

Rowan University

Rowan Digital Works

Theses and Dissertations

9-12-2018

Transition Experiences: Feelings of Mattering Among Military Students at Rowan University

Marisa Israel

Rowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Israel, Marisa, "Transition Experiences: Feelings of Mattering Among Military Students at Rowan University" (2018). *Theses and Dissertations*. 2604.

<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/2604>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Rowan Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Rowan Digital Works. For more information, please contact graduateresearch@rowan.edu.

**TRANSITION EXPERIENCES: FEELINGS OF MATTERING AMONG
MILITARY STUDENTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY**

by

Marisa Israel

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
August 23, 2018

Thesis Chair: Burton Sisco, Ed.D.

© 2018 Marisa Israel

Dedications

To my husband, Justin Israel. To my sister, Monique Gassaway. To all veterans and current military service men and women.

Acknowledgments

There are so many individuals who supported me, guided me, and contributed to my success in graduate school. I would not be the woman I am today without them:

To my husband, Justin Israel, who believed in me every single day throughout this journey. His love, pep talks, and unwavering support throughout this pursuit have meant more than he will ever know. Thank you for consistently putting my needs above your own and always pushing me to focus my energy on my education. Thank you for taking care of our family and handling my absence due to long work and school days without a second thought. None of this would have been possible without you.

To my sister, Monique Gassaway, who was my example and standard for achieving this goal. Your hard work, dedication, and perseverance are qualities I have always admired and tried to emulate. Thank you for always picking up the phone and giving me words of encouragement to cross the finish line. You will forever be my source of inspiration and motivation to reach new heights for our families.

To Dr. Burton Sisco, thank you for believing in me and always having an open door and ears. Your passion for education and the adult learner have helped guide me through this program and led me to finding purpose in the work I do every day. I will never forget why working in education is work worth doing in this world, even when times get tough.

To my supervisor, Laurie Baker, whose understanding and kindness were invaluable over the past two years. People come into our lives for a reason, and I truly believe I would not have achieved this goal without your presence.

Abstract

Marisa Israel

TRANSITION EXPERIENCES: FEELINGS OF MATTERING AMONG MILITARY STUDENTS AT ROWAN UNIVERSITY

2017-2018

Burton Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education

This purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of mattering among military service members at Rowan University. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Schlossberg's Theory of Mattering to reveal military students' perceptions of mattering to the institution and to examine the relationships of military students with the Rowan community. This study uses a quantitative method which includes a survey focused on capturing participants' perceptions of five focus areas of mattering to the institution including: administration, advising, faculty, peers and multiple roles. Sixty-one subjects completed a Likert-type survey using a five-point scale to assess their perceptions of mattering in the five focus areas. The Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to input all quantitative data for the purpose of descriptive statistics. The findings determine that military students on Rowan's campus felt satisfied with and supported by the administration, advising, faculty, peers and multiple roles. It is recommended that the University provide more recognition of the military population through events and programming to further strengthen relationships between the military student population and Rowan University community.

Table of Contents

Abstract	v
List of Tables	viii
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance of the Study	4
Assumptions and Limitations	4
Operational Definitions.....	5
Research Questions	6
Overview of the Study	7
Chapter II: Review of the Literature	8
Introduction.....	8
The History of the G.I. Bill.....	9
Veterans Experiences in Higher Education	11
Theoretical Framework: Schlossberg's Theory of Mattering.....	13
Summary of the Literature Review	18
Chapter III: Methodology	21
Context of the Study	21
Population and Sampling	22
Instrumentation	23
Data Collection	24
Data Analysis	25

Table of Contents (Continued)

Chapter IV: Findings.....	26
Profile of the Sample	26
Analysis of the Data.....	29
Research Question 1	29
Research Question 2	43
Chapter V: Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations	45
Summary of the Study	45
Discussion of the Findings.....	46
Research Question 1	46
Research Question 2	51
Conclusions.....	52
Recommendations for Practice	53
Recommendations for Further Research.....	54
References.....	55
Appendix A: Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College.....	58
Appendix B: Alternate Consent Form	63
Appendix C: IRB Approval	65

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 4.1 Demographic Information (N=61).....	27
Table 4.2 Military Students' Perceptions of Administration (N=61)	30
Table 4.3 Military Students' Perceptions of Advising (N=61).....	33
Table 4.4 Military Students' Perceptions of Faculty (N=61)	35
Table 4.5 Military Students' Perceptions of Peers (N=61).....	37
Table 4.6 Military Students' Perceptions of Multiple Roles (N=61).....	40
Table 4.7 Military Students' Perceptions of Social Relationships (N=61).....	44

Chapter I

Introduction

The Post 9/11 G.I. Bill has been widely considered transformative in the history of veterans' educational benefits because it has increased accessibility and affordability for military service members and their families. Since the decline in U.S. military involvement overseas in recent years, more veterans are pursuing higher education following their active-duty military service to advance their transition into civilian careers and financial stability. The experiences military men and women have when transitioning from military to civilian life are unique, specifically as they arrive on college campuses. Although the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill has increased access for veterans to many different types of colleges and universities, it is imperative that higher education administrators and professionals understand the needs of military students on their campuses as they transition from military service to higher education. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of students transitioning from military life to Rowan University and their perceptions of mattering at the institution.

Statement of the Problem

Since the establishment of the G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944, military veterans and active-duty service men and women have been provided financial assistance aid them in earning their college degrees. As the demand for a college degree in the workforce has increased over time, education benefits have become one of the most popular incentives for enlisting in the military (Zinger & Cohen, 2010). More than 900,000 military veterans and service members used their education benefits between 2000 and 2012 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). Additionally, there was a 42% increase in the

utilization of benefits following the introduction of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill in 2009 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). Although veterans and active-duty military service members are taking full advantage of their education benefits, there are challenges that arise when reintegrating with the civilian life following military service.

Military service and higher education are vastly different in many respects which can impact transition to higher education for service men and women. For instance, military service requires increased discipline, respect for authority, and limits a service member's choice in their daily lives. On the other hand, college students have much more flexibility and freedom in how they live their daily lives. Additionally, military service expects group cohesion and teamwork to be ingrained in their lives and work. Whereas college allows for more independence and solitary tasks and accountability. The differences between military service and higher education create a unique integration process for veterans enrolling in colleges and universities. Their character and experiences further diversify the campus and break the mold of the traditional college student. Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010) confirm that student engagement and integration are critical in predicting student success in college; therefore, providing resources and support to facilitate a smooth transition to higher education is critical for veteran students.

With a rapidly increasing number of veterans utilizing their education benefits, more challenges have been uncovered when studying the integration of this population on college campuses. For instance, veteran students bring different life experiences due to their military service compared to many college more traditional-aged college students.

These life experiences impact the dynamic of the college or university both in and outside the classroom (DiRamio, Ackerman, & Mitchell, 2008).

Additionally, veteran students may face varying degrees of physical and mental health issues related to their combat experiences which creates further differences from the traditional college student population (Elliott, Gonzalez, & Larsen, 2011). While many reports from government and educational agencies provide background on academic performance and physical and mental health challenges of veteran students, there is a limited scope of understanding of their transition experiences (DiRamio et al., 2008). Therefore, additional insights into the transition experiences and perceptions of mattering to the institution among veteran students are needed to inform higher education professionals, government officials, and beyond how these factors can both inhibit and facilitate the successful completion of a college degree for veteran and active-duty military service members.

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of mattering to the institution among military veterans transitioning from military service to Rowan University. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Nancy K. Schlossberg's theory of mattering to reveal perceptions of mattering among military students at Rowan University. As more and more veterans transition out of military service and begin to utilize their educational benefits, it is important to understand factors affecting their experiences in higher education in order to best serve their needs. This study uses a quantitative method which includes a survey focused on capturing participants' perceptions of five focus areas at the institution: administration, advising, faculty, peers

and multiple roles. Demographics included military rank, age, full-time or part-time enrollment, G.I. Bill education chapter, college major, and years of service in the military.

Significance of the Study

This study used Schlossberg's theory of mattering to examine the experiences of veteran students at Rowan University, their transition from military service to higher education, and their experiences while attending Rowan University. This study identifies perceptions of mattering that influence the higher education experience for the veteran student population, which are important for influencing policy and practice when working with veteran students. By identifying the needs and concerns of veteran students, higher education professionals can better serve this unique population and assist them with transitioning successfully from military to civilian life as well as provide support to ensure positive education, career, and financial outcomes. Additionally, organizations will be able to better assist veterans who choose to pursue higher education and provide resources that will help veteran students feel supported and welcomed on a college or university campus.

Assumptions and Limitations

The scope of the data presented in this study was limited only to veteran students at Rowan University due to the ease of access. There were 252 student veterans registered with the Veterans Affairs office and enrolled at least part-time for the 2017-2018 academic year at Rowan University. Only those who completed the survey participated in the study, and it was assumed that those who responded were honest and truthful. Additionally, this study assumes that Schlossberg's theory of mattering is

applicable to veteran students. The study is further limited by the fact that the respondent sample is a convenience sample of veterans who were accessible to me. Given these limitations, readers are cautioned about making impressions about the larger U.S. veteran population. There was the potential for researcher bias in an attempt to inform how Schlossberg's theory of mattering is used to explain perceptions of mattering among military students.

Operational Definitions

1. Active-duty: Members of the military branches of the United States Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Navy, or Air Force serving active, full-time duty and who can be deployed at any time.
2. Discharged: When a member of the armed forces is released from his or her contract with a branch of the United States Armed Forces. For the purpose of this study, discharged refers to veterans released from service under other than dishonorable conditions.
3. Full-time student: Students enrolled for 12 or more credits in spring 2018 at Rowan University.
4. Mattering: Refers to the beliefs people have, whether right or wrong, that they matter to someone else, that they are the object of someone else's attention, and that others care about them and appreciate them (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989).
5. Military student: For the purpose of this study, military students are any individuals who are currently engaging or have engaged in active-duty military service and were discharged from service under other than

dishonorable conditions (honorable, under honorable, general) prior to pursuing higher education.

