



2023
NASPA
SYMPOSIUM ON
MILITARY-CONNECTED
STUDENTS

**Building a Support System for
Military-Connected Students at SUNY
Fashion Institute of Technology**

Presenters

- Lisa Mulligan
Member of the Academic Advisement Center Military-Connected Committee
Former Associate Director of Military and Veteran Affairs/Certifying Officer, Berkeley College
Former Coordinator of the first-year experience/Advisor for military-connected students, MCNY
- Benita Pratt Jones
Current Chair of the Academic Advisement Center Military-Connected Committee
Former Military and Veterans Center founding member, Monroe College
Developed the Veteran and Military Connected Admissions recruiting program, Monroe College
Advisor for the Monroe College Student Veterans of America Chapter, Monroe College
- Jared Ciborowski
Member of the Academic Advisement Center Military-Connected Committee
Former Residence Hall Director, SUNY Stony Brook
Student Government President, Long Island University



Fashion Institute of Technology

The Fashion Institute of Technology is a State University of New York (SUNY)

School of Business and Technology

School of Art and Design

School of Liberal Arts

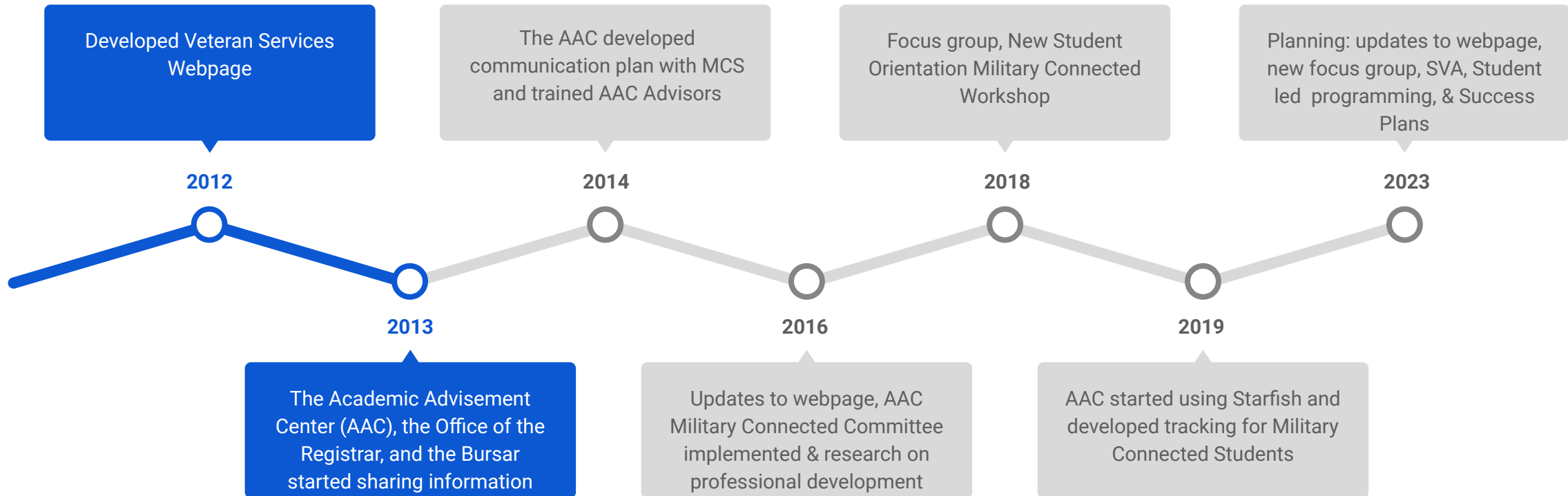
Undergraduate majors include international trade and marketing, toy design, menswear, fashion business management, graphic design, and entrepreneurship

2+2 school- AAS degree and BS/BFA degree

Graduate degree programs



Military Connected History at FIT



Webpage Development

- Prior to 2012 FIT provided a link to Veteran affairs webpage
- In 2012 the Academic Advisement Center and Enrollment Management created a informational webpage for Veteran Students
- Throughout the years the Veteran Services webpage evolved and is currently included under Student Support
 - New, Transfer, and continuing Students
 - Types of Veteran Affairs Educational Benefits, Scholarships, and Awards
 - Certification of Enrollment
 - Information on eligibility, disclosures, and meeting with the Academic Advisement Center
- The Military Connected Academic Advisement Center Committee will be requesting updates to the webpage
 - A separate section for Academic Advisement and withdrawal policy

Streamlining Services for Military-Connected Students

Enrollment Management and Student Services have come together to support our population of military-connected students.

