VPC Graduate Success Story...

Jaymon Bell

Once upon a time, a young University of Tennessee Knoxville student started spending time in the sub-basement of the HPER Building on campus. He had completed his program with Veterans’ Pre-College Program but still felt at home with his fellow students and the staff. That young man was Jaymon Bell from Lebanon, Tennessee which is about 40 miles east of Nashville. Jaymon graduated in 1998 from Lebanon High School and then attended Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky for a year and a half. Then he transferred to The University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK). His next decision was a stint in the Army from 2002-07. He was stationed in Germany from 2003-07 and served in Iraq from January 2004-05 and from October 2005-06. He returned to UTK in July 2007 and completed a Bachelors in English Rhetoric and Writing.

While at UTK, Jaymon was the “star” of the VPC Public Service Announcement video. He played the part of a veteran returning to school quite well! In January of 2010, Jaymon re-entered the military and attended Officer Candidate School. He was commissioned in April of 2010 as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry. He went back to Germany for the second time only to end up deployed yet again to Afghanistan from February 2011 to October 2011. Jaymon’s unit was shut down in July of 2012 and he returned to Ft. Benning where he has been an Executive Officer for the Infantry Mortar Leaders Course. He pinned Captain in April of this year and is scheduled to attend the Maneuver Captains Career Course in July of this year.

“Words are cheap and weak in comparison to action. Action, however is costly, strong, tangible and visible.” - Ernest W. Brewer

Find us on the Web at http://web.utk.edu/~utkvb/vpc.shtml
Veteran’s Assistance

What is Veterans’ Priority of Service? Priority of Service is the right of an eligible “Covered Person” to be given priority of service over an eligible non-covered person for the receipt of employment, training and placement services, not withstanding other provisions of the law. Covered persons take precedence over non-covered persons in obtaining services and shall receive access to services and resources earlier in time than a non-covered person. If services or resources are limited, the covered person receives access instead of or before the non-covered person.

You are a “Covered Person” and are entitled to Priority of Service if:

- You served in the military or air service, were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable as specified in 38 U.S.C 101(2);
- Active service includes full time National Guard or a Reserve component, other than full time duty for training; or
- You are the spouse of:
  - Any veteran that died of a service connected disability; or
  - Any member of the armed forces service on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed as one or more of the following categories and has been so listed a total of more than 90 days:
    » Missing In Action,
    » Captured in line of duty by a hostile force,
    » Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government.
- Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veteran Affairs, was in existence.
- Any veteran who died and a total disability (service connected), as evaluated by the Department of Veteran Affairs, was in existence.

In addition, you can receive assistance from Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) staff and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) who are dedicated to providing employment, training services and case management to all veterans.

UTK’s VPC Partners with PSCC

We are very excited about the partnership being forged by the Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC) and The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) Veterans Pre-College Program (VPC). The enthusiasm and participation thus far speaks to the timeliness of such a partnership to assist veterans through college preparation, enrollment, and persistence. It is clear our goals are compatible as we continuously strive to provide the best possible support system for veterans prior to entering PSCC as well as continuing needed academic support while completing a degree program.

A joint brochure of PSCC’s Veterans Center and UTK’s VPC is being developed to inform veterans and the community of our partnership. There are also plans to engage in additional outreach activities to inform veterans in East Tennessee of the partnership, services available, and how to participate. At any time, veterans interested in enrolling in PSCC can contact them directly or UTK’s VPC.

“I grew the most when I was confronted with a crisis that caused great pain.”
- Ernest W. Brewer

Have you contacted your VPC Educational Specialist recently?

Call 865-974-2132

Is Vocational Rehabilitation For You?

http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/ to discover if you are eligible for educational assistance, contact this office.
You Can Prepare for Any Type of Postsecondary Institution

UTK Veterans’ Upward Bound Program
Veteran PSI Enrollments as of 2013

Type of Postsecondary Institution (PSI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-year</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/non-profit Voc-Tech.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private/non-profit 2/4-year</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proprietary schools</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Education is Key

In the midst of upheaval in the world and international marketplaces, there is one constant: Education is the most critical element of success.

Governments, schools, and businesses plead with young people to stay in school and with adults to make learning part of their life. The nation depends on it.

The undeniable fact is, however, that the country can only provide the tools for learning. The decision to stay in school, to learn, and to change with the times is up to you.

Education and Training

Post-9/11 GI Bill

If you have at least 90 days of aggregate active duty service after Sept. 10, 2001, and are still on active duty, or if you are an honorably discharged Veteran or were discharged with a service-connected disability after 30 days, you may be eligible for this VA-administered program. The program has a few specific components, outlined below. You can also review the program pamphlet.

