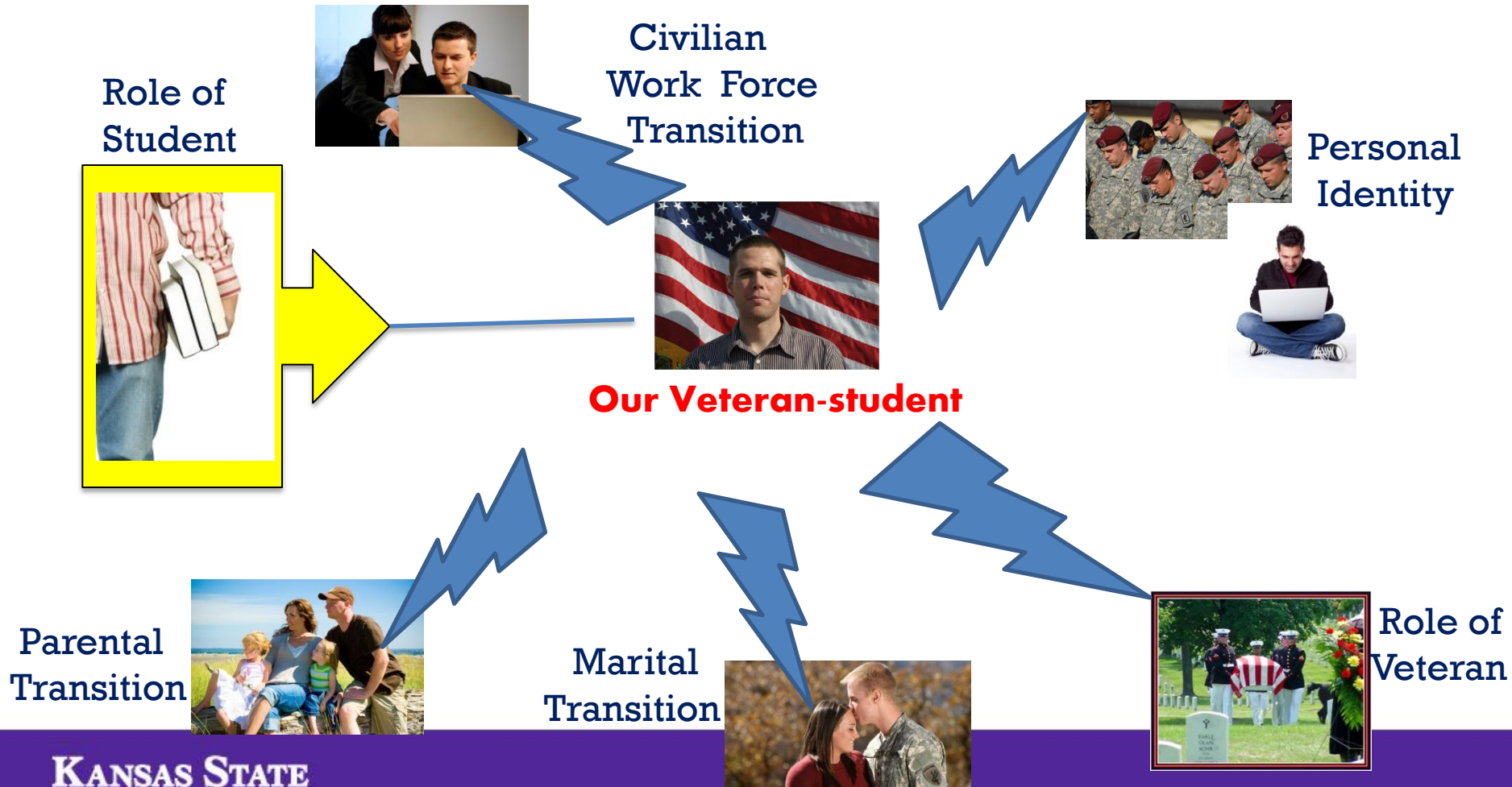
Success - Attainment of Degree

- **academic engagement**



Tinto (1993) & Bean (1985)

Living Through Multiple, Simultaneous Transitions....



The Critical Transition...