6. Part-time student: Students enrolled in less than 12 credits in spring 2018 at Rowan University.
7. Transition: Schlossberg (1984) defined transition as individual life experiences which explain life's changes. For the purpose of this study, transitions consisted of any undergraduate veteran going or returning to college after serving as an active-duty member of the United States military.
8. United States Armed Forces: A collective defense force operating under the direction of the President of the United States, The Department of Defense (DoD), and The Department of Homeland Security. To include the National Guard, United States Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Navy, Air Force, and United States Armed Forces Reserve units.
9. Veteran: As defined by the Merriam-Webster (2017), a veteran is a former member of the armed forces. For the purpose of this study, veterans are any individuals who are currently engaging or have engaged in active-duty military service and were discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions (honorable, under honorable, general) prior to pursuing higher education.

Research Questions

This study explored the following questions:

- What do veteran students at Rowan University report regarding the five focus areas of mattering on campus?

- How are social relationships perceived among military students at Rowan University?

Overview of the Study

Chapter two offers a review of various sources within the scholarly literature deemed important to this study. This review explores current studies and how the data from those studies relate to the experiences of veterans on college campuses.

Chapter three describes the procedures and methodologies used in this study. Included are the context of the study, sample selection, demographics, data collection tools and processes, and how data were analyzed.

Chapter four presents the findings of this study while returning to the research questions outlined in Chapter I. This chapter summarizes the data via content analysis on veteran student surveys.

Chapter five discusses the major findings in the study which includes the meaning, implications, and conclusions drawn from the findings. Additionally, Chapter V offers some recommendations for further action and future research.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

From the establishment of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (also known as the G.I. Bill of Rights) to the introduction of the most recent Post 9/11 G.I. Bill, veterans have seen increased college funding as an incentive for enlisting in the military. In fact, one of the primary reasons for enlisting in the military for many individuals was earning money for a college education (Kelty, & Segal, 2006; Zinger & Cohen, 2010). Despite the education benefits received for military service, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2010), only an average of 24% of veterans have used their VA education benefits for a postsecondary degree since World War II. While this percentage is relatively low, data from the National Conference of State Legislatures (2014) suggests that over one million veterans were using Post 9/11 G.I. Bill education benefits in 2014. These data should be interpreted with caution because it includes military spouses and dependents who are using the benefits.

Today's fast-paced world demands a post-secondary education for individuals seeking financial security and a positive career outlook. Zinger and Cohen (2010) point out that U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense education benefits are a key factor in their decisions to enlist because a college education mean better job prospects in the future. However, understanding the experiences of those service men and women on college campuses are critical in facilitating the successful completion of a college education and integration into the modern workforce.

With the Post-9/11 Veteran population expected to increase 22% between 2016 and 2021, more veterans will be pursuing advanced education to aid them in their transition to civilian life (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016). Therefore, it is critical to understand the experiences and needs of military service men and women in order to provide adequate resources and support for this population. The purpose of this literature review is to examine research related to factors affecting college experiences of veteran students at institutions of higher education.

The History of the G.I. Bill

The introduction of the G.I. Bill of Rights in 1944 proved to be a turning point in accessibility to higher education for all American citizens as millions of veterans from varying demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds used the benefits provided by the bill to flood college campuses and increase enrollment across the nation. Students who would not have previously been able to enroll in college due to financial and personal circumstances proved to educational leaders and faculty members that they were motivated and dedicated students. Despite the positive benefits of the influx of new students, minority groups such as disabled veterans, Jewish, and African-American students still faced obstacles in using their benefits as segregation and discriminatory admissions policies still prevailed in some institutions. In the end, their struggles brought national attention to the importance of accessibility of higher education and the positive outcomes of the bill proved to be the first major step in providing equal access to higher education around the country.

At the time of the G.I. Bill's enactment, political and universities' leaders were skeptical about the use of the higher education benefits among veterans. In fact, Hindley

(2014) writes that the President of Harvard at the time, James Bryant Conant, and the President of the University of Chicago, Robert Maynard Hutchins, were incredibly critical stating that the least capable veterans would be the ones to enter colleges and universities and campuses across the country would be turned into “hobo jungles” (p. 52). Serow (2004) explains that despite the criticism and low expectations, 7.8 million veterans took advantage of the benefits by enrolling in undergraduate and graduate education, trade schools, high schools, and farm training programs. Veterans wasted no time in using their benefits as 2.2 million of those using the education benefits were specifically enrolling in college and university programs (Serow, 2004). Veterans went on to exceed the expectations of those who doubted them by preferring to enroll in respected, flagship state universities where they were described as mature and highly motivated by faculty members (Serow, 2004). During the 1947-1948 academic year, veteran students comprised half of the total population pursuing higher education and accounted for 70% of the total male population (Serow, 2004). The rapid and large influx of veteran students had a positive impact on college enrollment unlike institutions had ever seen in their existence. Serow (2004) points out that 20% of veterans who did enroll in colleges and universities would not have done so without the help of the G.I. Bill. Needless to say, if the G.I. Bill had not been brought into effect, college enrollments would never have skyrocketed in the way that they did.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2018), the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill offers higher education and training benefits to veterans, service members, and their families who served after Sept. 10, 2001. The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill was signed into law on June 30th, 2008 by President George W. Bush, and the impacts of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill

continue to impact veteran college enrollments today. The Post 9/11 G.I. Bill, also known as Chapter 33, is similar to previous versions of the G.I. Bill in that recipients receive education benefits according to their length of service (Taylor et al., 2016). The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill is available to all eligible active-duty service members or veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001. Under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, full benefits are provided to service members who served an aggregate of 36 months of active-duty service, reduced benefits are given to those who served less than 36 months, and all eligible service members and veterans receive no more than 36 months of education benefits (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2018). The Department of Veterans Affairs provides a G.I. Bill comparison tool which allows individuals to compare the benefits of the different chapters of the G.I. Bill to make the best decision for themselves (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2018).

Veterans Experiences in Higher Education

All forms of G.I. Bill benefits provide active-duty service members, veterans, and dependents the opportunity to enroll in higher education to obtain valuable knowledge and skills that will prepare them for entering the workforce successfully (Taylor, Parks, & Edwards, 2016). Due to the large influx of veterans enrolling in post-secondary education, institutions of higher education are developing and improving on resources and support services in hopes of becoming more “veteran-friendly.” In 2012, the American Council on Education surveyed 723 institutions across the United States and found that roughly 57% of all responding institutions currently provide programs and services designed to serve active-duty military service members and roughly 60% reported that increasing the services available to veteran students is a part of their long-

term strategic plan (McBain, Kim, & Cook, 2012). The study also found that public four-year and public two-year institutions are more likely to have programs specifically designed for military veterans than private not-for-profit colleges and universities (McBain et al., 2012). While many institutions are committed to superior service to veteran students, there are many challenges that institutions of higher education have not been prepared to meet. The services and resources needed to serve the veteran student population are substantial, and it takes a strong commitment from institutions to quality in the services they provide.

Many of the needs of veteran students are drawn from the physical and mental health of veterans following active-duty military service. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2018) estimates that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) afflicts nearly 31% of Vietnam veterans, nearly 10% of Gulf War veterans, and 11% of veterans of the war in Afghanistan. The PTSD: National Center for PTSD (2009) defines it as a mental health problem as a result of experiencing a life-threatening event, such as combat or sexual assault. According to Taylor et al. (2016), the symptoms of PTSD for veteran students can be characterized by stress-related reactions that are triggered by memories and severe anxiety about a scenario. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (n.d), PTSD among veterans has led to substance abuse, social anxiety and isolation, and depression. The severity of PTSD can vary greatly for individuals, but when left untreated, PTSD can create significant academic and social barriers for veterans who are trying to earn their college degree (Taylor et al., 2016).

Veteran students are underrepresented on college campuses, with veterans and active-duty military students making up a mere 4 percent of the national college student

body (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). Like many underrepresented student populations, military veterans often face many stereotypes on college campuses (Taylor et al., 2016). These stereotypes, such as difficult or aggressive, impact the relationships and interactions with faculty and their peers. The media's interpretation of veterans and military service members being more afflicted by mental health issues than the average American further contribute to the negative stereotypes surround this population (Taylor et al., 2016). While some veterans will suffer from PTSD following military service, generalizing the population will hinder the total population's ability to successfully transition from military service to higher education and integrate with civilian culture.

Veterans and active-duty military students are defined as non-traditional students because they do not have the same life experiences of the traditional-aged college student who attends college directly following high school. Because of the complex nature of their education benefits, their likelihood to have full-time jobs and families, and their unique background following military service, veterans are less likely to interact with instructors and participate in educational opportunities outside the classroom (Pietrzak et al., 2010). A deep understanding of veteran and military students is critical for institutions and administrations to offer appropriate support and resources in order to facilitate the success of veterans seeking to complete their college degree.

Theoretical Framework: Schlossberg's Theory of Mattering

Across college campuses and in everyday life, individuals pursue a sense of belonging and mattering from those around them. As individuals transition from previous lives to their new lives on a college campus, it is not uncommon to wonder "will I belong

here” or “will I matter”? Schlossberg (1989) refers to mattering as an individual’s belief that they matter to and gain the attention of another person as well as have others care about them. Schlossberg (1989) defines marginalize as the opposite of mattering and states that marginalized student populations are more likely to drop out than those who feel as though they matter. According to Schlossberg (1989), this would be particularly the case for individuals undergoing transitions, from one role to another, such as students who are entering college for the first time or after an extended leave from education. Schlossberg also notes that students who feel they matter are much more likely to persist and succeed in higher education. Mattering, therefore, is essential to student success in higher education.

