



# Veteran status as a DEI identity

Logan Pearce

U Mich Astro Equi-tea

26 Feb 2025



Graduated Purdue  
 - BS Chemistry  
 - NROTC Scholarship

2003

2015



2024



Graduated UA  
 PhD Astro



2008



- Surface Warfare Officer  
 - Nuclear Power Operator

- MS Science and Eng Teacher  
 - MA Education 2014



Graduated UT  
 BS Phys & Astro



2019





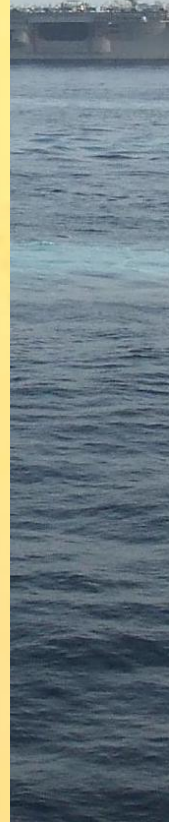
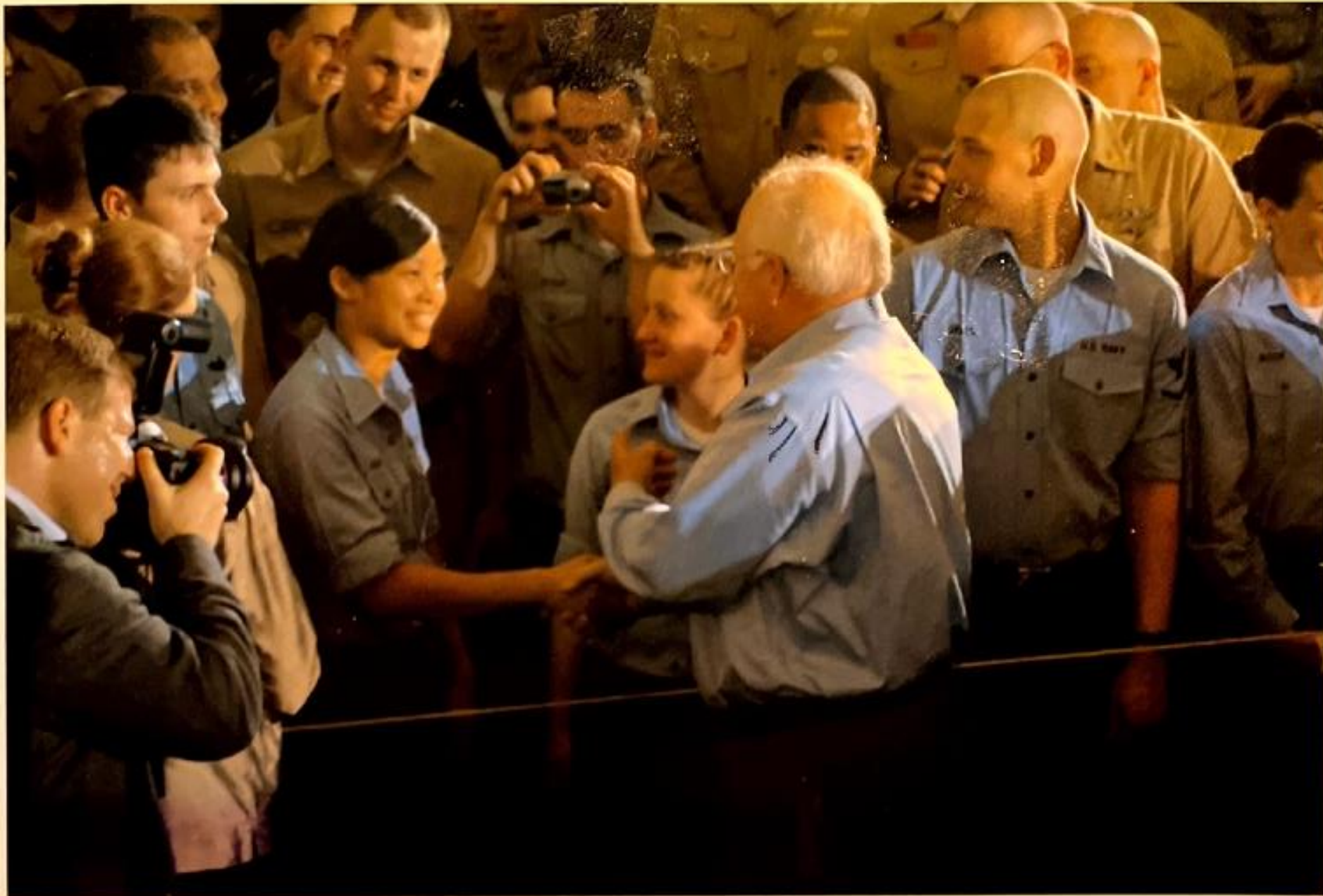