The



Civilian → Service Member → Student

Point #5:

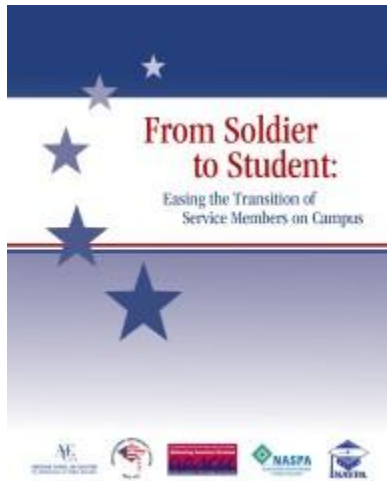
What educational research tells us...



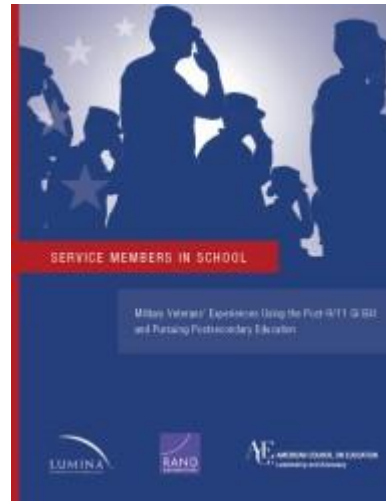
State of Contemporary Literature..

- The phenomenon of Post 9-11 veteran transition and student success is not adequately described....**need more qualitative research to discover**
- Few researchers have personal military experience to fully **understand context** of what they are observing and finding..
- **Relevant models and theories** of student development and retention are being recommended..
- Bench-marking “best practices” appears to be used in place of **applied research or evidence-based practice**

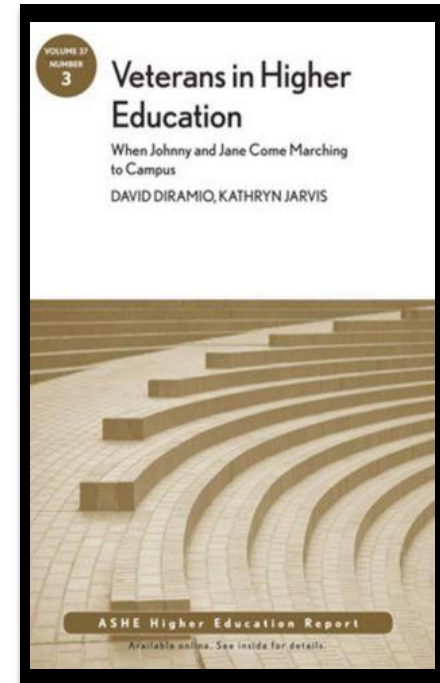
We have relevant literature...but not fully describing our challenge..



July 2009



November 2010



2011



Factors related to Veteran Student Transition..

- Level of contact with former colleagues..
- Average time in “neutral zone” –time between military and college
- Type of transition being experienced..
- Awareness and self-definition of role changes..
- Presence of non-role dependent support of veteran student (usually family)
- **Presence of role-dependent support of veteran student (student peers, faculty, etc.)**
- Presence of a “helping professional”

Diramio & Jarvis (2011)

Point #6:

Some compelling insights from the **K-State** experience...



A Source of Tradition..and Strength...



To be recognized as the most military-inclusive public research university in America

A Philosophical Difference...

Military - Friendly

- military as an external **sub-community**
- served by separate systems of support
- treated as niche student market
- different faculty and academic systems
- accommodate veterans expectations
- limited services available for transition/
meet student where they are at...

Military - Inclusive

- military as an **organic member** of campus community
- served by same systems of support
- treated as integral part of student population
- same faculty and academic systems
- same academic/student life expectations
- additional assistance offered to enable
transition/develop the student...

