



# VITAL Initiative Program *Overview*

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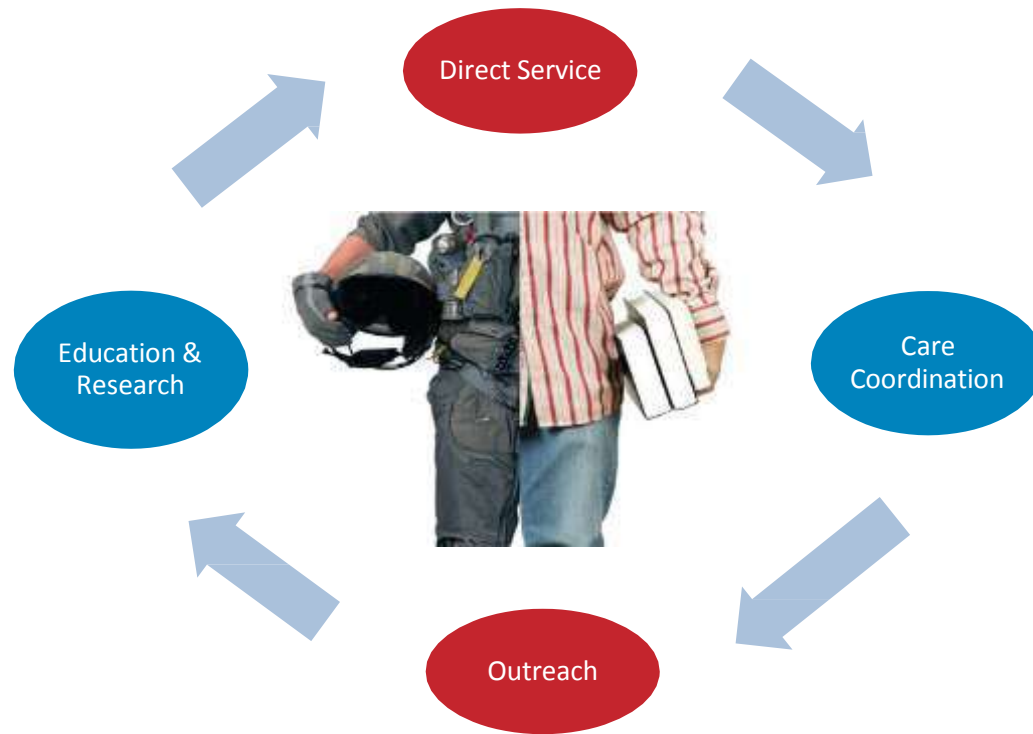
# Introduction

- Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) is a Veteran-Centric, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Initiative aimed to support student Veterans on campus in their successful transition to academia, and attainment of their goals.
- VITAL use a multi-prong approach consisting of **4 Core Components** to provide comprehensive support to student Veterans



