



UWRF Veterans Survey Report, 2011

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Executive Summary

In February 2011, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls contacted 211 UWRF veterans and family members/dependents of veterans by email and invited them to participate in an on-line survey designed to measure the level of satisfaction with services provided to UWRF veterans and dependents. Ninety-seven usable surveys were completed for a return rate of 46 percent. Given the number of veterans/dependents of veterans for whom contact information was available (211), this number of observations should yield estimates that are accurate to within plus or minus 7 percent with 95 percent confidence.

Analysis included in this report:

- A summary of the 2011 survey results, including analysis that looks at differences across demographic groups.
- A comparison of results of the 2011 survey to the initial 2010 UWRF baseline survey.

Key observations from the survey:

1. The typical respondent to the Veterans' survey are full-time junior or senior students, under the age of 30, male, single, live off-campus, and have household incomes of less than \$50,000.
2. Nearly two-thirds of respondents believe that UWRF was very effective or effective during their transition to university life.
3. Nearly all respondents (94%) know where to go on campus if they have questions regarding veterans' services.
4. 83 percent believe UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs.
5. Nearly three-fourths of respondents think that UWRF faculty and staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus.
6. Two services are judged "very important" by a majority of respondents: veterans services/benefits counseling and career services/planning.
7. Substantial majorities of respondents (nearly two-thirds or more) report very good or good experiences with every UWRF resource or service listed on the survey.
8. Approximately one-half of the respondents (47%) have experienced delays in receiving their VA education benefits; a statistically significant decrease from 2010 survey results (64% reported delays in 2010).
9. Forty percent of respondents do not feel connected to other UWRF students.
10. Nearly 1 in 3 respondents have had difficulty finding adequate housing while attending UWRF.

2010 Priority Actions (# 1 – 4) and 2011 Results

Based on results from the 2010 UWRF Veterans' Survey, the SRC provided four recommendations or "priority actions" that UWRF should consider. The following paragraphs summarize those priority action items and numeric indicators of changes in UWRF performance in those areas over the past year.

1. UWRF and the VA. Explore how the university might improve the interplay between the University and the Department of 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.

Relevant indicators of UWRF performance with respect to this action item indicate that UWRF has made some meaningful improvements:

- ✓ **Respondents report a statistically significant decrease in delays in receiving VA education benefits (47% experienced delays in 2011 vs. 64% in 2010).**
 - ✓ **The Veterans' Services Office received a combined 86 percent very good or good rating as compared to 67 percent in 2010.**
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.

The 2011 survey indicates that UWRF has improved performance with respect to this action item:

- ✓ **83 percent believe UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs as compared to 54 percent in 2010.**
- ✓ **Career Services received a combined 74 percent very good/good rating as compared to 69 percent in 2010.**
- ✓ **Bursar/billing/tuition payment received a combined 80 percent very good/good rating as compared to 64 percent in 2010.**
- ✓ **Registrar services/enrollment verification received a combined 81 percent very good/good rating as compared to 73 percent in 2010.**

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.

Data from the 2011 survey shows both progress and room for improvement with respect to this action item:

- ✓ **42 percent of 2011 respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with UWRF's progress over the past year in the area of granting credit for military training and service, 22 percent are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 15 percent are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied, and 21 percent don't know.**
 - ✓ **74 percent of respondents believe that UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus compared to 57 percent in 2010.**
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.

Changes in UWRF's performance with respect to this action item is mixed. Some numeric indicators show very large improvements, others are about the same as in 2010:

- ✓ **40 percent of 2011 respondents do not feel connected with other UWRF students; a 2 percent increase since 2010.**
- ✓ **82 percent of respondents believe that their transition to college was made easier by the assistance provided by UWRF personnel compared to 60 percent in 2010.**
- ✓ **77 percent of respondents are aware of the active Veterans' Club on campus; 31 percent are members.**
- ✓ **A similar proportion of 2011 respondents (31%) believe that support groups/clubs specifically for active duty and veterans are very important as felt that way in 2010 (28%).**

Survey Purpose

The study was designed to measure veterans' satisfaction with the levels and efficacy of services UWRF is providing to them.

Survey Methods and Design

In February 2011, the SRC contacted 211 UWRF veterans and family members/dependents of veterans by email asking them to participate in an on-line survey about their experiences at UWRF. The survey was available online for one month after the initial posting. Three reminders were sent over 4 weeks to those from whom a completed survey had not been received. A total of 97 usable surveys were completed for a return rate of 46 percent. Given the 211 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 believe UWRF was very effective during their transition to university life responded to the questionnaire, the values in the report would likely overstate the effectiveness of UWRF during veterans' transitions 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). After conducting statistical testing, only one variable was found to have a statistically significant difference between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents. The Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is 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. For comparison purposes, the 2010 demographic profile is included as well. A majority of the respondents are single, male, full-time students. Most respondents are juniors or seniors and nearly two-thirds are under the age of 30. Nearly all respondents live off campus and 70 percent have no children in their household. The 2011 demographic profile is generally quite similar to 2010. There is a statistically significant decrease in the number of respondents who live alone. There were more females responding to the survey in 2011 and slightly more married/partnered respondents. Comparisons of results were made by the SRC based on age, gender, military status, branch of service, time since last activation, whether children live in their home, income, and Veterans' Club membership. Survey results were quite consistent regardless of demographic categories. Differences will be noted in the report.

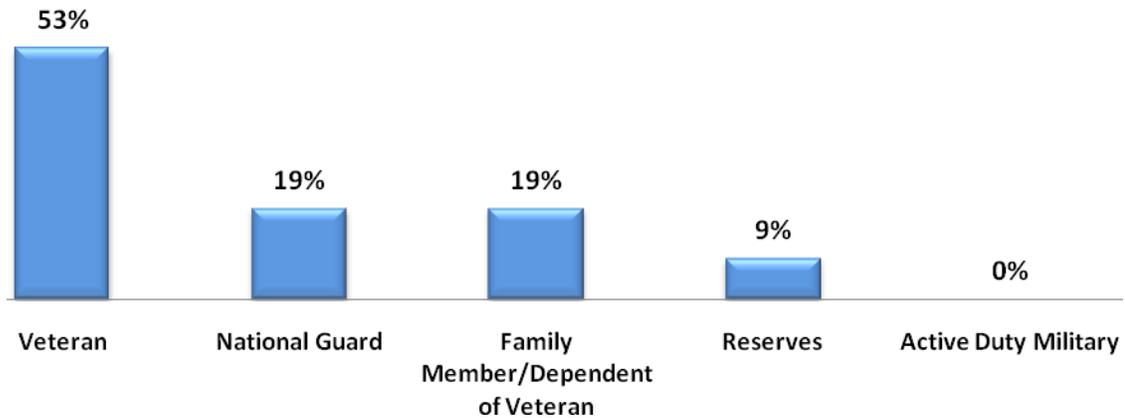
Table 1: Profile of Respondents: UWRF Veterans Survey - 2011 and 2010 Survey Results							
Academic Status	Count	Full-Time Student	Part-Time Student	Recently Graduated	On Leave School	Other	
2011	93	83%	16%	0%	0%	1%	
2010	111	88%	8%	0%	3%	1%	
Class Standing	Count	Freshman	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Grad Stu.	Cont. Ed.
2011	94	14%	18%	19%	43%	4%	2%
2010	111	14%	17%	26%	34%	8%	0%
Age	Count	18 – 22	23 – 25	26 – 29	30 – 35	36 – 39	40+
2011	93	23%	19%	23%	18%	5%	12%
2010	110	29%	27%	21%	11%	3%	9%
Gender	Count	Male	Female				
2011	93	62%	38%				
2010	110	74%	26%				
Marital Status	Count	Single	Married/ Partner	Divorced/ Separated	Widowed		
2011	94	57%	35%	6%	1%		
2010	111	64%	27%	9%	0%		
Household (HH)	Count	0	1	2	3+		
2011 – Adults HH	90	----	27%	42%	31%		
2010 – Adults HH	110	----	41%	35%	24%		
2011 – Children HH	92	70%	14%	11%	5%		
2010 – Children HH	72	75%	11%	8%	6%		
Living Arrangements	Count	Res Hall	Off Camp. Rental	Own Home	Parent's Home	Deployed*	Other
2011	94	14%	51%	26%	7%	0%	2%
2010	111	14%	58%	18%	7%	----	3%
Household Income	Count	<\$15,000	\$15,000-24,999	\$25,000-49,999	\$50,000-74,999	\$75,000-99,999	\$100,000+
2011	93	33%	15%	25%	12%	9%	6%
2010	109	38%	19%	22%	11%	7%	3%
Veterans' Club Mbr.*	Count	Yes	No				
2011	72	31%	69%				

* Question or Option Added to Survey in 2011

Current Military Status

Respondents were asked to identify their current military status. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of military status for the 94 who answered the survey question. Slightly over one-half of the respondents were veterans, followed by 19 percent National Guard or family members or dependents of veterans, and 9 percent Reservists.

Figure 1: Current Military Status



There were only slight, and not statistically significant, differences in the military status of 2011 and 2010 survey respondents (Table 2).