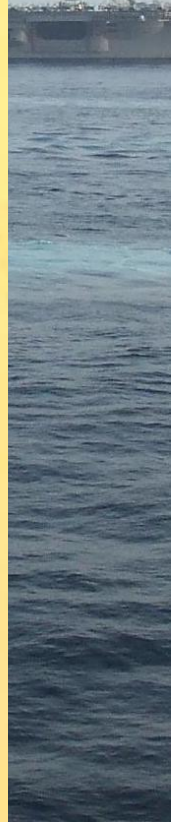












2008



2015







2019

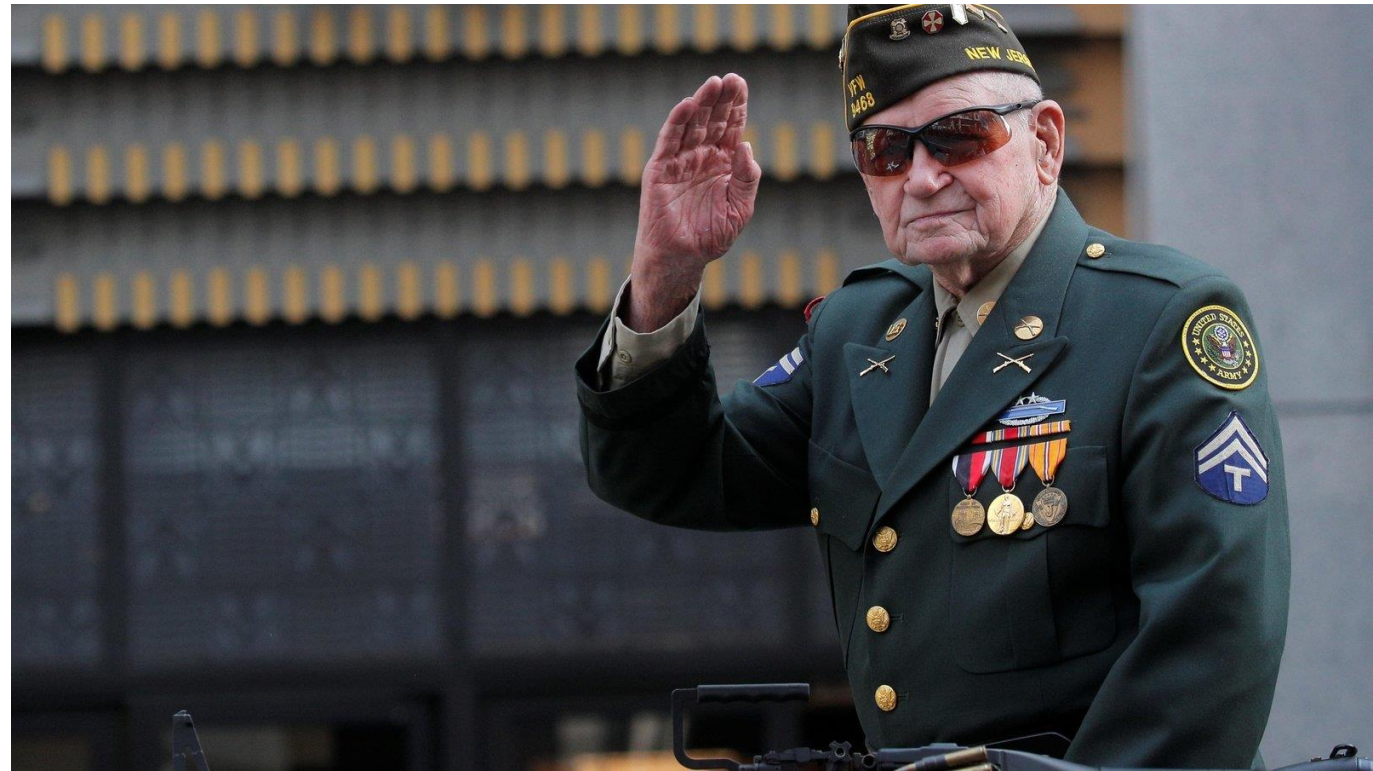




What comes to mind when you think of veterans?



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What comes to mind when you think of



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What comes to  
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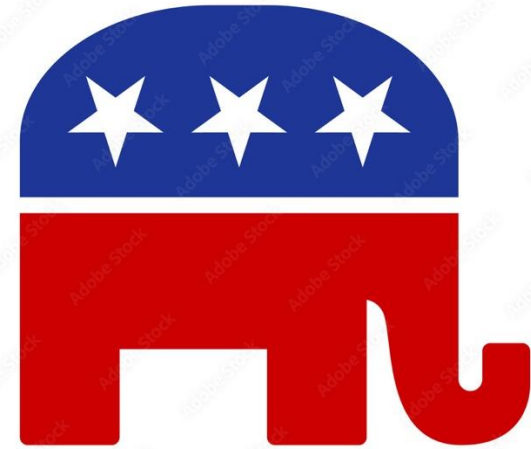




# What comes to mind when you think of veterans?



PTSD?



Republican?



Gun lover?

