



UWRF Veterans Survey Report

**Shelly Hadley
David Trechter**

**Survey Research Center Report 2010/6
March 2010**

The SRC would like to thank Nicole Lillis, UWRF Veteran Program Manager for her valuable input and assistance throughout the survey process. We would also like to thank the UWRF veterans and the family members and dependents of veterans who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Survey Purpose.....	6
Survey Methods and Design.....	6
Profile of Respondents	7
UWRF Services, Resources, and Policies	10
Providing Better Service to Student-Veterans	15
Veterans Benefits and Services	16
Campus Experience	17
Conclusions.....	20
Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test	21
Appendix B – 2010 UWRF Veterans Survey - Written Comments	22
Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses	35

Executive Summary

In February 2010, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls contacted 262 UWRF veterans and family members/dependents of veterans by email and invited them to participate in an on-line survey designed to measure the levels of services provided to UWRF veterans and their satisfaction with these services.

A total of 114 surveys were completed for a return rate of 44 percent. Given the number of veterans/dependents of veterans for whom contact information was available (262), this number of observations should yield estimates that are accurate to within plus or minus 7 percent with 95 percent confidence.

The following are key observations from the survey:

1. Substantial majorities (nearly two-thirds or more) of respondents report very good or good experiences with every UWRF resource or service listed on the survey.
2. Two services were judged “very important” by a majority of respondents: career services/planning and veterans services/benefits counseling.
3. By a wide margin, the area respondents most want UWRF to focus on is granting credit for military training and service.
4. Most respondents (90% agree or strongly agree) know where to go on campus if they have questions regarding veterans’ services.
5. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents have experienced delays in receiving their VA education benefits.
6. Fewer than 6 out of 10 respondents rated their overall transition from the military to UWRF as either very good or good. Almost one-third report a fair transition and 10 percent (11 respondents) experienced a poor or very poor transition to academic life.
7. 54 percent feel UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members’/veterans’ needs.
8. 57 percent feel UWRF faculty and staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus.
9. A slight majority (58%) of respondents feel connected with other UWRF students.
10. Sixteen percent of respondents are experiencing difficulties that might cause them to stop attending UWRF.

Based on our analysis of the survey results, priority actions that UWRF should consider are:

1. UWRF and the VA. Explore how the university might improve the interplay between the University and Veterans Affairs. Part of this will likely be addressed if there is stability in the Campus Veterans Office. Comments and numeric results indicate that more should be done to ensure that veterans truly understand what benefits they are entitled to and that they have correctly applied for those benefits in a timely fashion.
2. Administrative Improvements. The results of this survey suggest that veterans seem to view UWRF as a transition period between their military experiences and their careers. They seem to want that passage to move as quickly and seamlessly as possible. Improving the interplay between the VA and UWRF is a component of this but there are internal UWRF factors that also come into play. These results indicate that some administrative functions – career services, the bursar, the registrar – could be fine-tuned to better meet the needs of veterans. The respondents to this survey placed a high level of importance on career services yet they gave these services a fairly average rating in terms of their satisfaction. Additional conversations need to be initiated with veterans to discover what specific improvements they feel are needed. They also value “academic support.” Their comments suggest that “academic support” is defined broadly to encompass the registrar and the bursar. As was true with career services, additional listening is needed to identify specific veteran needs that are not being met in these areas.
3. Instructional Improvements. Facilitating the passage through UWRF also has academic dimensions. Two things stand out in terms of things the academic side of the house should consider to better serve veterans. First, exploring if/how military experiences and training can be substituted for graduation requirements. Second, additional faculty development opportunities to increase awareness of and suggested responses to the special needs of veterans who are in their classes.
4. Connection to Campus. If it is true that veterans generally view their time at UWRF as a transition to be gotten through as expeditiously as possible, it may not be possible to enhance their sense of connection to the campus. However, we were struck by the relatively high percentages that said they do not feel connected to other students (38%) and who disagree that UWRF personnel made their transition to college easier (26%). It seems worthwhile informally exploring with veterans if they think it is important to feel more connected to campus and, if so, what sorts of things the institution can do to build bridges to other non-veteran students and how the campus can be more welcoming.

Survey Purpose

The motivation for this study was to evaluate veterans' experiences at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF). The study was designed to measure the levels of services UWRF is providing to veterans and their efficacy; the levels of satisfaction veterans express for UWRF and its services; and the difficulties veterans face at UWRF. The Survey Research Center (SRC) at UWRF was chosen to administer the survey.

Survey Methods and Design

In February 2010, the SRC contacted 262 UWRF veterans and family members/dependents of veterans by email asking them to participate in an on-line survey about their experiences at UWRF. Four reminders were sent over 4 weeks to those from whom a completed survey had not been received. A total of 114 surveys were completed for a return rate of 44 percent. Given the 262 veterans/dependents for whom contact information was available, this number of observations should yield estimates that are accurate to within plus or minus 7 percent with 95 percent confidence.

The SRC tested these data for the presence of non-response bias. Non-response bias exists if people who do not complete a questionnaire hold systematically different views than those who completed the survey. For example, if only those veterans who had an easy transition from the military to UWRF responded to the questionnaire, the values in the report would likely overstate the ease in which veterans transition to university life. The standard way to test for this problem is to compare responses to the first invitation to those who responded later ("non-respondents" to the first invitation). We found little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample (see **Appendix A** for a more complete description of this process).

Responses to open-ended questions were compiled by the SRC. **Appendix B** to this report contains a complete compilation of comments. **Appendix C** contains a copy of the numeric portions of the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the profile of respondents to the survey. As indicated, most respondents are full-time and are juniors or seniors. A slight majority of the respondents are 25 years old or younger; approximately one-fourth are 30 years old or older. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents are male and about two-thirds of the sample are single. Most have no children in their household and most live off campus (86%).

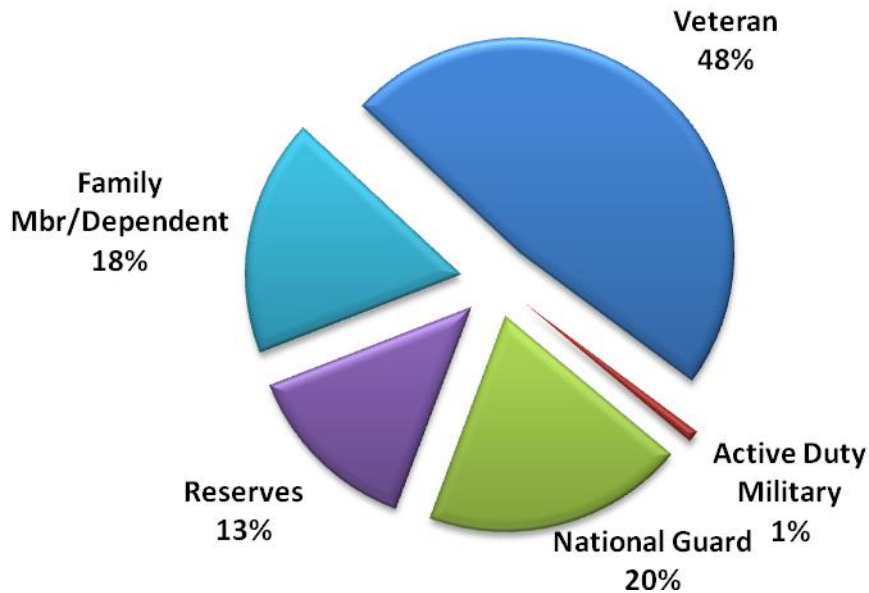
Comparisons of key survey questions were made by the SRC based on gender, age, military status, branch of service, time since last activation, whether children live in their home, and income. Survey results were remarkably uniform regardless of the demographic categories into which respondents fell. When differences occur, they will be pointed out, as appropriate, in the report.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents - Demographics							
	Count	Full-Time Student	Part-Time Student	Recently Graduated	On Leave School	Other	
Academic Status	111	88%	8%	0%	3%	1%	
	Count	Freshman	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Grad Stu.	Cont. Ed.
Class Standing	111	14%	17%	26%	34%	8%	0%
	Count	18 – 22	23 – 25	26 – 29	30 – 35	36 – 39	40+
Age	110	29%	27%	21%	11%	3%	9%
	Count	Male	Female				
Gender	110	74%	26%				
	Count	Single	Married/ Partner	Divorced/ Separated	Widowed		
Marital Status	111	64%	27%	9%	0%		
	Count	0	1	2	3+		
Household	110	12%	29%	35%	24%		
Adults Household	110	12%	29%	35%	24%		
Children Household	72	75%	11%	8%	6%		
	Count	Res Hall	Off Campus Rental	Own Home	Parent's Home	Other	
Living Arrangements	111	14%	58%	18%	7%	3%	
	Count	<\$15,000	\$15,000-24,999	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,999	\$100,000+
Household Income	109	38%	19%	22%	11%	7%	3%

Current Military Status

Respondents were asked to identify their current military status. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of military status for the 112 who answered the survey question. Nearly one-half of the respondents were veterans, followed by 20 percent National Guard, 18 percent family members or dependents of veterans, 13 percent Reservists, and 1 percent active duty military.

Figure 1: Current Military Status



When comparing responses based on military status, we might have expected to see a number of statistically significant differences of opinion from family members or dependents of veterans. This was, however, not the case. The relatively few response patterns which are statistically different will be noted throughout the report.