- Yellow Ribbon Program
- Transfer of Entitlement Option

Types of Training

The following assistance is approved under the Post-9/11 GI Bill:

- Accelerated payments
- Correspondence training
- Entrepreneurship training
- Flight training
- Independent and distance learning
- Institutions of higher learning undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Licensing and certification reimbursement
- Vocational/technical training, non-college degree programs
- National testing reimbursement
- On-the-job training
- Tuition Assistance top-up
- Tutorial assistance
- Vocational/technical training

Benefits and Eligibility

For approved programs, the Post-9/11 GI Bill provides up to 36 months of education benefits, generally payable for 15 years following your release from active duty. Institutions of higher learning participating in the Yellow Ribbon Program may make additional funds available for your education program without an additional charge to your GI Bill entitlement. The following payments may also be available:

- Monthly housing allowance
- Annual books and supplies stipend
- One-time rural benefit payment

Nontraditional Students Returning to School

Balancing school and family as an adult student can be tough.

Make your college experience a success.

- Begin with classes that you feel confident about.
- Get wired. Have access to e-mail and the Internet when you begin taking classes.
- Schedule a campus resources tour.
- Take time to prepare for unfamiliar fields.
- Know your time frame. Map out your schedule.
- Make sure your work schedule can accommodate your class schedule.
- Know your drop deadlines and book return policies.
- Check out alumni networking services. Don’t wait until you graduate!

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment

- The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program provides a comprehensive program of vocational rehabilitation assessment and services for veterans who have incurred or aggravated a physical or mental disability while in the armed forces of the United States.

- Veterans who have the potential to become employed are assisted in making viable occupational choices, and if necessary, are provided the skills needed to qualify for suitable employment.

- When the veteran reaches the point where he or she is "job ready," VR&E staff assists that person in the employment search process.

- For those persons who do not have the option of employment by virtue of the severity of disabling conditions, VR&E may be able to provide independent living services designed to assist the individual to live in the community as independently as possible.

- Whether the rehabilitation plan calls for a vocational goal or independent living, the VR&E staff work very closely with the veteran and his/her family to assure progress in the program and success in the goals.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs administers a number of educational benefit programs for eligible service members, veterans, and dependents.

- As an integral part of these benefits, educational and vocational counseling is available to help the individual to choose a vocational direction or area of study and select a school or other facility which the person might attend to achieve the chosen goal.

- Counseling is provided by qualified counselors and is offered at no charge.

Source: http://www.deed.state.mn.us/veterans/chapter31.htm

Student Veterans of America

Before the end of World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, otherwise known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. After demobilizing, returning veterans flooded colleges and universities around the country. Not only did these student veterans face basic challenges associated with reintegrating into civilian life, but schools were unprepared for this influx of students, which lead to additional problems for veterans like severe housing shortages and lack of transitional assistance. Student veterans banded together, forming peer-to-peer support networks to overcome these challenges and earn their college degrees.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the U.S. launched Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq). As OEF and OIF veterans returned home to use GI Bill benefits, they found that their campuses did not provide adequate support services to assist student veterans as they worked towards their educational goals.

Lacking support, student veterans decided to organize on campuses across the country. These groups began to connect through social media with one another—spreading best practices, sharing success stories, and supporting one another to further strengthen the student veteran community. In 2008, members from various chapters formalized this grassroots movement and Student Veterans of America was born.

Concurrently, SVA and a number of Veteran Service Organizations were tirelessly advocating for an overhaul of the G.I. Bill to address the needs of the 21st Century student veteran. Six months after SVA’s founding, President George W. Bush signed into law the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill.

SVA Today

Since SVA’s founding in 2008, over one million veterans have returned home to pursue a postsecondary degree or certificate using VA education benefits. To meet this need, SVA’s presence at the local and national levels has grown to include over 950 chapter affiliates, numerous private and nonprofit partners, and most importantly, an expanding list of impactful programs and services for veterans.

Source: http://www.studentveterans.org/
**VPC Graduates Enroll in Post-Secondary Education**
(Cont. from p. 1)

Tennessee College of Applied Technology
- Melissa Altures
- Lonnie Aguindera
- Jimmy Barber
- Mark Carpenter
- Paul Crisp
- Ronald Dorris
- Justin Elliott
- Alex Foster
- Jared Griffin
- David Hopkins
- David Hython
- Warren Lewis
- George Reper
- Peter Schwark
- Brian Turner
- Ronnie Sellers
- Robert Weller

Tusculum College
- Barry Floyd
- Della Hall
- Steve Scott

SAE Institute
- Steven Hammond

Maryville College
- Mitchell Ward

National College
- Samuel Cooke
- Antonio Mack
- George Williams

Missionsville Theological Seminary
- Steve Wright, Jr.

