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**VETERAN STUDENTS TRANSITIONS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION USING
CHICKERING'S SEVEN VECTOR DEVELOPMENT THEORY**

by

Taryn M. Cooper

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
June 21, 2018

Thesis Chair: Burton Sisco, Ed.D.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost this work is dedicated to all of the men and women who have served and continue to serve our country. Your sacrifices never go unnoticed and I thank you for protecting this country with your blood, sweat, and tears. I also thank the families of the military, because we too make sacrifices in order for our servicemen and women to succeed.

I would also like to dedicate this study to my father, whom has always been my biggest supporter throughout everything in my life. Without his sacrifices of deployments and service in the military, I would have never had the opportunity to go to college in the first place. This also goes out to my mother who supports my aspirations and dreams no matter how big or small. My mother is the hardest working woman I've ever known, and for that work ethic I thank you.

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Abstract

Taryn Cooper

VETERAN STUDENTS TRANSITIONS INTO HIGHER EDUCATION USING CHICKERING'S SEVEN VECTOR DEVELOPMENT THEORY

2017-2018

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this study was to examine what kinds of internal emotions and feelings are attached to the transition of becoming a student on a college campus for veteran students. Veteran students have a different experience on campus compared to the rest of the student population, therefore it is important for institutions to understand this experience in order to best provide for these students. A survey was created based off of Chickering's seven vector development theory. The survey collected demographic data such as what branch of the military the student was in, age, race/ethnicity, and gender. The rest of the survey provided statements relating to each of Chickering's seven developmental vectors in which participants would rate on a Likert Scale how little or much they could relate to the statement. The results of the data collection concluded that veteran students generally find their transition to college easy and enjoy what they are doing on campus. However there are several emotions attached to the process, such as feeling stress and pressure in the environment, confidence in their abilities, relationships with their peers and professors, and working alone compared to in a group.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Veteran students have been increasing their presence on higher educational campuses around the world since the ending of WWII in 1945. After the bombing in New York City on September 11, 2001, veteran's educational benefits became more accessible which caused more than 1.4 million veterans to enroll into higher education institutions (Hamrick & Rumann, 2010). While institutions have been evolving in order to cater to the specific and unique needs of its students, veterans still face a difficult transition from military to civilian life. Challenges within this transition can include a variety of factors such as environmental changes, societal isolation, and identity deconstruction and reconstruction.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies have looked at this transition through a variety of lenses, such as Schlossberg's transition theory. This theory focuses on the effects an event can have on individuals such as relationship changes, routines, and roles. It also focuses on effects of events such as physical transitions like a change of location or environment or unexpected changes such as loss of a loved one (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006). However, research in veteran student transition has been lacking in areas including the identity negotiations and internal changes that take place when they move to a new environment such as a college campus. Existing research is primarily focused on outside factors and transitions, while lacking in a focus on internal factors and transformations. Hamrick and Rumann (2009) acknowledge that there is a significant lack of research

regarding identity development once a veteran enters higher education from a military setting.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand the emotions, feelings, and identity changes that occur internally for veteran students as they transition from the military to higher education. The purpose was also to examine this phenomena through Chickering's seven developmental vector theory. The quantitative approach of this study aimed to analyze selected veteran students at Rowan University by providing surveys framed with Chickering's seven developmental vectors about their personal internal and external experiences on and off campus.

Significance of the Study

The number of veteran students has been increasing on college campuses around the United States since 2001, and they continue to search for campuses that will comprehend and serve their atypical needs (O'Herrin, 2011). Understanding the transitions to campus in every context of the situation, internal and external, helps institutions understand how they can help veteran students to be successful. While this demographic of student is increasing, studies are still scarce and in need of more research that is updated and varied.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study assumed that the subjects who completed the surveys were truthful and honest. It is also assumed that these subjects understood the statements and could relate to most, if not all statements on the questionnaire. This study also assumed that Chickering's development theory is applicable to veteran students, specifically at Rowan

University. It is assumed that the subjects had experiences in the military and were students on campus as student veterans. Limitations to this study included sampling style and the size of the sample. The random selection sample style and the size of the sample may not accurately represent the population in its entirety. Another limitation included the possibility that the subjects of the survey may not go through emotional transitions as described as a focus in this study. Other limitations of this study included researcher bias. This researcher bias included the assumption that Chickering's development theory being applicable to student veterans and their transition from the military to a college setting.

Operational Definitions

- 1.) Dependent(s): Children of members of the military who are using educational benefits at Rowan University and therefore are enrolled with the Veteran Affairs office.
- 2.) Development: Emotional, interpersonal, and identity growth and change, particularly for veteran students transitioning to college.
- 3.) External: Physical changes experienced by veteran students including environment changes and role changes.
- 4.) Identity: How an individual characterizes and perceives themselves in relations to their environment and they're experiences. For the purpose of this study, identity is in relation to the feelings, thought process, and perception of self within student veterans.
- 5.) Internal: Mental and emotional changes regarding thoughts, feelings, and managing emotions.