Activation

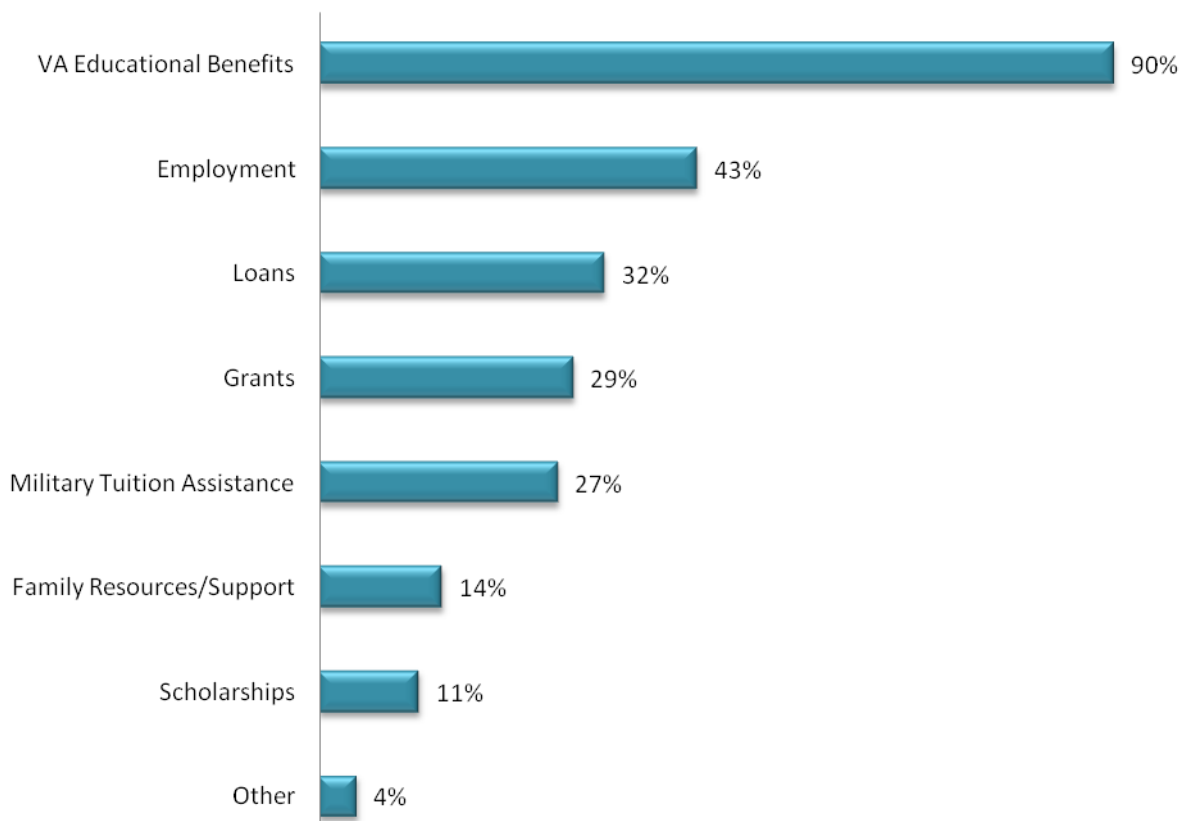
Respondents were asked if they have been activated within the last five years (Table 2). Roughly half of the respondents have been activated in the past five years and half have not. A follow-up question asked those activated in which branch of service they served. A slight majority of those activated were in the Army (58%), 17 percent Marines, 14 percent Air Force, 10 percent Navy, and 2 percent Coast Guard.

Table 2: Activation					
Have you been activated within the last five years?	Yes			No	
		53%			47%
If yes, what branch of service?	Army	Marines	Air Force	Navy	Coast Guard
	58%	17%	14%	10%	2%

Sources of Funding for Education

Respondents were asked what sources they use for their university education (Figure 2). Clearly, the source of most respondents' funding for university education is VA educational benefits. A substantial portion of respondents use money they earn from work to fund their education. About one-third have loans or grants. Military tuition assistance is used by approximately one-fourth of respondents. Relatively few fund their education through family resources/support or scholarships.

Figure 2: Sources of Funding for University Education



Demographic difference regarding the data summarized in Figure 2:

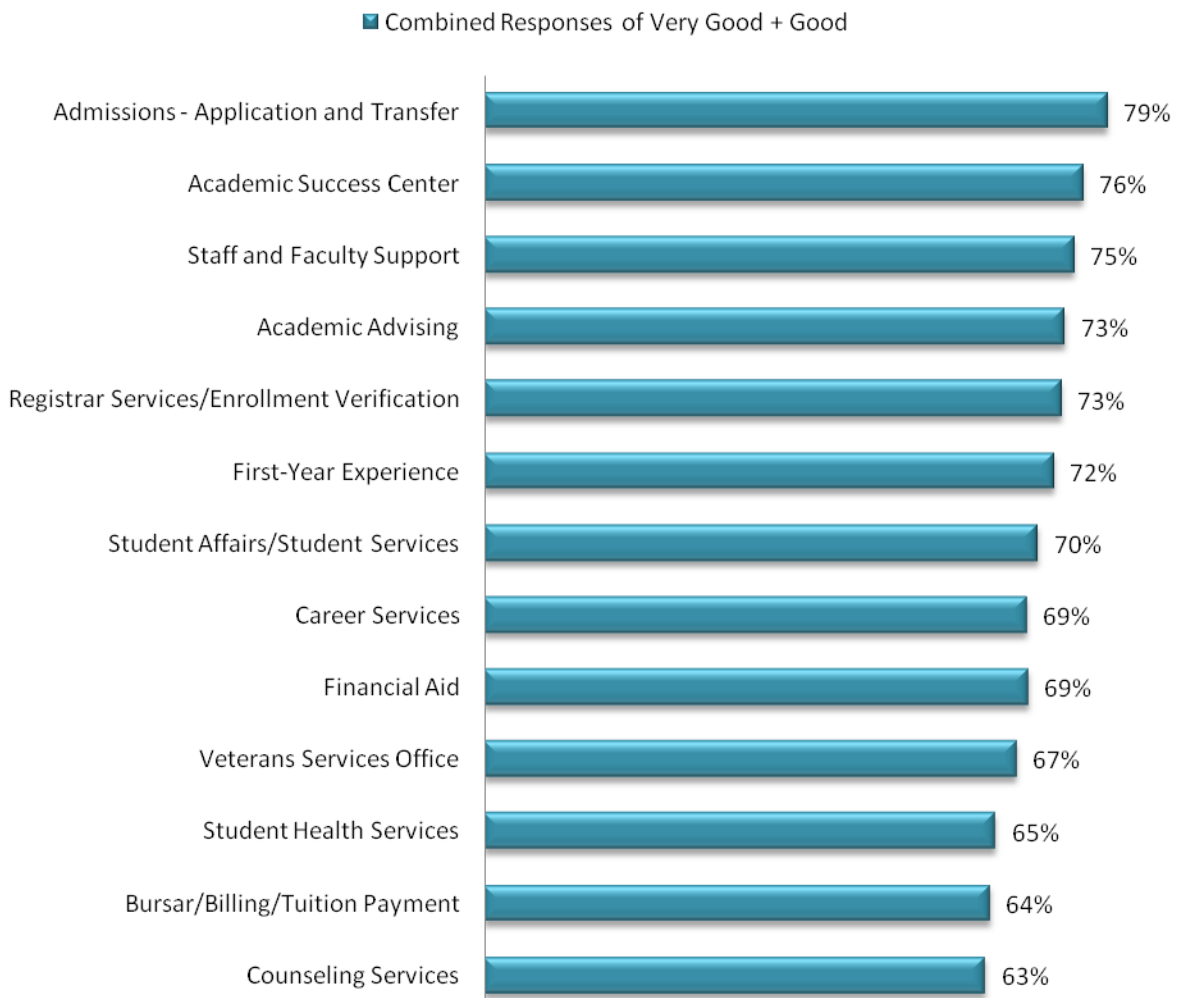
- Those not activated within the past 5 years, were more likely to use loans and grants to fund their education.
- Respondents with less than \$25,000 household income were more likely to use grants to fund their education.
- National Guard members were more likely to fund their education using military tuition assistance.

UWRF Services, Resources, and Policies

Rating UWRF Services

Respondents were asked to rate their experience with various UWRF resources and services. Figure 3 indicates that respondents were quite uniform in their assessment of all the services listed in the survey. Nearly two-thirds or more of respondents report very good or good experiences with every resource or service listed (only those who have had experience with the resource or service were included in the percentages listed in Figure 3). In particular, experiences with admissions were rated the highest; counseling services the lowest.

Figure 3: Rating Experiences with UWRF Resources/Services

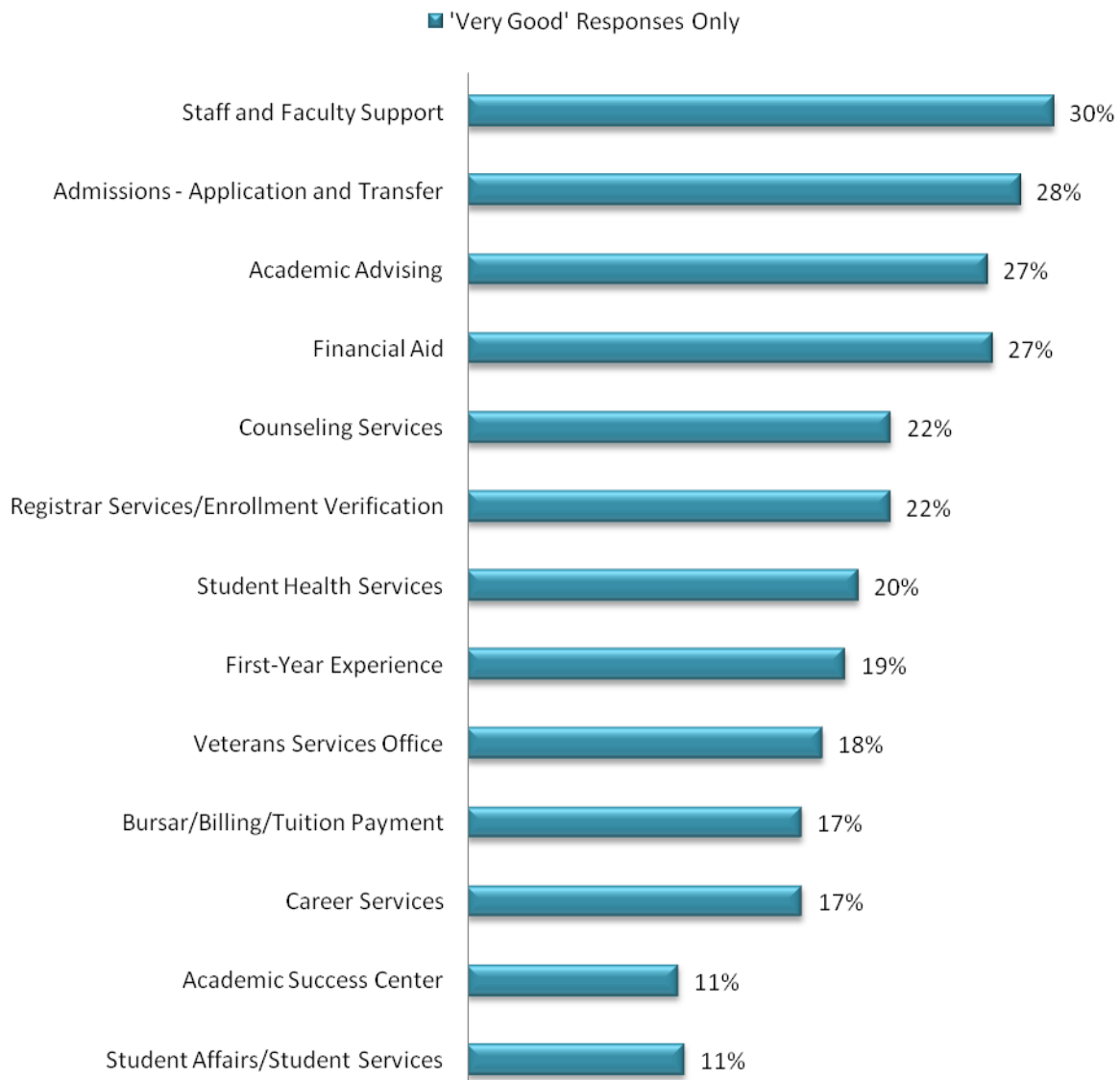


In terms of differences among demographic groups:

- Those who have not been activated within the last five years rate student affairs/student services higher.
- Respondents 25 years old and younger rate student health services higher.

