Session Objectives

- Examine process of military friendly designations
- Review campus climate and sense of belonging indicators
- Consider and center SVMC students' perspectives and experiences
- Provide recommendations for practice and research

Opening Activity

- In groups of 2-3, each group will take on one of the following identities/perspectives:
  - Student Veteran/Military-Connected Students (SVMC)
  - Spouse or dependent of a SVMC
  - Faculty member
  - Veterans Affairs Center

- Discuss the following questions (7-8 mins):
  - What does it mean for an institution to be military friendly?
  - How do we determine if a college or university is military friendly?

Formal Military Friendly Designations

8 Keys to Veterans' Success

1. Create a culture of trust and connectedness to promote vets' well-being and success
2. Ensure consistent and sustained support from leadership
3. Implement an early alert system
4. Coordinate and centralize campus efforts
5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations
6. Collect and track data on veterans
7. Provide professional development for faculty and staff
8. Develop systems to ensure sustainability for effective practices

(U.S. Dept of Education, n.d.)

Military Friendly by Viqtory

- Institutions must meet minimum standards regarding accreditation and complaints
- Survey data is combined with publicly available data
- Weighted approach considers programs, policies, and outcomes such as majors and graduation rates
- Utilizes a third-party scoring system
- Institutions self-select – in 2022, 1800 schools took the survey and over 500 received the designation
- Maintain 50% retention rates

(Military Friendly, 2022)

Military Friendly Designations

- Definitions of military friendly vary and can signal a variety of supports related to recruitment, professional development, outreach, and even the hiring of veteran employees (Kirchner & Minnis, 2018; Kirchner et al., 2021)

- Disconnect between being friendly, welcoming and supportive, and the notion that campuses may be uninviting to servicemembers due to anti-war/anti-military perspectives (Moore, 2017)

- Military Friendly may be an advertising mechanism to attract students

- Little accountability for those that have the title and outcomes may be difficult to determine
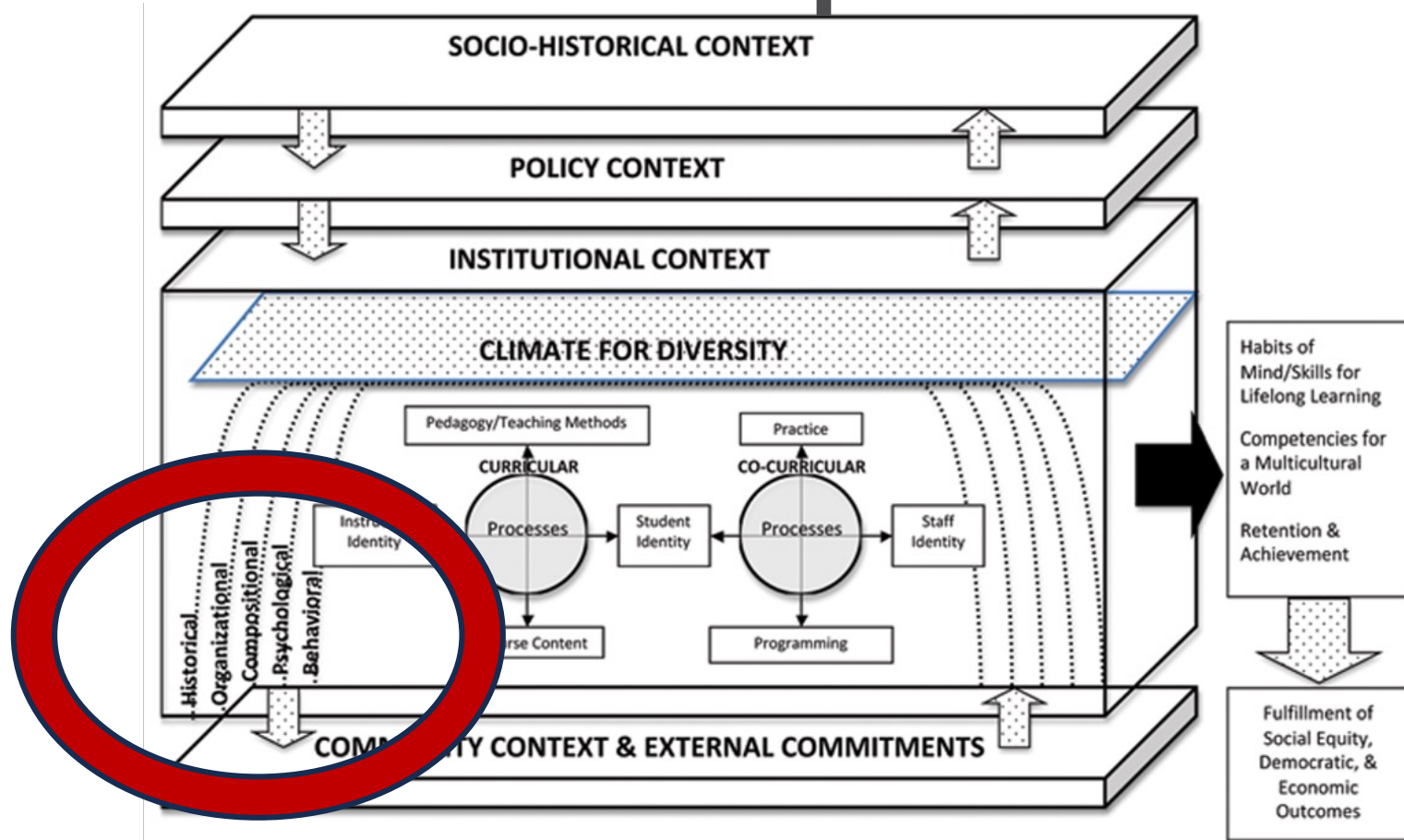
Framework for Campus Climate