Adobe Stock | #462819930

# The truth is

Diverse backgrounds

Diverse military experiences

Diverse opinions on their service and the military

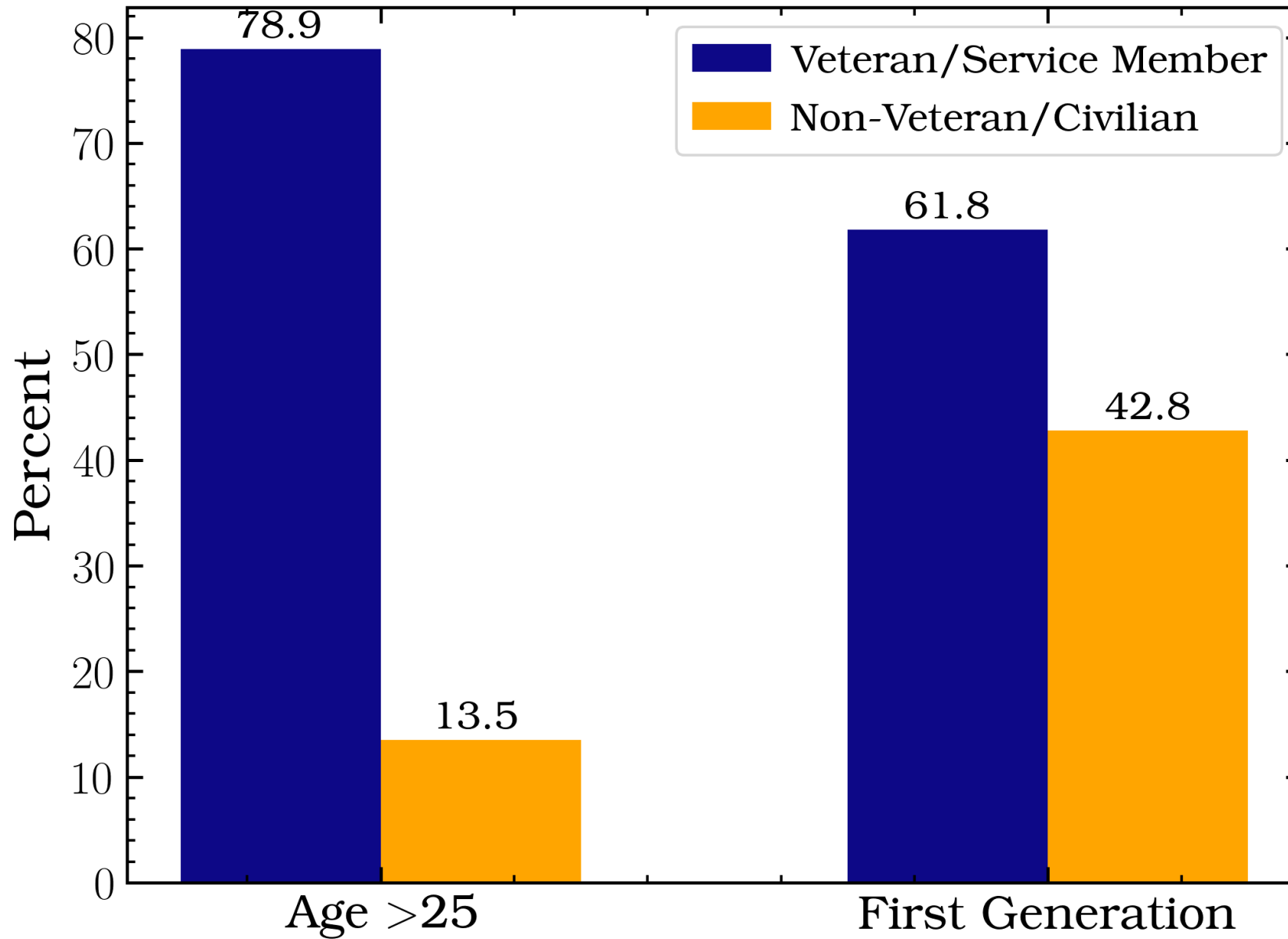




# Diverse backgrounds

Vets disproportionately come from groups underrepresented in academia

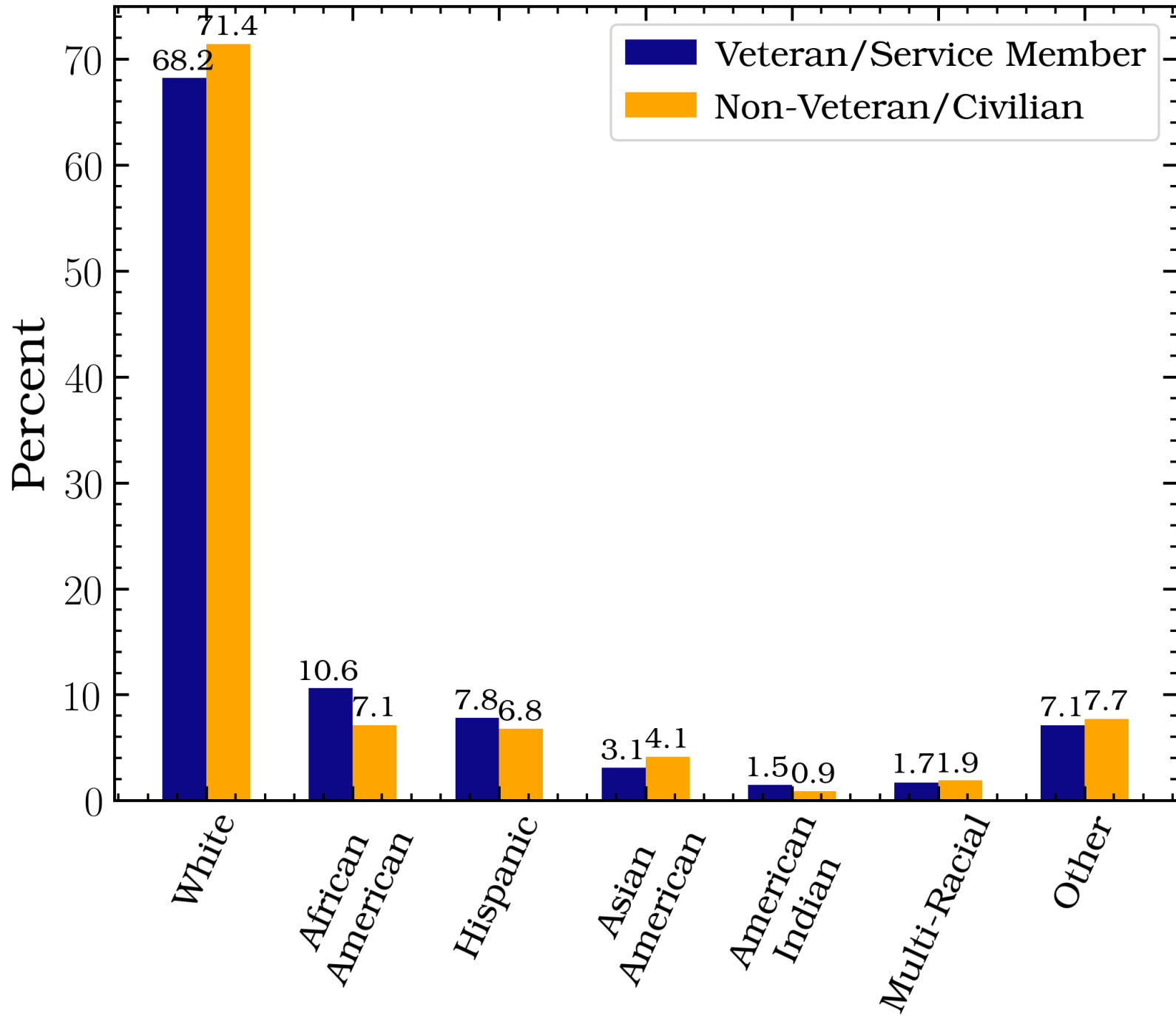




America Council for Education & Center for Policy Research and Strategy  
National Survey of Student Engagement 2023







# Diverse backgrounds

People joined for different reasons

- Blow sh\*t up
- Money for college
- Sense of patriotic duty



# Diverse opinions

- Proud of service vs feeling it was a mistake
- Support US foreign policy vs critical
- Some folks may not want to self identify or participate in veteran spaces





# Diverse military experiences





# Regardless of experience

## ALL student vets have

- Leadership Skills
- Experience developing a high level of technical expertise quickly
- Outside academia perspective

## MANY student vets have

- Years of career experience
- Technical education in a STEM-related field ex: Nuclear Power School, Electricians Mate school, Aircraft Mechanics school