To provide further perspective to the data in Figure 3, the SRC looked at only those respondents who said their experience with a particular UWRf resource or service was “very good” (“good” responses were excluded). As Figure 3a highlights, clearer distinctions appear when only the very highest ratings are considered. Approximately one-fourth to one-third of respondents report “very good” experiences with staff/faculty support, admissions, academic advising, and financial aid. Approximately one-fifth of respondents report “very good” experiences with counseling services, registrar services, and student health services. Less than one-fifth of respondents report “very good” experiences with first-year experience, veterans services office, bursar, career services, academic success center, and student affairs/student services.

Figure 3a: Rating Experiences with UWRf Resources/Services



Additional Comments about UWRF Resources/Services Experiences

Respondents were given the opportunity to expand upon their experiences with the UWRF resources/services covered in Figure 1. Comments were provided by 35 respondents. In their postings, respondents discussed their experiences with the Veterans Services Office, VA benefits, and other comments regarding UWRF services. Appendix B, Question 4 to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.

Comments include:

“Reintegrating back to the University is difficult after deployment and there were no services available to help with the overwhelming list of “things” to do.”

“The only complaint I have is the school not being registered for Tuition Assistance benefits. These benefits go directly to the school helping me and my fellow veterans pay for college. By not going through the registration process, you are jeopardizing our ability to receive these benefits, thus taking money away from the college.”

“The veteran's office has always been unavailable and unhelpful, however recently I found that since UWRF has hired a full time VA representative, many issues have been resolved and gone a lot smoother. Kudos on that aspect.”

Helpfulness on Campus

Respondents were asked to share information about members of the UWRF campus community who have been particularly helpful to them as a veteran or family member/dependent of a veteran. Thirty-four respondents provided comments. Some respondents shared information about multiple members of the campus community, so a total of 46 responses were categorized. The comments were divided into 6 categories: UWRF staff, faculty, students, veterans services office, ROTC, and other. Appendix B, Question 5 to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.

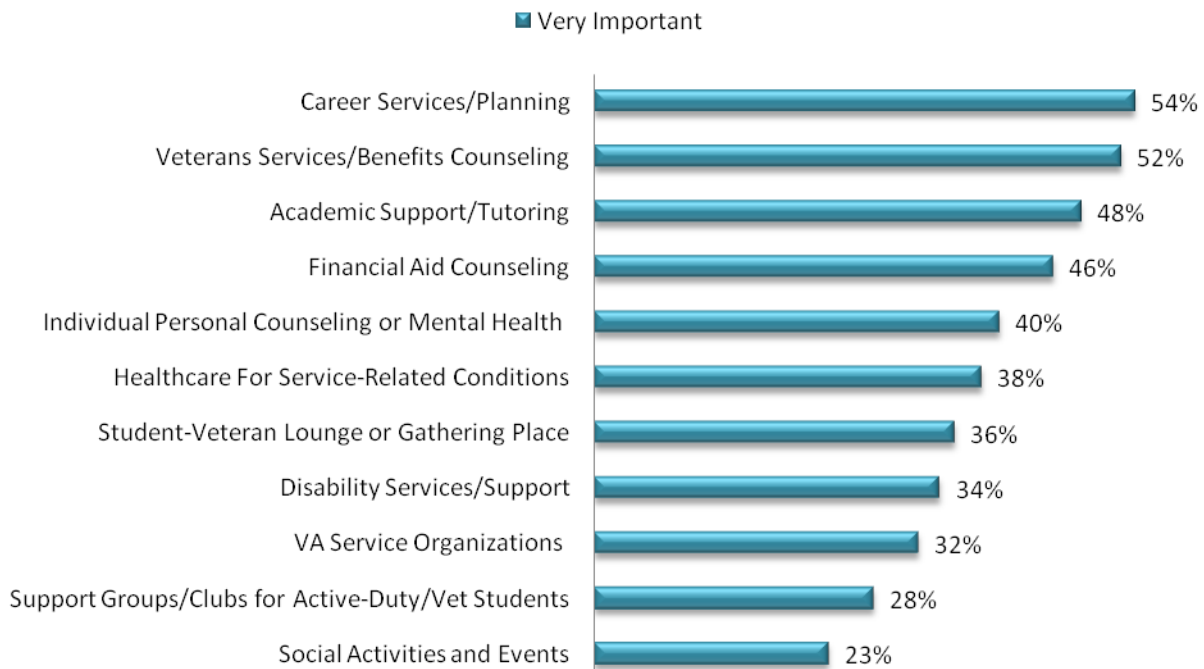
The groupings in order of the number of responses per category are highlighted in Table 3. UWRF staff received the most comments (28% of additional comments). Tied with the second highest number of comments were UWRF faculty and the Veterans Services Office, both at 24 percent.

Categories	Count	Percentage
UWRF Staff	13	28%
UWRF Faculty	11	24%
UWRF Veterans Services Office	11	24%
UWRF Students	6	13%
UWRF ROTC	3	7%
OTHER	2	4%
TOTAL	46	100%

Level of Importance

Respondents were given the opportunity to rate the level of importance they place on various services (Figure 4). The respondents to this survey placed a high level of importance on career services, yet they gave these services a fairly average rating in terms of their satisfaction (see Figure 1). Veterans services, academic support/tutoring, and financial aid counseling were “very important” to nearly one-half of the respondents. Less than one-third said VA service organizations, support groups/clubs, or social activities and events were “very important” to them.

Figure 4: Level of Importance of Various Services



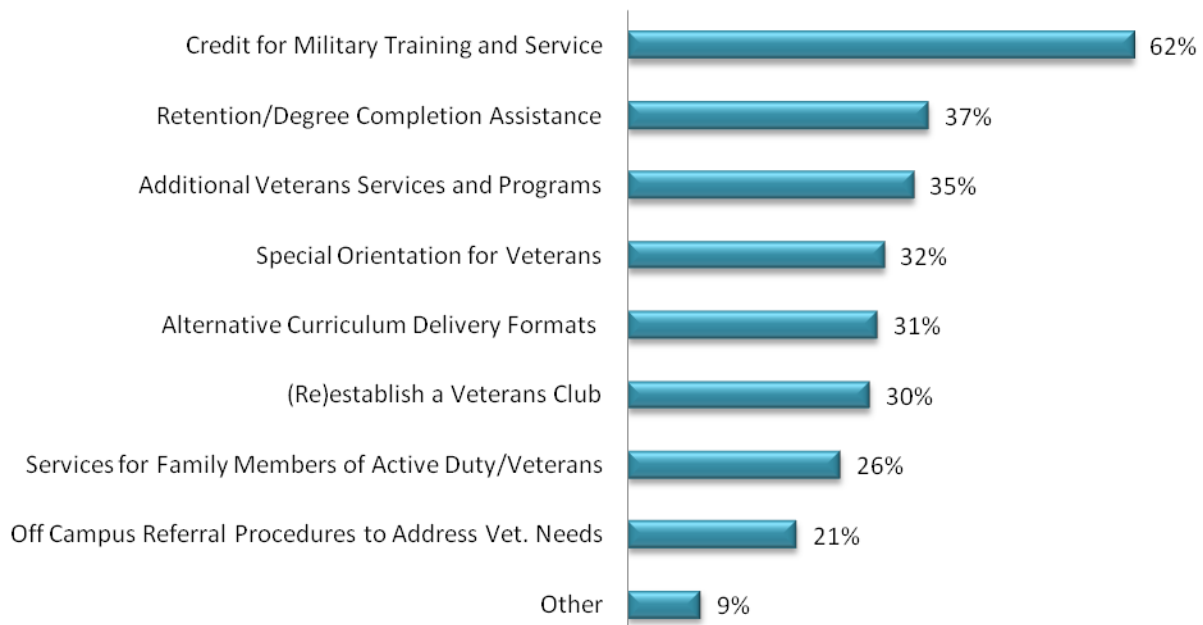
In terms of demographic differences,

- Younger respondents (25 and under) are more likely to place high importance on social activities and events.
- Those who have not been activated within the past 5 years place more importance on disability services/support.
- National Guard members, and younger (25 and under) respondents are more likely to say support groups and/or clubs specifically for active-duty and veteran students are very important to them.
- Females, and those without children in the home are more likely to say VA service organizations (American Legion, DAV, etc.) were only ‘somewhat important’ to them. This is the only instance in which statistical tests show males and females have statistically significant differences of opinion. Forty-eight percent of females said VA service organizations were ‘somewhat important’ to them; 31 percent of males felt this way.
- Those who have been activated within the past 5 years place more importance on a student-veteran lounge or gathering place.

Areas of Focus

Respondents were given an opportunity to choose which items they believe UWRF should focus on in terms of veterans' services and policies (Figure 5). By a very wide margin, respondents most want UWRF to focus on granting credit for military training and service. Five other items were identified by approximately one-third of the respondents as things on which they would like UWRF to focus: retention/degree completion assistance, more veterans services and programs, a special orientation for veterans, alternative curriculum formats (on-line, evening, weekend, etc.), and reestablishing a veterans club. Nine percent of respondents wrote in "other" areas of focus. Responses in the "other" category included communication regarding GI Bill tuition payment status, and a welcome orientation meeting for veterans. See Appendix B, Question 2 for 'other' comments.