Figure 1. A Model for Diverse Learning Environments (Hurtado et al., 2012)

Key Dimensions of Campus Climate

1. **Historical** – historical inclusion or exclusion of SVMC on campus

2. **Organizational** – programs, policies, resources allocated to supporting SVMCs

3. **Compositional** – representation within the student body, as well as among faculty, staff, and administrators

4. **Psychological** – sense of belonging and how student feel on campus

5. **Behavioral** – interactions with peers, faculty, staff, administrators

(Hurtado et al., 2012)

Dimensions of Campus Climate

- Return to your small groups and revisit the initial discussion questions through the lens of these five dimensions of campus climate

- What might you add to or refine in your answers? (7-8 mins)
    - What does it mean for an institution to be military friendly?
    - How do we determine if a college or university is military friendly?

- Remember your group's identity/perspective:
    - Student Veteran/Military-Connected Student (SVMC)
    - Spouse or dependent of a SVMC
    - Faculty member
    - Veterans Affairs Center

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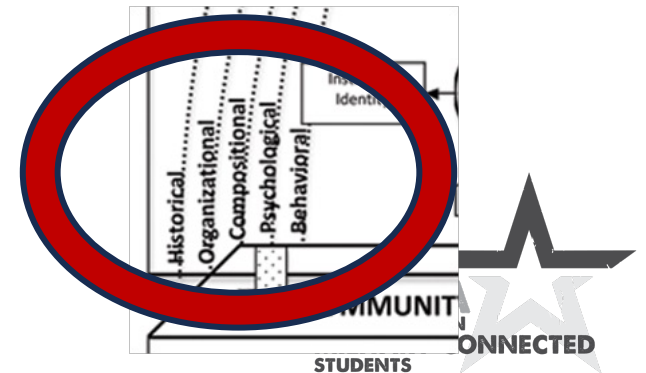
Healthy Minds Study

- 2021 – 2022 HMS dataset

- Over 95,000 students from 135 colleges and universities

- Survey focuses on mental health and mental health services
  - Questions regarding perceptions of campus climate, inclusion, and sense of belonging
  - Key variables include affiliation with the military and institution attended

- HMS merged with data from Department of Education, Military Times, and IPEDS

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Sample Key Variables from HMS

Campus Climate Variables

- At my school, students' mental and emotional well-being is a priority
- Rate the overall climate over the past 12 months
  - Hostile – Friendly
  - Not Welcoming - Welcoming
  - Disrespectful - Respectful
- Experiences on campus
  - Being treated fairly
  - Being treated rudely or disrespectfully

Sense of Belonging Variables

- I fit in well at my school
- At my school, we are a campus where we look out for each other
- I feel valued as an individual at this school
- I have found one or more communities or groups where I feel I belong at this school

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Profile of Student Veterans/Military-Connected Students

- Analyses focuses on 1,690 SVMCs

Degree	Percent
Associate's	19%
Bachelor's	60.1%
Master's	15.6%
J.D.	0.8%
Ph.D.	4.6%

Military Service	Percent*
ROTC	25%
National Guard	23.1%
Currently on Active Duty	5%
Active Duty in Past 12 Months	5.9%
Active Duty but not in Past 12 Months	49.2%