Table 2: Current Military Status: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results					
	Veteran	National Guard	Family Mbr/Dependent of Veteran	Reserves	Activity Duty Military
Veterans 2011	53%	19%	19%	9%	0%
Veterans 2010	48%	20%	18%	13%	1%

Activation

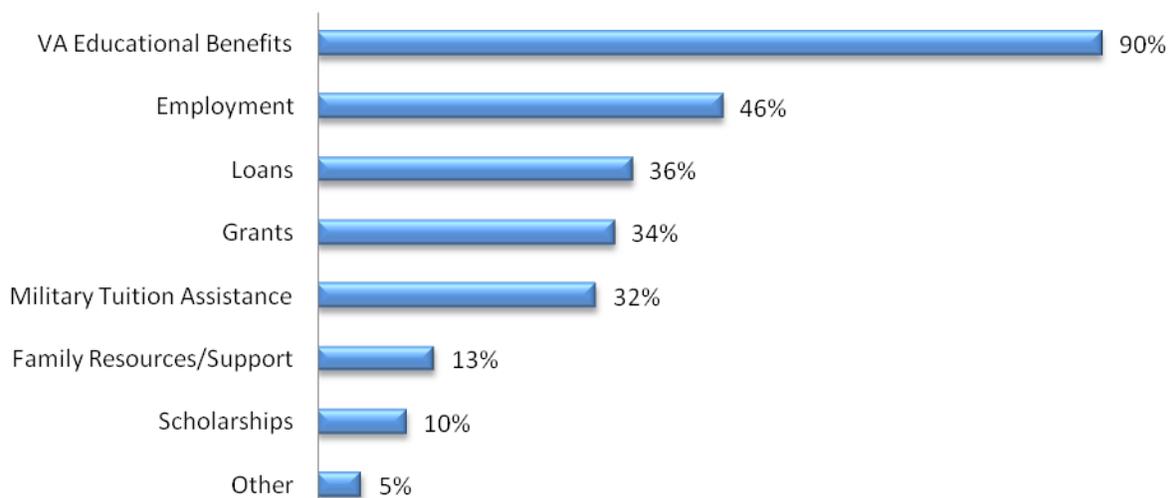
Respondents were asked if they have been activated within the last five years (Table 3). Approximately half of the respondents have been activated in the past five years and half have not, similar to 2010 results. A follow-up question asked those activated in which branch of service they served. A majority of those activated were in the Army (63%), 15 percent Marines, 13 percent Air Force, 9 percent Navy, and no Coast Guard.

Table 3: Activation: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results					
Have you been activated within the last five years?	Yes			No	
Veterans 2011	51%			49%	
Veterans 2010	53%			47%	
If yes, what branch of service?	Army	Marines	Air Force	Navy	Coast Guard
Veterans 2011	63%	15%	13%	9%	0%
Veterans 2010	58%	17%	14%	10%	2%

Sources of Funding for Education

Respondents were asked what sources they use for their university education (Figure 2). The source of most respondents' funding for university education is VA educational benefits. Nearly one-half of respondents use money they earn from work to fund their education. About one-third use loans, grants, or military tuition assistance. Relatively few fund their education through family resources/support or scholarships.

Figure 2: Sources of Funding for University Education



Demographic differences regarding the data summarized in Figure 2:

- Family members/dependents of veterans and those 25 and younger were more likely to use family resources/support 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.

There was very little change in the sources of funding for university education in 2011 compared to 2010 (Table 4).

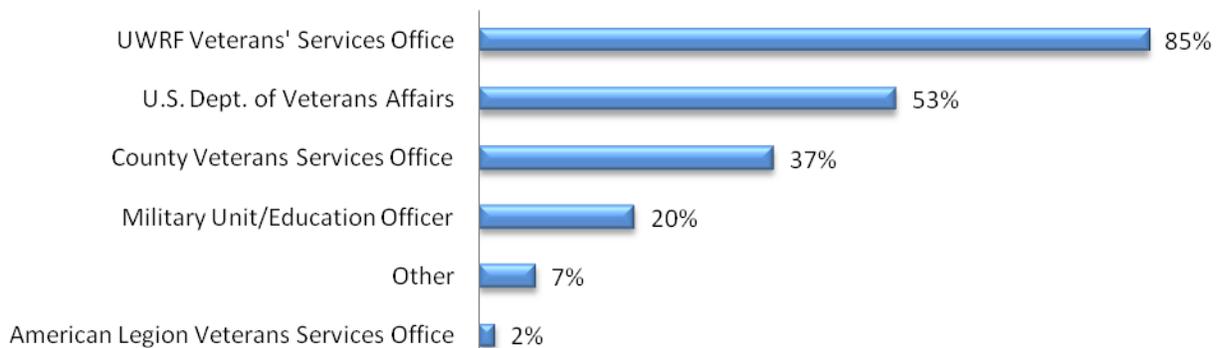
Table 4: Sources of Funding for University Education: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results								
	VA Educ Benefits	Employment	Loans	Grants	Military Tuition Assistance	Family Resources/Support	Scholarships	Other
Veterans 2011	90%	46%	36%	34%	32%	13%	10%	5%
Veterans 2010	90%	43%	32%	29%	27%	14%	11%	4%

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 3). The UWRF Veterans Services Office received the highest response; more than 4 in 5 respondents report using the Office. A slight majority uses the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Approximately one-third use a County Veteran Services Office. One-fifth report using their military unit/education officer and only 2 percent use the American Legion Veterans Service Office. Seven percent of respondents obtained information from “other” sources, which are listed in Appendix B, Question 1.

Figure 3: Resources Used in Obtaining Information about Veterans' Services and Benefits



Differences regarding information sources about veterans’ services and benefits included:

- Respondents over the age of 25 are more likely to go to the U.S. Dept. of Veteran’s Affairs.
- Members of the National Guard are more likely to get information from their military unit/education officer.

Results show a substantial increase between 2010 and 2011 in respondents’ use of the UWRF Veterans’ Services Office to obtain information about services and benefits. This change is statistically significant, meaning that the increased usage of the Veterans’ Services Office is unlikely caused by random differences in the 2011 and 2010 samples. Other 2011 results were consistent with last year (Table 5).

Table 5: Resources Used in Obtaining Information about Veterans’ Services and Benefits: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results						
	UWRF Veterans’ Services Office	U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs	County Veterans Services Office	Military Unit/ Education Officer	American Legion Veterans Services Office	Other
Veterans 2011	85%	53%	37%	20%	2%	7%
Veterans 2010	68%	50%	32%	22%	3%	16%

UWRF Services and Resources

Rating UWRF Services

Respondents were asked to rate their experience with various UWRF resources and services (Table 6). Nearly two-thirds or more of respondents report very good or good experiences with every resource or service listed on the survey (only those who have had experience with the resource or service were included in the percentages listed in Table 6). The highest combined rating of “very good” plus “good” was for the Veterans’ Services Office at 86 percent, followed closely by admissions at 84 percent, staff and faculty support (82%), registrar services (81%), and bursar (80%).

Table 6: Rating Experiences with UWRF Resources/Services						
Resource/Service	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Re-sponses
Veterans' Services Office	41%	45%	9%	4%	1%	93
Admissions - application and transfer	34%	50%	11%	4%	0%	90
Staff and faculty support	32%	50%	14%	4%	0%	92
Registrar serv./enrollment verification	29%	52%	12%	7%	1%	91
Bursar/billing/tuition payment	29%	51%	10%	7%	4%	91
Student affairs/student services	24%	50%	17%	7%	3%	72
Career services	23%	51%	23%	3%	0%	61
First-year experience	24%	49%	21%	3%	3%	71
Academic advising	28%	44%	16%	9%	2%	88
Academic success center	27%	44%	22%	5%	2%	55
Financial aid	27%	40%	21%	9%	3%	70
Student health services	26%	39%	20%	11%	4%	46
Counseling services	24%	40%	32%	4%	0%	50

Only one statistically significant difference was found regarding UWRF resources/services experiences:

- Veterans’ Club members rated their experiences with UWRF Financial Aid lower (mean = 3.82) than non-members (mean = 2.82) on a scale of “1 = Very Good” to “5 = Very Poor.”

There is a statistically significant improvement in the ratings respondents gave the Veterans’ Services Office in 2011 compared to 2010. Ratings were also higher for bursar/billing/tuition services, although not statistically significant. 2011 results for the other resources/services listed in Table 7 were generally in alignment with 2010 results.

Table 7: UWRF Resources/Services – Very Good and Good Responses: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results							
	Academic Advising	Academic Success Center	Admissions	Bursar/Billing/Tuition	Career Services	Counseling Services	Financial Aid
Veterans 2011	72%	71%	84%	80%	74%	64%	67%
Veterans 2010	73%	76%	79%	64%	69%	63%	69%
	First-Year Experience	Registrar Services/ Enrollment Verification	Staff and Faculty Support	Student Affairs/ Student Services	Student Health Services	Veterans' Services Office	
Veterans 2011	73%	81%	82%	74%	65%	86%	
Veterans 2010	72%	73%	75%	70%	65%	67%	

Recommendations for UWRF Resources/Services

If a respondent rated a UWRF resource or service poor or very poor, they were given the opportunity to provide recommendations of how the resource/service could be improved. Twenty-three respondents provided suggestions and their responses were compiled based on the particular resource or service they were commenting on. Some respondents addressed more than one resource or service. Such comments were split and placed into appropriate categories (Table 8), resulting in a total of 35 comments.

The largest number of recommendations (20%) concerned academic advising.

An example of these comments include:

"I think advisors (or all POSSIBLE advisors) of individuals with military transfer credits should be better trained in helping the veterans use the credits they already have and apply them to their degree program, if it is possible. After I had already taken courses (again), my advisor commented I had repeated the courses that I "probably didn't need to." With that being said, I felt I had unnecessarily wasted my time and my education benefits."

Other recommendations regarding UWRF resources/services can be found in Appendix B, Question 4 to this report.