“Military –Connected Students”

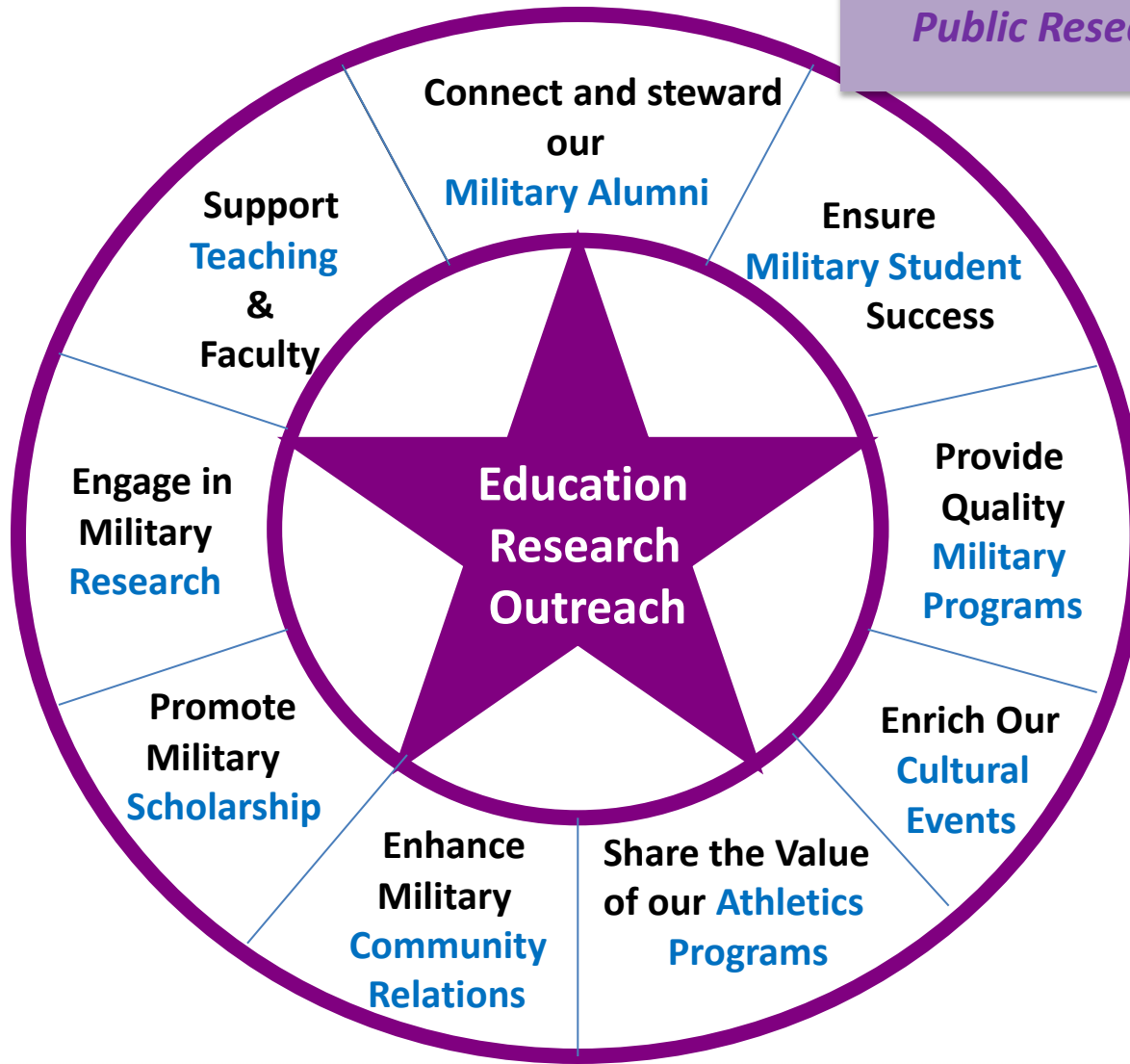
An inclusive term for the true population--

- **Veteran Students – former service members**
- Currently serving military students
- Military family member students – spouses/children
- Officer Pre-Commissioning students-ROTC cadets
- Military Degree Completion Student – recent officer candidate school graduates
- Military Graduate Students - Advanced Civil Education Program
- DOD Civilians and family members

ALSO

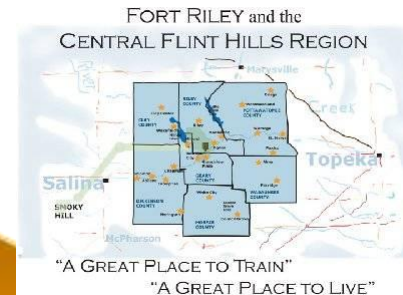
A comprehensive approach...