For non-traditional students, such as veterans, the need to matter is complex because finding themselves in a place that often caters to the 18 to 22 age group, it becomes challenging to determine whether or not they matter to the institution. Additionally, the need to matter among veteran students will differ from the more traditional student population because of the differences between traditional and non-traditional student populations. The term “mattering” was first coined by sociologist Marc Rosenberg who defined mattering as “the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate” (Schlossberg, 1989). The feeling of mattering is strong and can act as motivation for decisions among individuals. Schlossberg (1989) gives an example of this by noting that individuals who are depressed may not follow through with a suicide if they feel they matter to someone. Mattering is a powerful feeling and critical in the development of individuals across all areas of life.

Depending on the point in one's life, mattering and satisfaction can look quite different (Schlossberg, 1989). For instance, for traditional-aged student away to college for the first time, there is a delicate balance between feeling as though their family is impacted by their absence, and their parents becoming overbearing and placing stress on the student (Schlossberg, 1989). Similarly, due to the biases veteran students often face on college campuses, this population may prefer not to identify as a "veteran" in order to avoid attention being drawn to their veteran-status. How then, can institutions help the veteran student population feel a sense of mattering on campus without placing the burden of labeling on them? Schlossberg (1989) asked, "when does mattering become essential to well-being, and when does it become a burden" (p. 9)? Schlossberg (1989) determined that answering this question would require a clear definition of mattering. Using five aspects of mattering defined by Rosenberg, attention, importance, ego-extension, dependence, and appreciation, Schlossberg (1989) conducted structured interviews with twenty-four men and women addressing each of these five aspects of mattering. Items were then generated on the interviews to measure the degree to which people feel they matter, which later developed into Schlossberg, Lassalle, and Golec's (1990) *Mattering Scales for Adults in Postsecondary Education (MHE)*.

To further determine how the scale could be used at the institutional level, in a 1985 study, Schlossberg and Warren (1985) examined adult learners who participated in non-traditional educational opportunities and measured their feelings of mattering. As a result of the study, Schlossberg and Warren (1985) determined that a mattering scale would enable institutions to answer critical questions such as: Do students feel they matter? Are policies and practices designed to make students feel that they matter to the

institution? The concept of the mattering scale then became Schlossberg et al. (1990) *Mattering Scales for Adults in Postsecondary Education (MHE)*. The purpose of developing the mattering scales was to evaluate how adult learners perceive their education environment. The same principles of this evaluation can be applied to the veteran student population as they are considered non-traditional learners in higher education. To examine all areas of the educational experience, five areas were identified for evaluation: administration, faculty, peers, advising, and multiple roles. The purpose of the scales is to evaluate an institution's response to adult learners' needs, how those needs are met, and where there may be deficiencies in meeting their needs.

The Administration subscale is used to measure a student's perception of mattering in regards to institutional policies and procedures such as scheduling, registration, orientation, and office hours. The Faculty subscale measures how faculty members interact with adult students in the classroom and how well adult students are accepted by faculty members (Schlossberg et al., 1990). The Advising subscale measures how well advisors answer questions, recall conversations, and address problems brought forth by students. A high score in this area would indicate that students perceive advisors helpful and available. As adult learners and other non-traditional populations often have significant responsibilities outside of their education, it was important to measure how institutions recognize these responsibilities. Schlossberg et al. (1990) addressed this area with the Multiple Roles subscale. The Peers subscale is used to measure the extent to which students feel accepted on campus and in the classroom (Schlossberg et al., 1990). High scores indicate that adult students feel content with the services or environment and thus perceive they matter in any individual area. The subscales of the MHE can be seen

as a tool to help measure the needs of non-traditional students in any the campus environment (Mullen, 2016). By measuring these areas, institutions will gain a better understanding of the needs of military students.

In 2008, Dahan examined the transition experiences of undergraduate veterans at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. Using Schlossberg's mattering scale, Dahan (2008) found that the large majority of participants were satisfied with the five focus areas: administration, advising, faculty, multiple roles, and peers. However, closer examination of her study reveals 43.1% of students felt that unless there was another veteran in the class, no one really understands how hard it is to be there (Dahan, 2008). This reveals that some veteran students may feel as though they cannot relate to their current classmates. Additionally, Dahan's (2008) study suggests that some veteran students may experience difficulties communicating and developing relationships with faculty. A total of 21.5% agreed or strongly agreed that their questions put faculty members on the defensive, and nearly 30% of veteran students surveyed felt that professors interpreted their assertiveness as a challenge to their authority (Dahan, 2008). Overall, Dahan (2008) determined that most students disagreed with the negative statements such as "the faculty not being sensitive to other responsibilities or their non-recognition of veteran students." Although, overall, Dahan (2008) found that student veterans felt as though they mattered to the institution, the findings suggest that some veteran students may be unsatisfied in their relationships with peers and faculty which is still of significance to institutions when examining the attention given to this population on campus.

Similarly, in 2013, Kurz examined the transition experiences of veteran students at Stockton University in Galloway, New Jersey using Schlossberg's mattering scale. Kurz (2013) found that students who were surveyed felt as though they mattered to the institution in the five focus areas of the mattering scale: administration, advising, faculty, peers, and multiple roles. Kurz (2013) found that nearly 78% of subjects reported feeling welcome on campus. However, one area of concern was identified in regards to veteran students' relationship with their peers. According to Kurz (2013), 55.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with other students." The subjects of Kurz's study were all above the age of 21, with nearly half of participants above the age of 26. It is common for non-traditional students such as veterans to be older than the average college student who often range in age between 18-22. The age difference creates some challenges in building relationships with peers inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, over 54% of veteran students agreed with the statement "My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority", and 33% agreed that "My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive" (Kurz, 2013). Similar to Dahan's (2008) study, veteran students disagreed with negative statements when it came to the administration, advising, and multiple roles subscales. However, both Dahan (2008) and Kurz (2013) reveal areas for improvement when it comes to veteran students' relationships with peers and faculty.

Summary of the Literature Review

Since the inception of the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill, there has been a 42% increase in the utilization of educational benefits among military service members (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). The influx of military service men and women on college

and university campuses presents unique challenges for institutions as they attempt to serve this population as best as possible. When examining best practices for serving veteran students, colleges and universities need to critically examine the services and resources needed because of the differences between non-traditional students, including veterans, and traditional students.

Schlossberg's theory of mattering may help institutions address veteran students' need to matter on campus and guide their practice in establishing policies, procedures, and resources for this population. Schlossberg et al. (1990) *Mattering Scales for Adults in Postsecondary Education (MHE)* was developed using five aspects of mattering developed by sociologist Morris Rosenberg: attention, importance, ego-extension, dependence, and appreciation. According to Rosenberg, the need to matter is a driving motivator among individuals to persist and succeed in their goals (Schlossberg et al., 1989). Schlossberg et al. (1989) proposed that "institutions that focus on mattering and greater student involvement will be more successful in creating campuses where students are motivated to learn, where their retention is high, and ultimately, where their institutional loyalty for the short- and long-term future is ensured" (p. 14).

As it relates to the veteran student population, the need to matter is driven by the support, resources, and attention they receive during their college education. Dahan (2008) and Kurz (2013) both found that veteran students may struggle to identify with their classmates and communicate with faculty members. While both studies revealed an overall sense of mattering among veteran students, the use of Schlossberg's mattering scales is to identify deficiencies may exist in meeting the needs of non-traditional students and where additional attention may be needed when examining the experience of

non-traditional students on college campuses. In the environment of higher education, it is essential for veteran students to feel a sense of mattering to their college or university.

Due to the challenges facing this population, it is critical for institutions to address this population's need to matter. This sense of mattering is needed from multiple levels including faculty, administration, peers, and staff among others areas of the institution. Throughout military service, veterans feel a sense of mattering to their squadron, station, families, and country. It is therefore imperative that during and following their transition from military service to higher education, veteran students feel as though they matter to their institution. With many growing concerns and awareness surrounding the success of military students in higher education, further research is needed to investigate how higher education administrators and professionals provide services and resources to address the challenges facing individuals transitioning from military service to higher education.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University, a Carnegie-designated doctoral-level public research institution with campuses in Glassboro, Camden and Stratford, N.J. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks Rowan University 19th of Northern Regional Universities and third among the public institutions in the category. Rowan University first opened in 1923 as a teacher's college with the mission to educate elementary school teachers. Rowan University has since evolved into a comprehensive research institution offering degrees from the baccalaureate to doctorate. There are currently more than 80 bachelor's, 60 master's, five doctoral degrees, and two professional medical degree options being offered.

Rowan University is divided into 13 academic colleges and schools across four campuses consisting of: Business, Communication and Creative Arts, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Performing Arts, Science and Mathematics, School of Health Professions, School of Earth and Environment, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Cooper Medical School of Rowan, and Rowan School of Osteopathic Medicine (Rowan University, 2017). There are over 18,000 undergraduate and graduate students currently attending Rowan University. Of the over 14,000 undergraduate students, 252 student veterans were registered with the Veterans Affairs office in the 2017-2018 academic year. This number does not include dependents registered with the office.

