Veteran and Service Member Education Benefit Data Flow Re-Engineering Project

Creating a major short-term win for the veteran and military education benefit ecosystem by allowing higher education, SVA, NAVPA, and National Student Clearinghouse to streamline the data submission process into VA-ONCE and VACERT.

March 20, 2016
Today’s Panelists

**Shelby Stanfield**, Vice Provost and Registrar
University of Texas - Austin

**Chris Cate**, Vice President of Research
Student Veterans of America

**Marc Barker**, Manager Military and Veterans Benefits
Colorado State University
President, National Association of Veteran Program Administrators

**Scott Owczarek**, University Registrar
University Wisconsin - Madison

**Doug Falk**, CIO
National Student Clearinghouse
Today’s Conversation Topics

• The case for re-invention
• Overview of the proposal
• Discussion of benefits
• Current status, getting involved and next steps
2 years ago NSC was approached by several school registrars to help with the VA reporting process.
Our expectations of the Clearinghouse as an agent of our institution:

- Improve *institutional efficiency and effectiveness through*
  - Relief of administrative work burdens via outsourcing
  - Easier access to job related information (i.e., enrollment management)

- Operate a **trusted, private, secure, transparent** environment

- Benefit to the students, schools, administrators and data requestors

- Provide national access, persistence and attainment related reports and information
"The Financial Aid World" Before the Clearinghouse

Issues:
- Paper driven
- High costs
- Technical defaults

Students and institutions suffered
3,700+ postsecondary institutions
- Representing 97% of U.S. enrollment

Report of all enrolled students
APPROXIMATELY MONTHLY

NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE®
All Enrolled Students/All Borrowers

- SSCRs
- Deferment Forms
- Out-of-School Notifications
- Address/Name Changes
- Enrollment Status Reductions
- Notifications of Deferment Eligibility
- Enrollment Histories
- Education Debt Tools - Meteor

Guarantor Lists
of All Borrowers

Servicer Lists
of All Borrowers

ED List
of All Direct Loan Borrowers

Perkins & Private Lender Lists
of All Borrowers

WEEKLY Enrollment Data
Large Lenders/Servicers
(Clearinghouse Participants)

WEEKLY Enrollment Data
Guarantors

BI-MONTHLY SSCR Exchange
NSLDS
U.S. Dept. of Education

WEEKLY Direct Loan Enrollment Data
Direct Loan Servicers
Bringing a similar process to bear for Veteran Services
Implication of the transformation: Students better served by the institution

Continued ownership of data by institution and **data and reporting submissions controlled by SCO**

Large **efficiency gains**
- Student status changes reported daily; timing issues eliminated
- Veteran Service office focused on higher order student needs
- Standards driven (data and process) equals training simplified
- Ease of work required to meet new regulations

**Error reductions**
- NSC quickly identifies potential errors in submissions and school corrects

Accurate reporting of progression and completion measures allowing for more complete assessment of **program efficacy**
Validating the opportunity

• Over the past two years numerous conversations....summarizing:
• AACRAO 2015 Baltimore Meeting: 24 registrars and SVA leadership meet to review and discuss the challenge/opportunity
• SVA leadership and members: validating veteran benefits
• NAVPA leadership and SCO’s across 100’s of institutions: validating the issues and the benefits
• Presentation to NAVPA membership at annual meeting concurrent (at same event) meeting with Mr. Robert Worley, VBA head: Present the business case, validate the opportunity, set up possible meeting with VBA

We started by taking a look at the current process...
Veteran Education Benefit data reporting eco-system

WOW
And determined that there was indeed the potential for a better process
### Veteran's education benefits enrollment reporting via National Student Clearinghouse

**From Registration to Census date**
- **Start**
  - Student makes contact with VA
  - Certifying official requests benefits for a specific semester/quarter

**Institution**
- Institutions mark their system as veteran/dependent and chapter under which student claims benefits

**National Student Clearinghouse**
- Receive data from institutions
- Format data to upload to VA

**Department of Veteran Affairs**
- Receive enrollment/un satisfactory attendance/graduation information including veteran or dependent status and chapter

**After census date**
- **Option A**
  - Process continues
  - If institutions already have a way to identify students who have made changes in enrollment, provide information on only this group of students
  - Submit current enrollment data to NSC: Data elements as needed to populate VAONCE (Excel or tab delimited file) - upload

**Option B**
- Prepare transcript in NSC acceptable format, also include dates of drop, withdrawals, effective date of changes, academic probation, dismissal, etc. (If only degree applicable hours are reported, institutions may need to identify these courses on the transcript) and upload

**End of semester**
- Send degree data for students at the end of the semester (Regular submission for institutions that already pass data in enrollment and degree reporting) Include veteran status indicator and veteran chapter (new field)
- Identify students who received VA benefits who have graduated

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*Option A and B can also be used simultaneously in order to deliver required information to the VA.*
The Clearinghouse in a position to offer game changing near term eco-system win