University of Phoenix
- Shana Oltman
- Holly Rensham

East Tennessee State University
- Emmanuel Dasson

Fountain Head School of Technology
- Timothy Muse
- Mike Shope

Roane State Community College
- Mark Owsley
- Eric Young

New Horizons Computer Center
- Brent Ranch

Chattanooga State Community College
- Lynn Ferguson

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**Program Eligibility**

**Veteran’s Pre-College (Upward Bound) Program**

- A veteran with greater than 180 days of service or a reservist called to active duty for 30+ days in support of a campaign or conflict
- First generation, potential college graduate (neither parent has a four year degree)
- Economically eligible (low income level, unemployment or disability, etc.)

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**VUB is a DUAL TRACK Program**

- The veteran must commit to completing BOTH TRACKS prior to starting classes at his or her target school or program.
The Keys to Succeed...
Military Veterans and College

You are a veteran; you have earned your rank and served your country with honor and respect. Now, you are just one of the many who are ready to begin or re-enter college. How do you as a citizen soldier make the best decisions when it comes to financing your education, turning your military experience into college credit, and dealing with issues like adjusting to a new environment or current health problems? What follow are some easy guidelines to ease your transition and helpfully influence your decisions about college.

FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

If you have GI Bill benefits, it is not just important but mandatory that you inform your college’s VA Certifying Official. This individual, along with you, will certify on a monthly basis that you are attending classes and making progress. Completing the VONAPP (Veterans Online Application at http://www.vabenefits.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp) will start the monetary process by sending your Certificate of Eligibility; this certificate assures the institution that you are eligible for GI Bill benefits. It will clarify what type of GI Bill benefits you have and what percentage of those benefits you can receive. Remember that dropping classes may affect the amount of money you will receive each month from GI Bill. Whether you are a full-time or part-time student will also determine the amount of monthly stipends you will receive from the Veterans Administration.

Did you know that veterans with GI Bill benefits receive BAH (Basic Allowance for Housing)? Your amount of BAH is determined by the physical location of the main campus of your college. These amounts are set by the VA. Check out http://militarybenefits.info/2013-bah-basic-allowance-for-housing-rates/ to learn how much your allowance will be for your school choice.

But what if you do not have GI Bill benefits? Remember that every student should complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/) which determines if you are eligible for financial aid to attend school. You should never pay to complete a FAFSA; the application is free from the Dept. of Education. In some states the FAFSA automatically enrolls you for state and other funding sources to pay for your schooling. Make sure you check with the financial aid office at your institution to learn what FREE money may be available to you through federal financial aid, state or institutional aid, and scholarships.

TRANSLATING YOUR MILITARY EXPERIENCE INTO COLLEGE CREDIT

Do you realize that some colleges and universities will look at your military experience and transcript it as credit? Most schools automatically grant a basic number of credits for sharing your DD 214 with the Registrar’s office; as well, your university may use the ACE Military Guides to equate your skills and training into credit. Every school has a different policy on this issue, so be sure to speak with a representative from the Registrar’s office for current information. Read more about this program at http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Adult-Learners-Using-Your-ACE-Credit-Recommendations.aspx

Finally, if you want your college experience to be memorable as well as useful, get involved. Joining clubs and keeping abreast of campus activities will afford you a well-rounded education. You have served your country well, now it is time to serve yourself by ensuring that you have the keys to succeed!

Vicky Johnson

Managing Your Time

Do you know where your time goes? Why do some people seem able to accomplish so much? They usually follow a system of time management. In order to manage time, you need to know what you usually do. One way to accomplish this is to keep a time log. Briefly jot down what you are doing every 15-30 minutes for a week will give you important information. Once you have this, ask yourself:

☐ Did I get everything done?
☐ Was I rushed for time?
☐ Did I meet deadlines?
☐ What habits interfered with reaching my goals?
☐ Did I accomplish more at a certain time of day?
☐ At what times of the day did I accomplish the least?

Now, make a list of the activities you have to do. Mark those that are scheduled at definite times and those that can be arranged according to your own time. Then, prioritize the list:

I. The most crucial activities
II. Activities that can wait until after those in group I
III. The least crucial activities

Then, prepare a schedule using the prioritized list. Use your list and schedule daily. Remember to plan for your peak times and your low-energy times.

Effective time management frees you to do your best and to succeed. But the schedule isn’t your master. You control it.