*Exceeds 100% as respondents indicated multiple statuses (e.g., Simultaneous Membership Program
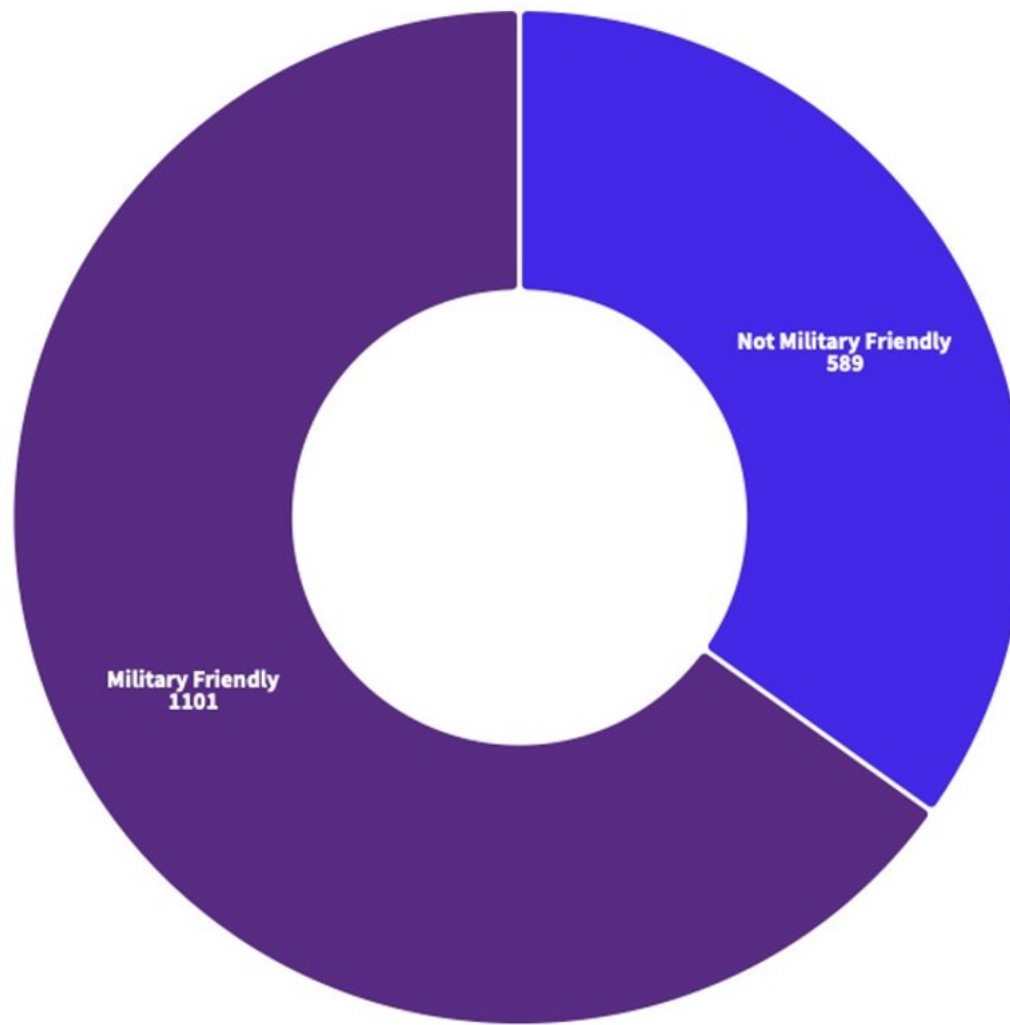
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Distribution of SVMCs by Military Friendly Designation
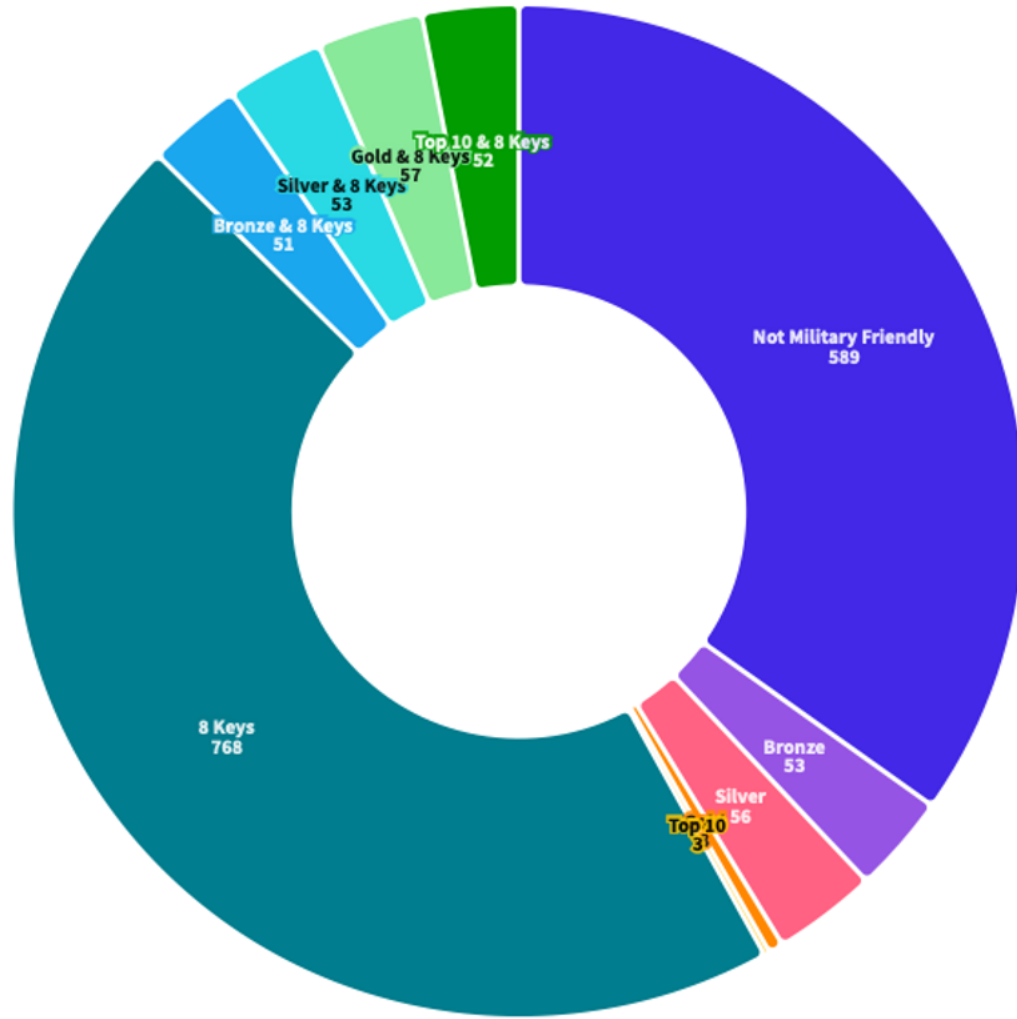
Nearly every campus attended by SVMCs had a dedicated point of contact for Vets, Military Servicemembers, and their Families