Table 8: Recommendations for UWRF Resources/Services		
Resource/Service	Count	%
Academic Advising	7	20%
Admissions	3	8%
Student Health Services	3	8%
Veterans' Services Office	3	8%
Bursar/Billing/Tuition	2	6%
First Year Experience	2	6%
Staff and Faculty Support	2	6%
Academic Success Center	1	3%
Career Services	1	3%
Financial Aid	1	3%
Parking	1	3%
Registrar Services/Enrollment	1	3%
Student Services	1	3%
Miscellaneous	7	20%
Total	35	100%

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 a family member/dependent of a veteran. Thirty-five respondents described the help received by the UWRf campus community. A few respondents shared information about multiple members of the campus community, so a total of 38 responses were categorized. The comments were divided into 5 categories: UWRf Veterans’ Services Office, UWRf faculty, staff, students, and other.

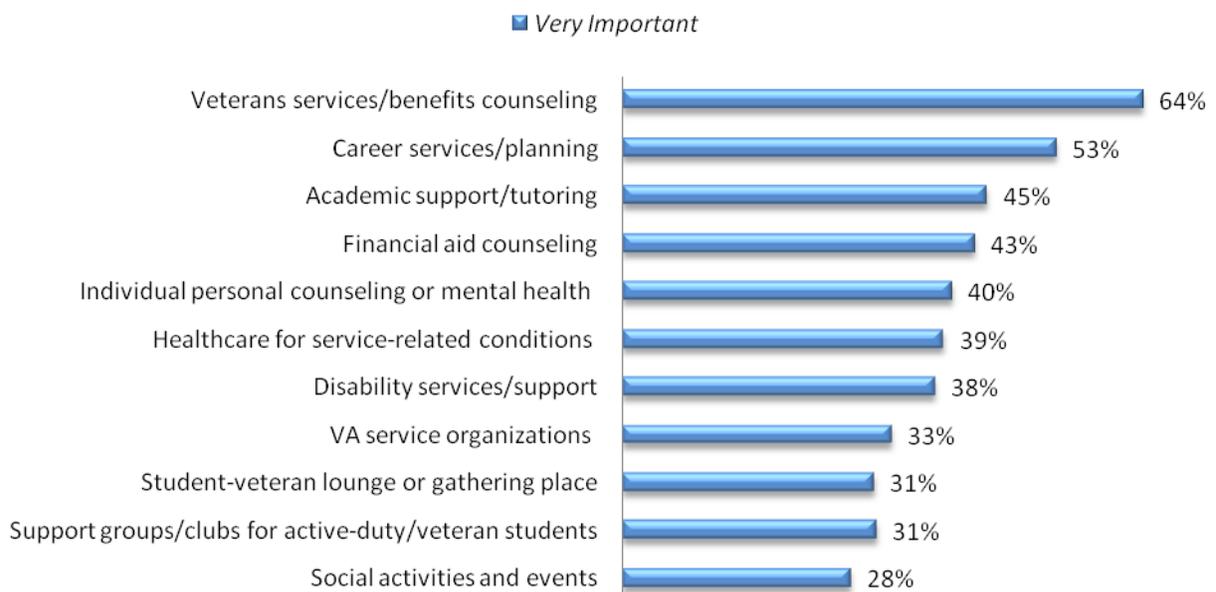
Table 9: Helpful UWRf Campus Community		
Categories	Count	Percentage
UWRf Veterans Services Office	23	60%
UWRf Faculty	6	16%
UWRf Staff	5	13%
UWRf Students	1	3%
Other	3	8%
TOTAL	38	100%

UWRf’s Veterans Services Office received the most comments (60%), followed by UWRf faculty and staff (Table 9). Appendix B, Question 5 to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.

Level of Importance

Respondents were given the opportunity to rate the level of importance they place on various services (Figure 4). A relatively high level of importance is placed on veterans services, and, as we saw in Table 7, respondents rate this UWRf service highly. Career services/planning was “very important” to slightly over one-half of respondents. Academic support/tutoring, financial aid counseling, and individual personal or mental health counseling were important to slightly less than half of survey respondents. Less than one-third said a student-veteran lounge or gathering place, 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,

- Family members/dependents of veterans are more likely to say support groups and/or clubs specifically for active-duty and veteran students are very important to them.
- Females are more likely to say social activities and events and academic support/tutoring are very important to them.
- Having a student-veteran lounge or gathering place is more important to Veterans' Club members.

Relative to 2010, the only substantial reported change, although not statistically significant, is a 12 percent increase in the percentage of respondents saying that veterans services/benefits counseling is very important to them (Table 10). Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that veteran' services/benefits counseling is 'very important' to them followed by career services and planning. In 2010, the top two services were reversed with career services/planning receiving the highest 'very important' ratings followed by veterans' services/benefits counseling.

Table 10: Services – Very Important Responses: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results				
	Academic Support/ Tutoring	Career Services/ Planning	Disability Services/ Support	Financial Aid Counseling
Veterans 2011	45%	53%	38%	43%
Veterans 2010	48%	54%	34%	46%
	Healthcare for Service-Related Conditions	Individual Personal Counseling or Mental Health	Social Activities and Events	Support Groups/ Clubs Specifically for Active-Duty and Veterans
Veterans 2011	39%	40%	28%	31%
Veterans 2010	38%	40%	23%	28%
	VA Service Organizations	Veterans Services/ Benefits Counseling	Student-Veteran Lounge or Gathering Place	
Veterans 2011	33%	64%	31%	
Veterans 2010	32%	52%	36%	

Areas of Focus

In the 2010 survey, respondents were given an opportunity to choose from a list of items that they believed UWRF should focus on in terms of veterans' services and policies. The top six areas were included in this year's survey to see how satisfied veterans/dependents are with improvements in these areas over the past year (Table 11). Last year, respondents most wanted UWRF to focus on granting credit for military training and service. Forty-two percent of 2011 respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with progress in this area. Forty-one percent are very satisfied/satisfied with progress made on re-establishing the Veterans' Club, and 40 percent are very satisfied/satisfied with alternative curriculum delivery improvements. Substantial proportions of respondents report that they do not know how satisfied they are with the various improvements described in Table 10.

Table 11: Satisfaction with UWRF’s Improvements Over the Past Year

Area of Focus	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Responses
Credit for military training and service	21%	21%	22%	10%	5%	21%	96
Re-establishment of the Veterans’ Club	14%	27%	28%	1%	1%	29%	97
Alternative curriculum delivery formats	9%	31%	31%	2%	2%	25%	97
Additional veterans services and programs	9%	28%	25%	4%	2%	32%	97
Degree completion assistance	7%	25%	30%	4%	1%	33%	97
Special orientation for veterans	0%	19%	30%	9%	1%	41%	97

Demographic difference regarding the data summarized in Table 11:

- Perhaps not surprisingly, Veterans’ Club members are more satisfied with the re-establishment of the Veterans’ Club.

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. Fifty-nine responses were placed into 9 categories (Table 12). Specific assistance for veterans was the category with the most comments. Comments in this category primarily focused on benefits and tuition assistance and paper work issues:

“Go through financial aid things better for veterans, some of us don't know what categories we fall under due to the changes made.”

“The thing that would have helped the most is for the vet office to do my paperwork properly.”

Some respondents could not think of ways to improve services:

“Nothing really. All the services that I need to meet any needs I have as a student-veteran have been met.”

Table 12: What One Thing Could UWRF Do to Provide Better Service to Student-Veterans?

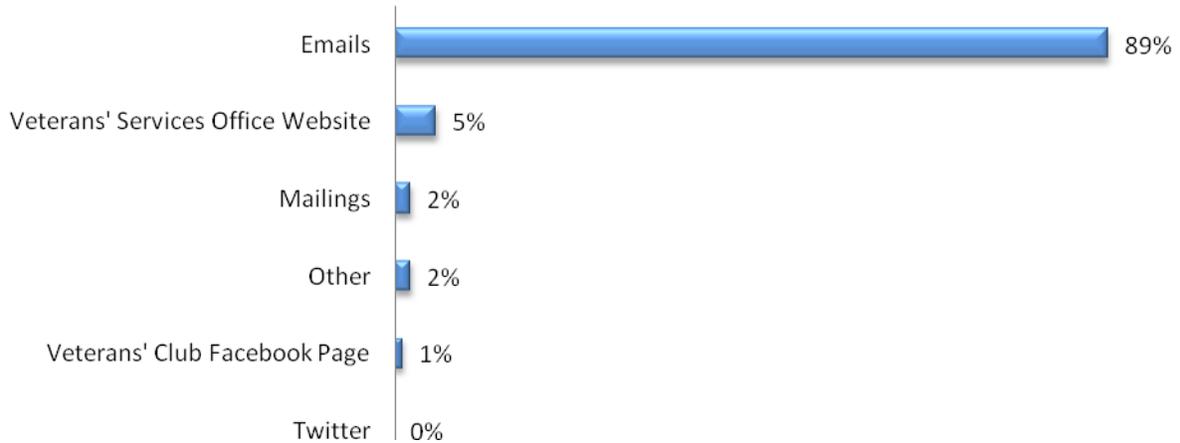
Topic	Count	%
Veterans’ Specific Assistance	28	47%
Satisfied with Service	7	12%
Veterans’ Services Office	4	7%
Faculty/Staff	2	3%
Family	2	3%
Housing	2	3%
Orientation/Welcome/Transition	2	3%
Student-Veteran Gathering Place	2	3%
Other/Miscellaneous	10	17%
Total	59	100%

All responses to this question are included in Appendix B, Question 11.