The aim is to relieve student anxiety by streamlining services across the student lifecycle from Admissions to Financial Aid to Academic Advisement and finally, Student Development.

Each of our service departments contains at least one individual who has been trained to identify the unique needs of military-connected students.



Student POV

Admissions

- Student completes SUNY Application for Admission and speaks to an FIT Admissions Counselor dedicated to their program of choice.

Registrar

- Student is invited via email to meet with our School Certifying Official. After reviewing their benefit information, the SCO will refer the student to Financial Aid.

Financial Aid

- The student will be encouraged by Financial Aid to complete a FAFSA form. If a student wishes to drop or withdraw from a course, they are told they must meet with both the SCO and their Academic Advisor.

Academic Advisement Center

- Student is invited via email to meet with an Academic Advisor who has been trained in military cultural competency as well as the various chapters of the GI Bill. After meeting with the Academic Advisor, the student will understand how to read their degree audit, make a schedule, and request certification of benefits.

Student Life

- Student will attend a special break out session of New Student Orientation. This session will review information pertinent to their benefits as well as discuss various support systems.

School POV

Admissions

- Admissions collects official transcripts from other institutions and/or JST transcripts. Admissions will also refer the student to the Registrar's Office to speak with our School Certifying Official (SCO).

Registrar

- The SCO will collect all documentation relative to military educational benefits including a copy of the student's discharge papers (DD214) as well as the certificate of eligibility (COE) for the GI Bill when applicable. The Registrar's Office then uses this information to create a spreadsheet that is shared with the Academic Advisement Center, Financial Aid, and the Bursar's Office.

Financial Aid

- The Financial Aid Office reviews the spreadsheet when packaging military-connected students. They actively encourage students who have not completed a FAFSA form to do so and will reach out to the SCO with regards to missing payments before they reach out to the individual student.

Academic Advisement Center

- The Advisor will review the student's degree audit and assist with course registration. They will also explain academic policy relative to the GI Bill including the FIT process for certification and course withdrawal.

Student Life

- Information on certification and benefits will be reiterated during New Student Orientation, at a break out session dedicated to Military-Connected Students.

AAC Communication Plan and Advisor training

- 2014 Created and implemented a communication plan with Military Connected Students that identified MCS through their military benefits in conjunction with the Certifying Official.
- Trained AAC staff on best practices for advising the MCS population. Every new hire in the AAC was required to participate in this training. Training included type of benefits, academic impact on benefits, and sensitivity training.
- Currently we have 4 AAC Advisors dedicated to MCS

AAC Military Connected Committee

- AAC Military Connected Committee was implemented
- Our members started attending Military Connected conferences and learning about different ways to assist our population

Focus Group

- The Academic Advisement Center started working with Institutional Research in March 2018
- April - May 2018 planned out the process and timeline
 - Organized session to take place after orientation to capture student reactions to advisement and orientation
 - Scheduled Focus Group for September 25th 12-1 PM
- June - July 2018 finalized the questions for the focus group
- August 2018 Marketing for focus group
 - Contacted students who self identified via the SUNY application and students who applied for military connected benefits
 - Offered \$15 gift cards for participation
- Results
 - Students requested clear information with guidelines and procedures emailed to students on all their benefits.
 - Students requested that we publicize the Veteran Orientation session as much as possible.
 - Students requested FIT build more relations with veteran students so they know the school cares about them—email checkups, info sessions, and meetups.

FIT Departments working together

- Academic Advisement Center
- Admissions
- Bursar
- Communications and External Relations
- Financial Aid
- Enrollment Management and Student Success
- Institutional Research
- Registrar
- Student life

Military Connected Students Orientation Presentation



- Orientation for FIT students is held every January and August.
- During every orientation, there is a session dedicated to Military Connected Students (MCS).

Review of Military Benefits

VA Chapter Benefits

Pays Tuition and Fees directly to the University:

- Chapter 33 – Post 9/11 GI Bill
- Chapter 31 – Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment
- Chapter 35 – Dependents' Educational Assistance

Pays a monthly stipend only, directly to the student:

- Chapter 30 – Montgomery GI Bill
- Chapter 1606 – Selected Reserve

-Majority of our MCS population are dependents.