- 87.4% of Non-Military Friendly
- 98.4% of 8 Keys
- 100% of Military Friendly
- 100% with Multiple Designations

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Military Friendly vs. Non-Military Friendly

Not Military Friendly
589

Military Friendly
1101

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STUDENTS

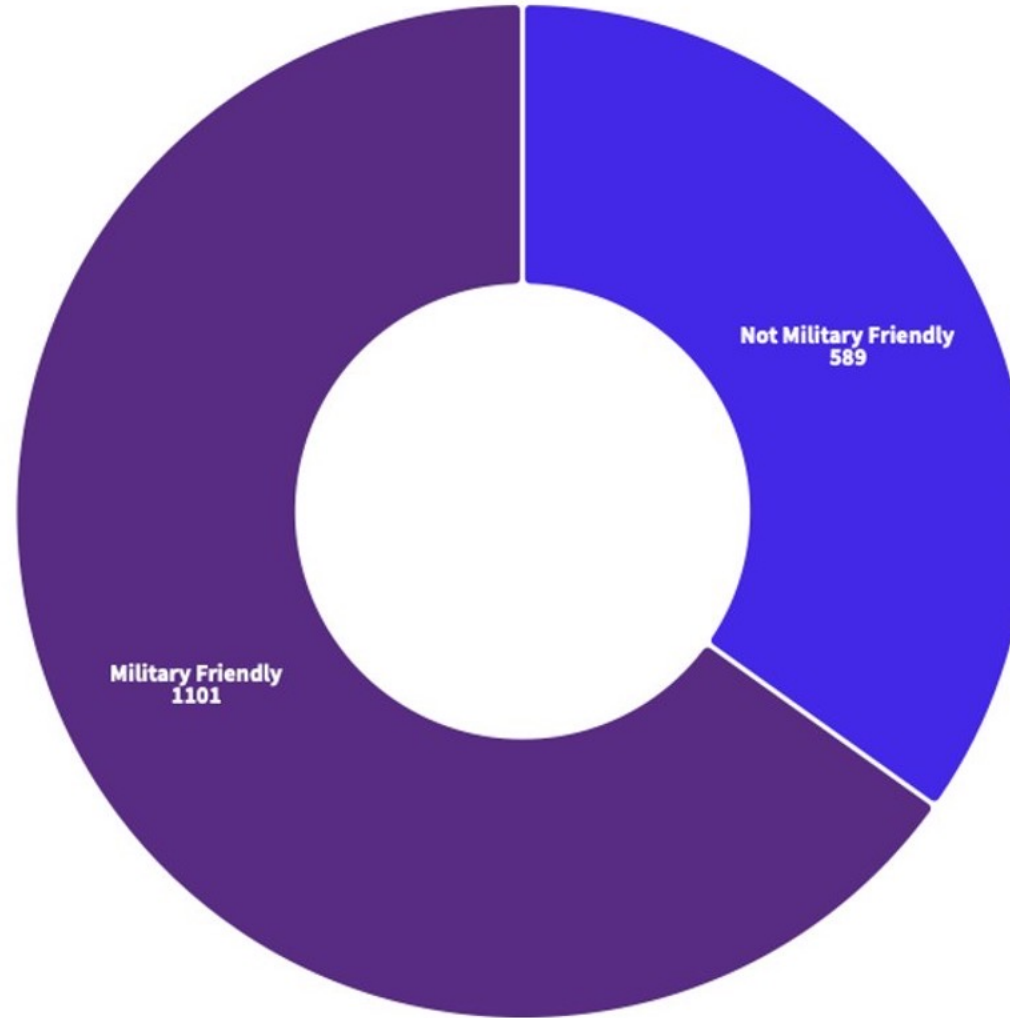# Military Friendly vs. Non-Military Friendly