Best Way to Communicate

Respondents were asked how best to communicate with them. Overwhelmingly, the preferred method of communication is email (Figure 5). Very small percentages of respondents chose the other communication methods listed on the survey.

Figure 5: Most Preferred Method of Communication



UWRF Veterans' Club

Respondents were asked about their awareness of the Veterans' Club on campus and if they are a Club member (Figures 6 and 7). More than three-fourths of respondents are aware of the Veterans' Club and less than one-third are members.

Figure 6: Aware of UWRF Veterans' Club on Campus

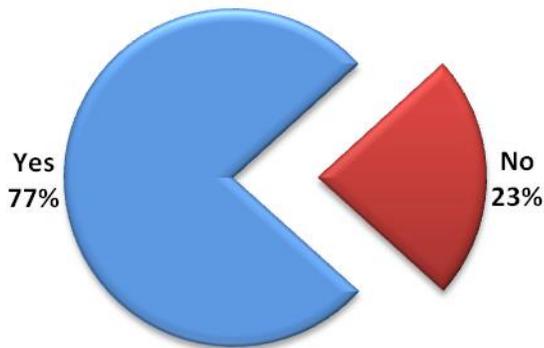
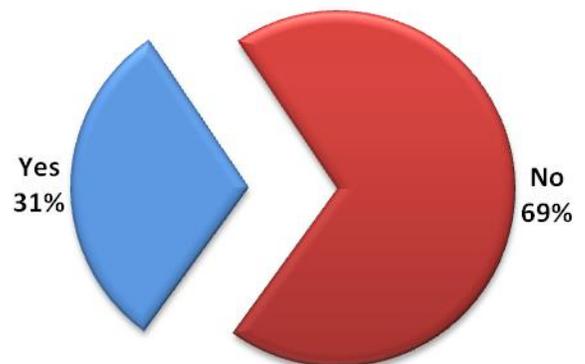
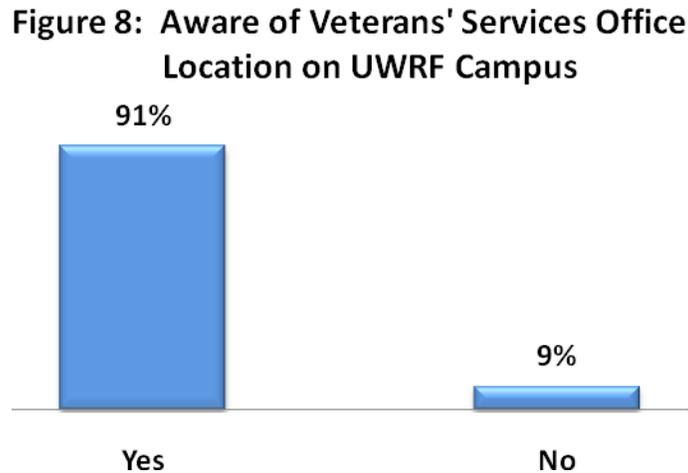


Figure 7: Member of UWRF Veterans' Club



Awareness of Veterans Services Office Location

Figure 8 shows that when asked if they know where the Veterans' Services Office is located on the UWRF campus, most respondents are familiar.



If a respondent marked on the survey that they did not know where the office was located, they were sent to a page that provided the location, office hours, and contact information.

Campus Experience

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with statements pertaining to their experiences at UWRF (Table 13).

Veterans Services

- Most respondents (94% agree or strongly agree) know where to go on campus if they have questions regarding veterans' services.

VA Education Benefits

- 82 percent of respondents understand the paperwork associated with VA education benefits.
- Nearly one-half of the respondents have experienced delays in receiving their VA education benefits.

UWRF Staff

- Approximately four in five respondents believe their transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided to them by UWRF personnel.
- 83 percent believe UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs.
- Nearly three-fourths say UWRF faculty and staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus.

Part of the Campus Community

- Two in five respondents do not feel connected with other UWRF students.

Housing

- 29 percent have had difficulty finding adequate housing while attending UWRF.

Table 13: UWRF Experiences					
Please choose the response that best represents your opinion to the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Responses
I know where to go on campus if I have questions regarding veterans services	54%	40%	3%	2%	94
I have understood the paperwork associated with VA education benefits	26%	56%	15%	3%	94
My transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided to me by UWRF personnel	25%	57%	15%	3%	79
UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs	23%	60%	15%	2%	82
I have experienced delays in receiving my VA education benefits	16%	31%	36%	18%	90
UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of the veterans on campus	13%	61%	16%	10%	77
I feel connected with other UWRF students	13%	46%	28%	12%	82
I have had difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRF	8%	21%	33%	38%	63

Statistically significant differences in the responses to the statements shown in Table 13.

- Statistical analysis indicates those with less than \$25,000 household income were more likely to report difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRF.
- Veterans' Club members were less likely than non-members to report having difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRF.

Compared to 2010, the proportion of respondents who agree/strongly agree with all the statements included in Table 14 increased in 2011 with one exception. Fewer respondents report experiencing delays in receiving their VA education benefits. This decrease in delays is statistically significant.

Table 14: UWRF Experiences – Strongly Agree and Agree Responses: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results				
	Know where to go on campus regarding veterans services questions	Experienced delays in receiving VA education benefits	Understood paperwork assoc. with VA education benefits	UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of veterans on campus
Veterans 2011	94%	47%	82%	74%
Veterans 2010	90%	64%	80%	57%
	Feel connected with other UWRF students	Transition to college has been made easier by assistance provided by UWRF personnel	UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs	Have had difficulty finding adequate housing while attending UWRF
Veterans 2011	59%	82%	83%	29%
Veterans 2010	58%	60%	54%	18%

Difficulties

Respondents were asked if they are experiencing any difficulties that may cause them to stop attending UWRF (Figure 9). Twelve percent reported that they are experiencing such difficulties. There were no statistically significant differences by military standing, branch of service, academic status, class standing, age, gender, marital status, if there are children in the home, living arrangements, or household income range. However, respondents that have been activated within the last five years were more likely to be experiencing difficulties that may cause them to stop attending UWRF (9 out of the 46 respondents that have been activated within the last five years, or 20 percent, were experiencing difficulties that might lead them to leave UWRF).

Figure 9: Experiencing Difficulties That May Cause You to Stop Attending UWRF?

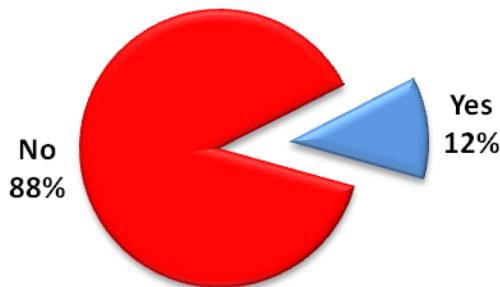


Table 15: Difficulties that May Cause Respondent to Stop Attending UWRF		
Issue	Count	Percentage
Health	3	33%
Academic	1	11%
Financial	1	11%
Multiple Reasons	1	11%
Transition to College	1	11%
VA Benefits/Assistance	1	11%
Other	1	11%
TOTAL	9	100%

A follow-up question asked respondents to describe the difficulties that might cause them to stop attending UWRF (Table 15). Nine respondents described their difficulties.

A comment from a respondent:

“While dealing with the mental scars associated with my combat experience in Iraq, and also dealing with memory issues associated with a TBI, I have found it difficult to keep my grades where they should be.”

A respondent wrote about a difficult transition to college life:

“I’ve changed since I served overseas. Coming back years later, I realize I’m not the same and college is much more difficult than before. I don’t relate to anyone and they don’t understand me.”

The complete comments are available in Appendix B, Question 8a.

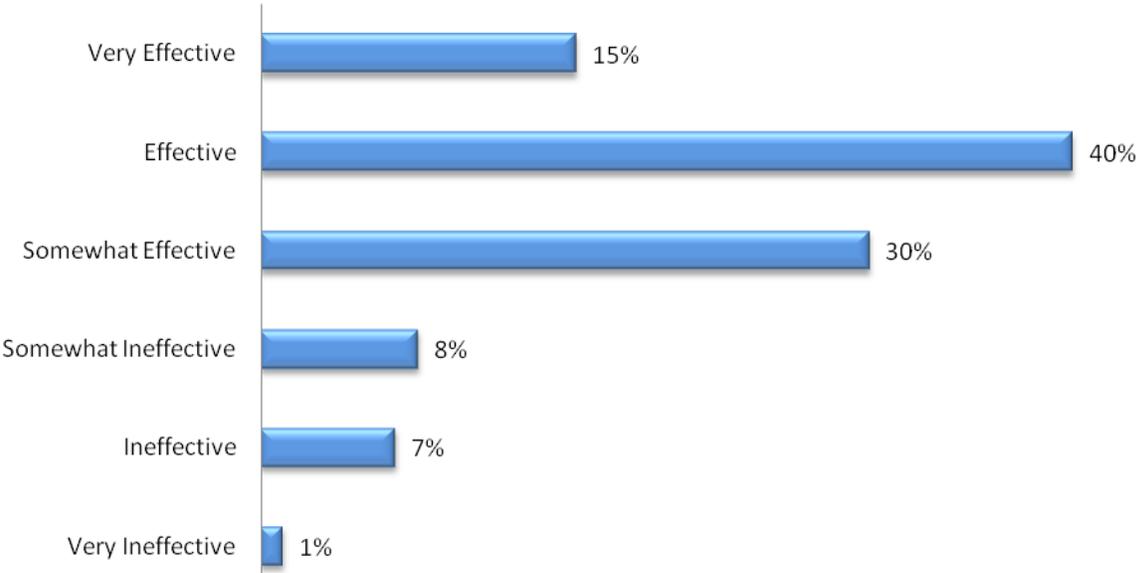
Table 16 indicates that between 2010 and 2011 there was a slight, though not statistically significant, decrease in the percentage of respondents experiencing difficulties serious enough to possibly cause them to leave UWRF.