Rowan University's Veterans Affairs office is housed within the Academic Success Center, a division of Student Affairs. The office provides support to veterans and dependents of veterans with their education benefits in addition to providing programming and resources for the campus community. Currently, there are over 500 students registered with the Veterans Affairs office. This population includes active-duty, veteran, dependents, National Guard, and Reservists and all branches of the military are represented. The Veterans Affairs Office provides a variety of services and activities with the assistance of the Veteran Student Organization (VSO). Every veteran student registered with the office completes a supplemental orientation to assist them with their transition to Rowan, introduce them to the Rowan community, and connect veterans to various community organizations and resources. Additionally, there is an opportunity for current veteran students to connect with faculty mentors who are also veterans.

Population and Sampling

Target population for this study was all student veterans seeking a degree and enrolled full-time or part-time in for-credit courses during 2017-2018 academic year at Rowan University. For this study, a veteran was defined as a student who is currently serving in the United States Armed Forces or has served and has been discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions. The available population was all veteran students at Rowan University registered with the Veterans Affairs Office and who were enrolled full-time for the 2017-2018 academic year. A total population of 252 student veterans were enrolled at Rowan University at the time of this study. A sample size for this population is 152 and was obtained utilizing a sample size calculator set at a

confidence level of 95%, with a 5% error rate. A quantitative research design was used and was aimed at collecting responses from 40% of the sample size.

The purpose and structure of the research proposal was explained to the staff members in the Veterans Affairs office to procure their support and help in encouraging participation among qualified student veterans. Individuals were identified through various strategies. Weekly mass emails were sent to all currently enrolled full-time and part-time student veterans from the Veterans Coordinator requesting participation in the study. Individuals were asked to voluntarily participate in the study if they met the criteria of being a student veteran, not dependent, and are currently attending Rowan University. Additionally, student veterans who visited the Veterans Affairs office were asked to participate in the study, if applicable.

Instrumentation

The *Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College* (Appendix A) is based on the Schlossberg, Lassalle, and Golec (1990) survey created in 1990. The instrument includes 45 items with 19 from the original *Mattering Scales for Adult Students in Higher Education* (MHE) survey. Participants were asked to rate each response using a five-point Likert-type scale from Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1. Based on the Demographics Form used in Kurz's (2013) study, demographic information was obtained and included full-time, part-time, branch of service, military rank, G.I. Bill education benefits chapter, major, and age (Appendix B).

The *Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College* was reviewed by Dr. Burton Sisco, and the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Validity and reliability were determined

for the survey instruments by having a faculty advisor and an administrator review the questions to make sure they are easy to understand. According to Schlossberg et al. (1990), the *MHE* is reliable and valid. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients for reliability for the five subscales were: $\alpha = .850$ for administration, $\alpha = .820$ for advising, $\alpha = .860$ for peers, $\alpha = .770$ for multiple roles, and $\alpha = .842$ for faculty. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was employed to test the internal reliability for the five subscales of the modified *MHE*, the *Veteran Student Transition Survey*. The results for the five subscales were: $\alpha = .803$ for administration, $\alpha = .839$ for advising, $\alpha = .747$ for peers, $\alpha = .718$ for multiple roles, and $\alpha = .858$ for faculty.

Data Collection

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Rowan University granted me permission to conduct the study (Appendix C). Permission to conduct the study was also obtained by Dr. Burton Sisco, Professor and Program Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Higher Education program at Rowan University and Mr. John Woodruff, Director of the Academic Success Center at Rowan.

The veteran students were sent the survey by mail, and were also emailed a version of the survey, through the Veteran Affairs Office, at the Academic Success Center. Any veteran student who entered the Academic Success Center during the months of March and April, were given a survey to complete. Also, new students were sent a postcard in the mail asking them to contact the researcher to participate in a short survey. All students were given over one month to complete the survey. The survey instructions made it clear that no one would be identified, and personal identity would not be disclosed.

Data Analysis

All research questions were answered using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze survey results from *The Veteran Student Transition Survey* (Schlossberg et al., 1990). Tables were generated to include mean scores ranked highest to lowest, frequency of subject responses, percentage of responses, and standard deviation scores.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

Subjects in this study were all student veterans enrolled full-time or part-time at Rowan University during the 2017-2018 academic year. A total of 252 student veterans were identified via an internal college database and sample population of 154 was determined using a sample population calculator. Subjects from the sample population were determined using two approaches: (a) those who visited the Veterans Affairs Office were asked if they were interested to participate in a research study and (b) a weekly mass email was sent that included the survey instrument.

Sixty-one surveys were completed during March and April 2018 for a response rate of 40%. Demographic information was captured for those who participated in the survey (Table 4.1). Fifteen participants were between the ages of 18-20 years (26.8%); 16 were between 21-23 years of age (28.6%); 10 were between 24-26 years of age (17.9%); six were between 27-29 years of age (10.7%); and nine were other ages (16.1%). Forty-four were enrolled full-time (78.6%) and 12 were enrolled part-time (21.4%). Enrollment among Rowan's nine academic colleges were identified. Ten participants reported Rohrer College of Business (17.9%); two reported College of Communications and Creative Arts (3.6%); seven reported College of Education (12.5%); one reported College of Performing Arts (1.8%); 16 reported College of Humanities and Social Sciences (28.6%); three reported the Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering (5.4%); nine reported the College of Science and Mathematics (16.1%); one reported the School of Earth and Environment (1.8%); and seven reported School of Health Professions (12.5%). Four

branches of service were also identified via the survey. Seventeen participants reported serving in the Air Force (30.4%), 25 served in the Army (44.6%), 10 served in the Marines (17.9%), and four served in the Navy (7.1%). Twelve ranks were identified. One Airman (1.8%); six Airman First Class (10.7%); three Lance Corporals (5.4%); 10 Private First Class (17.9%); six Corporal (10.7%); two Petty Officer Third Class (3.6%); five Senior Airman (8.9%); 10 Specialists (17.9%); two Petty Officer Second Class (3.6%); six Sergeants (10.7%); four Staff Sergeants (7.1%); and one Master Sergeant (1.8%). Years of service varied among participants ranging from one to sixteen years of service. One at one year (1.8%); 13 at two years (23.2%); one at two and a half years (1.8%); 11 at three years (19.6%); 12 at four years (21.4%); one at four and a half years (1.8%); five at five years (8.9%); six at six years (10.7%); one at six and a half years (1.8%); three at seven years (5.4%); one at eight years (1.8%); and one at 16 years (1.8%). G.I. Bill education chapter included 28 enrolled in 1606 (50%); one enrolled in chapter 30 (1.8%); four enrolled in chapter 31 (7.1%); and 23 enrolled in chapter 33 other (41.1%).

Table 4.1

Demographic Information (N=61)

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Age:		
18-20	16	26.2
21-23	17	27.9
24-26	12	19.7
27-29	7	25
Other	9	14.8
Enrollment Status:		
Full-time (12 or more credits)	48	78.7

Table 4.1 (continued)

	<i>f</i>	%
Part-Time (1-11 credits)	13	21.3
Current Academic College:		
Rohrer College of Business	11	18
College of Communication and Creative Arts	3	4.9
College of Education	8	13.1
College of Performing Arts	1	1.6
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	17	27.9
Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering	3	4.9
College of Science and Mathematics	10	16.4
School of Earth and Environment	1	1.6
School of Health Professions	7	11.5
Branch of Service:		
Air Force	20	32.8
Army	27	44.3
Marines	10	16.4
Navy	4	6.6
Rank:		
Airman	1	1.6
Airman First Class	6	9.8
Lance Corporal	3	4.9
Private First Class	11	18
Corporal	6	9.8
Petty Officer Third Class	2	3.3
Senior Airman	6	9.8
Specialist	10	16.4
Petty Officer Second Class	2	3.3
Sergeant	7	11.5
Staff Sergeant	6	9.8
Master Sergeant	1	1.6
Years of Service:		
One	1	1.6
Two	14	23
Three	12	19.7
Four	12	19.7
Five	8	13.1
Six	8	13.1
Seven	4	6.6

Table 4.1 (continued)

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Eight	1	1.6
Sixteen	1	1.6
G.I. Bill Education Chapter:		
1606	29	47.5
30	1	1.6
31	4	6.6
33	27	44.3

Analysis of the Data

Research question 1. What do veteran students at Rowan University report regarding the five focus areas of mattering on campus?

Table 4.2 contains the results of eight survey items based on Military Students' Perceptions of Administration. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Agree=5; Agree=4; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Items are presented from most to least positive using mean scores. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates a positive level of agreement in response to a survey item and a mean score below 3.0 indicates a negative level of agreement in response to a survey item.

The highest ranked item, "The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me," had a mean score of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.851. Twelve subjects strongly agreed with this statement (19.7%); 38 subjects agreed (62.3%); four neither agreed nor disagreed (6.6%); and seven disagreed (11.5%).

The second item, "The administration seems to consider student priorities as important," had a mean score of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.030. Eighteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (29.5%); 25 subjects agreed with this statement

(41.0%); 10 subjects neither agreed nor disagreed (16.4%); seven disagreed (11.5%); and one strongly disagreed with this statement (1.6%).

The seventh item, “The administrative offices are not open at times I need them,” had a mean score of 2.48 and standard deviation of 0.976. Three subjects strongly agreed with this statement (4.9%); eight agreed (13.1%); eight neither agreed nor disagreed (13.1%); thirty-eight disagreed (62.3%); and four strongly disagreed (6.6%).

The final item, “I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires,” had a mean score of 2.26 and standard deviation of 1.015. Two subjects strongly agreed with this statement (3.3%); eight agreed (13.1%); five disagreed (8.2%); and 11 strongly disagreed with this statement (18.0%).