# Unique concerns affecting student veterans



- May need to maintain a full courseload to keep full benefits



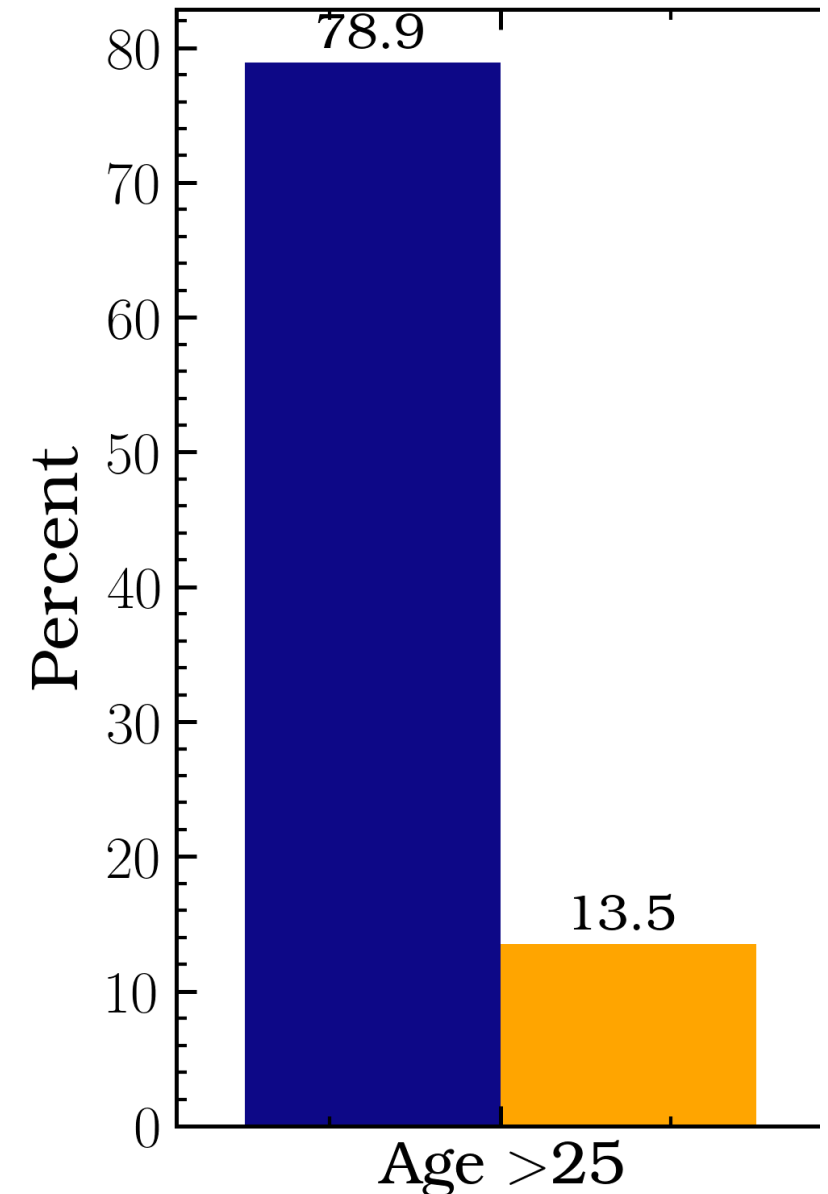
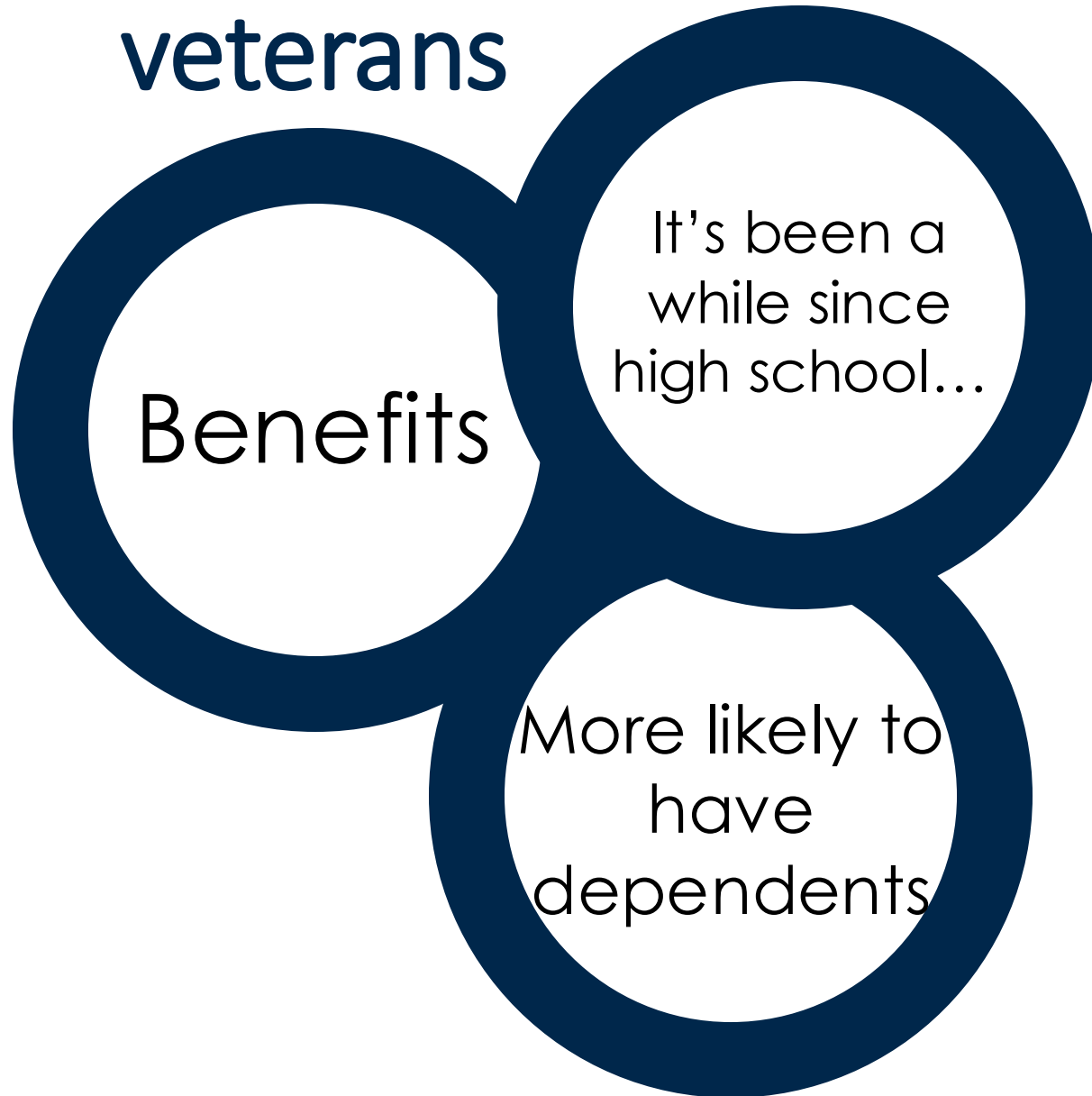
# Unique concerns affecting student veterans