I see myself as part of the campus community

On my campus, we look out for each other

I feel I belong

I feel valued

At my school, students' mental and emotional well-being is a priority

Not Military Friendly
589

Military Friendly
1101

I am treated fair on campus

I am able to perform to my full potential

I belong to one or more communities

I have a group where I feel I belong

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Military Friendly vs. Non-Military Friendly

I see myself as part of the campus community
(p = 0.047)

Strongly Disagree or Disagree	
Viqtory Military Friendly	20%
8 Keys	26.5%
Multiple Designations	29.8%
Not Military Friendly	29%

On my campus, we look out for each other
(p = 0.027)

Strongly Disagree or Disagree	
Viqtory Military Friendly	11.5%
8 Keys	9.1%
Multiple Designations	18.9%
Not Military Friendly	16%

Multiple Designations 161

Not Military Friendly 589

8 Keys 768

Viqtory Military Friendly 120
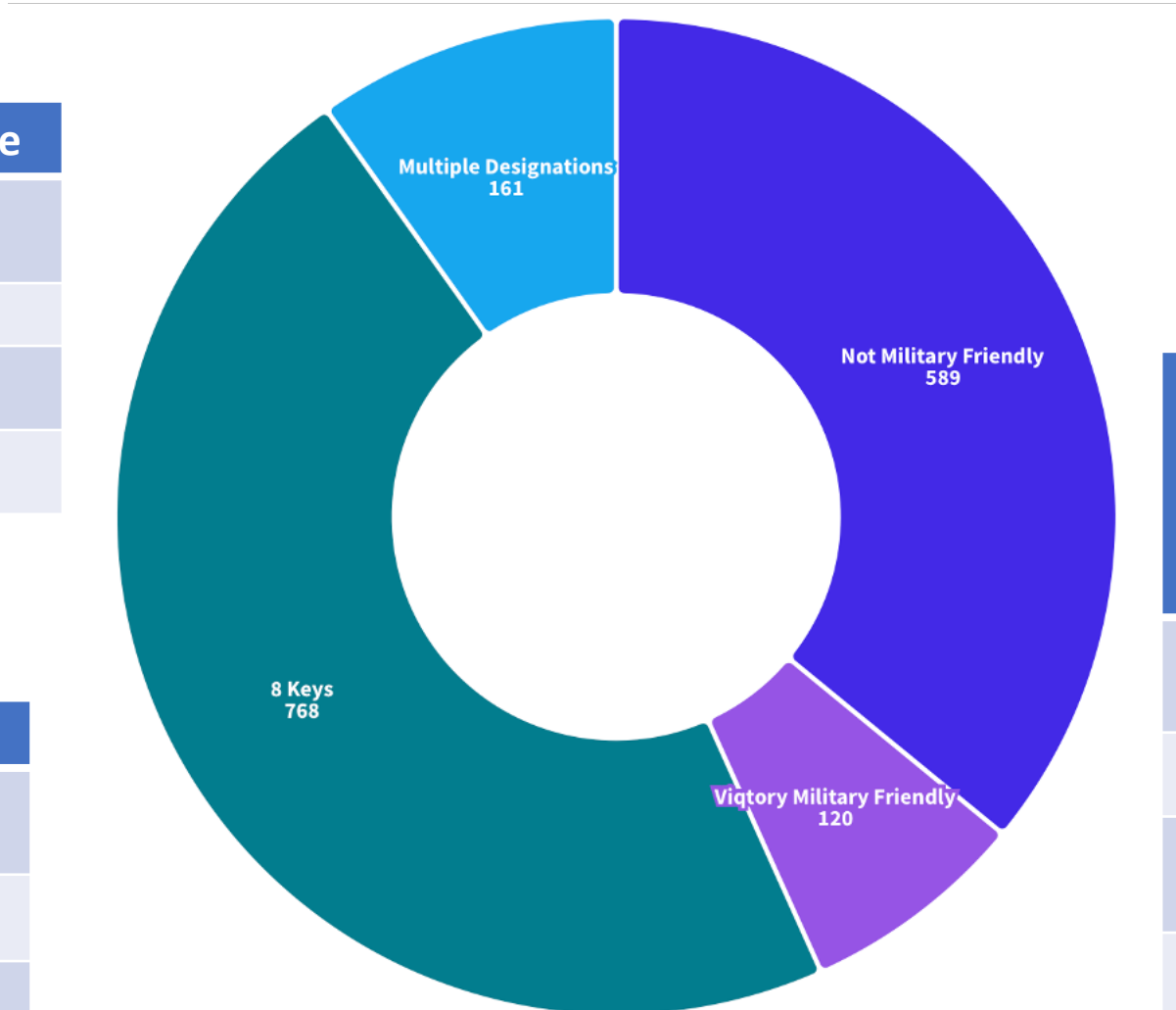
I am aware my school has a Veterans' Service Coordinator
(p < 0.001)