Table 4.2

Military Students' Perceptions of Administration (N=61)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me. <i>M</i> =3.90, <i>SD</i> =.851	12	19.7	38	62.3	4	6.6	7	11.5	0	0
The administration seems to consider student priorities as important. <i>M</i> =3.85, <i>SD</i> =1.030	18	29.5	25	41.0	10	16.4	7	11.5	1	1.6

Table 4.2 (continued)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Administrative staff is helpful in answering my questions. <i>M</i> =3.85, <i>SD</i> =.963	14	23.0	33	54.1	6	9.8	7	11.5	1	1.6
The administration makes efforts to accommodate students. <i>M</i> =3.79, <i>SD</i> =.897	9	14.8	38	62.3	8	13.1	4	6.6	2	3.3
The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities. <i>M</i> =3.03, <i>SD</i> =1.125	4	6.6	22	36.1	12	19.7	18	29.5	5	8.2
The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students. <i>M</i> =2.92, <i>SD</i> =.862	3	4.9	11	18.0	25	41	22	36.1	0	0
The administrative offices are not open at times I need them. <i>M</i> =2.48, <i>SD</i> =.976	3	4.9	8	13.1	8	13.1	38	62.3	4	6.6
I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires. <i>M</i> =2.26, <i>SD</i> =1.015	2	3.3	8	13.1	5	8.2	35	57.4	11	18

Table 4.3 contains the results of four survey items based on Military Students' Perceptions of Advising. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Agree=5; Agree=4; Neutral=3; Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates a positive level of agreement in response to a survey item and a mean score below 3.0 indicates a negative level of agreement in response to a survey item.

The highest ranked item, "If my advisor doesn't know the answer to my questions, he or she will seek out the answers," had a mean score of 4.10 and standard deviation of 0.790. Nineteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (31.1%); 32 subjects agreed (52.5%); seven neither agreed nor disagreed (11.5%); and three disagreed (4.9%).

The lowest ranked item, "My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before," had a mean score of 1.85 and standard deviation of 1.014. One subject strongly agreed (1.6%); six subjects agreed (9.8%); three subjects neither agreed nor disagreed (4.9%); 24 disagreed with this statement (39.3%); and 27 strongly disagreed with this statement (44.3%).

Table 4.3

Military Students' Perceptions of Advising (N=61)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
If my advisor doesn't know the answer to my questions, he or she will seek out the answers. <i>M=4.10, SD=.790</i>	19	31.1	32	52.5	7	11.5	3	4.9	0	0
There has always been an advisor available to talk if I have a question. <i>M=3.93, SD=.998</i>	17	27.9	33	54.1	2	3.3	8	13.1	1	1.6
My advisor has office hours at times I am on campus. <i>M=3.85, SD=1.108</i>	16	26.2	33	54.1	3	4.9	5	8.2	4	6.6
My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before. <i>M=1.85, SD=1.014</i>	1	1.6	6	9.8	3	4.9	24	39.3	27	44.3

Table 4.4 contains the results of eight survey items based on Military Students' Perceptions of Faculty. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Agree=5; Agree=4; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates a positive level of agreement in response to a survey item and a mean score below 3.0 indicates a negative level of agreement in response to a survey item.

The highest ranked item, “My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors,” had a mean score of 3.95 and standard deviation of 0.762. Fourteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (23.0%); 32 subjects agreed (52.5%); 13 neither agreed nor disagreed (21.3%); and two disagreed (3.3%).

The second item, “The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class,” had a mean score of 3.75 and standard deviation of 0.977. Thirteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (21.3%); 30 subjects agreed with this statement (49.2%); eight subjects neither agreed nor disagreed (13.1%); and ten disagreed with this statement (16.4%).

The seventh item, “My professors seem to recognize other students but not me,” had a mean score of 1.84 and standard deviation of 0.711. One subject agreed with this statement (1.6%); eight subjects neither agreed nor disagreed (13.1%); 32 disagreed (52.5%); and 20 strongly disagreed (32.8%).

The final item, “Some of the jokes my professors tell me make me feel uncomfortable,” had a mean score of 1.51 and standard deviation of 0.674. Six subjects neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement (9.8%); 19 disagreed (31.1%); and 36 strongly disagreed (59.0%).

Table 4.4

Military Students' Perceptions of Faculty (N=61)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors. <i>M=3.95, SD=.762</i>	14	23	32	52.5	13	21.3	2	3.3	0	0
The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class. <i>M=3.75, SD=.977</i>	13	21.3	30	49.2	8	13.1	10	16.4	0	0
My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority. <i>M=2.66, SD=1.015</i>	2	3.3	10	16.4	22	36.1	19	31.1	8	13.1
My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive. <i>M=2.16, SD=1.067</i>	3	4.9	4	6.6	10	16.4	27	44.3	17	27.9
I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking. <i>M=2.00, SD=.856</i>	0	0	4	6.6	10	16.4	29	47.5	18	29.5
My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions. <i>M=1.90, SD=.790</i>	0	0	4	6.6	4	6.6	35	57.4	18	29.5

Table 4.4 (continued)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
My professors seem to recognize other students but not me. <i>M</i> =1.84, <i>SD</i> =.711	0	0	1	1.6	8	13.1	32	52.5	20	32.8
Some of the jokes my professors tell me make me feel uncomfortable. <i>M</i> =1.51, <i>SD</i> =.674	0	0	0	0	6	9.8	19	31.1	36	59

Table 4.5 contains the results of 10 survey items based on Military Students' Perceptions of Peers. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Agree=5; Agree=4; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates a positive level of agreement in response to a survey item and a mean score below 3.0 indicates a negative level of agreement in response to a survey item.

The highest ranked item, "I feel welcome on campus," had a mean score of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.851. Fourteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (23.0%); 32 subjects agreed (52.5%); 10 neither agreed nor disagreed (16.4%); and five disagreed (8.2%).

The second item, "I have a good relationship with my classmates," had a mean score of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.724. Nine subjects strongly agreed with this statement (14.8%); 40 subjects agreed with this statement (65.6%); 10 subjects neither

agreed nor disagreed (16.4%); one disagreed with this statement (1.6%); and one strongly disagreed with this statement (1.6%).

The ninth item, “Unless I have another student like me in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here,” had a mean scored of 2.59 and a standard deviation of 0.920. One participant strongly agreed with this statement (1.6%); eight agreed (13.1%); 13 neither agreed nor disagreed (21.3%); 32 disagreed (52.5%); and seven subjects strongly disagreed with this statement (11.5%).

The final item, “Fellow students don’t seem to listen to me when I share my experiences,” had a mean scored of 2.41 and a standard deviation of 0.920. One subject strongly agreed with this statement (1.6%); eight agreed (13.1%); 13 neither agreed nor disagreed (21.3%); 32 disagreed (52.5%); and seven strongly disagreed (11.5%).

Table 4.5

Military Students’ Perceptions of Peers (N=61)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I feel welcome on campus. <i>M</i> =3.90, <i>SD</i> =.851	14	23.0	32	52.5	10	16.4	5	8.2	0	0
I have a good relationship with my classmates. <i>M</i> =3.90, <i>SD</i> =.724	9	14.8	40	65.6	10	16.4	1	1.6	1	1.6
My classmates would help me catch up with new technologies if I need it. <i>M</i> =3.85, <i>SD</i> =.727	8	13.1	39	63.9	12	19.7	1	1.6	1	1.6

Table 4.5 (continued)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I have had adequate opportunities to get to know my fellow students. <i>M</i> =3.79, <i>SD</i> =.798	7	11.5	40	65.6	9	14.8	4	6.6	1	1.6
I get support from my classmates when I need it. <i>M</i> =3.74, <i>SD</i> =.835	7	11.5	38	62.3	10	16.4	5	8.2	1	1.6
I feel like my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge. <i>M</i> =3.66, <i>SD</i> =1.094	13	21.3	27	44.3	11	18	7	11.5	3	4.9
I feel like I fit in my classes. <i>M</i> =3.54, <i>SD</i> =1.163	11	18	29	47.5	7	11.5	10	16.4	4	6.6
My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with other students. <i>M</i> =2.82, <i>SD</i> =1.310	8	13.1	15	24.6	4	6.6	26	42.6	8	13.1
Unless I have another student like me in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here. <i>M</i> =2.59, <i>SD</i> =1.116	3	4.9	12	19.7	12	19.7	25	41.0	9	14.8
Unless I have another student like me in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here. <i>M</i> =2.59, <i>SD</i> =1.116	3	4.9	12	19.7	12	19.7	25	41.0	9	14.8

Table 4.5 (continued)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my experiences.	1	1.6	8	13.1	13	21.3	32	52.5	7	11.5
<i>M</i> =2.41, <i>SD</i> =.920										

Table 4.6 contains the results of 10 survey items based on Military Students' Perceptions of Multiple Roles. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Agree=5; Agree=4; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Items are arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates a positive level of agreement in response to a survey item and a mean score below 3.0 indicates a negative level of agreement in response to a survey item.

The highest ranked item, "There has always been someone on campus that could help me when I had a question or problem," had a mean score of 4.02 and standard deviation of 0.785. Fourteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (23.0%); 38 subjects agreed (62.3%); six neither agreed nor disagreed (9.8%); two disagreed (3.3%); and one strongly disagreed (1.6%).

The second item, "Classes are offered at times that are good for me," had a mean score of 3.61 and standard deviation of 1.005. Eight subjects strongly agreed with this statement (13.1%); 34 subjects agreed with this statement (55.7%); eight subjects neither agreed nor disagreed (13.1%); nine disagreed with this statement (14.8%); and two subjects strongly disagreed with this statement (3.3%).

The fourteenth item, “Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible,” had a mean score of 2.36 and a standard deviation of 0.895. Two strongly agreed with this statement (3.3%); four agreed (6.6%); 15 neither agreed nor disagreed (24.6%); 33 disagreed (54.1%); and seven strongly disagreed with this statement (11.5%).