Figure 5: What Should UWRF Focus On in Terms of Veterans Services and Policies?



Demographic differences regarding the data summarized in Figure 5:

- Respondents with children in their home were more likely to say UWRF should focus on credit for military training and service.
- National Guard respondents and those who have been activated within the last five years were more likely to say UWRF should focus on retention/degree completion assistance.
- Younger respondents (25 and under), respondents with children in their home, and family members/dependents of veterans were more likely to say UWRF should focus on services for family members of active duty service members/veterans.

Providing Better Service to Student-Veterans

An open-ended question asked respondents to describe one thing UWRF could do to provide better service to student-veterans. Sixty-seven responses were placed into 9 categories (Table 4). The two largest categories of comments focused on VA assistance and benefits (16 comments) and the Veterans Services Office (14 comments). Orientation recommendations rounded out the top three.

Comments regarding VA assistance generally focused on the timely payment (or lack thereof) of benefits. Comments Included:

“Timely payment of benefits. Even if the problem is not at your level, provide access to the problem folks and help fix it.”

“My only problem is that I haven't received my housing allowance from the VA for last semester, so money has been tight. But I don't see how UWRF can help with that. If there is anything that can be done to pressure the VA to work faster on that, it would be great.”

Table 4: What One Thing Could UWRF Do to Provide Better Service to Student-Veterans?

Topic	Count	%
VA Assistance/Tuition/Benefits	16	24%
Veterans Services Office	14	21%
Orientation/Welcome/Transition	9	13%
Faculty/Staff	4	6%
Veterans Specific Assistance	4	6%
Family	2	3%
Transferring Credit	2	3%
Veterans Club	2	3%
Other/Miscellaneous	14	21%
Total	67	100%

Comments regarding the Veterans Services Office centered primarily on the tenure of staff.

“Have one person, that has been there for awhile, that knows all the ins and outs of Veteran Benefits while on and off deployment.”

“.....you need to have a steady counselor, who isn't going to be transferred in 6 months to a year.”

Other comments from respondents described the need for additional orientation services for veterans.

“A re-orientation to the campus upon returning and someone to help explain the steps necessary to re-enter and a place to discuss issues with fellow veterans.”

“If possible have a separate day for in processing (ids, and welcome week). Most of the stuff I sat through had nothing to do with me. The briefing was greatly geared towards high schoolers entering college. I highly disliked playing the games along the way; I think it's geared towards the younger crowd. I would also like to see more information incorporated into the welcome weeks about veterans, maybe have a representative come and speak. Even if it's a short speech.”

“Maybe have a gathering each fall semester so individuals who are in Chapter 31, etc., can get all the information they need to start the school year.”

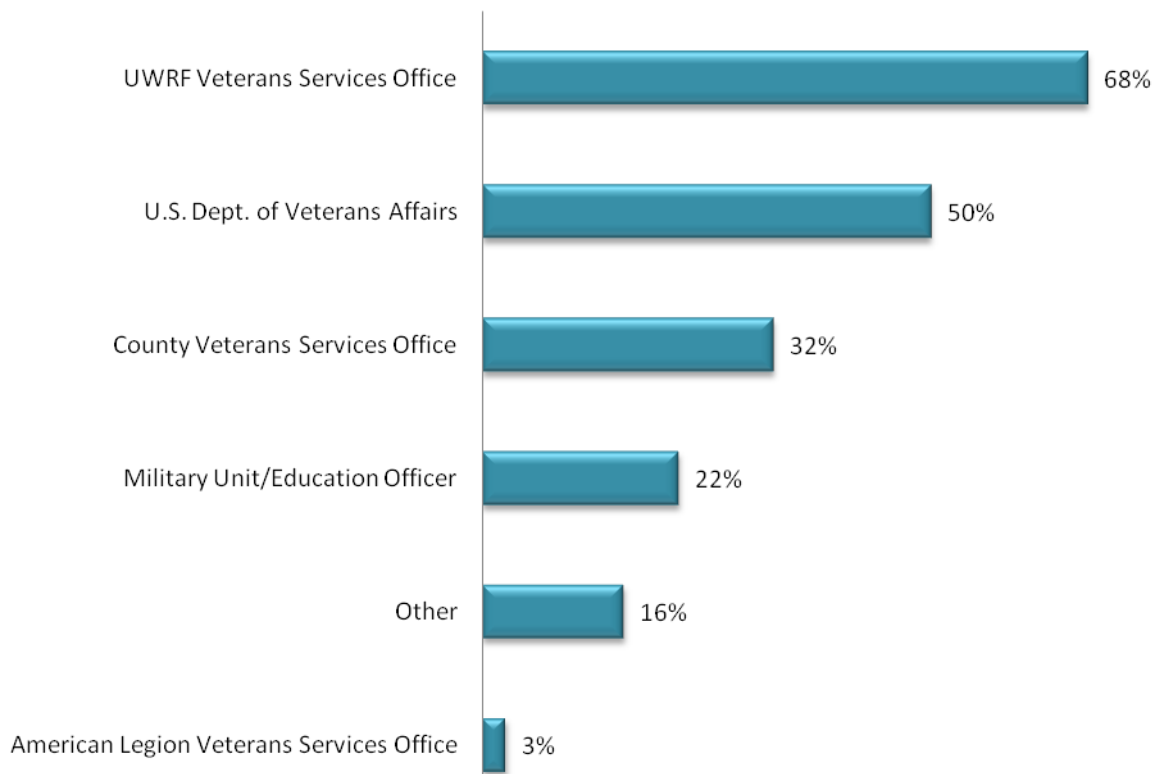
All responses to this question are included in Appendix B, Question 10.

Veterans Benefits and Services

Resources Used in Obtaining Information about Veterans Services and Benefits

Veterans were asked which resources they use in obtaining information about veterans services and benefits (Figure 6). The UWRF Veterans Services Office received the highest response; more than two-thirds report using that resource. A considerable drop-off occurs for the second most used resource, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, followed by another step drop-off to the County Veteran Services Office. Less than one-fourth report using their military unit/education officer and only 3 percent use the American Legion Veterans Service Office. “Other” received a considerable number of responses. Comments ranged from obtaining information online to talking with a parent. All “other” comments can be found in Appendix B, Question 1.

Figure 6: Resources Used in Obtaining Information about Veterans Services and Benefits



Differences regarding where respondents go for information about veterans services and benefits:

- Respondents with household incomes of \$25,000 and above are more likely to go to the County Veterans Services Office for information about veterans’ services and benefits.
- Respondents 25 years old and younger, and those in the National Guard are more likely to obtain veterans services and benefit information from their military unit/education officer.

Campus Experience

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with various statements pertaining to aspects of their experiences at UWRf. A majority of respondents either agree/strongly agree with all of the statements included in Table 5 with one exception. Few respondents reported difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRf.

Campus Resources

- Most respondents (90% agree or strongly agree) know where to go on campus if they have questions regarding veterans’ services.

VA Education Benefits

- Eight in ten respondents understand the paperwork associated with VA education benefits.
- However, approximately two-thirds of the respondents have experienced delays in receiving their VA education benefits.

UWRf Staff

- Approximately six in ten respondents believe their transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided to them by UWRf personnel.
- 54 percent believe UWRf has qualified staff trained to address service members’/veterans’ needs.
- 57 percent say UWRf faculty and staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus.

Part of the Campus Community

- A slight majority (58%) of respondents feel connected with other UWRf students.

Table 5: UWRf Experiences					
Please choose the response that best represents your opinion to the following statements:	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I know where to go on campus if I have questions regarding veterans services	111	39%	51%	7%	3%
I have experienced delays in receiving my VA education benefits	111	37%	27%	25%	10%
I have understood the paperwork associated with VA education benefits	112	15%	65%	16%	4%
UWRf faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of the veterans on campus	110	12%	45%	20%	5%
I feel connected with other UWRf students	110	10%	48%	25%	13%
My transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided to me by UWRf personnel	110	9%	51%	19%	7%
UWRf has qualified staff trained to address service members’/veterans’ needs	110	9%	45%	27%	6%
I have had difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRf	111	4%	14%	39%	23%

There was only one statistically significant demographic difference in the responses to the statements shown in Table 5.

- Statistical analysis indicates those who have been activated within the past 5 years were less likely to feel connected with other UWRf students.

Difficulties

Respondents were asked if they are experiencing any difficulties that may cause them to stop attending UWRF (Figure 7). Sixteen percent reported that they are experiencing such difficulties; more than four-fifths are not. There were no statistically significant differences by class standing (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, grad students) with respect to experiencing difficulties that may cause them to leave school. Although small in the overall respondent count, Reservists, by percentage, were slightly more likely to be experiencing difficulties that may cause them to stop attending UWRF (4 out of the 15 Reservists who completed the survey, or 27 percent, were experiencing difficulties that might lead them to leave UWRF).

Figure 7: Experiencing Difficulties that May Cause You to Stop Attending UWRF?



A follow-up question asked respondents to describe the difficulties that might cause them to stop attending UWRF (Table 6).

While the complete comments are available in Appendix B, Question 8a, the following are representative comments from respondents.

Five respondents identified physical and mental health issues as reasons they may need to leave school.

"I got out of the Army two years ago and I have been going quite often to appointments at the VA hospital. Because of this, I attended last spring semester but had to pull out of last fall and the current semester due to appointments."

Difficulties with VA benefit assistance was noted by four students.

"My GI Bill has not yet come in and I applied over 3 months ago, also my Tuition assistance has not yet come in from goarmy.com because the university has not yet applied with the website."