- Currently asking schools to indicate veteran status via registrar data submission
- Currently collecting course, grade, degree and enrollment and major information to support other services
- Established liaison compliance reporting relationship between institutions and with USED including compliance resource center for institutions and daily USED registrar managed updates to federal systems
- Partners with institutional registrar’s and/or financial aid office to enable continuous process improvements
- Provides a free reporting platform allowing institutions/school systems to evaluate program efficacy in a more complete manner
Proposal Overview
Opportunity for Improvement

- December 2nd meeting at VA, including:
  - VA leadership
  - NAVPA president
  - SVA president
  - Higher Ed leaders:
    - UT-Austin
    - UW-Madison
    - Univ. of Missouri
    - Syracuse Univ.
    - St. Louis Univ.
    - Hopkinsville Community College

Who belongs to the boots?
Shelby or Scott????

Shelby!
Who belongs to the boots?
Shelby or Scott????

Scott!
Creating a Major Short-term Win for Veterans and Service members

Leveraging the existing NSC process with USED and create similar data submission pathway to VA through a collaborative partnership

Proposal: *Creating and delivering an eco-system wide transformational win by re-engineering the data flow that underlie the VA education benefit process with HED*

Near Term:
1. Allow NSC to submit data on behalf of institutions who choose to submit via NSC (akin to ED)
2. NSC/VA create interface with VA system for SCO processed/authorized data submissions
3. NSC/VA create measurement platform interface allowing for system wide timely assessments

Setting the stage for:
1. NSC/VA create an enhanced student serving educational pathway view tool
2. NSC’s portal to enhance veteran transition logistics (improving ease of transfer to and between institutions) including PLA’s and MOS
3. Partner with VA to create enhanced benefit view tool to provide integrated debt and financial aid view *(private AND public debt)* to veterans.
Major proposal asks of the VA:
Allow systems to accept data from NSC

- **Stage 1:** The VA allows NSC to work with their technology team to develop a batch file update that allows VA-ONCE to accept data from NSC for completions.
- **Stage 2:** The VA allows NSC to work with their technology team to develop a direct input interface that allows VA-ONCE or VACERT to accept data from NSC for completions, bio-data and terminations.
- **Stage 3:** The VA allows NSC to work with their technology teams to develop the eligibility and certification interfaces between NSC and VA-ONCE or VACERT covering certification and re-certification.
Demonstration of Efficacy: Completion data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGE DEGREE INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Code (header)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Code (header)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official School Name (header)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Report Flag (header)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmission Date (header)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree Period (header)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree Level Indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree, Certificate, or Credential Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/College/Division Awarding Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Institution/College/School/Division Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Degree, Credential, or Certificate Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Course of Study 1 (Repeat up to 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Course of Study 1 (Repeat up to 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Option 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Option 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Concentration 1 (Repeat up to 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCES CIP Code for Major 1 (Repeat up to 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCES CIP Code for Minor 1 (Repeat up to 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Honors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Honors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Institution Granting Degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Opportunities

- Improved efficiency
- Increased service to veterans
- Better data analysis and information
Bio-Data

- Personal Identifiers
  - Name
  - DOB
  - SSN
  - Address
  - Email
  - Phone
  - Other ID Numbers
- Enrollment Term Dates
- Enrollment Status
- Enrollment Status Effective Dates
- Anticipated Graduation Date
- Major/CIP Code (multiple)
- Program Information (multiple)
- Level
- Degree Seeking
- Program Length
- Program Level Enrollment Status

National Student Clearinghouse®

Institution

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

3/20/2016
AACRAO Pre-Conference Veteran Program Update
Bio-Data (combined)

- Personal Identifiers
  - Name
  - DOB
  - SSN
  - Address
  - Email
  - Phone
- Other ID Numbers
- Enrollment Term Dates
- Enrollment Status
- Enrollment Status Effective Dates
- Anticipated Graduation Date
- Major/CIP Code (multiple)
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Opportunities

- Improved efficiency
- Increased service to veterans
- Better data analysis and information

Institution → National Student Clearinghouse™ → U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Major work streams and high-level timeline near-term

**Stages of Implementation: Immediate**

1. **Completion data** interface development: High value prop demonstration
   1. Develop standard data definitions where applicable with beta schools
   2. Develop data submission mapping for institutions building off of existing degree file submissions
   3. Develop pilot batch file interface to **VA-ONCE**
   4. Develop a trust/working relationship with VA and institutional SCO’s
Major work streams and high-level timeline medium-term

**Stages of Implementation: 12 months**

1. **Conversion of Completion data** interface to VACERT
2. **Submission of Bio data to set up new veteran accounts**
   1. Develop standard data definitions where applicable with beta schools
   2. Develop data submission mapping for institutions building off of existing submissions
   3. Develop pilot interface to VACERT with VA
Major work streams and high-level timeline medium-term

Stages of Implementation: 12 to 18 months
1. Certification and recertification: begin developing with VA interface
   a. Work with schools and VA to develop API interface
   b. Negotiate MOS and ACE credits inclusion into NSC database
   c. beta testing begins... Value proposition test (learner, school, VA)
   d. Rollout of solution
Major work streams and high-level timeline long-term