The final item, I will have a hard time finishing my degree requirements because of time limits completing course requirements,” had a mean score of 2.28 and a standard deviation of 1.113. Four subjects strongly agreed with this statement (6.6%); five agreed with this statement (8.2%); nine neither agreed nor disagreed (14.8%); 29 disagreed (47.5%); and 14 strongly disagreed with this statement (23.0%).

Table 4.6

Military Students’ Perceptions of Multiple Roles (N=61)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
There has always been someone on campus that could help me when I had a question or problem. <i>M=4.02, SD=.785</i>	14	23.0	38	62.3	6	9.8	2	3.3	1	1.6
Classes are offered at times that are good for me. <i>M=3.61, SD=1.005</i>	8	13.1	34	55.7	8	13.1	9	14.8	2	3.3

Table 4.6 (continued)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
The university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses. <i>M</i> =3.13, <i>SD</i> =.903	3	4.9	17	27.9	29	47.5	9	14.8	3	4.9
The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length courses. <i>M</i> =3.03, <i>SD</i> =.894	1	1.6	20	32.8	22	36.1	16	26.2	2	3.3
The school newspaper doesn't discuss student issues that are relevant to me. <i>M</i> =3.03, <i>SD</i> =.752	1	1.6	12	19.7	39	63.9	6	9.8	3	4.9
I feel my activity fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me. <i>M</i> =2.97, <i>SD</i> =.999	3	4.9	14	23.0	28	45.9	10	16.4	6	9.8
Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for someone other than me. <i>M</i> =2.93, <i>SD</i> =1.195	8	13.1	12	19.7	14	23.0	22	36.1	5	8.2
Sometimes I feel out of place in the classroom. <i>M</i> =2.87, <i>SD</i> =1.271	4	6.6	23	37.7	5	8.2	19	31.1	10	16.4
It takes too long to register or correct registration problems. <i>M</i> =2.87, <i>SD</i> =1.103	4	6.6	15	24.6	17	27.9	19	31.1	6	9.8

Table 4.6 (continued)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes students. <i>M</i> =2.80, <i>SD</i> =.910	3	4.9	6	9.8	33	54.1	14	23.0	5	8.2
The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes students. <i>M</i> =2.80, <i>SD</i> =.910	3	4.9	6	9.8	33	54.1	14	23.0	5	8.2
The classroom desks are uncomfortable. <i>M</i> =2.75, <i>SD</i> =1.090	3	4.9	13	21.3	19	31.1	18	29.5	8	13.1
I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university. <i>M</i> =2.46, <i>SD</i> =1.119	3	4.9	10	16.4	10	16.4	27	44.3	11	18.0
It's hard for me to adjust to the school environment. <i>M</i> =2.38, <i>SD</i> =1.157	3	4.9	12	19.7	2	3.3	32	52.5	12	19.7
Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible. <i>M</i> =2.36, <i>SD</i> =.895	2	3.3	4	6.6	15	24.6	33	54.1	7	11.5
I will have a hard time finishing my degree requirements because of time limits completing course requirements. <i>M</i> =2.28, <i>SD</i> =1.113	4	6.6	5	8.2	9	14.8	29	47.5	14	23.0

Research question 2. How are social relationships perceived among military students at Rowan University?

Table 4.7 contains the results of six survey items based on Military Students' Perceptions of Social Relationships. The Likert-type survey items are arranged from Strongly Agree=5; Agree=4; Neither agree nor disagree=3; Disagree=2 and Strongly Disagree=1. Items are presented from most to least positive using mean scores. A mean score of 3.0 and above indicates a positive level of agreement in response to a survey item and a mean score below 3.0 indicates a negative level of agreement in response to a survey item.

The highest ranked item, "My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors," had a mean score of 3.95 and standard deviation of 0.762. Fourteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (23%); 32 subjects agreed (52.5%); thirteen neither agreed nor disagreed (21.3%); and two disagreed (3.3%).

The second item, "I feel welcome on campus," had a mean score of 3.90 and standard deviation of .851. Fourteen subjects strongly agreed with this statement (23%); 32 subjects agreed with this statement (52.5%); 10 subjects neither agreed nor disagreed (16.4%); and five disagreed (8.2%).

The fifth item, "Sometimes I feel out of place in the classroom," had a mean score of 2.87 and standard deviation of 1.271. Four subjects strongly agreed with this statement (6.6%); 23 agreed (37.7%); five neither agreed nor disagreed (8.2%); 19 disagreed (31.1%); and 10 strongly disagreed (16.4%).

The final item, "I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university," had a mean score of 2.46 and standard deviation of 1.119. Three subjects strongly agreed with this

statement (4.9%); 10 agreed (16.4%); 10 neither agreed nor disagreed (16.4%); 27 disagreed (44.3%); and 11 strongly disagreed with this statement (18.0%).

Table 4.7

Military Students' Perceptions of Social Relationships (N=61)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors. <i>M</i> =3.95, <i>SD</i> =.762	14	23	32	52.5	13	21.3	2	3.3	0	0
I feel welcome on campus. <i>M</i> =3.90, <i>SD</i> =.851	14	23	32	52.5	10	16.4	5	8.2	0	0
I have a good relationship with my classmates. <i>M</i> =3.90, <i>SD</i> =.724	9	14.8	40	65.6	10	16.4	1	1.6	1	1.6
I feel like my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge. <i>M</i> =3.66, <i>SD</i> =1.094	13	21.3	27	44.3	11	18	7	11.5	3	4.9
Sometimes I feel out of place in the classroom. <i>M</i> =2.87, <i>SD</i> =1.271	4	6.6	23	37.7	5	8.2	19	31.1	10	16.4
I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university. <i>M</i> =2.46, <i>SD</i> =1.119	3	4.9	10	16.4	10	16.4	27	44.3	11	18.0

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

The study investigated the perceptions of mattering among military service members at Rowan University. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Schlossberg's theory of mattering to reveal ideas related to military students' feelings of mattering on campus and how they impact their experience at Rowan University. A survey was used to collect quantitative data for the study.

A total of 256 active-duty or military veteran students were identified through an internal database in the Rowan University Veterans Affairs office. A sample population of 154 was determined using a sample population calculator. Of the sample population, 40% completed the *Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College* (Schlossberg et al., 1990) for a total of 61 responses. The survey included five focus areas: administration, advising, faculty, peers, and multiple roles on campus. The administration focus area measures students' perceptions of mattering in the area of policies and procedures of the college or university. The advising focus area measures students' perceptions of students' perceptions of responsiveness from university advisors. The faculty focus area measures students' perceptions of relationships with faculty. The peers focus area measures students' perceptions of relationships with peers. The multiple roles focus area measures students' perceptions of how well the institution responds to non-traditional students' priorities and responsibilities outside of the college campus. Each area was examined using descriptive statistics to measure military students' perceptions of mattering on campus.

Discussion of the Findings

Based on the findings of this study, most undergraduate military students are satisfied with their experiences at Rowan University. Overall feelings of mattering on the college campus were based on the five focus areas of administration, advising, faculty, peers, and multiple roles developed by Schlossberg, et al. (1990). The five focus areas of mattering were central in answering all research questions.

Research question 1. What do military students at Rowan University report regarding the five focus areas of mattering on campus?

Overall the subjects in this study reported being satisfied Rowan University in the five areas of mattering: administration, faculty, advising, peers, and multiple roles.

Administration. The Administration subscale measures students' perceptions of mattering in the area of policies and procedures of the college or university. A high score in this area would indicate that students perceive they matter to the administration. Dahan (2008) and Kurz (2013) both found that veteran students perceived they mattered to the administrations of Stockton University and Rowan University responded favorably to the way the administration handled business at the respective universities. According to Dahan (2008), 62% of student veterans agreed that the administration seems to consider veteran student priorities important. Similarly, Kurz (2013) found that 72% of subjects agreed that the administration considered veteran student priorities important.

This study also found that student veterans reported favorable perceptions of the administration. The data showed that a total of 82% either strongly agreed or agreed that the administrative rules and regulations were clear to them. As non-traditional students, veterans often carry unique life experiences and manage many important responsibilities

and priorities, such as full-time jobs and families, which can impact their college experiences. The data showed that a total percentage of roughly 70.5% strongly agreed or agreed that the administration seems to consider student veteran priorities important. Lastly, the survey asked whether the administration makes efforts to accommodate students; 77.1% of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Based on the results of the data, the data suggest that a favorable image of Rowan University's administration among veteran students on-campus which is consistent with the findings from Dahan (2008) and Kurz (2013).

Advising. The second focus area was advising which focused on how well Rowan University advisors respond to student veterans. The questions included in this subscale address whether advisors seek out answers for students, whether advisors offer convenient office hours, and whether advisors remembered what was discussed during advising sessions. Dahan (2008) found that 64% of subjects agreed that there is always an advisor available to talk if they have a question and over 58% agreed that if an advisor does not know the answer to a question, he or she will seek out the answer. Overall, Dahan (2008) reported a positive student perception towards advisors on campus. Similarly, Kurz (2013) found that 56% of student veterans agreed that there was always an advisor available to answer questions when needed.

Similar to the findings from Dahan (2008) and Kurz (2013), most of the student veterans in this study reported favorable perceptions of Rowan University advisors. The data showed that 83.6% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement "My advisor does not seem to remember things we have discussed before." The data also showed that 83% strongly agreed or agreed that their advisor will seek out the answer if they cannot

answer a question and 82% strongly agreed or agreed that there has always been an advisor available to talk if they have a question. The data in this study suggest that more than 80% of student veterans agreed that advisors were available when needed and helpful in answering questions resulting in an overall positive perception among those surveyed.