Type of Institution	Percent of SVMCs at Institution Aware of Coordinator
Viqtory Military Friendly	13.3%
8 Keys	4.0%
Multiple Designations	8.7%
Not Military Friendly	5.6%

Regression Results from HMS

- A composite mean score were created for sense of belonging (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.833)
- OLS Regression
  - R^2 = 0.45
  - Significant: Being a transfer student (-), being treated unfairly (-), dissatisfaction with overall experience (-), and believing campus has a negative impact on students' mental and emotional health (-)

- Multilevel Regression
  - Corrects standard errors in OLS regression coefficients
  - Accounts for nesting within schools
  - Significant: Being treated unfairly (-) and dissatisfaction with overall experience (-)

- Being at any type of Military Friendly Institution does <u>not</u> have an impact on sense of belonging
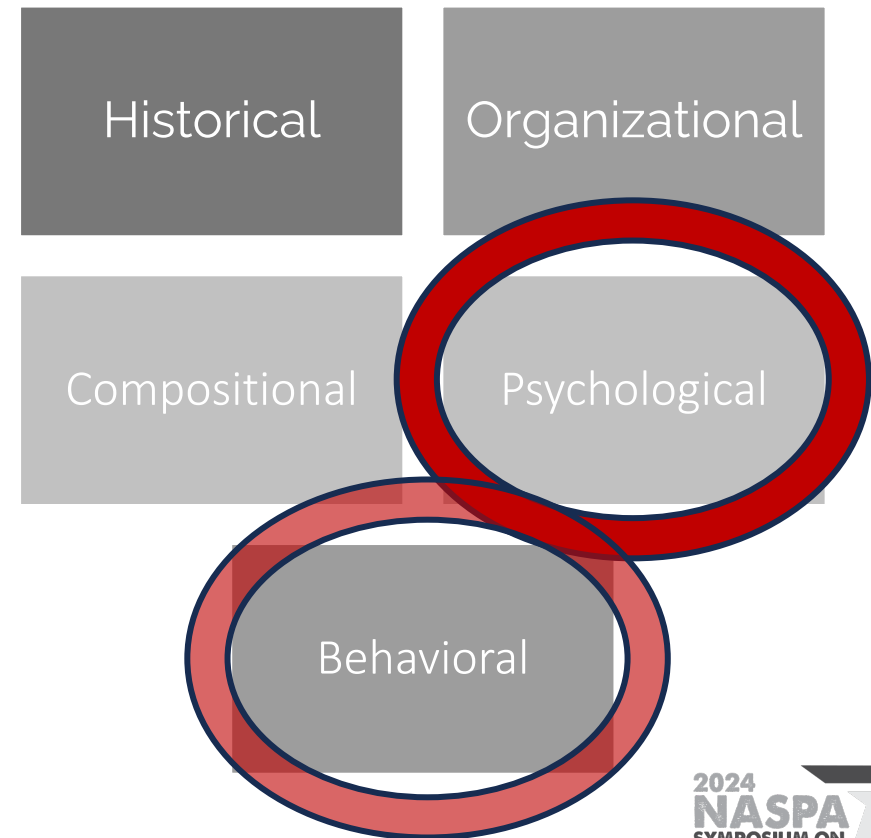
Results from HMS