**Stages of Implementation: 24 months**

1. Coordinate with VA to Provide integrated portfolio view for Veterans  
   a. NSC data feeding VA portfolio or NSC originated portfolio view  
   b. Look to develop interface with Meteor for new VA platform and other student aid sources (federal and private) & initial certification  
2. Upon rollout: **Development of Approach to DOD** to address service member and family member related certification and eligibility issues
Major benefits accrued to veterans (Over 1.2mln currently enrolled)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder\Benefit</th>
<th>Student: Minimizing bureaucracy/stress, maximizing opportunity to be better served by the institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Efficiency**: Improving speed and timberliness | • Speed / timeliness of getting to eligibility determination  
• Increased levels of PSED support service personnel  
• **Minimize overpayments and debt; preservation of benefit due to gaps in timeliness of information sharing**  
• Deeper education-Pathway understanding  
• One stop data shop for sourcing PLA |
| **Accuracy**: Reducing errors | • Speed/timeliness of accurate benefit recognition |
| **Efficacy**: Measuring program efficacy real time. | • Better data informed counseling enabled |
Major benefits accrued to Veteran Program Administrators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder\Benefit</th>
<th>Upscaling the skill and competencies required to be the School Certifying Official to better serve non-clerical issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Efficiency**: Improving speed and timeliness | • **SCO**: Move from blocking and tackling to higher order work (improving outcomes)  
• Fin Aid: better real-time data to support aid questions (improving outcomes) |
| **Accuracy**: Reducing errors | • Ease of correcting major mistakes (prior to submission to VA system; similar to USED error alerts from NSC on files)  
• Improving business continuity in times of turnover  
• Common definitions used by all institutions reporting via NSC |
| **Efficacy**: Measuring program efficacy real time. | • Upskilling to run measurement reports and queries enabling consultation with a military focus |
## Major benefits accrued to Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder/ Benefit</th>
<th>Institution: Cost benefit allowing for improved utilization of veteran support resources enabling improved outcomes</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Efficiency:** Improving speed and timeliness | • Processing time reductions  
• Simplifying process to meeting new reporting requirements  
• *Reallocation of staff from veteran paperwork processing to support staff (e.g. Counseling, academic advising, Office of Veteran Affairs)*  
• Scalability  
• Simplifying admissions and matriculation (PLA, MOS)  
• Minimize institutional debt |
| **Accuracy:** Reducing errors | • Faster turnarounds reduces or eliminates gaps in information sharing resulting in more accurate information  
• Improved accuracy enhances trust of veterans in institution |
| **Efficacy:** Measuring program efficacy real time. | • Ease of obtaining program efficacy measures tied to standard persistence and attainment rates |
## Major benefits accrued to VA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder\Benefit</th>
<th>VA: Enablement / Enhancement of mission to serve veterans / Large public win, short term win for VA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Efficiency:** Improving speed and timeliness | • Aligns and enables LTS (Long Term Solution) goals  
• Ease of implementing policy changes  
• Placement of greater focus to improving outcomes |
| **Accuracy:** Reducing errors | • Faster response times due to fewer common errors  
• Accurate completion data from one, common source |
| **Efficacy:** Measuring program efficacy real time. | • Can establish report schedules/updates etc.  
• Ability to compare veterans to other populations  
• Real time understanding of Veteran Education benefit ROI |
Major benefits accrued to Public Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Benefit</th>
<th>Public Policy: More timely and complete ROI assessments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency:</strong> Improving speed and timeliness</td>
<td>• Timeliness of completion and progression reports (ROI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy:</strong> Reducing errors</td>
<td>• Accurate completion data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficacy:</strong> Measuring program efficacy real time.</td>
<td>• Ease of producing nationwide statistics on access, progression and attainment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Status and Next steps
Short-term Opportunity

• Completion Data Proposal:
  • NSC to add three data elements to degree file
    • VA File Number
    • Suffix
    • Chapter
  • NSC to obtain authority from SCO’s to report to VA
  • NSC to create an extract file and deliver to VA via Secure FTP
  • VA to retrieve file and update systems with completion data
  • File layout, timing and other requirements will be determined thru discussions with VA
Long-term Opportunity

• Collecting and reporting Bio and Certification data
• Provide data linkages to enrollment, completion, course/grade/credit and other military data

• The Future Result:
  • The Clearinghouse provides institutions with another compliance-related service that helps reduce their administrative burdens and supports student veterans.
How to Stay Informed...Get Your Dog Tags!!!

1. Sign up at the **Clearinghouse booth #407**:  
   - Express your support for this project  
   - Get project updates  
   - Be included in beta testing of the different solution sets  
   - Have your campus included in webinars
How to Stay Informed...Get Your Dog Tags!!!

2. Join our listserv:
   https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/subscribe/aauveteran

3. This presentation will be posted at
   https://studentclearinghouse.info/studentvets
THANK YOU, VETERANS!