Faculty. The third focus area was faculty which expressed how student veterans felt in the classroom and when interacting with university faculty members. The knowledge base confirms that veterans are less likely to interact with faculty and participate in educational activities outside the classroom because of the complex nature of their military service and their likelihood of having full-time jobs, families, and other competing priorities (Pietrzak et al., 2010). The questions in this focus area addressed communication with and perception of professors, whether veteran students felt encouraged to speak out in class, and whether they were recognized by professors. Schlossberg (1989) states that the classroom environment is essential in making students feel welcome and accepted on campus.

The data related to this focus area found that veteran students at Rowan University felt welcome and accepted in the classroom and by their professors. Over 70% strongly agreed or agreed that they the classroom atmosphere encourages them to speak out in class and felt that they experience-based comments would be accepted by their professors. Additionally, over 85% of veteran students reported that they are recognized by their professors. While these findings report positive experiences in the classroom and with professors, there was still a percentage of students, roughly 20%, who agreed that professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority with another 36%

reporting they felt neutral about this statement. These findings differ somewhat from those found in Dahan's (2008) study. Dahan (2008) found that 21.5% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their questions put faculty members on the defensive.

Additionally, Dahan (2008) found that nearly 30% of veteran students surveyed felt that professors interpreted their assertiveness as challenge to their authority. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that veteran students generally felt welcomed in the classroom, comfortable with their professors, and encouraged to participate in classroom discussions and activities.

Peers. The fourth focus area of the mattering scale was peers, which according to Schlossberg et al. (1990), the peers focus area assesses how much students feel as though they belong and matter on campus, both inside and outside the classroom. As non-traditional students, the knowledge base confirms that veterans experience some level of difficulty in connecting with their peers due to their differences in life experiences. Dahan (2008) found that 43.1% of students felt that unless there was another veteran in the class, no one really understands how hard it is to be there (Dahan, 2008). However, in this study, only 25% of subjects agreed with the same statement. While the majority of subjects did not agree, it is revealing that one quarter felt misunderstood by those around them. Additionally, 23% of subjects did not feel as though they fit in in their classes and almost 40% reported that their age sometimes gets in the way of interactions with other students. Kurz (2013) found that 55% of student veterans also felt that their age gets in the way of their interactions with other students, and Dahan (2008) found that 41% of students felt similarly since many veteran students are older than the traditional college student. Despite nearly 75% of veteran students feeling welcome on campus, the findings

in this study showed that there are some areas in which student veteran report feelings of marginalized as it relates to interactions with their peers.

Multiple roles. The multiple roles focus area refers to how well institutions recognize the competing priorities and demands of a non-traditional, such as adult and/or veteran, student's schedule. The multiple roles subscale addresses areas such as class time offerings, resources on campus, and overall campus environment. Kurz (2013) points out that 33.3% of student veterans reported feeling alone or isolated at the university and Dahan (2008) found that nearly 40% felt the same. However, in this study, only 21% reported feeling alone and isolated. Additionally, 71% of student veterans in this study reported that it was not difficult for them to adjust to the school environment. Schlossberg et al. (1990) identified attention as one of the foundations of mattering and is described as an individual feeling noticed by those around them when entering a new setting such as a college campus. This study confirms that the majority of student veterans surveyed did feel noticed on campus and perceived their experience as positive. Moreover, the findings in this study suggest that student veterans were satisfied with the times of the course offerings and felt as though there was always someone available on campus to assist them with a question or problem. While both Dahan (2008) and Kurz (2013) reported feelings of isolation and aloneness on campus among student veterans, both studies confirmed the findings of this study which suggest that overall, student veterans felt as though the institution is receptive to the multiple priorities of student veterans.

Research question 2. How are social relationships perceived among military students at Rowan University?

Research question 2 was addressed by the faculty, peers, and multiple roles subscales of the *Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College* (Schlossberg et al., 1990). In 2013, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that veteran students are underrepresented on college campuses, with veterans and active-duty military students making up a mere 4% of undergraduates in the United States (Radwin, Wine, Siegel, & Bryan, 2013). This underrepresented student population is considered a non-traditional college student and faces challenges that do not exist for students who enter higher education directly following high school. Radwin et al. (2013) report that on average, veterans take 5 years to return to college following high school. This creates a significant age and life-experience gap between veteran students and their peers. It is therefore critical to examine how veteran students' social needs are addressed on campus and how they are received by those around them.

Similar to other non-traditional student populations, such as adults and minorities, veterans often face many stereotypes when they arrive on college campuses which leads to feelings of isolation and lack of a sense of belonging (Tayler et al., 2016). In this study, the purpose of the *Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College* (Schlossberg et al., 1990) was to identify perceptions of veteran students in a social context on a college campus. The findings of this study suggest that veteran students at Rowan University were well-adjusted to the campus environment and felt a sense of belonging among peers and other members of the campus community.

Sixty-five percent of student veterans surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that they fit in in their classes and over 80% reported having a good relationship with their classmates. Taylor et al. (2016) states that the stereotypes veteran students face, such as being difficult or aggressive, and the media's interpretation of military service members being more afflicted by mental health issues than the average American impact the relationships and interactions with faculty and their peers. Despite what the knowledge base reports regarding the implications of these stereotypes on student veterans' relationships on campus, this study found that student veterans on Rowan's campus felt as though classmates reacted positively to their experiences and over 75% felt as though their experience-based comments were accepted by their professors. Additionally, 62.3% of student veterans did not report feelings of isolation on campus and over 75% report feeling welcomed by the campus community. The findings of this study confirm that veteran students at Rowan University have healthy social relationships with other individuals on campus.

Conclusions

This quantitative study analyzed the perceptions of mattering among 61 subjects who were enrolled at Rowan University and have served or are currently serving in a branch of the United States military. The research findings of this study conclude that military students at Rowan University perceive that they do feel satisfied with and supported on campus in all five focus areas: administration, advising, faculty, peers, and multiple roles. Additionally, military students at Rowan maintain healthy, thriving social relationships with other members of the campus community such as their peers and faculty members. The general perceptions were based on the reported mean scores of

relevant items. The findings of this study contributed to the knowledge base of perceptions of mattering among non-traditional students on college campuses. This study looked at perceptions of mattering among military students which contributes to the gap in the knowledge base because there is a lack of perspective from the military student population. However, overall, this study provides a small scope of military students' experience at Rowan University. It is possible that there are students at Rowan who do not identify with the military student population and are hesitant to report on their experiences on campus. Providing college campuses with a greater understanding of perceptions of mattering among military students is critical to the development of best practices for serving this unique, growing population. Further research is needed to further define the experiences of military students at Rowan University to better serve military students.

Recommendations for Practice

1. More recognition of military student population on Rowan's campus by faculty and administration. Participation in recognition events will further strengthen relationships between this student population and administrators and faculty.
2. Develop a common area for military students on campus so that they have a place to meet other students like themselves outside the classroom.
3. Develop more programs and events for the non-traditional student population as a whole to bring awareness to the traditional student population that this population exists. This will draw awareness to the growth of the non-traditional, including military, student population on campus.

4. Encourage military students to be honest and proud of their military experience so that non-military students and individuals on campus develop knowledge about this population that may clear up misconceptions about the population.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Further studies should be conducted to include a larger sample population to confirm the findings of this study.
2. A qualitative study of the sample could be completed to further define personal experiences of perceptions of military students on campus.
3. A mixed-methods study could be conducted to study more personal experiences of veteran students on campus.
4. A comparative study should be conducted to compare experiences of veteran students over 30 years of age and under 30 years of age.
5. A study of the administration and staff's views of experiences and resources of veteran students should be conducted.

References

- Anderson, M., Goodman, J., & Schlossberg, N. (2012). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking Schlossberg's theory with practice in a diverse world*. New York: Springer.
- Azmitia, M., Syed, M., & Radmacher, K. (2013). Finding your niche: Identity and emotional support in emerging adults' adjustment to the transition to college. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(4), 744-761.
- Dahan, J. (2008). *Military veterans in higher education: Application of adult development theories to selected Rowan University undergraduate veterans* (Unpublished master's thesis). Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ.
- DiRamio, D., Ackerman, R., & Mitchell, R. L. (2008). From combat to campus: Voices of student-veterans. *NASPA Journal*, 45(1), 73-102.
- Elliott, M., Gonzalez, C., & Larsen, B. (2011). US military veterans transition to college: Combat, PTSD, and alienation on campus. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 48(3), 279-296.
- Griffin, K. A. & Gilbert, C. K. (2015). Better transitions for troops: An application of Schlossberg's transition framework to analyses of barriers and institutional support structures for student veterans. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 86(1), 71-97. The Ohio State University Press.
- Hindley, M. (2014). *A new deal for veterans: How the GI bill was passed*. Washington: National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Kelty, R., Kleykamp, M., & Segal, D. R. (2010). The military and the transition to adulthood. *The Future of Children*, 20(1), 181-207.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J., & Whitt, E. Associates (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., & Whitt, E. J. (2011). Fostering student success in hard times. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 43(4), 13-19. doi:10.1080/00091383.2011.585311
- Kurz, J., (2013) Women veterans in higher education: transitions and transformative learning experiences. *Theses and Dissertations*. 430. <https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/430>
- McBain, L., Kim, Y. M., Cook, B. J., & Snead, K. M. (2012). *From soldier to student II: Assessing campus programs for veterans and service members*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

- Mullen, J. N. (2016). *A comparative analysis of nontraditional students' perceptions of mattering in small private catholic four-year academic institutions*. Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection. (1808509721). Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.rowan.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1808509180?accountid=13605>
- National Conference of State Legislatures. (2014) *Veterans and college*. Retrieved June 30, 2017, from http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/veterans-and-college.aspx#_edn2
- Pietrzak, R., Goldstein, M., Malley, J. C., Rivers, J., Johnson, C., Morgan, A., & Southwick, M. (2010). Posttraumatic growth in veterans of operations enduring freedom and Iraqi freedom. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 126(1), 230-235.
- PTSD: National Center for PTSD. (2009). Retrieved from https://www.ptsd.va.gov/about/mission/goals_and_objectives_of_the_national_center_for_ptsd.asp
- Radwin, D., Wine, J., Siegel, P., and Bryan, M. (2013). 2011–12 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12): Student Financial Aid Estimates for 2011–12 (NCES 2013-165). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>
- Rowan University (2017). Retrieved October 26, 2017, from <http://www.rowan.edu/home>
- Schlossberg, N. K. (1984). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Schlossberg, N. (1989). *Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community*. *New Directions for Student Services*, 1989(48), 5-15.
doi:10.1002/ss.37119894803
- Schlossberg, N., Lasalle, A., & Golec, R. (1990). *The mattering scales for adults in postsecondary education*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. ERIC ED 341 722.
- Schlossberg, N., Lynch, A., & Chickering, A. (1989). *Improving higher education environments for adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schlossberg, N., & Warren, B. (1985). *Growing up adult: Reactions to nontraditional learning experiences*. Columbia, MD: Council for Advancement of Experiential Learning.