Dr. Ernest W. Brewer
Professor Emeritus and TRIO Director
Education: FAFSA Opens the Front Door to College

Your dream of getting the college degree needed for a successful career can be easily sidetracked when you start to consider the cost of paying for it. Many people like you have given up on their dreams due to bad information and fear of not being able to pay for their education. Here are a few facts that might surprise you:

- Eighty-two percent (82%) of college graduates never saved a dime to pay for college.
- For the 12% who did, grants, loans, and scholarships were still needed.
- Financial aid programs can help virtually every college student, even service members.
- Sixty percent of all aid is in the form of educational loans.

In fact federal regulations now permit virtually all United States citizens to receive some form of assistance, including grants, scholarships, educational loans, or work-study opportunities. The Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is your first step toward paying for college. Here are some reasons why you need to fill out the FAFSA.

The Key to College Admissions

FAFSA is the key to college admission because it establishes your ability to pay for college. Once completed, the 8 pages and 146 items in a FAFSA application are processed and placed in a federal database that college financial aid administrators can download electronically. Colleges and universities require the FAFSA so they can reliably review financial aid needs and credit worthiness.

Determines Your Needs

As a result of more sensitive federal need standards, more people are eligible for need-based types of financial aid than ever before. FAFSA helps establish the basic equation used to determine your financial aid eligibility, or “need,” using the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) formula. In the past, your assets, including homes, routinely limited access to some financial aid. New federal laws and guidelines have improved every student’s chances of getting some form of financial support.

Tip: Service members are also eligible to use many forms of Federal Student Aid in conjunction with the GI Bill or Tuition Assistance.

Source: www.military.com/resources

Some Do’s and Don’ts…

Test-Taking Tips from Dr. Ernest W. Brewer, Professor Emeritus and PL/TRiO Director

Tests are in the same category as Monday mornings and root canals, but like other unpleasant events, they can be managed. If you’re well prepared, you can turn a potentially unpleasant event into a good experience.

Tests are a part of academic life, so resolve to get the best of them. Begin to prepare for tests on the very first day of class by careful note-taking and studying. Schedule test preparation time well in advance and avoid last minute cramming!

Here are some strategies education experts suggest to increase your test-taking effectiveness:

Before the Test

• Try to predict test questions as you take notes.
• Review all notes taken in class and those developed when reading texts.
• Recite aloud any facts that you need to learn.
• Avoid rereading text books before a test.
• Consider studying with a partner or in a small group.
• Get a good night’s sleep.
• Concentrate on important information that you have highlighted or summarized.

During the Test

• Be sure you understand all the directions.
• Pace yourself. Don’t spend a lot of time on a few questions. Answer questions you know first then go back to those you are less sure of—but be sure to answer all questions.
• Write legibly and/or be sure your answers are recorded in the right place.
• Stay calm and avoid changing answers. Your first choice is most often correct.
• Finally, don’t second guess your performance. The actual results may be very different from your expectations.

By using these tips you’ll be well on your way to success in testing. If you feel you need outside help to improve your test taking, ask your teacher or advisor for an appropriate referral.
The Veterans’ Pre-College Program
14-County Service Area

- Blount
- Campbell
- Cocke
- Hamblen
- Grainger
- Jefferson
- Knox
- Loudon
- Monroe
- Morgan
- Roane
- Scott
- Sevier
- Union

Celebrating our
25th Consecutive Year

Positive Self-Concept
Know Your Strengths and Weaknesses... 

When you look in a mirror, what do you see? What sorts of words would you use to describe yourself? Are they positive, negative, or a combination of both? The view that we have of ourselves is called our self-concept. This view may be negative or positive and is learned through interacting with other people and the environment around us. Self-concept includes not only how we view our physical body, but also how we view our ability to accept and respect ourselves and others, solve problems, and make a difference in the world around us.

Working toward achieving a good self-concept begins by learning to accept yourself as you are today. Become aware of your strengths and weaknesses and make an effort to capitalize on your assets. Concentrating on the ways your talents can help you experience success also fosters a better view of yourself. As your self-concept improves, you will have the resources to begin working on overcoming your greatest weaknesses.

The other essential ingredient in being able to move toward a positive self-concept is believing in yourself. If you do not believe in yourself, others sense this and will act accordingly. This clearly helps keep a bad self-concept firmly in place. On the other hand, if you do believe in yourself and project a good self-concept, others will look at you as someone who is self-confident and deserves respect. So, in attaining a good self-concept, you reach the point of being able to look beyond yourself and assist others.

Thus, the payoff of having a positive self-image is great, both for you and the people around you.

Dr. Ernest W. Brewer
Professor Emeritus and PRiTRio Director