Voluntary Education Program
Readiness (Force Education & Training)

A Research Agenda for DoD Voluntary Education Programs that Supports Strategic Objectives with Evidence-Based Outcomes

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Agenda

- DoD Voluntary Education
- Research & Analytics Needs
- Key Drivers
- DoD VolEd Strategic Plan
- Research & Analytics
- Importance of Analytics
- Informed Research & Analytics
- Analytics In Practice
- Next Steps
- Discussion
Enable off-duty, voluntary education opportunities for Service members and adult family members.

Programs & Services:
- Professional Education Counseling
- High School Completion/Diploma Programs
- Academic Skills Program
- Tuition Assistance (TA) for Postsecondary Degree/Certificate Programs
- College Credit Examination Program
- Joint Service Transcript
- Troops to Teachers Program
DoD Voluntary Education
(Program Impact)

- 2,700 academic institutions at over 12,500 locations participate in VolEd programs through a signed DoD VolEd Partnership MOU.
- 831,000 Service members participated in DoD VolEd programs (i.e., TA, testing programs, and counseling) at 283 education sites worldwide in FY15.
- 286,000 Service members enrolled in more than 760,000 postsecondary courses at a cost of $518.5M (~$682 per course) in FY15.
- Service members earned over 52,000 college degrees and nearly 1,000 certificates using TA in FY 15.
DoD VolEd has a need for:

- Improved focus on empirically based research, data collection, and analytics capabilities.
- 5 year implementation path for DoD VolEd to ensure appropriate data is being researched, collected, and analyzed for actionable and more prescriptive strategies.
- More rigorous analytics process and capability, which will improve the DoD VolEd community’s decision-making ability.
- Attention on deliberate research and enhanced analytic capability that enable the DoD VolEd program in its continued efforts to ensure military students receive the best education possible through informed decision making, college readiness, measurable academic success, and effective community support.
- Focused efforts aligned with the DoD VolEd Strategic Plan to further the DoD VolEd vision, mission, strategic focus areas, and supporting goals through actionable initiatives.
### Key Drivers

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Need for ...</th>
<th>Focus on ...</th>
<th>Cognizant of ...</th>
<th>Enterprise approach to ...</th>
<th>Responsive to ...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Member /</td>
<td>• Increasing awareness, access, and personal investment</td>
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<td>Societal</td>
<td>• Motivating and supporting informed decision making</td>
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<td>Educational</td>
<td>• Enabling service member to civilian pathways to success</td>
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<td>Economic /</td>
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<td>Budgetary</td>
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<td>• College affordability and value</td>
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<td>• Continued Interest of government and agency leadership</td>
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<td>Technological</td>
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<td>• Post-military life considerations</td>
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<td>• Focus on quality, performance, and outcomes</td>
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<td>Political /</td>
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<td>• Fiscal constraints &amp; maximizing available DoD VolEd resources</td>
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<td>• Increasing oversight and regulatory requirements</td>
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Vision Statement
“Shaping quality voluntary educational experiences to foster better service members, better citizens”

Mission Statement
“Champion policies, programs, and partnerships that enable access to quality postsecondary educational opportunities, empower informed service member decision-making, shape meaningful personal and professional pathways, and drive military student success in higher education.”

Focus Area One
Promote Quality Educational Opportunities

Focus Area Two
Ensure Military Student Readiness and Success

Focus Area Three
Enable a Viable VolEd Community

Focus Area Four
Cultivate a Culture of Organizational Effectiveness
What factors drive a high quality and valuable educational experience for Service members?

How do Service members measure educational success in both the short and long term?

How does access influence Service member opportunities?
What are the key drivers of student readiness and success?

What preparatory experiences translate into academic success for military students?

How can DoD and the Services gain better return on the investment in education counseling?

Is there a way to optimize the delivery of educational counseling?
DoD VolEd Strategic Plan
(Focus Area Three)

Potential Research Questions

- How are roles and requirements of the VolEd community changing?
- Are there methods for improving education attainment?
- What sorts of enhanced collaboration and partnerships are possible?
DoD VolEd Strategic Plan
(Focus Area Four)

Potential Research Questions

- What are the policy gaps and constraints that currently hamper us?
- What are the emerging strategic drivers for DoD VolEd?
- What is the ROI of DoD VolEd?
Importance of Analytics
(DoD VolEd)

- Research insights are critical, but only represent one slice of time; analytics insights are on-going.

- Analytics are dynamic, allowing DoD VolEd to review and adjust “on the fly.”

- Analytics can be predictive, thus give us the ability to be precise and selective about policy interventions, without resorting to speculation.

- Analytics represent a cyclical and reciprocal relationship to policy and execution such that each can inform and impact the other in predictable ways.

- Analytics support the DoD VolEd Strategic Plan.
Analytics In Practice
(DoD VolEd)

Improved Use of Data

Enhancing Current Analytics

- DoD MOU Verification Application
- Tuition Assistance (TA) DECIDE
- Postsecondary Education Complaint System (PECS)
- Service TA administration systems
- Defense Manpower Data Center
- Other agency data (College Navigator, 8 Keys, GI Bill Comparison Tool, etc.)

DoD VolEd will focus on how to improve our use of the vast amounts of available data and mature our analytic capabilities to realize greater insight and support informed decision making.
# Informed Research & Analytics

## DoD VolEd (Descriptive)

**What HAS Happened**
- Increase data availability and frequency of collection
- Increase reliability of performance tracking

**What DoD VolEd needs to DO**
- The categorization of number and types of issues through time
- Data and statistical information

## Diagnostic

**Why DID it Happen**
- Understand organizational failures
- Issues that Arose
- Why the issues occurred

**What DoD VolEd needs to KNOW**
- Standard reporting to answer what has happened
- Drill down and apply human insight to reports

## Predictive

**What COULD Happen**
- Predict organizational failures or gaps for improved value and performance
- How to anticipate failures in specific areas
- When to consolidate underutilized or inefficient program areas
- How to determine costs to improve services

**What DoD VolEd needs to ANSWER**
- Ad hoc reporting: How many, how often, where?
- Alerts and Reports

**DoD VolEd Value**

## Prescriptive

**What SHOULD Happen**
- Reduce unnecessary costs
- Optimize efficiency and effectiveness within VolEd
- How to increase effectiveness
- Which strategic facilities plan provides the highest long-term benefit

## What makes this analytics POSSIBLE
- Dashboards: Use standardized or ad hoc reports to identify where the problem likely occurred

## Optimization
- What is the best possible outcome?
- Random variable optimization: What is the best outcome given the variability in the specified areas?

## Models
- Organization models
- Comparisons
- Optimization

## Analysis
- High volume, variety, and veracity of data

**2/12/2016**
Next Steps

- Each Strategic Focus Area contains dynamics that we perceive, but do not fully understand. Research can bridge these gaps.

- We already collect much of the data that an analytics strategy will require, we need to collect it more frequently.

- Collection methods and meanings are unique to Services, we need to have standardized definitions and compliance.

- Data locally reposed using different system architectures, we need to centrally repose data using an enterprise architecture.

- We have a conceptual dashboard, we need to operationalize and automate, at a velocity that matters.

- Analytical insights are isolated and speculative, insights need to be universal and predictive.
Discussion