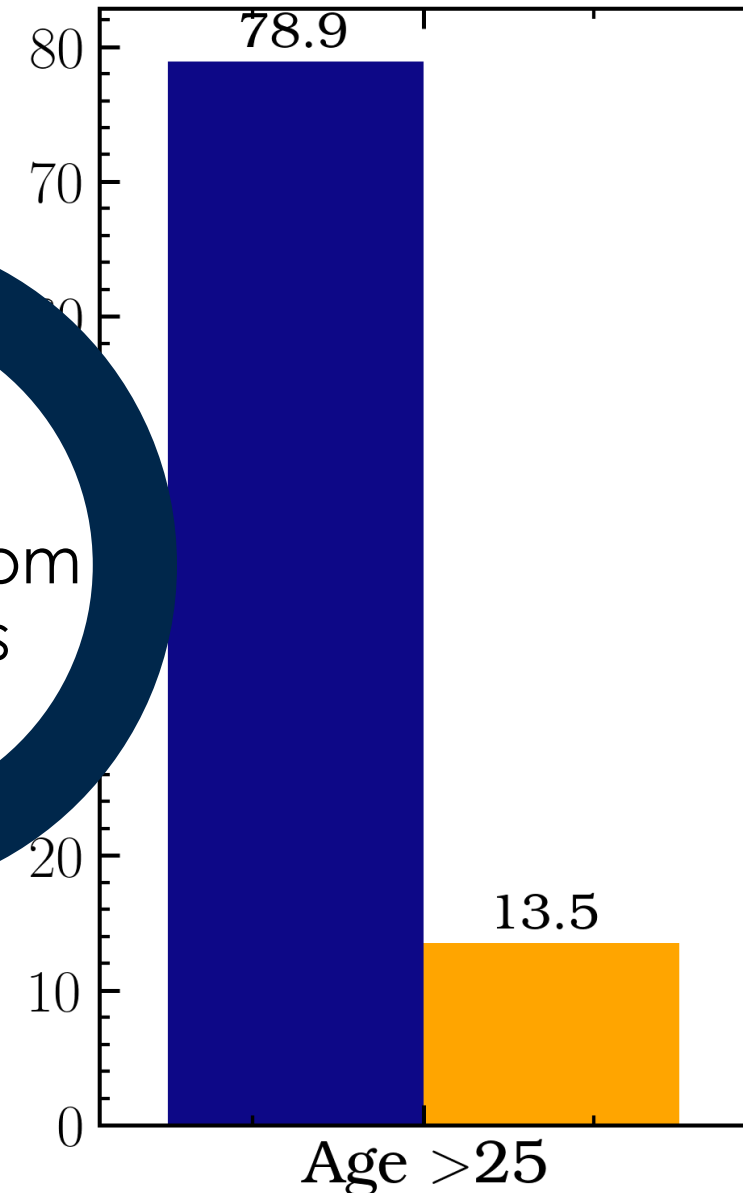
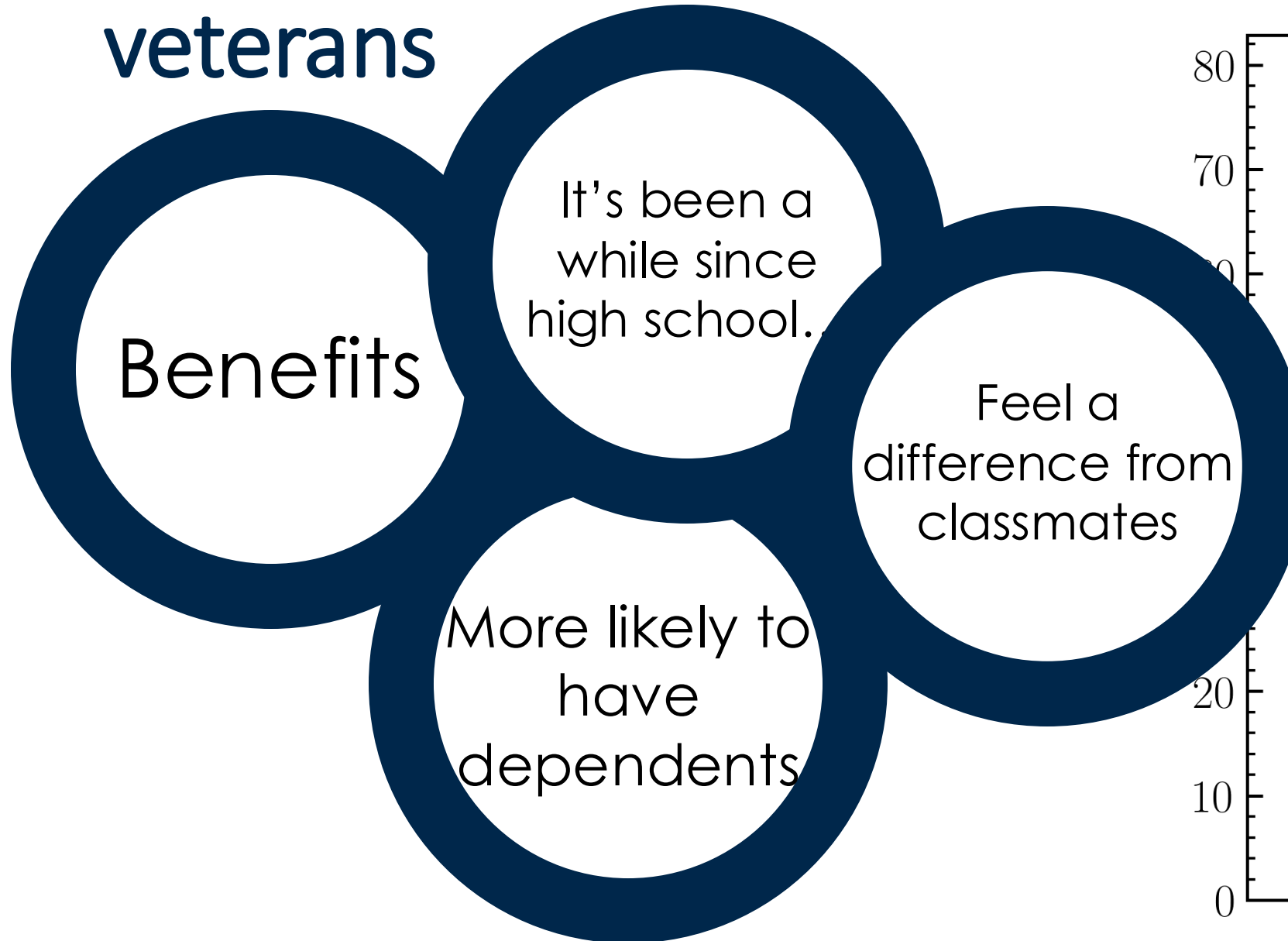
Benefits