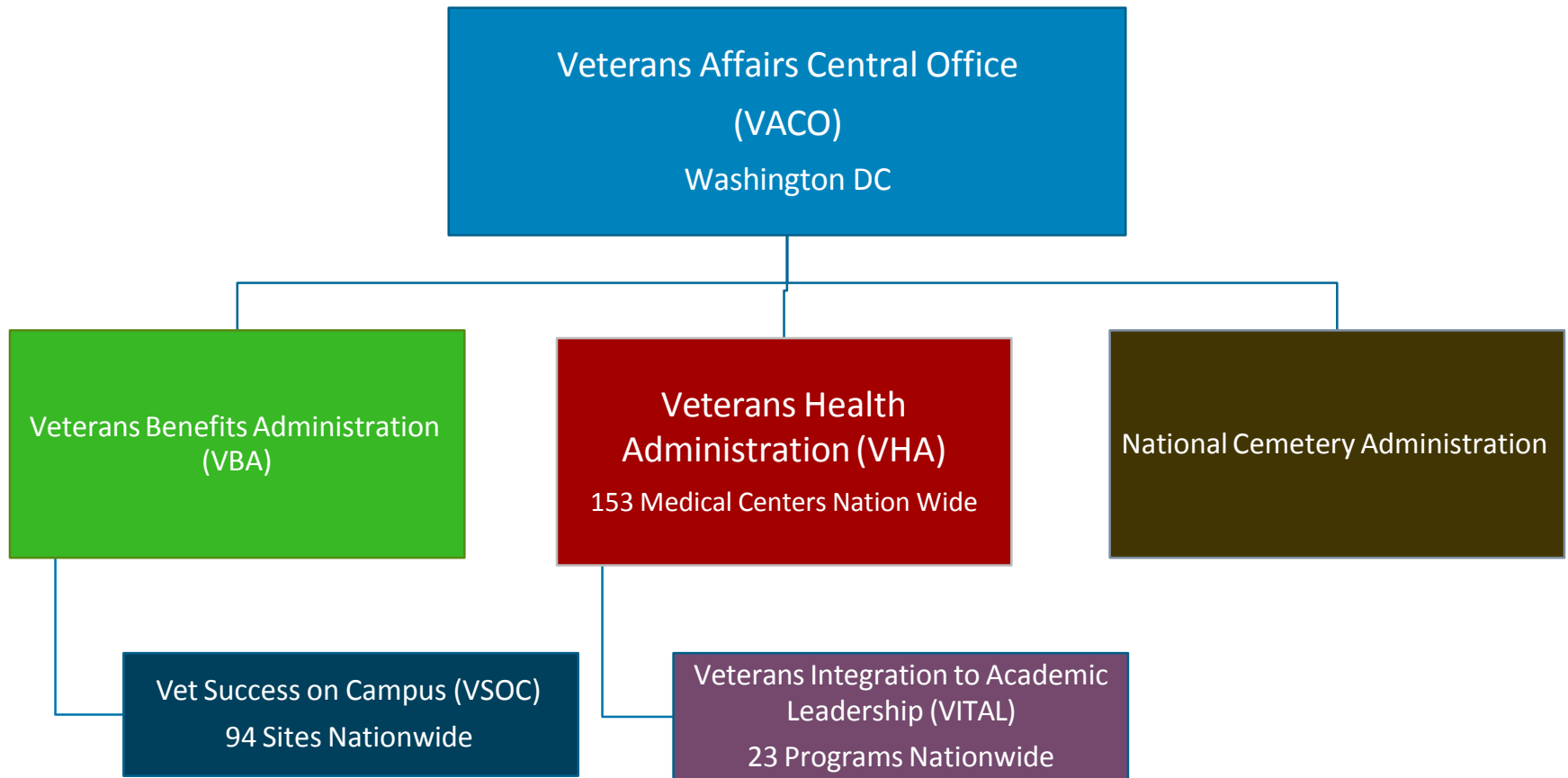
# VITAL Core Components

**A Veteran focused partnership...**



**Decreasing barriers & increasing success**

# Structure of the VITAL Initiative

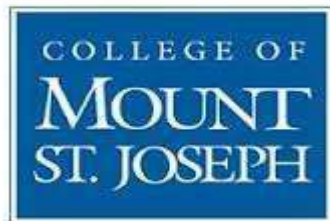


# VITAL Sites



# VITAL Sits & Schools

State	School	VITAL Site
Ohio	<u>Cincinnati State &amp; Technical College</u> <u>The College of Mt. Saint Joseph</u> <u>Gateway Community &amp; Technical College</u> <u>Miami University - Ohio</u> <u>Northern Kentucky University</u> <u>University of Cincinnati</u> <u>Union Institute &amp; University</u> <u>Xavier University</u>	Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center Cincinnati VA Medical Center



MIAMI UNIVERSITY



XAVIER UNIVERSITY





# VITAL RATIONAL: WHY IS THIS COLLABORATION IMPORTANT?

# Military vs. University Culture

Attitudes ingrained in military training may not map well onto university life

- Top-down vs. bottom-up mentality
- Black and white vs. gray
- Group cohesion vs. individualism
- Respect vs. questioning authority
- Chain of command vs. multiple points of contact
- Single mission focus vs. a need to manage multiple projects at a time

The shift from one culture to another can be jarring and frustrating for healthy student veterans, even more so for veterans struggling with physical or mental health issues...





# OEF/OIF/OND Deployment

Over **2.8** million deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, & Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND)

Deployments are longer than any other conflict (Sometimes Up to 18 Months)

Unparalleled multiple deployments

- 1/3 Have Had at Least Two Tours in Combat Zones
- 70,000 Have Been Deployed Three Times
- 20,000 Have Been Deployed at Least Five Times



# OEF/OIF/OND: Medical Conditions

- **Seriously Medically Injured – over 40,000**
  - Amputations, Burns, Paralysis
  - Better Safety Equipment = Increased Survival
- **Chronic Pain**
  - >33% Back
  - >38% Limb/Joint
  - >75.3% TBI Related Migraine
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**
  - Estimated 320,00 Service Members
    - 30% of deployed service members
    - 80+% are diagnosed with mTBI
- **Sleep Disturbance**
  - Nightmares, Insomnia, Sleep Apnea, Restless Leg Syndrome & Sleep Cycle disturbance



# OEF/OIF/OND: Psychological Concerns

- Cognitive (Memory & Attention)
- Anger
- Relationship Problems
- Depression and suicidal ideation
- Anxiety
- Substance Abuse/Dependence
  - 10-15% across all substances

Seal, et al. (2011). *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.