Table 16: Experiencing Difficulties That May Cause Respondent to Stop Attending UWRF: Comparison of 2011 and 2010 Survey Results		
	Yes	No
Veterans 2011	12%	88%
Veterans 2010	16%	84%

Transition to University Life

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of UWRF during their transition to university life (Figure 10).

Figure 10: UWRF's Effectiveness During Transition to University Life



A slight majority (55 percent) of respondents rated UWRF’s effectiveness during their transition to university life as either ‘very effective’ or ‘effective’. Almost one-third believe UWRF was ‘somewhat effective’. Sixteen percent (14 respondents) believed the University was ‘somewhat ineffective’ or worse.

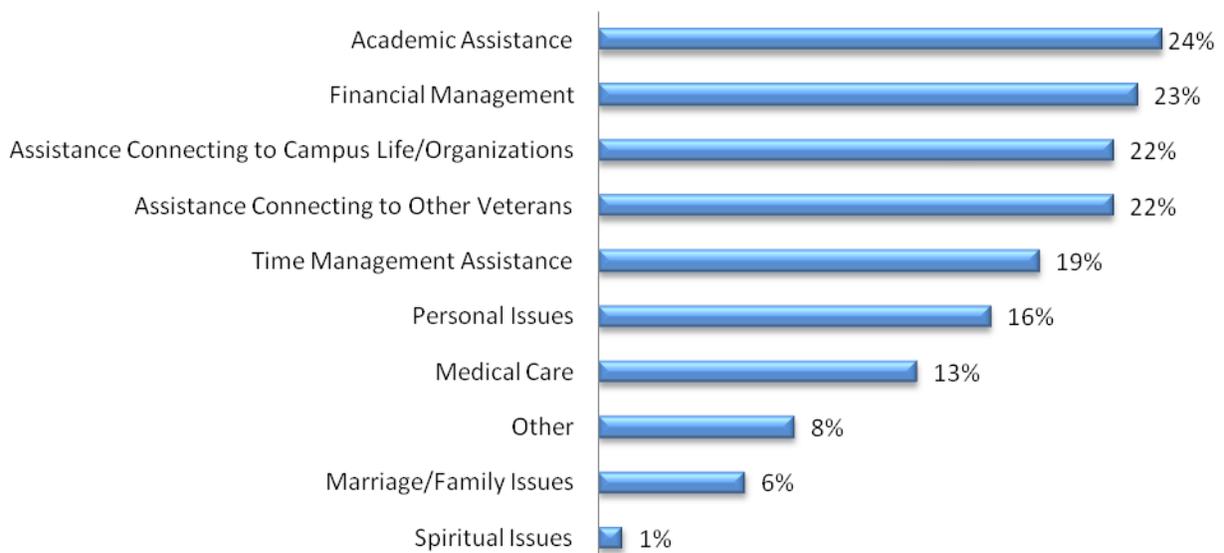
There were no noteworthy differences among the results based on demographic grouping.

In the 2010 survey, respondents were asked to rate their transition from the military to UWRf. Due to the somewhat different focus in the 2011 survey (UWRf's effectiveness during transition to university life), comparisons between the 2010 and 2011 survey cannot be made.

Additional Assistance in Making Transition to University Life

Respondents were asked to identify areas where they could use, or could have used, additional assistance in making the transition to university life (Figure 11). Academic assistance, help with finances, assistance connecting to campus life or other veterans, and time management assistance was/is needed by approximately one-fifth to one-fourth of respondents.

Figure 11: Areas in Which Additional Assistance Was/Is Needed During Transition to University Life



Demographic differences regarding the data summarized in Figure 11:

- Females were more likely to say they could use, or could have used, additional academic and financial management assistance.
- Members of the Veterans' Club were more likely to say they could use, or could have used, medical care and assistance connecting to campus life/organizations.

The question highlighted in Figure 11 was a new addition to the veterans' survey in 2011, so comparison to the prior year's survey is not possible.

Conclusions

2011 Survey Results

The analysis in this report concludes:

- **Overall, nearly two-thirds or more of respondents report very good or good experiences with every UWRF resource or service listed on the survey.**
- **A slight majority of respondents rated UWRF's effectiveness during their transition to university life as very effective or effective.** When asked to identify areas where they could use, or could have used, additional assistance in making the transition to university life, approximately one-fourth of respondents wished for academic assistance, financial management assistance, assistance connecting to campus life or organizations, and assistance connecting with other veterans.
- **Nearly all respondents to the survey know where to go on campus if they have questions regarding veterans' services.** More than 4 in 5 respondents believe that UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members' veterans' needs.
- **Most respondents rely on VA educational benefits to fund their university education.** Nearly one-half of respondents also use money they earn from work to fund their education. Approximately one-third of respondents use loans, grants, or military tuition assistance to help pay for school.
- **Forty percent of respondents report that they do not feel connected to other UWRF students.** When asked to rate the level of importance they place on various services, less than one-third of respondents believe a student-veteran lounge or gathering place, support groups/clubs for active-duty veteran students, or social activities and events are very important to them.
- **More than three-fourths of respondents are aware there is an active Veterans' Club on campus.** Although awareness is high, less than one-third of respondents are members of the Club.
- **Electronic communication is the best way to communicate with Veterans/dependents.** Nearly 9 in 10 respondents' preferred method of communication is email.

Comparing the 2011 and 2010 Results

The 2011 UWRF Veterans Survey results are quite similar to the results from the initial survey conducted in 2010. However, there are noteworthy statistically significant differences. A significant improvement is found in the ratings respondents give bursar/billing/tuition services and the Veterans' Services Office in 2011 compared to 2010. Results also show a substantial increase in respondents using the UWRF Veterans' Services Office to obtain information about services and benefits from 2010 to 2011. In terms of Veterans' experiences, significantly fewer respondents report delays in receiving their VA education benefits.

Recommendations

1. A substantial number of respondents (40%) do not feel connected with other UWRF students. The difficulty is in knowing which veterans only want to be peripherally connected to the campus, and which ones would like to enhance their sense of connection to the campus. Since the Veterans' Services Office appears to be the main connection to the University for survey respondents (eighty-five percent of respondents report that they obtain information about veterans' services and benefits from the UWRF Veterans' Services Office), and emails are the best way to communicate with them, perhaps a weekly/monthly listserv could be distributed to the veteran community. The listserv could be an outlet for the veteran community where suggestions could be offered regarding campus activities or events that might be of interest to them.
2. Continue assessment process with a biennial or triennial evaluation instead of annual review. The results of this study show some differences from the initial 2010 baseline survey. However, measuring the levels of services and levels of satisfaction with such services may prove more useful with a more extended evaluation period. With a biennial or triennial evaluation, the likelihood increases of having different groups of veterans/dependents in the sample and a more extended assessment would also allow more time to see improvements/declines in services/programs, etc.

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 believe UWRF was very effective during their transition to university life responded to the questionnaire, the values in the report would likely overstate the effectiveness of UWRF during veterans’ transitions 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, 55 people responded to the first invitation and 42 responded after reminders. Out of 81 variables tested, we found only one variable with a statistically significant difference 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 = 1.91) than those responding after reminders (mean = 2.57) on a scale of “1 = Very Good” to “5 = Very Poor.” While this item is statistically different, the difference is 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.** The data should accurately reflect the opinions of UWRF student-veterans and dependents.

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses to First Invitation and After Reminders			
Variable	Mean First Invitation	Mean After Reminders	Statistical Significance
Q3 Rate UWRF Resource/Service: Admissions – application and transfer	1.91	2.57	.018

Appendix B – 2011 UWRF Veterans Survey - Written Comments

Q1: Where do you go for information about Veterans Services and benefits? 'Other' responses

- Call the VA
- Chapter 31 counselor
- military.com
- None
- UW Baraboo/Sauk County
- VFW
- Vocational Rehab Office - Eau Claire

Q4: Please provide recommendations of how the UWRF resources/services for which you rated poor or very poor in the previous question (Q3) could improve. *23 responses split into 35 comments.*

Academic Advising (7 comments)

- Academic Advising would be better handled by a specially trained staff member that is knowledgeable about all programs on campus. They would have the time to actually listen to the students thoughts and desires for their education. Professors are often busy teaching classes, grading papers, conducting research and collecting grants to fund their research. Program professors are knowledgeable and well equipped to give advice on their individual specialty; however, they have not proven to be proficient in making recommendations in courses outside of their specialty. For example, science majors can receive sound advice about biology classes from their biology professors; but what does a biology professor know about early world history? I suggest a separate academic advising office.
- As a veteran, college was a very different step from what I was expecting. For the first two years of school, I basically picked classes aimlessly, and could have graduated at least a semester early if I would have had proper advisement. Both advisors that I have had seemed like they could care less about the route that I was taking in school; and as for veterans accommodations, for those of us that are considered disabled, and I know I am not the only one have come across barriers that could have ended our college career because of the staff that wasn't understanding to veterans issues.
- I also think advisors (or all POSSIBLE advisors) of individuals with military transfer credits should be better trained in helping the veterans use the credits they already have and apply them to their degree program, if it is possible. After I had already taken courses (again), my advisor commented I had repeated the courses that I "probably didn't need to." With that being said, I felt I had unnecessarily wasted my time and my education benefits.
- I believe that my academic advisor is not a good match for me and feel that there should be persons (faculty) in those positions that are not FORCED to do academic advising. I feel that is very noticeable that my advisor does not care to participate in that role. This is very unfortunate and I feel that it may have cost me an extra year of schooling vs if I had more intuitive advice earlier on.

