VETERANS ★ ON ★ CAMPUS

Online Cultural Competency & Gatekeeper Training for Faculty and Staff

1.0   Overview

Returning veterans enter the classroom with valuable life and leadership experience; however, transitioning to civilian and student life represent unique challenges to many of them. To better support and retain the nation's 870,000 student veterans, higher-education institutions across the country are increasingly activating their faculty and staff members, training them to better understand this population, be more sensitive to issues that affect them, and be more comfortable and competent referring them to appropriate support services on and off campus.

This need is driven by several staggering statistics. First, dropout rates for student veterans are at 70% nationwide compared to 45% for non-veteran students enrolled in two-year colleges, and 25% in four-year colleges. Furthermore, a study by the RAND Corporation found that approximately one-third of previously deployed military personnel and veterans showed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, and/or major depression, but barely half of them seek treatment from a mental-health provider or primary care physician. Finally, a study by the National Center for Veterans Studies and Student Veterans of America show that nearly half of student veterans report thinking of suicide and 20% said they had planned to kill themselves, rates that are significantly higher than those among non-veteran students.

2.0   Program Description

Veterans on Campus is an online, role-playing training simulation designed to educates faculty and staff about (1) the unique value student veterans bring to campus, (2) obstacles veterans may face in their pursuit of a college degree, (3) effective techniques for managing discussions—in and out of the classroom—around topics that may be sensitive to veterans, and (4) best practices for connecting student veterans exhibiting signs of psychological distress with appropriate support services.

In the 30-minute training, learners engage in simulated conversations with three virtual student veterans, helping each one resolve a challenge they are facing due to their transition. Users practice referring a service member who is being redeployed, managing a challenging class discussion about conflicts overseas, and approaching and referring a veteran who is exhibiting signs of post-deployment stress.

View demo at
www.kognito.com/demos

Simulated Conversation with a Veteran Student Avatar

The goals of the program are to assist universities and colleges in:

- Improving veteran retention and academic performance
- Promoting early intervention of students with psychological distress
- Reducing stigma that could make veterans uncomfortable on campus

3.0   Development Team

Veterans on Campus was created by Kognito Interactive in collaboration with national experts in military cultural competency training, mental health, and campus services for veterans. Kognito Interactive is an award-winning developer of role-playing training simulations in the areas of health and behavioral health. Kognito's suite of suicide-prevention training, entitled *At-Risk*, has been adopted by over 250 universities, high schools, hospitals, NPOs, and state and federal agencies to train over a million teachers, health providers, students, and families to identify, approach, and refer those at-risk for psychological distress. These simulations have undergone rigorous research, including a recently published, randomized, controlled study and are listed on The SPRC Best Practices Registry. Learn more about Kognito at www.kognito.com.

4.0   Program Effectiveness

In December 2011, 100 faculty and staff members in seven colleges and universities across the U.S. participated in a study to evaluate *Veterans on Campus*. Participants first completed a pre-survey (baseline) and then took the 30-minute training simulation, which was immediately followed by a post-survey. Analyses were conducted using a series of independent sample t-tests. Results were interpreted as significant if $p < .05$.

After completing the training, participants reported significantly higher rates of preparedness in the following areas:

- Understanding common challenges faced by student veterans
- Managing a classroom discussion around a veteran-sensitive issue
- Recognizing when a student veteran's behavior might be an indicator of psychological distress
- Approaching a student veteran exhibiting signs of psychological distress and, if necessary, motivating him or her to seek help at the campus counseling center or off-campus resources

In addition, 84% of participants rated the course as "very good" or "excellent," and 98% said they would recommend it to other faculty and staff in their school.

5.0   Purchasing *Veterans on Campus*

Academic institutions interested in making *Veterans on Campus* available to their faculty and staff can purchase an institution-wide license from Kognito. The cost of a yearly license depends on the size of the school and starts at $2,500. Purchase of the program also includes usage reports, assessment surveys, hosting, technical support, and materials to assist in informing staff about the training.

6.0   Contact Information

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