- PTSD

Carlson, et al., 2011. *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*.



# PTSD: Prevalence

- 18.5% returning soldier meet criteria for PTSD or depression (Rand Corporation, 2008)
- PTSD
  - General Population – 3-4%
  - Vietnam War– estimated 15%, 30%
  - Desert Storm – 2-10%
  - Afghanistan – 11%
  - Iraq – 17%

Hoge, et al. NEJM. 351:13-22.





# Student Veterans: Not your typical college student...

# Student Veteran Strengths

## Leadership Characteristics:

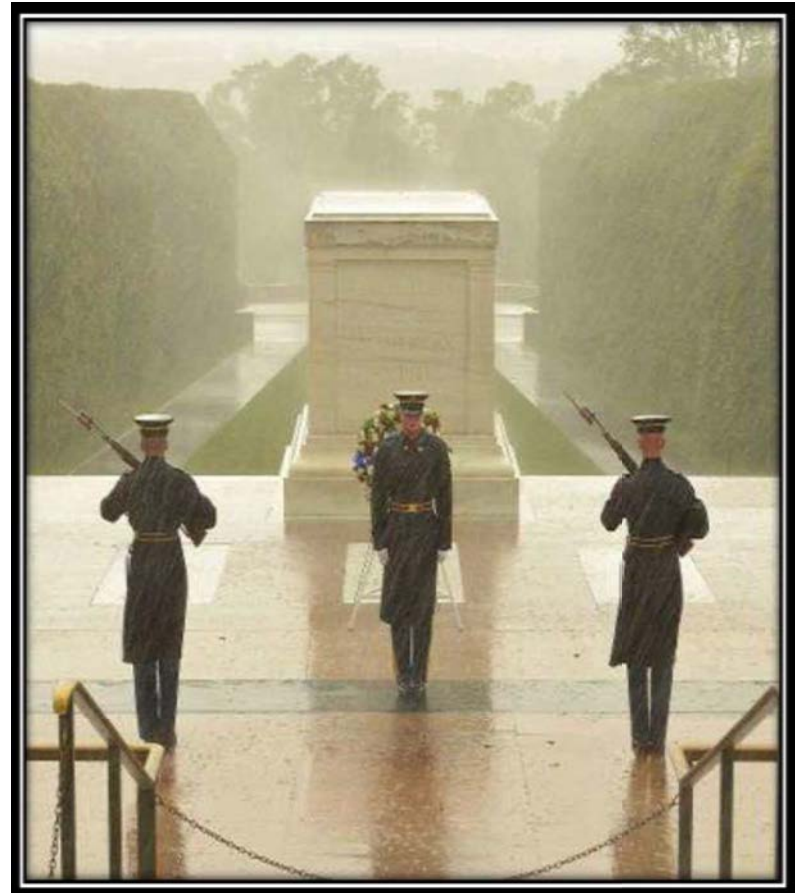
- Set an Example
- carefully considered directions
- Inspire and influence by:
  - providing purpose, direction and motivation

## Collaborative Team Member:

- Complete their duties by accomplishing tasks as part of a team

## Flexibility and Adaptability:

- Learned to be flexible and adaptable to meet the constantly changing situation and mission



# Barriers to Academic Success

Attention and concentration issues resulting from medical and psychological issues may impact learning...

- PTSD
- TBI
- Light Sensitivity
- Hearing - Tinnitus
- Chronic pain
- Sleep
  - Medical Appointments – negative impact on attendance

\*\*Classroom accommodations or treatment can help veterans adapt and overcome these issues



# Compared to non-Veteran students...



## USING YOUR GI BILL

EXACTLY HOW IT FEELS

DIY.DESPAIR.COM





# VA Resource Links

- Mental Health Services Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>
- Veterans Crisis Line: <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/Default.aspx>
- VITAL Campus Toolkit: <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/studentveteran/>
- National Center for PTSD: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- Make The Connection: <http://maketheconnection.net/>
- Virtual Problem Solving Techniques <http://www.startmovingforward.org/>
- VBA Vet Success On Campus:  
[http://vetsuccess.gov/vetsuccess\\_on\\_campus](http://vetsuccess.gov/vetsuccess_on_campus)
- Department of Veterans Affairs' GI Bill Website: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>
- Yellow Ribbon Program:  
[http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post\\_911\\_gibill/yellow\\_ribbon\\_program.html](http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/yellow_ribbon_program.html)



# Contact Information

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