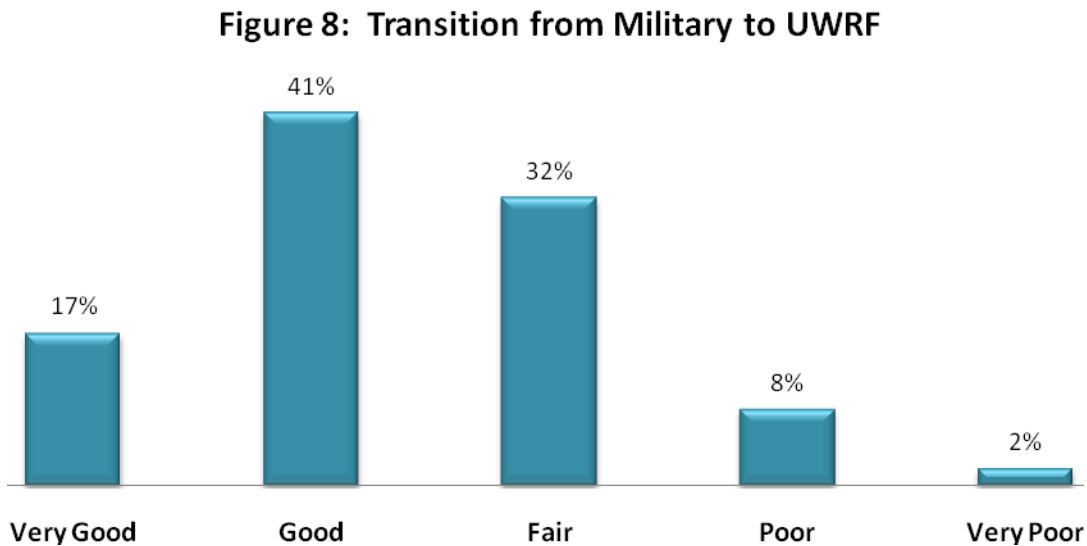
Issue	Count	Percentage
Health	5	29%
VA Benefits/Assistance	4	24%
Academic	4	24%
Family	1	6%
Work	1	6%
Multiple	1	6%
Other	1	6%
TOTAL	17	100%

Four other respondents commented on academic issues (departmental concerns, choosing a major, etc.).

“I find it hard to declare a major that I know I want to do the rest of my life. It seems that a student needs to know what career they are going into before enrolling in college. I know from personal experience that some times you think you would like a job but when you actually do it, you can’t stand it. Maybe some sort of job shadow should be offered in each field before a student commits to a major. It would save the student time and money, but maybe that’s not what the university wants.”

Overall Transition from the Military

Respondents were asked to rate their transition from the military to UWRF (Figure 8).



Nearly 6 out of 10 respondents rated their overall transition from the military to UWRF as either ‘very good’ or ‘good’. Almost one-third had a “fair” transition, and 10 percent (11 respondents) had a “poor” or “very poor” transition to academic life.

The following statistically significant differences were found related to those who had “poor” or “very poor” transitions to UWRF. They were statistically more likely:

- To rate their experience with UWRF bursar/billing/tuition payment as very poor
- To rate their experience with UWRF registrar services/enrollment verification as very poor
- To not understand the paperwork associated with VA education benefits
- To disagree that their transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided by UWRF personnel
- To disagree that UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of the veterans on campus

Conclusions

The UWRF Veterans Survey was designed to measure the levels of services UWRF is providing to veterans; the levels of satisfaction veterans express for UWRF and its services; and the difficulties veterans face at UWRF. Some results are encouraging. Overall, nearly two-thirds or more of respondents report very good or good experiences with every UWRF resource or service listed on the survey. In addition, 90 percent of respondents report knowing where to go on campus if they have questions regarding veterans' services. However, there are substantial challenges. Results suggest, and written comments confirm, that delays and confusion regarding VA benefits are common. There are also considerable portions of this population who do not believe UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs (33%), nor do they believe UWRF faculty and staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus (25%), or feel connected (38%) to other UWRF students. The comments from the survey are compelling (Appendix B). The number of written comments (for a relatively small sample), the length, and specificity of the comments are noteworthy.

The analysis in this report concludes:

- **Respondents most want UWRF to focus on credit for military training and service.** When asked what top three items they believe UWRF should focus on in terms of veterans' services and policies, the overwhelming top choice was military credit, followed by retention/degree completion assistance, and additional veterans' services and programs.
- **Most respondents understand the paperwork associated with VA education benefits.** However, approximately two-thirds have experienced delays in receiving their benefits. Respondent comments suggest frustration in this area.
- **A substantial proportion of respondents (32%) rate their transition from the military to UWRF as fair, and 10 percent rate it poor or very poor.** Respondents who report having a very poor or poor transition from the military to UWRF are statistically more likely to rate their experience with the UWRF bursar and registrar departments as very poor. They are also less likely to understand the paperwork associated with their VA benefits, less likely to agree their transition to college has been made easier by UWRF personnel, and are less likely to agree UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of the veterans on campus.
- **Sixteen percent of respondents are experiencing difficulties that may cause them to leave UWRF.** Reasons given for possibly leaving the university include health issues, VA benefit difficulties, and academic problems.
- **Those who have been activated within the past 5 years were less likely to feel connected to other UWRF students.** They also place higher importance on a student-veteran lounge or gathering place, rate student/affairs/student services lower, and say UWRF should focus on retention/degree completion assistance.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not respond to a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who do respond. For example, if only those veterans who had an easy transition from the military to UWRF responded to the questionnaire, the values in the report would likely overstate the ease in which veterans transition to university life.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who respond to the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who respond to subsequent mailings. Those who return subsequent mailings are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume they are representative of that group.

In the case of an on-line survey, such as the UWRF Veterans Survey, the SRC compared the responses of those who completed their survey in response to the first invitation to those who completed the survey after reminders were sent. Those who responded to the survey after the reminders are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first invitation) and we assume they are representative of that group. In this survey, 59 people responded to the first invitation and 55 responded after reminders. Out of 66 variables tested, we found 3 variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1).

Respondents to the first invitation, compared to later respondents, rated their experiences with UWRF admissions slightly higher (mean = 1.86) than those responding after reminders (mean = 2.25) on a scale of “1 = Very Good” to “5 = Very Poor.” Earlier respondents also rated their UWRF financial aid experiences slightly higher (mean = 2.61) than later respondents (mean = 3.27).

In addition, those responding early placed slightly less importance (mean = 2.24) on individual personal counseling or mental health counseling services than later respondents (mean = 1.81) on a scale of “1 = Very Important” to “3 = Not Important.” While these items are statistically different, the differences are relatively small and would not affect the overall interpretation of the results. **The Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that non-response bias is not a concern for this sample.** This means these data should accurately reflect the opinions of UWRF student-veterans.

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses to First Invitation and After Reminders			
Variable	Mean First Invitation	Mean After Reminders	Statistical Significance
Q3 Rate Resource/Service: UWRF Admissions	1.86	2.25	.031
Q3 Rate Resource/Service: UWRF Financial Aid	2.61	3.27	.046
Q7 Level of Importance Placed on Service: Individual Personal Counseling or Mental Health Counseling	2.24	1.81	.028

Appendix B – 2010 UWRF Veterans Survey - Written Comments

1. Where do you go for information about Veterans Services and benefits? *'other'* responses (18 responses)

- Online/Varied online sources (4x)
- Associated Press
- Friends, Arne Thompson
- Internet
- Internet/Google
- Marathon County
- My Father the Veteran
- My unit
- Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- Parent
- University of Minnesota Veterans Services Office
- V F W
- Va.gov
- WDVA Website
- Wisconsin. Dept of VA

2. From the list below, please choose the top three items you believe UWRF should focus on in terms of Veterans services and policies. *'other'* responses (10 responses)

- A policy for Veterans having to miss school for training and going over the "3" gimmies for allowed absence
- Better Service Hours
- Faster payments
- Financial grants and scholarships
- GI Bill
- Keep up good communication about GI Bill tuition payment status.
- More information for dependants
- Physical Location on Campus available for Veteran's and Military Associated People (ROTC, etc) use. This location could serve as a gathering place, meeting place, offices for Veterans Service Officers on campus, small computer lab, and maybe even a used book exchange for Vets. If you have a physical location, more people will interface, make things happen and really develop this area of UWRF.
- Sign up for Tuition Assistance Benefits
- Weeks of welcome orientation meeting for veterans.

4. Please provide any additional comments you may have about your experiences with the UWRF resources/services described above. (35 responses)

VETERANS SERVICES OFFICE (8 COMMENTS)

- Every year someone new became in charge of vet affairs. Now you have someone permanent in the office. This person needs to really be knowledgeable in all aspects of the Federal and State policies.
- Great customer service at new veterans office
- I feel the most significant thing UWRF has done to show a firm commitment to veterans is the appointment of Nicole Lillis as Veterans programs Manager. She is one of us and has sacrificed like us by raising her hand, swearing an oath, putting on a uniform, picking up a weapon, and standing a post. I hope the position permanent as the veteran stream from these current wars will run long into the future as returning service members leave service, retire, or disability ends careers.
- I gave the Veteran's Services Office a rating of Very Poor because of the way I was treated when I first came to UWRF as a transfer student back from Afghanistan. I am aware of the change in leadership of the VSO, so I am sure this rating would not be applicable any more. This, however, is the rating I would give my experience with the VSO that was here in 2007.
- I know it must be difficult to work in the veterans office with all of the continuous change in government programs but it would be nice to ask a question and not have the representative put their head in their hands and have to make three phone calls every time. maybe more training or information should be made available to the reps.
- The veteran's office has always been unavailable and unhelpful, however recently I found that since UWRF has hired a full time VA representative, many issues have been resolve and gone a lot smoother. Kudos on that aspect.
- The veterans office was a joke when I used to go there. The office was never open, and the people who helped me were students who had no clue what they were doing. If we actually have a full time person who runs the program from the office, that is a huge step in the right direction.
- Veterans office could be more helpful.

VA ASSISTANCE/TUITION/BENEFITS (6 COMMENTS)

- I am a vet under Chapter 31 program. I am concerned that my information is not being sent to my counselor because I have not received stipend pay since mid December.
- I have sent multiple emails multiple times with assorted questions with no or very late responses. I have had multiple problems with GI Bill payments that have yet to get resolved. I have resorted to working these issues myself.
- I think it's unclear what I can expect as far as financial aid and stuff like that. I don't know until a few weeks before the school year starts of what I can expect for financial support. I wish that we could know before the previous year ends so we can plan ahead.
- Not so much a problem with the UWRF V.A. but the Dept. of V.A. is too slow on their payments for tuition assistance and GI Bill and unclear to which benefits one qualifies for and way too much paperwork just to get money. The military guarantees a person so much money for college but is always reluctant to pay.