-Chapters 31, 33, and 35 are received by a majority of our MCS students. These chapters pay tuition and fees directly to the University.

-We have also had MCS who received Chapters 30 and 1606, which pays a monthly stipend directly to the student.

National Testing Program Information

National Testing Program

- Advancing your education often requires you to take costly national tests. Students can be reimbursed all required (mandatory) fees charged for national admission tests, national tests for college credit, and national tests that evaluate prior learning and knowledge and provide an opportunity for credit at an institution of higher learning (IHL). Complete a [VA Form 22-0810](#) (Application for Reimbursement of National Exam Fee).
- The following tests are approved for reimbursement:

- SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test)
- LSAT (Law School Admission Test)
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam)
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)
- AP (Advanced Placement Exam)
- CLEP (College-Level Examination Program)
- ACT (American College Testing Program)
- DAT (Dental Admissions Test)
- MAT (Miller Analogies Test)
- MCAT (Medical College Admissions Test)
- OAT (Optometry Admissions Testing)
- PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test)
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)
- DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests)
- ECE (Excelsior College Examinations)
- PLA (Prior Learning Assessment) testing through Learningcounts.org
- TECEP (Thomas Edison College Examination Program)

-CLEP is a popular option with our MCS as the scores can satisfy some of their Liberal Arts requirements at FIT. Examples?

-We encourage exams like LSAT, GMAT, and MCAT for those looking to further their education.

When should a MCS meet with our School Certifying Official?

Recertification, Withdrawals, and Program Changes

- You must recertify every semester by contacting Herb Walton in the Office of the Registrar via email
- Any withdrawals must be reported to Herb Walton and discussed with an advisor in the Academic Advisement Center
- Degree program changes require VA approval

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-During an appointment with an MCS, they are asked if they met with our Certifying Official, Herbert Walton, to review their military benefits.

-MCS are strongly encouraged to meet with us before making any changes to their academic progress including course withdrawals, major changes, minor declarations, etc...

Course Withdrawal Process and Grades

Withdrawals: Non-Punitive Grade of “WD”

- “WD”s are **SUBJECT TO AN OVERPAYMENT**
- Overpayment can include tuition and fees and housing allowance.
- Mitigating circumstances (accident, illness, relocation, military deployment etc.) do happen where students may not have to re-pay VA or school.
- **BUT**
 - **If you withdraw from a course past the drop date and drop below full time (12 credits), you will have to pay for the course.**
- Students receiving military educational benefits who also receive federal or state financial aid are subject to additional eligibility guidelines and regulations.

-We stress the importance of course withdrawals with MCS as it can have not just an impact on their academic progress but their military benefits as well.

-12 credits is full-time, but for military benefits, it needs to be 12 credits of required coursework.

Financial Aid Overview

Applying For Financial Aid

- You can receive veterans educational benefits and financial aid.
- Submit your FAFSA early so that you are considered for as many grants as possible.
- Extenuating financial circumstances can sometimes be taken into account, causing a student's financial need to increase and their grant eligibility to increase.
- You can fill out a FAFSA application by going to <http://www.fitnyc.edu/financial-aid/index.php>

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-Credit totals are important if a MCS receives financial aid as each type of aid has different credit requirements.

-Ex: Tuition Assistance Program (TAP, 12 credits required coursework); Excelsior Scholarship (30 credits required over an academic year, placement courses do not count).

FIT Student Resources

FIT Student Resources

- **Academic Skills Tutoring Center**
 - <http://www.fitnyc.edu/tutoring-center/>
- **FIT Writing Studio**
 - <http://www.fitnyc.edu/writing-studio/>
- **Disability Support Services (FIT-ABLE)**
 - <http://www.fitnyc.edu/fitable/>
- **Counseling Services**
 - <http://www.fitnyc.edu/counseling-services/>
- **Health Services**
 - <http://www.fitnyc.edu/health-services/>

-Academic resources are reviewed with MCS along with personal resources.

-Some of the resources include Academic Skills and Tutoring Center, FIT Writing Studio, FIT-ABLE, Counseling Services, Health Services, etc.

What are E-Benefits?

Tracking Your Payments: E-BENEFITS What is E-BENEFITS?