More likely to  
have  
dependents

# Unique concerns affecting student veterans

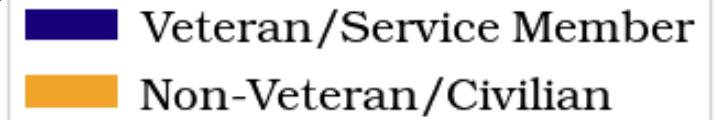


# Unique concerns affecting student veterans

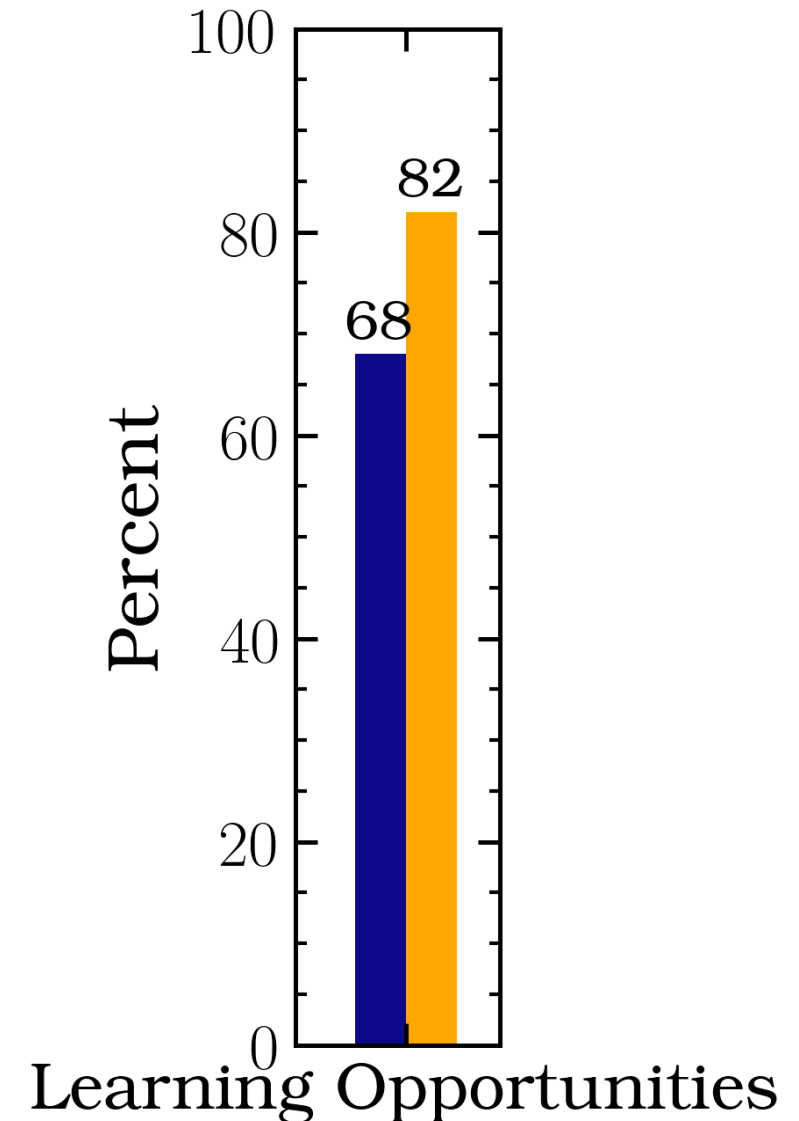




# From ACE National Survey of Student Engagement 2023



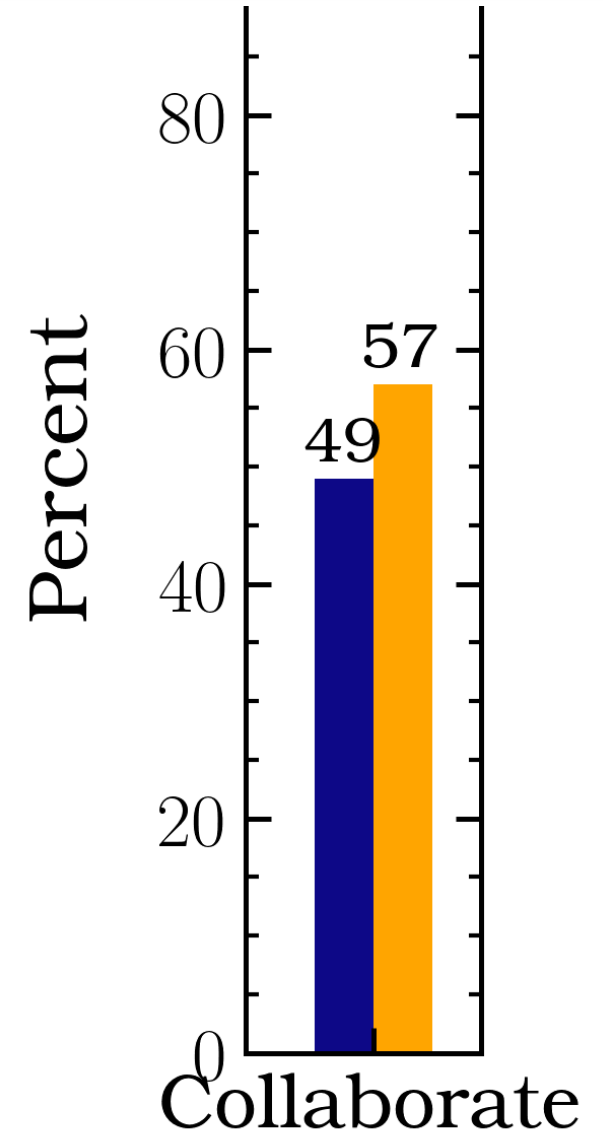
*“Student veterans/service members are less likely to participate in experiential learning opportunities, such as **internships** or practicums, leaning communities, study abroad, or community service”*



# From ACE National Survey of Student Engagement 2023



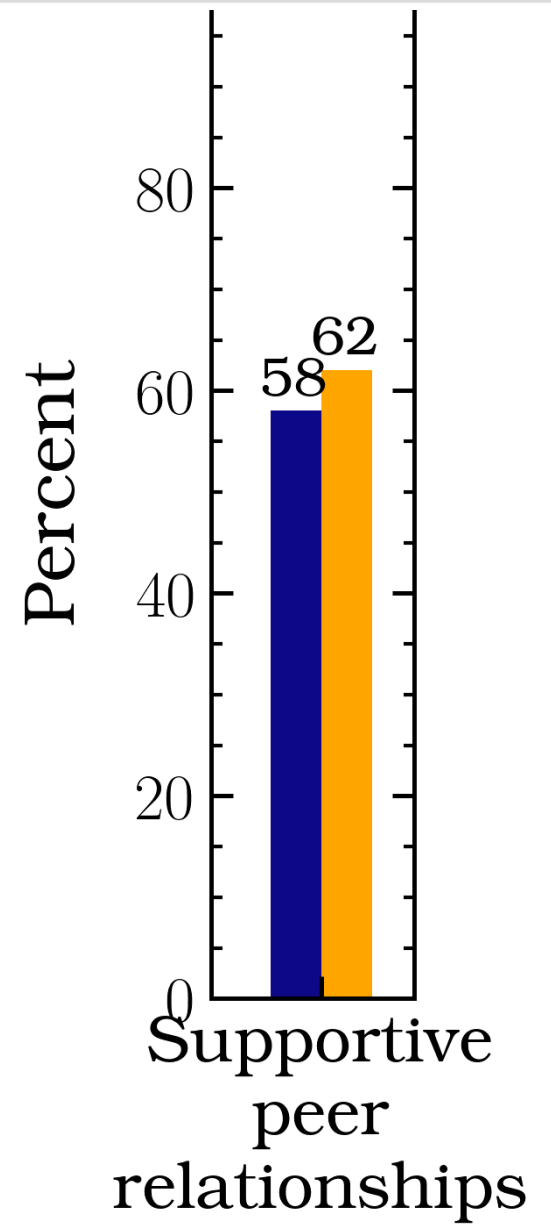
*...more likely to spend at least 10 hrs preparing for class and discuss grades or assignments with instructors but **less** likely to collaborate with classmates outside of class*