- The only complaint I have is the school not being registered for Tuition Assistance benefits. These benefits go directly to the school helping me and my fellow veterans pay for college. By not going through the registration process, you are jeopardizing our ability to receive these benefits, thus taking money away from the college.
- VA representative is very unhelpful. Went in to get questions answered and got turned away with nothing answered. Only information given was incorrect and caused me more problems.

UWRF SERVICES (5 COMMENTS)

- I had some paper work lost in the registrars office
- I really have not had too much success with academic advising. Part of the problem may be I wish there was a general adviser for those who are unsure of their degree path. If there is one, please let me know.
- It is very hard to communicate between departments, so I often find out information after the fact when it is needed.
- Reintegrating back to the University is difficult after deployment and there were no services available to help with the overwhelming list of "things" to do.
- Student Affairs/ Student Services---This University does not offer its students very many services. The workout facility is at the High School level. There is rarely anything going on for the students to do such as comedian, music singer, movie on campus, etc. I have been to a couple of other universities and there were always 1 or 2 fun things for the students to do on Friday and Saturday night.

MULTIPLE TOPICS BY RESPONDENT (4 COMMENTS)

- Advisers should automatically enroll students in required courses if they miss their enrollment dates. / / 2. Adjunct professors who do not keep office hours should have student tutors for one hour for each class they have. / / 3. Professors should quiz their students at the beginning of every class, multiple choice, 5 questions or less for extra credit. / / 4. Parking is absurd, in a small community with a small college, parking should not be an issue. However, it is very difficult to find parking near campus. / / 5. Our dilapidated physical fitness facilities are in dire need of a serious upgrade. Physical fitness facilities should be at the heart of the campus, and should provide a state of the art fitness experience! / / Lets face it, this institution is lacking in many of the areas which help students become leaders of industry. Inspire us to do, and to create great things. Give us a great fitness facility, give us free parking close to campus. Make us feel important and in-turn, we will do great things which will reflect, greatly, the quality of a University of Wisconsin River Falls education.
- Constantly revolving Veteran's Service Officers leave little familiarization for students requesting assistance. More than once, I've been given incorrect information about my Veteran's benefits from either the Veteran's Service Office or the Financial Aid office. My advisor is great about working with me throughout my deployments and personal issues, but other faculty has proven difficult. There aren't many upper level classes or main Gen Eds available online for soldiers that are deployed overseas.

- For the most part, UWRF is a good place to attain an undergraduate level education. The faculty and staff is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. / However, there are a few abnormalities that I wish to address. / (1)The printing system in the Library is substandard. Printing is a crapshoot. Everybody in the library has the ability to send print jobs to same printer. Approximately one out of every four print jobs I have sent has caused me to waste paper; either I end up printing someone else's print job, someone else prints mine, or the printer gets jammed up and eats my paper. Last semester I estimate that I was forced to drop approximately 30 sheets of paper into the recycle bin. If every one of the 6400 UWRF students experienced the same disappointment, that would equate to 192,000 sheets of paper (or 640 reams)! That would fill a small supply closet! Oh, one other thing; how much ink would it take to fill all 192,000 sheets of paper. This unacceptable. I suggest that the school allocate some funds to a larger printer that duplex prints and has individual trays assigned to each computer station. This would alleviate printing traffic jams and a drastic reduction in the waste paper stream. As a side note, the library needs to open a little earlier. 30 minutes before the first classes is not enough time for students to check e-mails and print out the days PowerPoint presentations. / (2) Academic advising is lacking. It does not adequately guide the student in all his/her options. Academic advisors are wonderful in giving guidance on subjects within the individual's college, but when it comes to the general education or other requisite courses they often have no clue to what the supplemental courses will add to the student's knowledge. I am an earth science major, however I want to make sure that I know what I am agreeing to when I sign up for a specific social science class. / At NWTC where I earned a couple associate degrees, I had an assigned guidance counselor that was able to answer questions on ANY class provided at the school. This system was great! I knew exactly what classes I needed to gain the knowledge I was looking for. At UWRF, most of my peers and I feel that we are uncertain if we are being steered in the right direction. Frankly, we would rather be holding the steering wheel. / I know this response was longer than the norm, but these two concerns are important to not just me, but the majority of the student body.
- The three topics that I marked poor are because I am dissatisfied with my advisor, tuition payment, and veterans' services. All my advisor has really done for me is give me a pin number when we meet for academic advising. While I was on active duty, I took an online class through River Falls and I was allotted 5000 dollars to spend on education. I applied for a reimbursement of my online summer course and I never received compensation and when I called the Veterans office I was referred to the Registrar and all they had to give me was an email address as a person to contact. Also, whenever I visit or call the veterans office usually don't get a hold of anyone or when I come during the hours that are posted on the website there is no one there to help me with my questions. So I have applied for my benefits by going online and finding the forms and handing them into the registrar's office.

POSITIVE SENTIMENTS (4 COMMENTS)

- A great group to work with. All aspects of UWRF work together to ensure a smooth transition. They are always available and helpful. Thank you!
- I don't really have any complaints, and I think things are running smoothly. If it's not broken, don't fix it! :O)

- My experience here has been good.
- The people in charge have been very good about getting back to me if I have questions and it's greatly appreciated! Thanks!

FACULTY/STAFF (3 COMMENTS)

- I had a bad experience with Coni Gehler. I had to miss class for Military training for an up coming deployment back in 2008. She did not give me ample amount of time to get caught up like the rest of my professors did and as a result, my grade dropped significantly. I received an 88% on the final but only walked out of the class with a C because of my training that I was required to go and do. The University should make polices in the event of this stuff.
- My advisor should have advocated for more of my credits being accepted (ex. Math, English, Global Perspectives, Multidisciplinary) when I transferred here so I didn't have to retake so many of the classes I'd already taken. There should also be credits allowed to veterans for Global Perspectives and Multidisciplinary...I've had enough "worldly" and diverse experiences, I don't think it was necessary to take GP and MD classes.
- faculty members on this campus need to be more understanding when you have reserve commitments that require you to miss some class. Some of the professors on this campus were very uncooperative when I tried to find an alternative means. There were also some who were very helpful.

CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING AND SERVICE (1 comment)

- Credit for military training and service: Much of my credits earned while in the military transferred without difficulty. The issue lies in various general education requirements, multicultural diversity classes and such. How can someone be considered satisfactory in that area after taking a semester course while I am unsatisfactory after living in foreign cultures for 4 of the past 7 years?

MISCELLANEOUS (5 COMMENTS)

- I would like to see more elevators and ramps for the handicap.
- I would like to see the van office at urn moved to a different location. I had the hardest time trying to find it. I do love the support that is given from the people in the office. Excellent help.
- It would be nice to see some sort of 'safety net' for the veterans who 'fall on their face'.
- Maybe have some sort of recognition ceremony for the veterans on veterans day? Also, tutors designated to help veterans as their learning/understanding styles may vary from their peers.
- Textbook services has already saved me hundreds of dollars. Keep it up.

5. Has there been a member(s) of the UWRF campus community who has been particularly helpful to you as a veteran or family member or dependent of a veteran? If so, please provide their name and a brief description of their assistance. (34 Total Responses)

- Nicole Lillis (2x)
- Although I do not know her well; I see her ambition and dedication as a very promising and positive aspect to the Veteran's on UWRF campus...I am speaking of Nicole Lillis. She has done an exceptionally great job so far.
- Because of a deployment, I had to miss multiple days of student teaching. Dee McCollum was extremely helpful with this issue and dealing with Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.
- Deb Marek - has been very helpful. I have had to withdraw and come back to school more than once and she has made that a very easy process. If I have a form that I need to turn in, she has been very helpful by directing me to the person that I need to go to. Also, she has been kind enough to send me reminders for deadlines.
- Dr. Brian Schultz - He has been great about helping me take classes throughout my current deployment so I can continue progress toward my degree.
- Dr. Thomas Holleran. Solid advising & assistance in beginning and completing my program of study.
- Dr. Travis Tubré in the Psychology Department as well as Nicole Lillis. Also, Dr. Miller and Dr. Kim Mogen in the Biology Dept.
- Ellen Schultz, academic advisor
- Ellen Schultz, my advisor, has been fairly helpful in getting me back into school and back on track. Jim Lauck and Dave Till when they were working in the VA office.
- Ellen Shultz. She is very motivated and is willing to take time out of her busy schedule to help answer any questions or research anything you may need help with. I have struggled finding a major that suits me and she has been understanding and willing to help any way she can.
- Erin from financial aid office
- Erin from the Veterans Service Office...well she was
- Erin Perrault -She helped with all the benefit transfers questions I had. She helped me understand the process and assisted me with whatever I needed.
- Erin Perrault Wayne went above and beyond to help me out with the paperwork that had been lost by the man that worked her job the semester before. She went out of her way to find out information that was needed to re-complete my paperwork and contacted all the people that she needed to find answers for me. I really appreciated the time and effort she put into my problem. UWRF needs to hire more people that are dedicated to that high level of conscientiousness, like Mrs. Wayne.
- Erin- the past veteran rep. for the fall of 09-10. She was very helpful getting paperwork together for me to get registered for classes. Very kind and patient. Made me feel welcome on campus as a veteran. Pretty much the only person so far. It was appreciated.
- Gary Robinson, / SFC Gary Robinson has always helped me plan classes around my schedule and continuously is there to help me with questions or concerns. He is an asset to many veterans on campus. He has worked hard to help me, veterans, and other students that are serving on campus.
/ CDT Austin Peck