*Becoming a Military-Inclusive
Public Research University....*



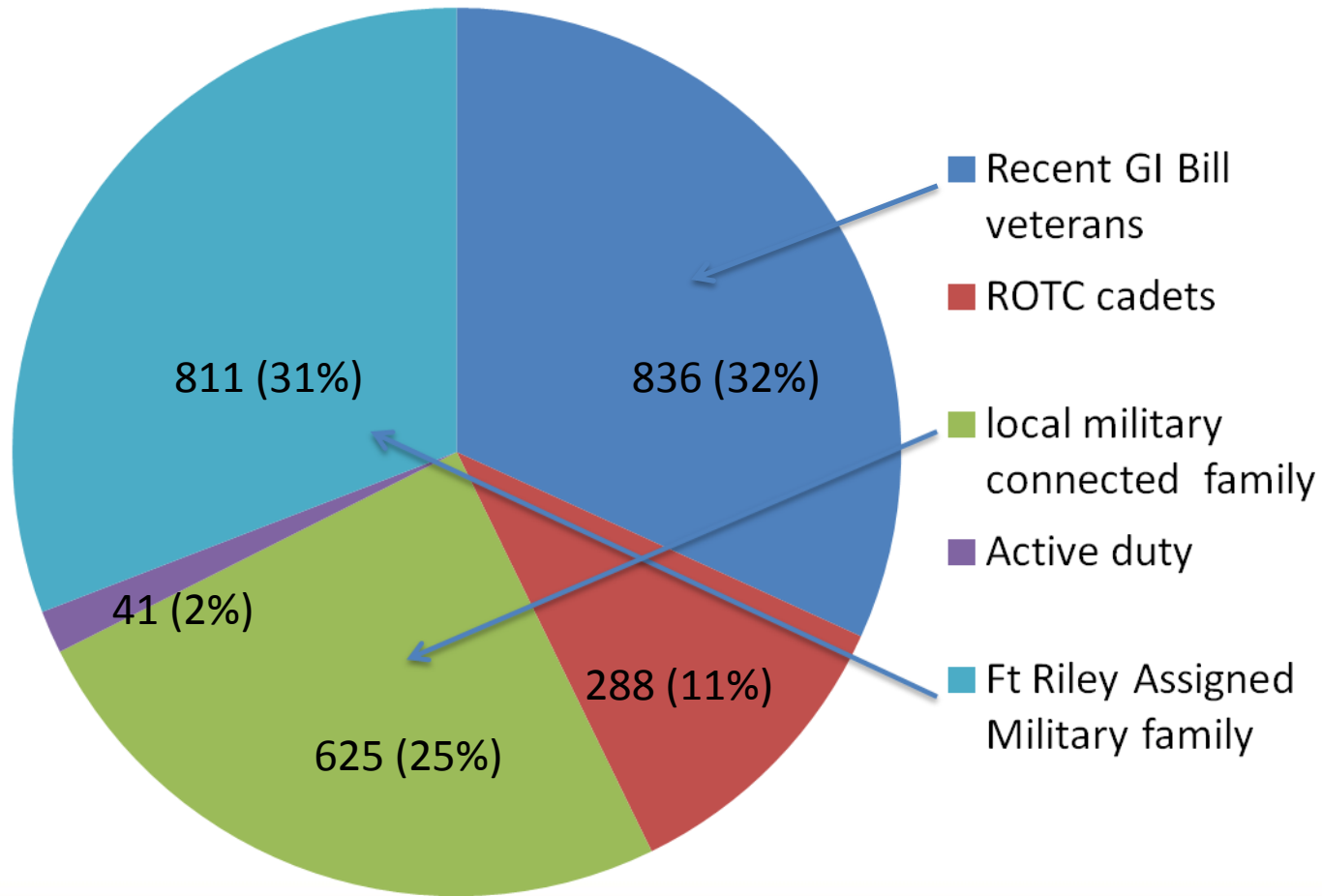
Building a “military-inclusive” campus culture..

..Our Partnership with 1st Infantry Division & Fort Riley



Our current military- student population

2628 Military-Connected Students (Fall 2011)/ 10.9% of total student body



For more information....

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