- 8 Key and Viqtory Military Friendly Designations center on Organizational and Compositional Dimensions

  - Representation of students, retention and graduation rates
 - Presence of programs and policies

Historical

Organizational

Compositional

Psychological

Behavioral

Results from HMS

- 8 Key and Viqtory Military Friendly Designations center on Organizational and Compositional Dimensions

- HMS focuses on Psychological and some Behavioral Dimensions

    - Students' experiences and perceptions are centered

Historical	Organizational
Compositional	Psychological
	Behavioral

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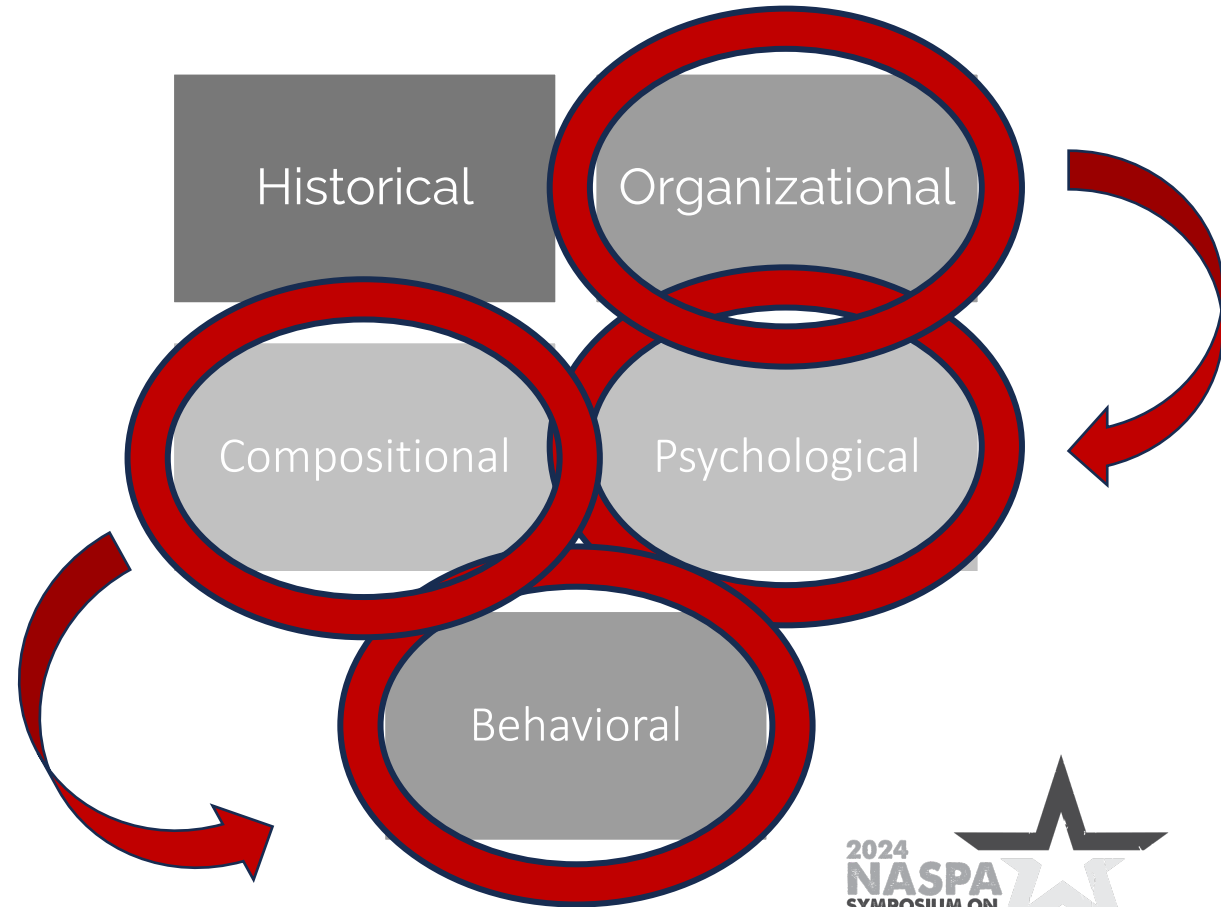SYMPOSIUM ON
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Next Steps