- Gretchen Link, Cynthia Kernahan, Linda Alvarez - they did her jobs remarkably well and were all very professional when dealing with me (quite regularly in some cases). Truly outstanding.
- Kristin Canan, one of the leaders of the Social Justice Committee, has been helpful as a person who has encouraged me to express my ideas and my extracurricular involvement. / Similarly, Dr. Michelle Parkinson, who is the Women's and Gender Studies Program Coordinator, has proven she cares about me as a person (not just as a student or tuition dollars) simply by taking the time to listen, and by being understanding. She has been an asset in helping me to get involved in the UWRF campus community. / / Additionally, the counselors at Student Health Services, and the Career Counselors at Career Services, have been helpful by being warm, optimistic, and willing to lend an ear or give advice whenever I have needed one
- Most professors that I have had support and make attempts to support my endeavors in my military training and education.
- Ms. Pam Weller, Plant and Earth Science. / Ms. Weller has been a positive influence as well as a strong motivator.
- My academic advisor Dr. Rellen Hardtke was very helpful in applying my transfer and military credit towards a physics dual degree program.
- My experience, to date, with all the faculty at UWRF has been outstanding! Especially those in the Geography department.
- Nicole Lillis has been a great help in explaining exactly what one needs to do to receive everything that one is entitled to.
- Nicole Lillis / E. Craig Morris / Greg Heinselman / Tom Pederson / and former acting Chancellor Dr. Connie Foster
- Nicole Lillis and James Lauck
- Nicole Lillis, Robert Cahalan, Darryl Miller, Brian Schultz, Ellen Schultz
- Nicole Lillis, she was a great help to me, in finding the status of my paperwork. She was very quick to respond to my email and in trying to get an answer back from the van.
- Nikki has been amazing, especially in establishing my account, getting everything set up, and made everything go incredibly smooth in my transition.
- Professor Kathy Olsen, I face certain challenges when my PTSD and depression set in. Sometimes I feel like Hell. Professor Olsen not only recognized when I was suffering but would put in extra work that she did not have to. Professor Olsen would reschedule tests for days when I had Psych appts. or just out of it. While never asking less from me, she made it possible for me to complete my work. Granted, I am an extreme case of challenges Vets face, but Professors like Katy Olsen are the reason I stay at River Falls.
- Robert Cahalan - pretty much everything!
- Shelley. / She has done a wonderful job, educating me on the process and taking care of everything else so that I may concentrate on my masters studies.
- The cadre of the UWRF ROTC program are outstanding in helping with any issues and help resolve them as soon as possible
- The people in the V.A. office, Nicole, Trevor and Rob I believe. All three were very helpful and worked in my favor.
- There have been three, but I do not remember their names.

- Yes the whole ROTC staff. They help us with every question we could possibly have.

8a. If yes to Q8, (are you experiencing any difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRP?), please describe the difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRP. (17 responses)

HEALTH (5 COMMENTS)

- During the 2009 Fall Semester, I experienced some severe medical problems - including being given a recalled prescription drug and a misdiagnosis - that made it nearly impossible to focus on my academic studies. Additionally, I had experienced a hostile domestic environment which, when coupled with the medical problems, made it extremely difficult to focus on my academic achievement. Because of a lack of knowledge of resources or support, I wined up failing most of my classes, and being put on Academic Probation for the 2010 Spring Semester. / / Both of these problems have relapsed, and because of a lack of empathy or understanding from most faculty persons, I may have to withdraw from the 2010 Spring Semester to avoid suspension
- I got out of the Army two years ago and I have been going quite often to appointments at the VA hospital. Because of this, I attended last spring semester but had to pull out of last fall and the current semesters do to appointments. Plus in April or may I will be having back surgery for a non-combat related injury during deployment. And in the next couple of years, I will need surgery on my left knee do to the same type of injury. So this has not been a good experience for me so far.
- I have developed atrial tachycardia and it makes it difficult to be at class when I have these episodes. The Minneapolis VA has been working with me on this issue. It is unexplainable and may have been induced by a medication I was taking for PTSD.
- I suffer from PTSD and Depression in relation to. Some days it is tough just to get out of bed. I have a hard time while driving due to deployment related issues, and it is a half hour of nervousness for me at times. It takes it toll when it comes time to sit in class and learn when your all wound up. I love school but it is tough sometimes to attend.
- PTSD

VA BENEFITS/ASSISTANCE (4 COMMENTS)

- Did not receive VA money for an entire semester
- If the tuition assistance application is not done I will not be able to receive the \$4,500 a year benefits and at that point, it would be advantageous to attend another college.
- Is it my responsibility to send my semester enrollment info to my VA counselor or does the school do that. I signed up for classes in November and when I didn't get paid I contacted my counselor and he told me that he didn't have any paperwork on me for Spring Semester. If my tuition doesn't get paid through Chapter 31, then I won't be able to attend because I don't want to take out anymore student loans.
- My GI Bill has not yet come in and I applied over 3 months ago, also my Tuition assistance has not yet come in from goarmyed.com because the university has not yet applied with the website.

ACADEMIC (4 COMMENTS)

- I find it hard to declare a major that I know I want to do the rest of my life. It seems that a student needs to know what career they are going into before enrolling in college. I know from personal

experience that some times you think you would like a job but when you actually do it, you can't stand it. Maybe some sort of job shadow should be offered in each field before a student commits to a major. It would save the student time and money, but maybe that's not what the university wants. Next semester I'm transferring to St. Cloud for their meteorology program, maybe I will be interested in this area.

- Personal feelings of inadequacy on the part of the UWRF CSIS program. Heavy Math and programming focus on churning out good qualified Java programmers but the Windows/Unix administration along with network administration and IT support portions seem either non-existent or scaled back to the point of almost being worthless.
- The biology department is sub-par. To go on to medical school, this is not the place to start.
- The whole Coni Gehler thing from a year and a half ago has really stained my view on this University and especially the Math Department.

FAMILY (1 COMMENT)

- Lack of support from immediate family, extended family moving out of state/region

WORK (1 COMMENT)

- Personally being able to balance the workload of school while still working full-time to be able to provide for myself.

MULTIPLE (1 COMMENT)

- Late VA Education Benefit payments, trouble finding cheap housing, lack of information about campus clubs and organizations in printed form (lack of connection to peers).

MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER (1 COMMENT)

- Graduation.

10. What ONE THING could UWRF do to provide better service for you as a student-veteran at UWRF?

VA ASSISTANCE/TUITION/BENEFITS/REGISTRATION (16 comments)

- Better guidance on school benefits
- Better notification of news/assistance
- Concentrate on making the payments faster.
- Honestly, everything's been going well. My only problem is that I haven't received my housing allowance from the VA for last semester, so money has been tight. But I don't see how UWRF can help with that. If there is anything that can be done to pressure the VA to work faster on that, it would be great.
- I honestly think that UWRF is doing a pretty good job. I've been fortunate that I don't have serious physical or emotional injuries from my experiences with the military. So for me, I don't feel like I need much assistance from the university. The biggest obstacles that I need assistance with are navigating the VA Educational system--there's so much paperwork and so many programs I don't know how anyone can keep it straight. Otherwise, I would just say to listen to what the guys with physical, emotional, and mental injuries have to say about how the university can help them.

- Less confusion within the registrars office
- Military personnel insist on professionalism and punctuality; therefore, we expect the same from our University. Late emails, miss-filled paperwork, and bureaucratic blunders are unacceptable.
- Provide a better understanding of the benefits we get and how to get them
- Provide more information on the opportunities and education benefits.
- Provide people that can explain my veteran benefits better, to include all the benefits that I have from being a disabled vet.
- Remind us of when paperwork is due. Such as filing for benefits.
- Right now, the service is getting better, but I would like to see workshops done for us to see what kinds of benefits are out there for us even though it may be repetitive. It will be very helpful.
- The ability to find out when my benefits are coming.
- Timely payment of benefits. Even if the problem is not at your level, provide access to the problem folks and help fix it.
- Understanding. There are always issues that come up with veteran financial aid. When you go to financial aid to figure it out, you always get attitude. 3 years ago when I was coming off of a deployment, I came back to UWRF, and I was eligible for a benefit increase. The VA makes you do an irrevocable election, and you have to wait months for it to go into effect. I went a long period of time without a payment and was considering withdrawing because it was too late for financial aid, my savings was empty, and my house payments were due. It's really frustrating because you are told that you have all these benefits coming, and you get passed around like a hot potato. They say "you have to do this first then wait..." a month later you follow up and they say "they didn't know what they were talking about, do this and wait..." You can only wait so long before you give up. I would imagine many veterans end up not completing their degrees because the benefit process it's a joke. Also, I'd say about 75 percent of veterans are receiving the correct benefits that they are entitled to. I talked to a guy last semester that only received half of his benefits for his entire 4 years of college. He missed out on like 20,000 dollars. I wish the government would simplify the process, and just write the check. Raise taxes if you have to, but don't tell us one thing, and do another...My point is that it really sucks begging for what you are entitled to. I don't want anything more than what I was promised.
- Work more closely with the VA to insure that GIB claims are done right and in a more timely matter.

VETERANS SERVICES OFFICE (14 comments)

- Have a Veteran's Service Officer that showed respect to people in need of assistance, and hours for people to come in and ask questions.
- Have one person, that has been there for awhile, that knows all the ins and outs of Veteran Benefits while on and off deployment.
- I am a veteran of 5 wars and each time I transitioned here, it was a mess. The one thing UWRF did great was appointing Nicole Lillis and E. Craig Morris.
- I have been gone for a year so I have yet to experience a truly helpful VA office on campus. In the past, it seems that no one was staffed there and when I happen on rare occasion find someone in the office, they were not very helpful.

- Keep the same individual that verifies and figures out veterans certificate of enrollment for more than one year. When I first transferred here I think Mrs. White was in charge and messed mine up big time, then it was some guy that did not seem to know what he was doing at first making it more confusing for me, and now there is someone else I'm not even sure who is in charge. There is Nicole Lillis and some other lady, basically I have no idea what's going on. If the university has a problem keeping people in that position pay them more or find a veteran that would be willing to take on a full time job and have a little more passion about the job, not to say Nicole Lillis is lacking in that area, but a veteran would probably be able to relate more and know how to deal with the VA on a different level.
- Like I stated earlier, you need to have a steady counselor, who isn't going to be transferred in 6 months to a year.
- Outreach and welcome. UWRF Vets office doesn't know me and have not attempted to know me.
- Reach out to them more than was in the past. Everyone marks down somewhere on applications whether they are a veteran or not. Make an effort to let them know where you are located and hours of when to seek info.
- River Falls has done a good job, but more Veteran services would be better.
- Staff the VA office with knowledgeable, polite, respectful workers who understand the processes and paperwork. I have only had poor experiences with them.
- Stress to new students that if they are veterans, contact the Veterans Service Office to help with the transition & direct possible new students to VSO to help make the process not so complicated.
- The one thing I thought could be done, has already been done-that is having someone in the veteran's office all the time.
- The staff at the Veterans office don't seem like they are 100% confident that they know what paperwork you need to fill out to get education benefits. There are several programs and each one has its own set of paperwork. This caused me to doubt their competence and caused me some stress, as I needed the education benefit money to attend school.
- Veterans office could actually give you a straight answer when they are asked questions regarding benefits.