# From ACE National Survey of Student Engagement 2023



*More likely to have positive relationships with faculty and admin, but less likely to have friendly and supportive relationships with other students*

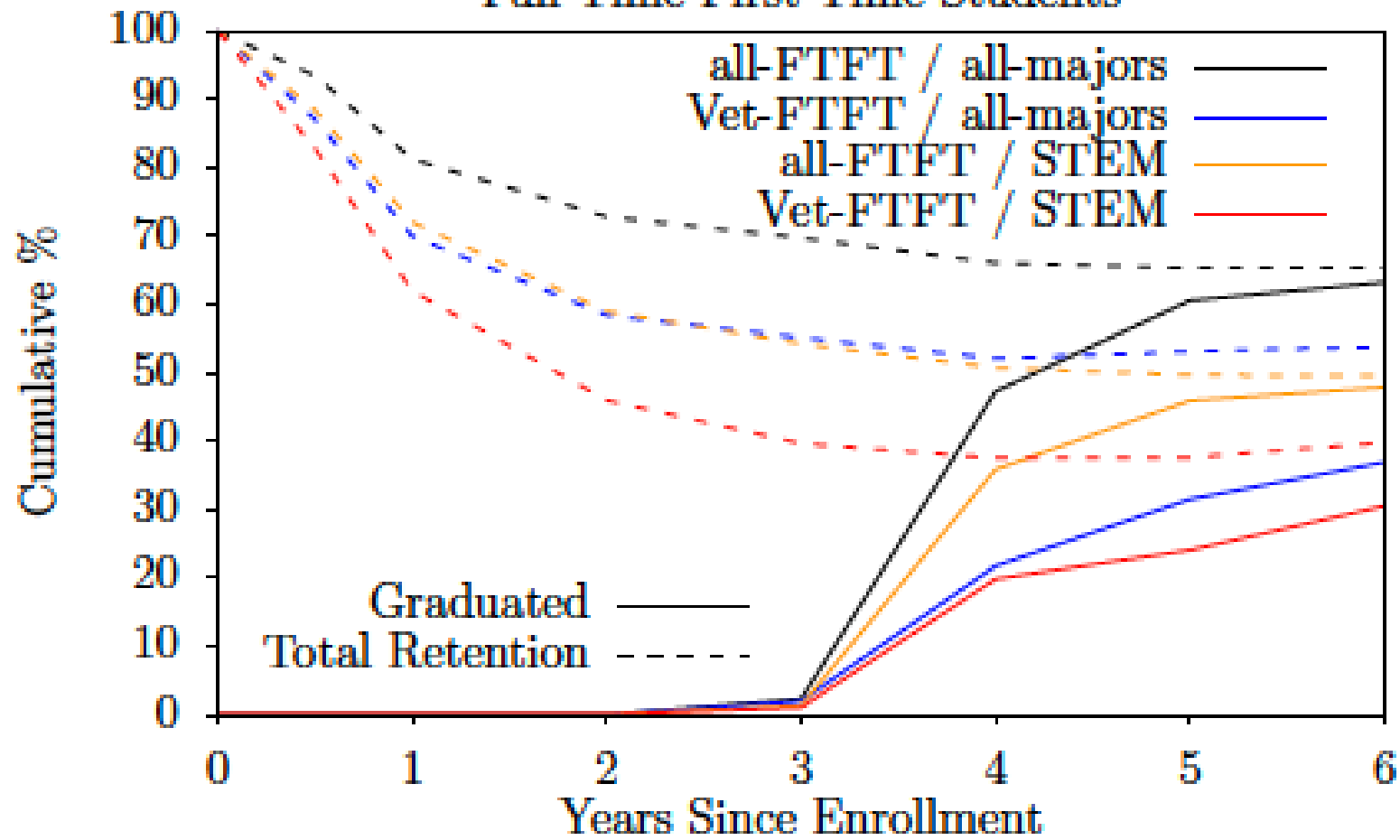




# From ACE National Survey of Student Engagement 2023

*When controlling for age these differences disappear **EXCEPT** for working with classmates on assignments, veterans are still less likely than non-vets*

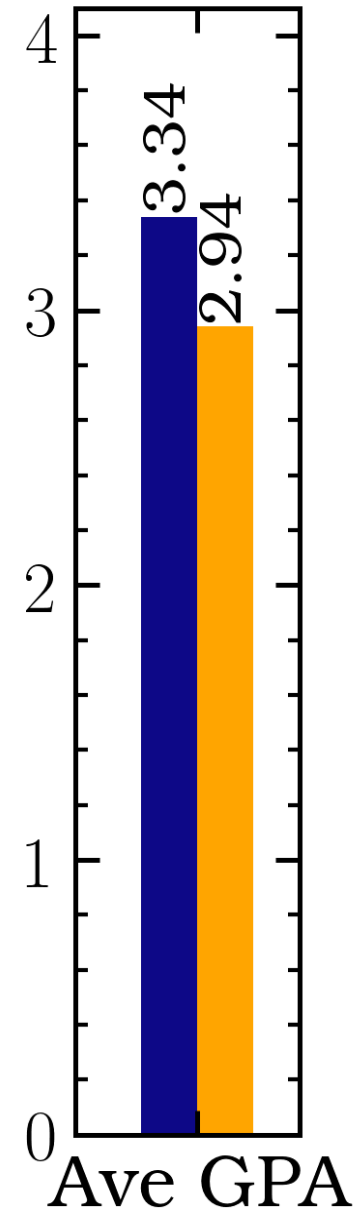
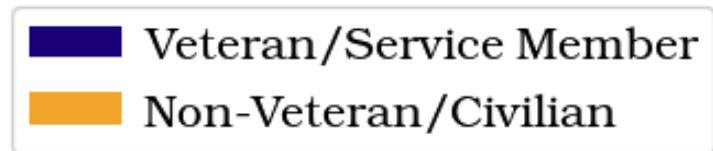
### Full-Time First-Time Students



Source: UA Analytics as of 2020



# From SVA National Veteran Education Success Tracker 2020





# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>



# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>

A large, dark blue circular graphic with a thick border, centered on the left side of the slide. Inside the circle, the word 'Benefits' is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

Benefits



# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>



Benefit

Peer  
Mentoring





# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>

Three overlapping dark blue circles arranged in a horizontal line. The leftmost circle is partially obscured by the middle one, and the middle one is partially obscured by the rightmost one. Each circle contains text.

Benefi

Peer  
Mentori

Dependent  
support



# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>

Benefit

A diagram consisting of four overlapping circles with thick dark blue outlines. The circles are arranged in a horizontal line, with each circle overlapping the one to its left and right. The text inside each circle is as follows: 'Benefit' (left), 'Peer Mentoring' (second from left), 'Depend support' (third from left), and 'Social events' (right).