- How can institutions use their organizational and compositional dimensions that achieved their designations to translate to shaping the psychological and behavioral dimensions and improve student belonging?
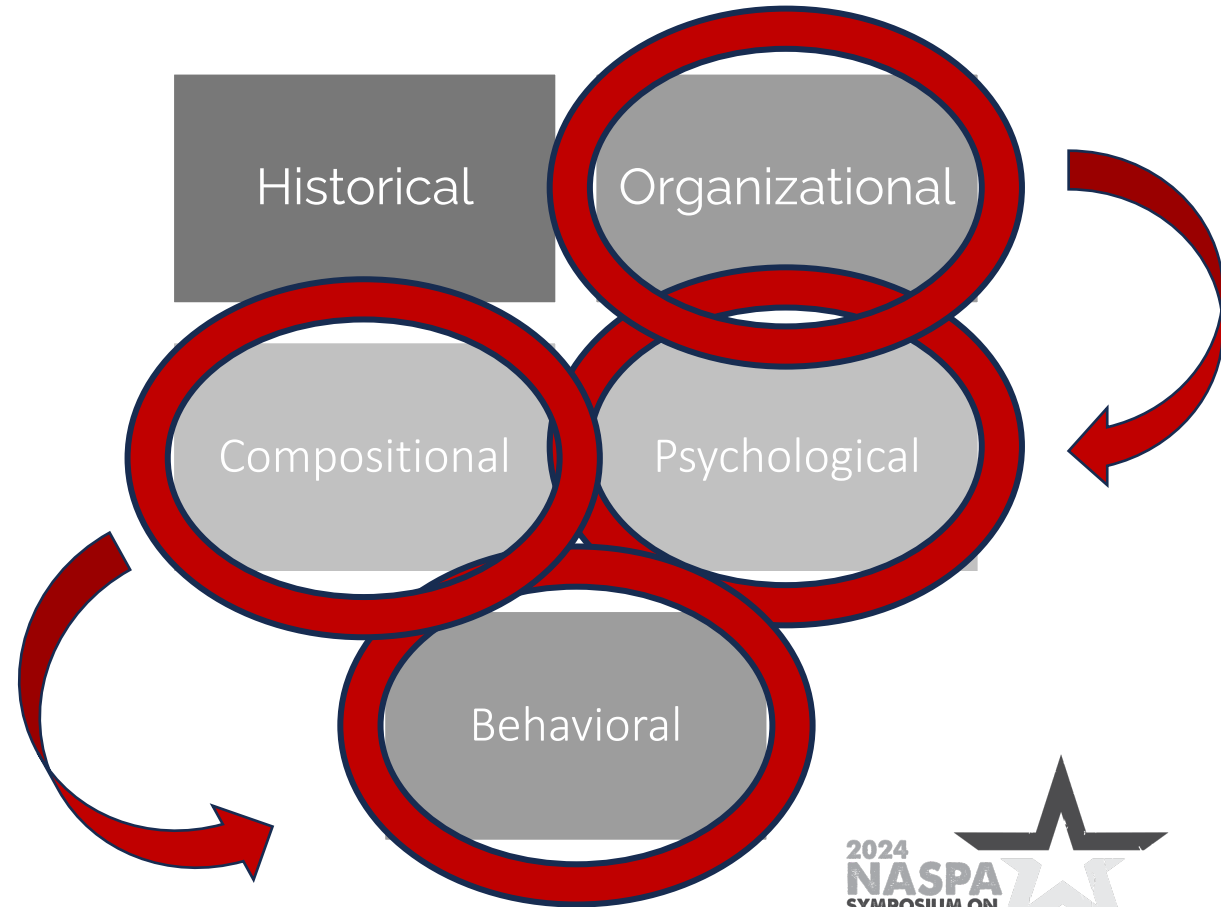
Concluding Activity

- What further comparisons or information would you like to see based the results and how you understand campus climate?

- What type of programs or efforts may your school see as important to increasing SVMC's sense of belonging?

- What are the key takeaways for your institution for your   institution based on your understanding of campus climate dimensions and SVMCs' experiences and perceptions?

Historical

Organizational

Compositional

Psychological

Behavioral

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Recommendations

- Key Takeaways (Practice)
  - Prioritize and center students' experiences in designations
  - Advertise and promote Veteran Student Services to help connect students and shape their experiences
  - Develop strategic plans for SVMCs, including awareness, engagement, and outreach efforts
  - Establish accountability measures

- Next Steps (Research)
  - The source of military friendly designations matter
  - Conduct more qualitative inquiries to explore and better understand SVMCs experiences at military friendly colleges and universities

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Discussion/Q&A

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