ORIENTATION/WELCOME/TRANSITION (9 comments)

- A re-orientation to the campus upon returning and someone to help explain the steps necessary to re-enter and a place to discuss issues with fellow veterans.
- A welcome class similar to the one held for all transfer students specifically for Veterans outlining GI Bill benefits, Veteran's Office personnel and hours, and resources specifically for veterans.
- Contact new veteran students personally, send them an email and call them saying you would like to meet, discuss all their options, and discuss what they need to do to get the most out of their veterans benefits. Transition is tough. Having someone request to sit down and explain everything could make things easier. Maybe having a designated meeting at the beginning of every semester would be good. Having a veteran advisor of sorts who could update us, in person, every semester on what we need to know, fill out, and do each semester to ensure we are on the right track and informed of our benefits.
- Easier transition from military to college life

- Have a separate tour and orientation for veterans that are older like me would be nice.
- Help new veterans to UWRF meet other current or new veterans at UWRF.
- If possible, have a separate day for in processing (ids, and welcome week). Most of the stuff I sat through had nothing to do with me. The briefing was greatly geared towards high schoolers entering college. I highly disliked playing the games along the way; I think it's geared towards the younger crowd. I would also like to see more information incorporated into the welcome weeks about veterans, maybe have a representative come and speak. Even if it's a short speech.
- Make the transition from community college to UWRF some-what easier.
- Maybe have a gathering each fall semester so individuals who are in Chapter 31, etc. can get all the information they need to start the school year. Example: Get green slip from financial office and then the vet would have the ability to take it to the Student Store and get supplies they need without having to run around all over campus.

FACULTY/STAFF (4 comments)

- Educate the faculty about returning veterans
- Let the faculty know about a veteran that is getting back the week of school to realize they are in a transitional period that won't happen over night.
- Mandatory staff/faculty training on PTSD sensitivity
- Try to be more understanding when addressing military topics that come up in class. I had a class where the professor made some comments that I felt were offensive due to my military experience. / I find that I have to keep my opinions/facts to myself in regards to the military and current situations.

VETERAN SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE (4 comments)

- Better communication between units and urn van.
- Make sure to keep in mind that some students are out of Minnesota for school and with the military and so they need to be able to inform us on what needs to be done.
- Physical Vet/Military Location with everything in one spot.
- Printed packet on campus organizations with descriptions, contact numbers and meeting dates. Information on student social events designed to meet people and make friendships. Help finding affordable housing.

FAMILY (2 comments)

- I am a family member, thus much doesn't seem to apply to me. I think financial aid/benefits counseling would be a good ideas, as a means to educate and insure that veterans and family members are fully aware of their benefits.
- Make it easier to find what paperwork is needed because I am a dependent and not an actual veteran

TRANSFERRING CREDITS (2 comments)

- Accept training credits as transfer
- Transfer my ACE credits

VETERANS CLUB (2 comments)

- Have a veteran club so we could share experiences and knowledge with each other
- I would like to see a more active Veterans Club, and will be willing to help work on that. Also a gathering place for veterans to meet, share and discuss things, help each other. There are a lot of things that veterans are willing to talk about only to other veterans.

OTHER (14 comments)

- An E-Club with a happy hour between classes would be nice. Other than that, I have found all UWRF veteran services to be sufficient to meet my needs.
- Build a bigger parking lot.
- Good job
- Have absent forms for whenever I have drill on Fridays
- Make politics and personal beliefs stay out of the classrooms.
- Not applicable
- Not sure
- Not sure right now.
- Nothing! I feel that the team exceeds the standard. Thank you!
- Offer more off peak time classes or more online classes.
- Provide a state-of-the-art physical fitness center.
- Recruit pretty girls
- The biggest issue is with housing. It is rather difficult to find a suitable place to live that is affordable. Perhaps a listing of Veteran friendly renters and such.
- You need to have some way to hold them specifically accountable, like a bi-yearly, mandatory check in with someone sensitive

13. My academic status is: *'other'* responses (1 response)

- Full-time at the University of Minnesota

19. What are your current living arrangements? *'other'* responses (3 responses)

- Deploying
- Lease home
- Room in Iraq

21. What are your sources of funding for your university education? *'other'* responses (5 responses)

- Chapter 31 VA benefits
- Disability
- Savings
- VA disability benefits
- WI GI bill, VA Compensation for 100% SC disability, SSDI for permanent total disability

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses

UWRF Veterans Survey

1. Where do you go for information about Veterans Services and benefits? **Mark (•) all that apply.**

UW-RF Veterans Services Office	U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs	County Veterans Services Office	American Legion Veterans Services Office	Military Unit/Education Officer	Other, specify See Appendix B
68%	50%	32%	3%	22%	16%

2. From the list below, please choose the **TOP THREE ITEMS** you believe UW-RF should focus on in terms of Veterans services and policies: **Mark (•) three only.**

(Re)establish a Veterans Club	Special orientation for veterans	Credit for military training and service	Additional veterans services and programs	Services for family members of active duty service members/veterans
30%	32%	62%	35%	26%
Alternative curriculum delivery formats (online, evening, weekend, etc.)	Off campus referral procedures to address veterans needs	Retention/degree completion assistance	Other, specify See Appendix B	
31%	21%	37%	9%	

3. Please **rate your experience** with each of these UW-RF resources/services:

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
a. Academic advising	26%	45%	15%	8%	3%	4%
b. Academic success center	7%	42%	12%	2%	2%	35%
c. Admissions – application and transfer	28%	50%	14%	5%	2%	1%
d. Bursar/billing/tuition payment	17%	46%	24%	8%	4%	3%
e. Career services	11%	32%	17%	2%	1%	38%
f. Counseling services	12%	22%	19%	0%	1%	47%
g. Financial aid	22%	34%	15%	5%	5%	18%
h. First-year experience	16%	43%	18%	1%	4%	18%
i. Registrar services/enrollment verification	21%	50%	17%	4%	5%	3%
j. Staff and faculty support	29%	43%	20%	3%	2%	4%
k. Student affairs/student services	9%	47%	22%	0%	2%	20%
l. Student health services	12%	26%	19%	1%	1%	42%
m. Veterans services office	18%	48%	23%	4%	4%	3%

4. Please provide any additional comments you may have about your experiences with the UWRF resources/services described above: **See Appendix B**

5. Has there been a member (s) of the UWRF campus community who has been particularly helpful to you as a veteran or family member or dependent of a veteran? If so, please provide their name and a brief description of their assistance. **See Appendix B**

6. Please choose the response that best represents your opinion to the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
a. I have understood the paperwork associated with VA education benefits	15%	65%	16%	4%	0%
b. I have experienced delays in receiving my VA education benefits	37%	27%	25%	10%	1%
c. I know where to go on campus if I have questions regarding veterans services	39%	51%	7%	3%	0%
d. My transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided to me by UWRF personnel	9%	51%	19%	7%	14%
e. I have had difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRF	4%	14%	39%	23%	21%
f. I feel connected with other UWRF students	10%	48%	25%	13%	4%
g. UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of the veterans on campus	12%	45%	20%	5%	17%
h. UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs	9%	45%	27%	6%	12%

7. As a current student-veteran and/or family member or dependent, please rate the **level of importance** you place on the following services as they apply to your particular situation:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Unsure
a. Academic support/tutoring	48%	39%	11%	2%
b. Career services/planning	54%	38%	4%	4%
c. Disability services/support	34%	30%	29%	7%
d. Financial aid counseling	46%	41%	10%	4%
e. Healthcare for service-related conditions (injuries, TBI, etc.)	38%	31%	21%	10%
f. Individual personal counseling or mental health (PTSD, depression, MST, etc.)	40%	27%	22%	11%
g. Social activities and events	23%	51%	21%	4%
h. Support groups and/or clubs specifically for active-duty and veteran students	28%	37%	29%	7%
i. VA service organizations (American Legion, DAV, etc.)	32%	36%	25%	7%
j. Veterans services/benefits counseling	52%	39%	4%	5%
k. Student-veteran lounge or gathering place	36%	22%	31%	11%

	Yes	No
8. Are you experiencing any difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRF?	16%	84%

8a. If yes, please describe the difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRF: **See Appendix B**

9. Overall, please rate your transition from the military to UWRF:

Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
17%	41%	32%	8%	2%

10. What **ONE THING** could **UWRF** do to provide better service for you as a student-veteran at UW-RF? **See Appendix B**

All personal and individual information will remain confidential and will be reported in group form only.

11. What is your current military status?

Veteran	Active Duty Military	National Guard	Reserves	Family Member/ Dependent of Veteran
48%	1%	20%	13%	18%

12. Have you been activated **within the last five years**?

Yes	No
53%	47%

12a. If you have been activated within the last five years, what branch of service?

Air Force	Army	Coast Guard	Marines	Navy	Other
14%	58%	2%	17%	10%	0%

13. My academic status is:

Full-Time Student	Part-Time Student	Recently Graduated	Currently on Leave from School	Other, specify: See Appendix B
88%	8%	0%	3%	1%

14. The following best represents my class standing:

Freshman (less than 30 credits)	Sophomore (30 -59 credits)	Junior (60- 89 credits)	Senior (90+ credits)	Graduate Student	Continuing Education
14%	17%	26%	34%	8%	0%

15. Age:

18 – 22	23 – 25	26 – 29	30 – 35	36 – 39	40+
29%	27%	21%	11%	3%	9%

16. Gender:

Male	Female
74%	26%

17. Marital Status:

Single	Married/Have a partner	Divorced/Separated	Widowed
64%	27%	9%	0%

18. **Including you**, how many of the following live in your household?

	None	1	2	3+
a. Adults (18+ years old)	0%	41%	35%	24%
b. Children	75%	11%	8%	6%

19. What are your **current** living arrangements?

Residence Halls	Off campus rental	Own home	Parent's home	Other, specify See Appendix B
14%	58%	18%	7%	3%

20. Household income range:

Less than \$15,000	\$15,000 - 24,999	\$25,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 74,999	\$75,000 – 99,999	\$100,000 or more
38%	19%	22%	11%	7%	3%

21. What are your sources of funding for your university education? **Mark (•) all that apply.**

Employment	Family Resources/ Support	Loans	Grants	Scholarships	VA Educational Benefits	Military Tuition Assistance	Other, specify See Appendix B
43%	14%	32%	29%	11%	90%	27%	4%

**This completes the survey. Thank you for your participation.
Your survey responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.**