- I expect my academic adviser to be available more to answer questions and help to assist me. That is not happening and I would like to see it happen. Every time I call to schedule an appointment, my advisers either not there or it's not a good time to talk. This needs to be fixed!
- It may have been my situation alone, I received no guidance as to which major would best suit what I had planned out.
- My adviser has not always been available for advice and when they have been able to meet with me, the quality of advice was poor.

Admissions (3 comments)

- I still have not been informed as to whether or not veterans, especially those who have deployed overseas or taken courses through their respective branch of service, will receive a credit waiver for general education courses such as Global Perspectives, American Cultural Diversity, or Multidisciplinary. I was told I had to retake my English and Math courses because the CLEPs I had taken and were accepted at another institution were not good enough for UWRF. I doubt Math and English had changed that significantly between my taking the exams and transferring to UWRF a few years later, that there couldn't have been an individual exception made. Either way, I graduate this spring but it would be/have been greatly appreciated to be kept abreast of changes being made either in favor or against veterans on campus. While the changes would not affect me now, it would be nice to know I helped make a change for other veterans who come to this campus.
- When I had an issue with transferring credits from another school, the service provided was good, but the personnel were very unfriendly and hard to work with. They did their job well, but they were not people I would enjoy dealing with on a regular basis.
- When I transferred here, I experienced multiple difficulties. I was treated rudely when I had questions about the process, which I felt were questions anyone would have when transferring to a new school.

Student Health Services (3 comments)

- I am not certain what student health services does, but without a doctor/clinic on campus, I feel UWRF is sub-par to other universities in the department.
- Make health services free for veterans
- What student health service?

Veterans' Services Office (3 comments)

- Being a special student through UWRF, I felt as if the veteran's office didn't care about my benefits. My home campus had to do all the work. The UWRF campus needs to be prompt and thorough with their assistance in veteran's benefits, and they need to communicate better with other campuses as to where veteran's benefits stand.
- I have experienced rude employees in the veterans' office, and when I have simple questions about the forms I have been filling out I was treated like I was dumb. The process to receive benefits has changed multiple times since I have been in school, and when I transferred here, it

was handled differently than at my previous school. It would be nice to have friendly people in the VSO so I am not intimidated to go in there for fear of being treated like an imbecile.

- They need to be trained on the services that they are claiming they provide. I knew more about the GI Bill than they did every time I went in there for questions/help. I have never had a positive experience with them and always leave extremely dissatisfied and frustrated. I prefer calling our regional office in St Louis and wait on hold for 30 minutes so I can actually talk to someone who knows what they are talking about rather than deal with our VA office on campus. I was a transfer student and both the prior colleges I attended had much better VA offices than this one in UWRP.

Bursar/Billing/Tuition (2 comments)

- It seems that the system used to reimburse us on our tuition is flawed due to me using veteran tuition assistance. Three times since summer semester 2010, my reimbursement was delayed due to oversights by staff in these two offices (bursar and financial aid). I am a full time unemployed student so these funds are all I have to live on and when they are late, it causes extreme financial hardship.
- It would be nice if tuition was actually fully calculated instead of having additional student fees tagged on. It is a stupid trick so the school can say it has low tuition in comparison to other campuses in the State. It is misleading to all new students and cheats our service men and women out of the full financial assistance that we are entitled to, as we are only reimbursed for "tuition." This is a disservice to our veterans.

First Year Experience (2 comments)

- First Year Experience doesn't mesh well with the values and customs of American veterans. This could be largely due to varying age groups and life experience. In its current state, I wouldn't recommend pushing veterans towards this program. They would likely find more support within the veterans group on campus.
- The first year experience is for children that have never had to live away from their parents. As an adult student, that has lived on his own for the past thirteen years, I realize that a humungous 'welcome to the campus community' is not entirely necessary for returning adults or prior military, but it would be nice to at least be acknowledge as part of the campus community in the brochures and literature that is mail to us prior to our arrival in Fall.

Staff and Faculty Support (2 comments)

- Professors need to try to understand how the veterans that have served overseas are different than the normal students in the class. On a daily basis, we deal with mental and physical disadvantages that have resulted from our duties. We all have had to switch back and forth between the military and school, which is extremely difficult for many. Even though they can't understand us and the challenges we face they need to be understanding and willing to go out of their way and in some instances make exceptions for things that are out of our control.
- Require staff and faculty to attend classes related to CURRENT war sensitive topics, and how their opinions and comments destroy combat vets emotionally.

Academic Success Center (1 comment)

- Academic success center: hard to find right answers. Vague-poor communication.

Career Services (1 comment)

- More employers, other than Agricultural, could show up at the career fairs on campus.

Financial Aid (1 comment)

- Financial Aid office personnel need to be trained on customer service. When people come to the finance window on the second floor of North Hall they are going there because they are confused about the website and need to have questions answered by a human being, not be told to follow the instructions on the internet.

Parking (1 comment)

- Create a bigger parking lot (parking garage/level) etc to eliminate the growing issue with parking. Many students are often late to class because there are hardly any parking near campus. Some students comes to school 1 or 2 hours early just to hunt for a parking space and it will take them approximately 40 minutes to find a spot. When can this issue be solved? How can it be solved?

Registrar Services (1 comment)

- For registration purposes, students should have "transfer status" for only one semester, because after that first semester, you are no longer a "transfer student." I got SCREWED in being able to get the classes necessary for me to graduate. Also, being that veterans only have a certain amount of time to be able to use the Montgomery GI Bill, We (veterans) should get preference for registration. This semester, NOT ONE of the courses I am taking are toward my major because those classes were filled/closed before I had a chance to register. Thanks a lot, Registrar's Office!

Student Services (1 comment)

- Student services should not be used to police the campus organizations (i.e. OrgSync).

Miscellaneous (7 comments)

- Dealing with the bureaucrats in the campus offices is hell. They do not care about the students and only seem interested in getting their paycheck. I have had continues issues dealing with the registrar, financial aid, staff, billing and tuition, and others. Overall, my campus experience has been fine except with regards to dealing with the various offices.
- In general, UWRF is a good campus but being in a technical science it is frustrating to have to take so many general education classes. I am glad that I was not force to retake physical education classes. Do not get rid of the veterans waver for this!
- Maybe send out an email asking what improvements can be made on campus.

- Not sure what can be done it's not my job.
- Offer housing placement assistance
- Reach out more, make people feel more welcome.
- The ease of use of ESIS when first learning how to navigate the system was annoying. Then in between semesters, the system was updated and needed items were moved around. The last year's use of ESIS has been better though.

Q5: 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. 38 responses

UWRF Veterans Services Office (23 comments)

- Everyone in the VA service office. You call or email and they respond almost immediately. Truly appreciate what you do for us!
- I've worked directly with Nicole and Rob for my GI Bill benefits. They have always very prompt, knowledgeable, and helpful with all of my needs, and have been pro-active in getting pertinent information to me whenever benefit changes happened. When I was an undergrad in the 90's, UWRF had no Veterans Services office, and it was a challenge working with the county and Financial Aid simultaneously to get paperwork handled to receive benefits. It has been a night-and-day positive change to receive benefits through the current Vet Services Office, and I can't thank UWRF enough for their investment in these valuable services.
- Nichole-Very helpful in ensuring everything was taken care of.
- Nicole in the veterans' office has taken her time to answer any and all questions I have had. The rest of the students working in the veterans' office are very helpful as well.
- Nicole Lillis (3x)
- Nicole Lillis and her staff at the UWRF veterans office. Help me very much, respond to emails in quick fashion. thank you
- Nicole Lillis- Assistance with transitional issues due to deployment and benefit information
- Nicole Lillis does a very good job helping to get VA Education Benefits in order. There is a very useful notification system for when documents need to be submitted and everything seems to get done in a timely fashion.
- Nicole Lillis from the UWRF Veteran Services Offices has been absolutely outstanding in providing assistance to me. I transferred to UWRF from an out of state institution, and was in the process of transferring to the Post-9/11 GI Bill at the same time. The very first day I visited campus after transferring, Nicole arranged for me to meet with the department head of my major in order to help select classes. Every single issue or question involving paperwork, finances, or class selection has been met with an immediate and accurate response from the UWRF Veteran Services office. My prior educational institution was absolutely inadequate in this regard; the UWRF Veteran Services Office really stands out.
- Nicole Lillis has been great in answering all my questions and helping me with whatever I need. This is my first year receiving benefits and she has been great guiding me through the process.