Peer  
Mentoring

Depend  
support

Social  
events



# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>

Benefit

Peer  
Mentori

Depend  
support

Social  
eve

Career  
services

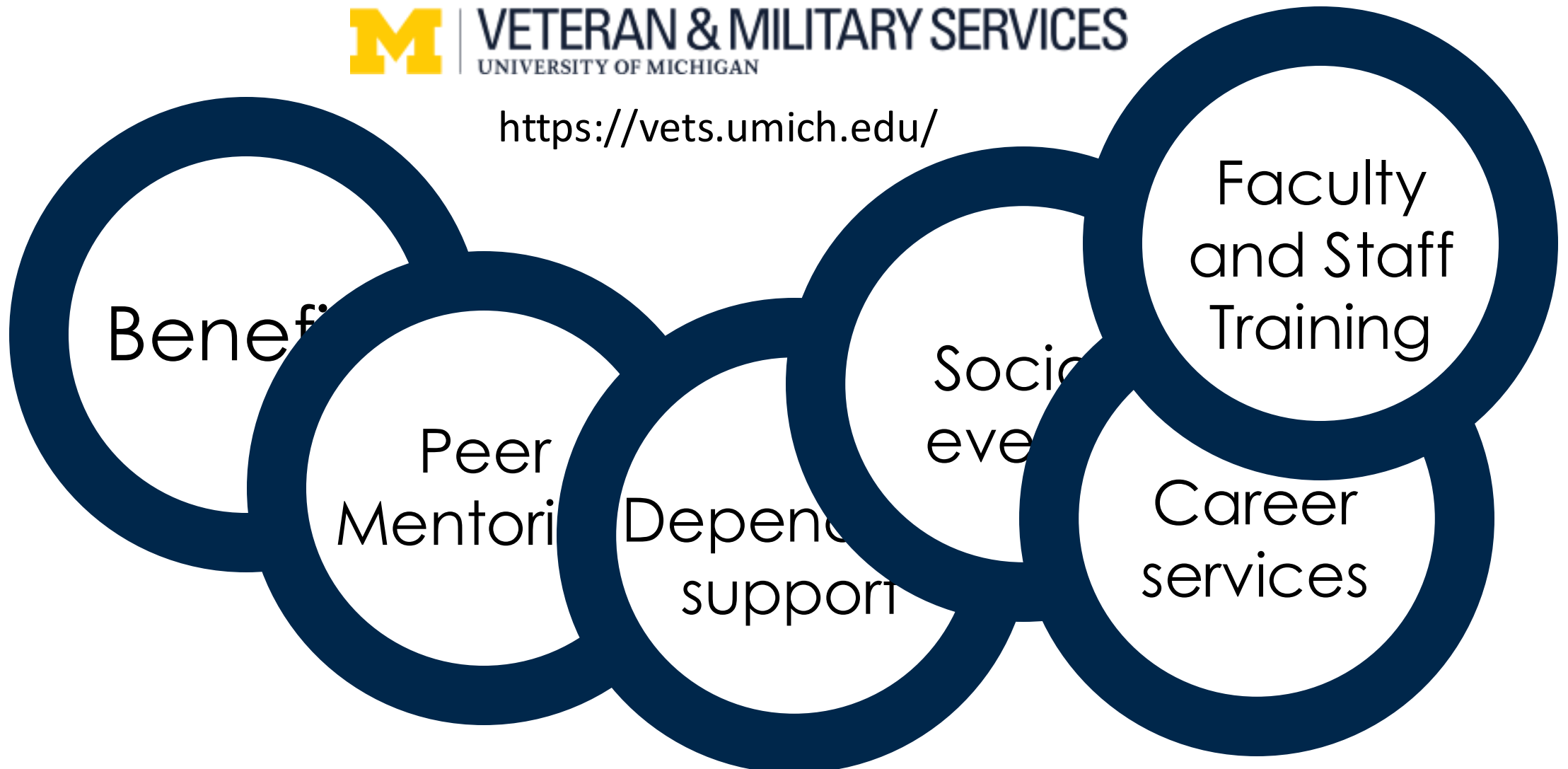




# Student Veteran Services



<https://vets.umich.edu/>





## Student Veteran Career Resources

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Welcome to Michigan! The University Career Center is committed to being a partner to our student veterans on campus. We look forward to helping you prepare for your next steps after Michigan and to help you build on the skills, experiences, and talents you have already gained through your experiences.

Transitioning from military to civilian life can come with challenges and can sometimes feel overwhelming. Don't worry- we're here for you for your career exploration and preparation.

You're coming to U-M with strong skills and experiences, but it will be critical for you to translate those skills into terms and descriptions that are relatable to a civilian employer.

While employers value your unique military experience, they may not understand the jargon or the responsibilities you've held, so it is important to market those skills in a relevant way on your resume, cover letters, and in interviews.

Below are some veteran specific links that will help you with career exploration and preparation. If other questions arise, look at our additional resources on our websites or [schedule an appointment online](#) to meet with one of our career advisors. Some of the one-on-one appointment types we provide include:



Very little  
conversation about  
grad school and  
academic careers in  
vet ed spaces!



Getting UG student veterans involved in research can bridge a lot of these gaps!

# Student Veterans in UG Research: Benefits to student

Fostering belonging is essential to retention of minoritized identity groups\*

Helps form a physics identity\*

Provides a view of science success beyond difficult classes

Lowers barriers to fitting in with peers

\* From the AIP Team Up Report

<https://www.aip.org/sites/default/files/aipcorp/files/teamup-full-report.pdf>



# Student Veterans in UG Research: Benefits to your research group

Technical  
expertise

Unique  
voice/contribution

“I’ve had a lot of  
good experiences  
in the past with  
older students”



# Barriers to getting student veterans involved in research

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# Barriers to getting student veterans involved in research

Need to maintain a full course load for benefits

Difficulty traveling for opportunities

May not realize it's even a possibility and that they can be paid for it

May assume they are too far behind and have nothing to contribute

May not realize or discount their transferable skills

# Things that hurt veterans in astro grad admissions

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Policies against  
admitting your  
own  
undergrads

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Policies against  
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Expectations of  
research  
experiences at  
other institutions



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Policies against  
admitting your  
own  
undergrads

Expectations of  
research  
experiences at  
other institutions

Failure to  
recognize  
advantage of life  
experiences

# The Veterans Research Symposium

- A 1-2 day cross-discipline event featuring veterans at UA and beyond on the cutting edge of STEM research.
- Speaking slots will prioritize undergraduate veteran STEM researchers, but will also showcase research by graduate students, post-docs, and faculty.
- The entire academic community will be invited to attend. Attendance by first year ASEMS-V students will be strongly encouraged.
- An off-campus keynote speaker will be invited.