- Serow, R. C. (2004). Policy as symbol: Title II of the 1944 G.I. bill. *The Review of Higher Education*, 27(4), 481-499. doi:10.1353/rhe.2004.0022
- Taylor, A., Parks, R., & Edwards, A. (2016). *Challenges on the front lines: Serving today's student veterans*. *College and University*, 91(4), 47-60. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.rowan.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1845129668?accountid=13605>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2010). National survey of veterans, active duty service members, demobilized National Guard and Reserve members, family members, and surviving spouses. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.va.gov/SURVIVORS/docs/NVSSurveyFinalWeightedReport.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2016). Annual Budget Report – Education. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/ABR-Education-FY16-03022017.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2018). Education and Training: Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/post911_gibill.asp
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2018). PTSD: National Center for PTSD. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (n.d.). Research findings on PTSD and violence. Retrieved from: ptsd.va.gov/professional/co-occurring/research_on_ptsd_and_violence.asp
- Veteran. 2017. In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved October 22, 2017, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/veteran>
- Zinger, L., & Cohen, A. (2010). Veterans returning from war into the classroom: How can colleges be better prepared to meet their needs. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 3(1), 39-51.

Appendix A

Veteran Student Survey on Transition to College



VETERAN STUDENT SURVEY ON TRANSITION INTO COLLEGE

Based on the Mattering Survey by Schlossberg, Lasalle, and Golec (1990)

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all the responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent and willingness to participate.

Section One: Demographic Information--Please complete the information below:

Age (please select one):

18-20

21-23

24-26

27-29

Other:_____

Enrollment Status (please select one):

Full-time student (12 or more credits)

Part-time student (1-11 credits)

Current Academic College (please select one):

Rohrer College of Business
College of Communication and Creative Arts
College of Education
College of Performing Arts
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Henry M. Rowan College of Engineering
College of Science and Mathematics
School of Earth and Environment
School of Health Professions

Branch of Service (please select one):

Air Force

Army

Coast Guard

Marines

Navy

Other: _____

Rank (please do not use acronyms for your rank):

Years of service:

G.I. Bill Chapter (please select one):

1606

30

31

33

Other: _____

Section Two: Please circle the response which best describes your feelings. Please select a response for each item, using the following scale:

SD=Strongly Disagree

D=Disagree

N=Neither Agree nor disagree

A=Agree

SA=Strongly Agree

1. The administration seems to consider student priorities as important. SD D N A SA
2. My advisor doesn't seem to remember things we have discussed before. SD D N A SA
3. I will have a hard time finishing my degree because of time limits completing course requirements. SD D N A SA
4. I get support from my classmates when I need it. SD D N A SA
5. The university's policy of transfer credits penalizes students. SD D N A SA
6. My questions seem to put faculty members on the defensive. SD D N A SA
7. The faculty and administrators are sensitive to my other responsibilities. SD D N A SA
8. I sometimes feel alone and isolated at the university. SD D N A SA
9. The administrative rules and regulations are clear to me. SD D N A SA
10. My professors interpret assertiveness as a challenge to their authority. SD D N A SA
11. The administration sets things up to be easy for them, not the students. SD D N A SA
12. It's hard for me to adjust to the school environment. SD D N A SA
13. If my advisor doesn't know the answer to my questions, he or she will seek out the answers. SD D N A SA
14. The classroom atmosphere encourages me to speak out in class. SD D N A SA
15. I feel my classmates react positively to my experience and knowledge. SD D N A SA
16. My professors seem to recognize other students but not me. SD D N A SA

17. I don't have time to complete the administrative tasks this institution requires.	SD D N A SA
18. There has always been someone on campus that could help me when I had a question or problem.	SD D N A SA
19. I feel like I fit in my classes.	SD D N A SA
20. The administrative offices are not open at times I need them.	SD D N A SA
21. The administration makes efforts to accommodate students.	SD D N A SA
22. I have a good relationship with my classmates.	SD D N A SA
23. Sometimes I feel out of place in the classroom.	SD D N A SA
24. The university does not commit enough resources to off-campus courses.	SD D N A SA
25. There has always been an advisor available to talk if I have a question.	SD D N A SA
26. My classmates would help me catch up to the new technologies if I need it.	SD D N A SA
27. My experience-based comments are accepted by my professors.	SD D N A SA
28. It takes too long to register or correct registration problems.	SD D N A SA
29. Administrative staff is helpful in answering my questions.	SD D N A SA
30. Fellow students don't seem to listen to me when I share my experiences.	SD D N A SA
31. Unless I have another student like me in class, no one really understands how hard it is to be here.	SD D N A SA
32. The university offers alternatives to the traditional semester-length courses.	SD D N A SA
33. I have had adequate opportunities to get to know my fellow students.	SD D N A SA
34. Campus rules and regulations seem to have been made for someone other than me.	SD D N A SA

35. My age sometimes gets in the way of my interactions with other students.	SD D N A SA
36. Some of the jokes my professors tell me make me feel uncomfortable.	SD D N A SA
37. Classes are offered at times that are good for me.	SD D N A SA
38. I feel welcome on campus.	SD D N A SA
39. The classroom desks are uncomfortable.	SD D N A SA
40. I feel my activity fees are spent in a way that is meaningful to me.	SD D N A SA
41. My advisor has office hours at times I am on campus.	SD D N A SA
42. Departmental rules sometimes make my goals difficult or impossible.	SD D N A SA
43. The school newspaper doesn't discuss student issues that are relevant to me.	SD D N A SA
44. My professors sometimes ignore my comments or questions.	SD D N A SA
45. I sometimes feel my professors want me to hurry up and finish speaking.	SD D N A SA

Thank you for taking my survey!!

Section One Source: Kurz, J., "Women veterans in higher education: transitions and transformative learning experiences" (2013). *Theses and Dissertations*. 430.
<https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/430>

Section Two Source: Schlossberg, N., Lasalle, A., & Golec, R. (1990). *The mattering scales for adults in postsecondary education*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. ERIC ED 341 7

Appendix B

Alternate Consent Form



Transition Experiences of Military Students at Rowan University Alternate Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled Transition Experiences of Military Students at Rowan University. You are included in this survey because you are registered with the Rowan University's Veterans Affairs Office and are actively enrolled at least part-time at Rowan University. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be 152.

The survey may take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. We expect the study to last 2 weeks.

The purpose of this research study is to examine the transition experiences of veteran or active-duty military students at Rowan University from military service to the college environment. As more and more veterans transition out of military service and begin to utilize their educational benefits, it is important to understand factors affecting their college experiences in higher education to best serve their needs. By identifying the needs and concerns of veteran students, higher education professionals can better serve this population and assist them with transitioning successfully from military to civilian life as well as provide support to ensure positive career and financial outcomes.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us understand how the Rowan community can provide better services and resources to our active-duty military and veteran student populations.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Burton Sisco at 856-256-3717, Sisco@rowan.edu or me at the email address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Please complete the checkboxes below:

To participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older, enrolled at Rowan University at least part-time during the Spring 2018 semester, and registered with Rowan University's Veterans Affairs office. ☐

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. ☐

Sincerely,
Marisa Israel
israelm@rowan.edu

Appendix C

IRB Approval

** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance

Identifier: FWA00007111

IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman

IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy

Effective Date:

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID: [Pro2018002228](#)

Title: Transition Experiences of Military Students at Rowan University

Principal Investigator:	Burton Sisco	Study Coordinator:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Marisa Israel	Other Study Staff:	There are no items to display
Sponsor:	Department Funded	Approval Cycle:	Not Applicable
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	Device Determination:	Not Applicable
Review Type:	Exempt	Exempt Category:	2
Subjects:	178		

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:		Research Protocol/Study		Submission Status:		Approved					
Approval Date:		3/20/2018		Expiration Date:							
Pregnancy Code:		No Pregnant Women as Subjects		Pediatric Code:		No Children As Subjects		Prisoner Code:		No Prisoners As Subjects	

Protocol:	EmailPermission_Kurz Online Survey Consent Form Protocol including Survey Instrument and Demographics Form IRBApproval_Woodruff Survey Instrument	Consent:	There are no items to display	Recruitment Materials:	Email Invitation
------------------	---	-----------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------

* Study Performance Sites:

Glassboro Campus 201 Mullica Hill Rd, Glassboro, NJ 08028

There are no items to display

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators,

advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at:

<http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations :** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at:

<http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.

8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.

9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.

10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.