- Nicole Lillis has been so helpful and taken care of all of my and my husband's needs. She has gone above and beyond her duties to help us in any way she possibly can.
- Nicole Lillis has helped in every way.
- Nicole Lillis helped me with all my questions that I have had. She let me know what I needed to do and the papers that I needed to bring in. She was very understanding and took care of everything that I needed.
- Nicole Lillis is very helpful, and does a good job of ensuring all paperwork required is filled out and submitted on time.
- Nicole Lillis, she is always a huge help whenever I have questions on pretty much anything. Quick and helpful responses, every time.
- Nicole Lillis. I was having trouble with the VA to receive my GI Bill. She went out of her way to find someone who could help me, and fixed the problem.
- Rob C, Nikki, and Travis (UWRF Vets office) have all been very helpful and welcoming. They send me off with a smile every time I see them. /
- Since the veterans office has been fully staffed they have been very helpful, it is a 180 degree turnaround from my freshman year, when I left 20 some voicemails and never received a call back.
- The entire staff of the veterans services is paramount to my sanity on campus. They are always there for me when I need financial advice, I am stressed about classes, need help with my school work, or just providing me with some other social interaction.
- Vets office (Nichole especially) is outstanding. Willing to help out and do whatever it takes. Outstanding.
- VSO-UWRF
- When I came to UWRF about 4 years ago, there were many different faces (if there was a face at all) in the Veteran's Office. I believe having a full time/permanent person working in the Veteran Services Office has been one of the BEST decisions this university has made. Nicole Lillis is doing a wonderful job! She is a familiar face I see every time I visit the office to get my benefit paperwork filed and if she doesn't have an answer to a question, she WILL find it and get back to me. This is something I really appreciate!

UWRF Faculty (6 comments)

- Brian Schultz- Offered additional online courses and support while I was deployed to Iraq
- Dr. Bonnie Walters - I had food science with Dr. Walters the semester before I was deployed. She was the most helpful when turning in assignments and taking final exam early because of it.
- Dr. Sanden
- Holly Dolliver - As an advisor she made sure that I was able to enroll in classes I needed even though I hadn't gotten back to Wisconsin yet.
- Pam Weller
- Professor Carl Popelka has been an outstanding adviser since I switch to him from another professor. He has gone above and beyond to ensure I know where I am at and what I need to do. Kudos to him.

UWRF Staff (5 comments)

- Anthony Rubis in financial aid used to deal with Veteran's when I was a freshman. I'm still very grateful for all of the help he provided me nearly 5 years ago.
- Jill Moe has been very helpful with helping me find what I was most interested in for a major. I had four avenues that I wanted to approach with my background in the military. With her knowledge and experience, she helped me narrow it down. She has also helped me with making sure that all of my military credits didn't fall through the gaps and is making sure that they are being used to my best interest.
- Mark Johnson, Disability Services
- Mary Miller - Accounts Receivable. She has gone out of her way to help me with all of the questions and requests I have had while re-entering school after 20 years. Not having to worry about all of the financial details getting taken care of has allowed me to be able to focus that much more classes!
- Njia Lawrence-Porter has been the most helpful person in the campus community, but that is all-inclusive in being a veteran, woman in the sciences, low-income, first generation college graduate.

UWRF Student (1 comment)

- Veteran and good friend Rob Cahalan, support on every level

Other (3 comments)

- Dean of Agriculture
- Nobody on this campus has been specifically helpful because I'm a veteran. My personal experience from the military does not automatically mean that I require special treatment. Some veterans actually seek no additional treatment/aid/support (other than having access to filing the necessary paperwork for VA and other military education benefits).
- Unfortunately, I do not feel I have been connected with anyone on the campus community as a veteran. This would have been extremely helpful and beneficial if this had happened prior to deployment and before returning to campus again.

Q7: 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. 'Other' responses (2 comments)

- Having "important" as rating in this list
- Staff training on disabled veterans sensitivity

Q8a: If yes to Q8, (are you experiencing any difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRF?), please describe the difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRF. (9 responses)

Heath (3 comments)

- Heart problems.
- I was injured in a class, and am now on crutches. Seeing as its winter, it is difficult to get around in the snow especially when no one is clearing sidewalks.
- While dealing with the mental scars associated with my combat experience in Iraq, and also dealing with memory issues associated with a TBI, I have found it difficult to keep my grades where they should be. Certain classes are very difficult, because of the reading intensity that is involved. As much as I have tried, by taking notes, re-reading and highlighting, I still have a very difficult time recalling information that I have read. This is affecting me currently in my theory class, which is all reading and you are expected to come to class with reading fully prepared and understood. This is something that is very, very difficult for me with my condition and is very concerning.

Academic (1 comment)

- It is just the transition from 8 years in the army to being a student again. Aside from the fact that I am 32. But trying to figure out the class work and online aspect of every class is down right exhausting. I just don't think I will be able to pass my classes. If you miss one class your pretty much screwed. You get so far behind and no one else is going to help catch you up that the problem just grows exponentially.

Financial (1 comment)

- I have personal issues that relate to job finding to help my wife and newborn daughter to pay for bills and daily needs. Nothing more than I need to find a part time job, otherwise I need to quit school and find full time work for a while.

Multiple Reasons (1 comment)

- Financial reasons. / Poor Academic counseling, afraid I will not complete my degree in a timely manner, because of information that was not brought to my attention. No guideline or suggestions from my adviser for setting a plan in motion to help me achieve my goals.

Transition to College (1 comment)

- I've changed since I served overseas. Coming back years later, I realize I'm not the same and college is much more difficult than before. I don't relate to anyone and they don't understand me.

VA Benefits/Assistance (1 comment)

- Unable to use my WI GI Bill unless I reverse my transfer to my 3 children & use my post 9/11 first.

Other (1 comment)

- Service related issues

Q10: Please identify areas where you could use or could have used additional assistance in making the transition to university life. 'Other' responses (7 comments)

- A walk through or video explaining everything that you have to do to begin a term.
- Better communication with other campuses concerning veterans benefits
- Disability services
- Financial Aid
- Parking
- Tuition
- VA office on campus

**Q11: What one thing could UWRF do to provide better service for you as a student-veteran at UWRF?
59 responses**

Veterans' Specific Assistance (28 responses)

Financial Aid/Tuition/Benefits (6 comments)

- Already stated. Flat tuition instead of misleading segregated fees.
- Discuss different available benefits
- Ensure financial assistance
- Fact sheet what and when to apply for benefits and how to use them.
- Go through financial aid things better for veterans, some of us don't know what categories we fall under due to the changes made.
- Other universities have a yearly form for applying for benefits. If your credits for either term change, it's the student's responsibility to report that change. This was much easier than having to come in each semester.

Paperwork (6 comments)

- Be more time-conscious when it comes to filing claims and letting students know about what they need to do to receive benefits.
- Explain paper work
- Make the paper work easier.
- Send out reminders to go in and fill out the paperwork
- The thing that would have helped the most is for the vet office to do my paperwork properly. I had two instances where part of the online form was not sent with correct info to the VA even though I had filled the form out correctly for the vet office. These were both seemingly minor details in paperwork with huge consequences. One was an incorrect dependent code and another was a missed check box for interim break pay. One caused my benefits to be received 6 weeks late and another caused me to completely miss out on an entire month's worth of benefits. This caused me a severe financial hardship during those times. Addressing those problems to the vet office at the time would have been pointless because by the time the resulting problem with the benefits is noticed, it is either too late to change the paperwork or it takes 6-8 weeks for the "claim" to get through the VA system. I am disappointed in the staff's knowledge of veteran educational benefits and their lack of attention to detail.

Credit for Military Training and Service (3 comments)

- Keep working on military service credits
- Make it easier to have military transcripts sent to UWRF for credit of active duty service.
- Why do I have to take classes to meet Ethical Citizenship and Cultural Diversity requirements? Was my serving the United States for seven years not being an ethical citizen? Was my living in and interacting with the local populace of five countries over four years not proof that I have had cultural diversity?

Awareness (2 comments)

- Make people on campus more aware of the presence of military personnel on campus because there is a lot of misguided looks when one says they are in the military or were in the military
- Make the veterans on campus more visible part of the community.

Outreach (2 comments)

- Better outreach other than the club org.
- Get more involved and proactive about reaching out to student-veterans. We're big boys and girls, but a lot of the time, we just simply don't know everything we should or could know about our benefits.

Academic Assistance (1 comment)

- Give us one on one teaching when we need it. This can be due to many issues keeping the student from understanding their studies.

Assimilation (1 comment)

- The time between my separation from the military and starting to attend UWRF was essentially non-existent. I would have appreciated assistance in adjusting to "civilian life" and meeting other students my age. I came to UWRF as a 23 year old attending "freshman" classes, which for the most part had 17 or 18 year olds, just out of high school, attending. There were serious maturity differences.

Courses (1 comment)

- Expand/review the Military Science/Leadership minor. The minor is geared directly towards Army veterans only. There are numerous members of other services that could take advantage of this minor if it was friendly to more service members. For example, I am a Navy veteran who is very interested in the minor yet would get no viable credit for my service. The 301 and 302 courses required for the minor are for field leadership, leading troops in field maneuvers, there is much more to military science than just field maneuvers.

Internship (1 comment)

- Create a system that helps direct veterans to better attain the needed classes earlier in the education process that will set them apart from their peers when searching for internships. Help in the identifying of goals for student be it grad school or to the work force, and then illustrate goals to be successful other than just academia. (i.e. if they need an internship, certain skills) I wish I would have had this!

Mentorship (1 comment)

- As a veteran, providing me with another veteran counselor/mentor, in my own field. That would make a huge impact!

Opting-Out of Veteran Targeting (1 comment)

- The ability to opt-out of veterans targeting. I understand that it is desired by other veterans. I've requested several times to not be notified of several veterans' events on campus, but to no avail. There are large differences between each individual veteran. Many are without the ability to relate to other veterans, because the experiences within the military are vast.

Registration (1 comment)

- Provide veterans with registration preference.

Transfer (1 comment)

- I believe that if the University could somehow have a better definition of the credits that transfer from the military to the courses here would help. That way military members wouldn't have to try and define what they had done or experienced to make a better transition for them to the University's courses. Especially with the higher number of individuals that have been in the military and using the benefits to bettering themselves and getting a college degree.