- A portal for veterans, service members, and their families to research, find, access, and manage their benefits and personal information What does it offer the students?
- Download DD 214s
- View your benefit status
- Check Post-9/11 GI Bill entitlement
- Check enrollment status

<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>

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-General overview of E-Benefits that are provided to MCS.

-<https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/homepage>

Veteran Affairs Resources

Veterans Affairs Regional Offices

01

**New York Regional
Benefit Office**

245 W. Houston St. New
York, NY 10014

02

**James J. Peters VA
Medical Center**

130 West Kingsbridge
Rd. Bronx, NY 10468
Phone: 718-584-9000

03

**Manhattan Vet
Center**

32 Broadway 2nd
Floor - Suite 200
New York, NY 10004
Phone: 212-951-6866
Or 212-951-6866
Fax: 212-742-9593

FIT

-3 Veterans Affairs Regional Offices are available to the FIT MCS population.

-<https://www.benefits.va.gov/newyork/>

FIT Staff Contacts

FIT Contacts

Office of the Registrar

- Herbert Walton
Herbert_Walton@fitnyc.edu

Academic Advisement Center Staff

- Benita Jones
Benita_jones@fitnyc.edu
- Jared Ciborowski
Jared_Ciborowski@fitnyc.edu
- Lisa Mulligan
Lisa_Mulligan@fitnyc.edu
- Marcia Lezama
Marcia_Lezama@fitnyc.edu

-1 Counselor and 3 Counselor Associates are dedicated to the MCS population.

-We all work with our Certifying Officer to ensure students are receiving their military benefits.

-Scenarios

Academic Advisement Center

Academic Advisement Center

Go, Tigers!

Welcome to
the FIT family

FIT is unlimited
FIT is unstoppable
FIT is unpredictable
FIT is unexpected

- **Feldman Center, C402**
(212) 217-3080
(212) 217-3081 (fax)
advisementcenter@fitnyc.edu
- **Office Hours**
Monday - Wednesday: 9 am - 5 pm
Thursday: 9 am - 6 pm (when classes are in session), 9 am - 5 pm (when classes are not in session)
Friday: 9 am - 5 pm
- **Walk-In Hours**
Monday: 9 - 10:45 am
Tuesday: 12 pm - 1:45 pm
Wednesday: 2 - 3:45 pm
Thursday: 12 pm - 1:45 pm

-Overview of how the AAC works

-Scheduled Appointments vs. Walk-ins

-When do MCS meet with us?

Student Information

- Info
- Success Plans
- Courses
- Tracking
- Meetings
- Notes
- Network

✓ FALL 2022: Academic Standing: 00 - Good Standing

[-] Veteran Status

FALL 2020: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

SPRING 2021: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

FALL 2021: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

SPRING 2022: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

SUMMER 2022: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

FALL 2022: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

SPRING 2023: Veteran Status: 1 - Chapter 31 Rehabilitation

This is where we can see if a student is a Military Connected Student.

[+] Registration Eligible Date

Military Connected Student Success Plans

* Plan Type

* Plan Name

Overview To maintain the receipt of your benefit, follow these mandatory guidelines.

* Tracking Item

Due Date

Course Context

Specific Recommendation

↓ **Mandatory First Semester Advisement**

As a Military-Connected Student, you are required to meet with an advisor in the Academic Advisement Center in your first semester of enrollment for your matriculated degree program.

Schedule an appointment through the Military Connected Student Services section located within Other Services

↑ ↓ **Verify Full-time Status**

You must be registered in a minimum 12 credits towards your degree program if you are enrolled as full-time student using the Military Connected Student benefit.

↑ ↓ **Certification**

You must submit your interest in certification to Herbert Walton in the Office of the Registrar, Feldman Center, Room C158, to use your Military Connected Student benefit every semester.

↑ **Course Withdrawal Advisement Meeting**

If you are considering a course withdrawal, you must meet with an advisor in the Academic Advisement Center and Herbert Walton (Office of Registrar) prior to taking any action.

* Required fields

-Why do we want to implement MCS Success Plans?

-Review of tracking items



Next Steps

- Updates to webpage
 - A separate section for Academic Advisement and withdrawal policy
- Additional Focus Groups
- Increase MCS leadership
 - Student interest in Student Veterans of America Chapter at FIT
- Programming for Military Connected Students
- Fully implement the MCS success plans

Q&A