VA Assistance (1 comment)

- More VA Involvement

Satisfied with Service (7 comments)

- N/A They are great!
- None that I am aware of.
- Not sure, its pretty good as it is.
- Not sure.
- Nothing
- Nothing really. All the services that I need to meet any needs I have as a student-veteran have been met.
- Nothing, they have done a great job and have provided for all of my vet-related needs.

Veterans Services Office (4 comments)

- Make sure workers in the VA office know what they are talking about before they give out incorrect information, and if they don't know the answer to ask Nicole.
- Provide training to those working in the VA office on campus so they know what benefits we have and how they work/how to use them!
- Sensitivity training/ customer service training to the student workers in the VSO.
- Veterans' service should call or get together with new vets starting college and make sure they are transitioning well.

Faculty/Staff (2 comments)

- Ensure campus employees actually perform their jobs in a proper and timely manner.
- Sensitivity training for faculty

Family (2 comments)

- Making the dependents feel important too and more included.

- Monitor what teachers are talking about in class. Last semester I almost walked out of a class where a teacher was belittling the sacrifice of soldiers who died overseas. Some teachers like to preach their opinion which I'm not saying is wrong, but there are people in class who are a lot more sensitive to that issue than I am. A little more discretion in expressing personal opinions would be appreciated.

Housing (2 comments)

- Find a veteran only house off campus.
- Some sort of housing/apt list geared towards Veterans. It's important that veterans integrate with the younger generations in college...but being older might not quite work out if you get stuck with a bunch a 19-year olds.

Orientation/Welcome/Transition (2 comments)

- For new students, a veteran's only intro briefing better explaining VA benefits, campus/student life from a veteran's perspective, etc. could be helpful.
- You could have an orientation for veterans returning to school who may not be familiar with changes around campus. It would also be a good way to meet all the individuals and have them meet other veterans.

Student-Veteran Gathering Place (2 comments)

- A place to connect with and socialize with veterans on campus. Most of us veterans are older and either have jobs, families, or just live off campus so meeting during "club organization" hours may not be useful to many of us.
- Offer us a specific place to go and study. Many times, I have gone into the library and have had to leave because it was too noisy. I would like to have a place where I can go and have a quiet place on campus.

Other/Miscellaneous (10 comments)

- Act on the inputs from this survey i.e. not just talking about it and writing inordinate amounts of paper work in its effect.
- Be more involved.
- Better Parking/Have better parking! (2x)
- Hold seminars at the student center on how to save - budget monthly money. have a meeting at the beginning and mid semester
- I would be hard pressed to find anything.
- Make emails more clear. I personally am not a veteran and some things are hard to understand what they are talking about and I need to ask my mom who is in the military.
- Provide class schedules that allow labs to fall into a Monday-Wednesday-Friday or a Tuesday-Thursday class week with their associated lecture. Classes with lectures on the Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule have labs on Tuesday or Thursday. Classes with labs usually aren't available on a Tuesday-Thursday schedule or the labs are offered on Monday-Wednesday-Friday. Having lab schedules available in the same 3 day per week or 2 day per week schedule would

reduce the amount number of days that I commute to school per week and increase the amount of time I have available to study.

- Realize that some of us are not traditional students and don't need the "university experience".
- Service has been very good. Just keep being available.

Q14: My academic status is: 'Other' response (1 comment)

- ¾ time

Q20: What are your current living arrangements? 'Other' responses (2 comments)

- Both rental and parent's home
- Own home and rent in this area for school.

Q22: What are your sources of funding for your university education? 'Other' responses (5 comments)

- Money from deployment
- Savings
- Unemployment Benefits
- Veteran dislocated worker program
- WI. GI Bill

Q25: What is the best way to communicate with you? 'Other' responses (2 comments)

- I am graduating
- Many! Not just one

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses

2011 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
85%	53%	37%	2%	20%	7%

2. In last year's survey, respondents were given the opportunity to choose which items they believed UWRF should focus on in terms of veterans' services and policies. The top six areas are listed below. How satisfied are you with UWRF's improvement in these areas over the past year?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Re-establishment of the Veterans Club	14%	27%	28%	1%	1%	29%
Special Orientation for veterans	0%	19%	30%	9%	1%	41%
Credit for military training and service	21%	21%	22%	10%	5%	21%
Additional veterans services and programs	9%	28%	25%	4%	2%	32%
Alternative curriculum delivery formats (on-line, evening, weekend, etc.)	9%	31%	31%	2%	2%	25%
Degree completion assistance	7%	25%	30%	4%	1%	33%

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

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Academic advising	26%	40%	13%	8%	2%	10%
Academic success center	15%	25%	11%	3%	1%	44%
Admissions – application and transfer	32%	45%	10%	4%	0%	8%
Bursar/billing/tuition payment	27%	47%	8%	6%	4%	7%
Career services	15%	31%	15%	2%	0%	38%
Counseling services	13%	21%	17%	2%	0%	48%
Financial aid	20%	29%	15%	5%	2%	29%
First-year experience	18%	36%	15%	2%	2%	27%
Registrar services/enrollment verification	27%	48%	11%	5%	1%	7%
Staff and faculty support	30%	48%	13%	4%	0%	5%
Student affairs/student services	18%	38%	13%	4%	2%	26%
Student health services	13%	19%	9%	4%	2%	53%
Veterans services office	40%	44%	8%	3%	1%	4%

4. Please provide any recommendations of how the UWRF resources/services for which you rated poor or very poor in the previous question (Q3) could improve. **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	25%	55%	15%	3%	2%
b. I have experienced delays in receiving my VA education benefits	15%	29%	34%	17%	5%
c. I know where to go on campus if I have questions regarding veterans services	53%	40%	3%	2%	2%
d. My transition to college has been made easier by the assistance provided to me by UWRF personnel	21%	47%	13%	2%	18%
e. I have had difficulty in finding adequate housing while attending UWRF	5%	14%	22%	25%	34%
f. I feel connected with other UWRF students	11%	40%	24%	10%	15%
g. UWRF faculty/staff are sensitive to the needs of the veterans on campus	10%	49%	13%	8%	20%
h. UWRF has qualified staff trained to address service members'/veterans' needs	20%	51%	13%	2%	15%

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	45%	38%	10%	7%
b. Career services/planning	53%	31%	10%	6%
c. Disability services/support	38%	19%	36%	6%
d. Financial aid counseling	43%	37%	12%	8%
e. Healthcare for service-related conditions (injuries, TBI, etc.)	39%	26%	23%	12%
f. Individual personal counseling or mental health (PTSD, depression, MST, etc.)	40%	26%	24%	10%
g. Social activities and events	28%	42%	26%	4%
h. Support groups and/or clubs specifically for active-duty and veteran students	31%	39%	22%	9%
i. VA service organizations (American Legion, DAV, etc.)	33%	43%	16%	9%
j. Veterans services/benefits counseling	64%	24%	5%	6%
k. Student-veteran lounge or gathering place	31%	39%	22%	7%
l. Other, specify: See Appendix B	12%	8%	12%	69%

	Yes	No
8. Are you experiencing any difficulties that may cause you to stop attending UWRF?	12%	88%

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

9. How effective, overall, do you think UWRF was during your transition to university life?

Very Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Somewhat Ineffective	Ineffective	Very Ineffective
15%	40%	30%	8%	7%	1%

10. Please identify areas where you could use or could have used additional assistance in making the transition to university life. **Mark (•) all that apply.**

Assistance connecting to campus life/organization	Assistance connecting to other veterans	Assistance with academics	Financial management	Marriage/family issues
22%	22%	24%	23%	6%
Medical care	Personal issues	Spiritual issues	Time management assistance	Other, please specify See Appendix B
13%	16%	1%	19%	8%

11. 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.

12. What is your current military status?

Veteran	Active Duty Military	National Guard	Reserves	Family Member/Dependent of Veteran
53%	0%	19%	9%	19%

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

Yes	No
51%	49%

13a. If you have been activated within the last five years, what branch of service?

Air Force	Army	Coast Guard	Marines	Navy	Other, specify See Appendix B
13%	63%	0%	15%	9%	0%

14. My academic status is:

Full-Time Student	Part-Time Student	Recently Graduated	Currently on Leave from School	Other, specify: See Appendix B
83%	16%	0%	0%	1%

15. 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%	18%	19%	43%	4%	2%

16. Age:

18 – 22	23 – 25	26 – 29	30 – 35	36 – 39	40+
23%	19%	23%	18%	5%	12%

17. Gender:

Male	Female
62%	38%

18. Marital Status:

Single	Married/Have a partner	Divorced/Separated	Widowed
57%	35%	6%	1%

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

	None	1	2	3+
a. Adults (18+ years old)		27%	42%	31%
b. Children	70%	14%	11%	5%

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

Residence Halls	Off campus rental apartment or home	Own home	Parent's home	Deployed	Other, specify See Appendix B
14%	51%	26%	7%	0%	2%

21. 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
33%	15%	25%	12%	9%	6%

22. 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
46%	13%	36%	34%	10%	90%	32%	5%

23. Are you aware there is an active Veterans' Club on campus?

Yes	No
77%	23%

24. Are you a member of the Veterans' Club on the UWRF campus?

31%	69%
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25. What is the best way to communicate with you? Select MOST preferred method only.

Veterans' Services Office Website	Emails	Mailings	Twitter	Veterans' Club Facebook page	Other, please specify See Appendix B
5%	89%	2%	0%	1%	2%

26. Do you know where the Veterans' Services Office is located on the UWRF campus?

Yes	No
91%	9%

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