- 6.) Journey: A veteran students experience transitioning out a military setting and into the role of a college student.
- 7.) Post 9/11 G.I. Bill: A United States law that provides benefits to military veterans who have taken part in active duty service after September 11, 2001.
- 8.) Reservist: Person who is not actively serving full time in the military, but can be deployed at any time.
- 9.) Transition: The journey a veteran student makes from the military life to life as a college student on campus.
- 10.) Veteran Student/Student Veteran: A person who has served in the military, especially who has served during war time and is now enrolled in a higher education program.

Research Questions

This study sought to explore the following questions:

- 1.) Using the lens of Chickering's identity development theory, what external factors affect internal development in student veterans?
- 2.) Using the lens of Chickering's identity development theory, what internal factors affect internal development in student veterans?
- 3.) What vectors of Chickering's identity development theory evoke strong responses?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II presents a review of literature from various studies that are crucial to the formation of this study. The chapter provides a history of the relationship between the military and higher education, how disabilities effect identity in veteran students, as well

as a brief review of theories used in preexisting studies. Most importantly to this study, is a review of theories of particular interest relating to the study such as Chickering's developmental theory.

Chapter III describes the methodology used in this study. Information on the subjects, data analysis and collection methods, content of survey instruments used, and sample demographics are included in this chapter as well.

Chapter IV presents the results and findings of the study. This chapter discusses the research questions in depth and reviews the data from the completed surveys with the utilization of Tables.

Chapter V clarifies the results and findings in relation to the literature review. This chapter also presents several recommendations for practice and further research.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Higher Education and the Military

The history of higher education demonstrates the importance of the inclusion of many different types of students on campuses around the United States. This includes students of different ethnicities/races, women, and veteran students. Veteran students have played a crucial role in the history of higher education, especially after World War II. After the war, institutions around the country found themselves significantly underprepared for the increase of enrollment due to the promise of education to service men and women (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). At this time, the economy was shifting towards a new age of science and technology, therefore new skills were needed by military personnel who wished to reenter the workforce as a civilian. Many institutions saw several thousand applications a month from veteran students alone and had to develop special schedules, administrative actions, and credits just to accommodate the new students (Freeland, 2007).

The education of veteran students not only helped institutions of higher education flourish, but has also provided a method of integrating veterans back into civilian life once more. The creation of the G.I. Bill, also known as the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, was to assist with the transition from military life to college life for veteran students by providing federal support for tuition (Freeland, 2007). Since its creation there have been several amendments to the bill like the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill, one of the most recent changes occurring after the terrorist attack in New York City on September 11th, 2001 (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). With the occurrence of this tragedy came another influx of

veterans that boosted enrollment in many institutions. Since then, over 1.4 million service members have used the G.I. Bill benefits in pursuit of higher education (Hamrick & Rumann, 2010). Institutions have stepped up to ensure that the transition from military life to college life is the smoothest it can be, however the transition is still an uneasy path that is not completely understood (O'Herrin, 2011).

Transitional Period Studies

While the veteran student is a demographic that is not as studied as other demographics of college students on campuses, there are some existing studies that primarily focus on the transitions that veteran students make from service to the college atmosphere (Dahan, 2008). Many of these studies use Schlossberg's transition theory as a theoretical framework, such as a study conducted by Shiavone and Gentry (2014). In this qualitative study, Shiavone and Gentry (2014) interviewed six veterans about their experiences in college. Their findings included positive and negative factors that mostly affected them such as social role perceptions, emotional struggles, and financial situations (Shiavone & Gentry, 2014). In relation to identity transitions, Shiavone and Gentry (2014) also found that the subjects could comment on their identities while in deployments compared to their identities once in college, while also explaining what it was like to shift from one environment to the other. Griffin and Gilbert (2015) also used Schlossberg's transition theory to better understand student veteran's transitions to college. This study aimed to find out what universities and colleges are doing to facilitate the transition to the best of their abilities. The study diagnosed factors that influenced the transition from military to college life such as reliability of campus offices and services, student representation, and policies regarding student veteran operations (Griffin &

Gilbert, 2015). While there was not a focus on identity development within the study, there was slight mention of it with the discovery of the need for socializing, support, and culture from the student body towards the student veterans. One of the subjects explained personal identity differences between themselves and their younger classmates which contributed to difficulties with the transition in general (Griffin & Gilbert, 2015).

Other studies that look at the transition view it as a phenomenological process and research it as such. Jones (2013) conducted a phenomenological study that looked in depth of three veteran student's experiences as full time college students. This study was conducted over multiple stages of the student's first year as an undergraduate student to clearly observe identity transitions at multiple times. The findings of the study yielded that the three most occurring themes mentioned by the subjects interviewed seemed to be that the process of adapting to a civilian life was difficult, the role of professionals and administrators was important for the transition process, and there is a bigger need for services aiding with the transition back into civilian life. The main factors affecting all of the participant's identity development narrowed down to adaptation, environment, and structure (Jones, 2013).

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Schlossberg's transition theory is commonly the focus for most studies involving veteran student transitions because the theory as described by Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006) represents the four factors typical of influencing transitions such as support, self, strategy, and situation. Hamrick and Rumann (2010) used the four "S" system as they researched factors that contributed to identity development as military members became college students. They found that these factors can be negative or

positive and can affect individuals to different degrees. Some individuals may experience any combination of the factors or only one at a time. When a veteran returns to civilian life, their sense of self tends to get distorted or shattered completely due to the construction and deconstruction of social roles for the individual. For example, the military is a structured system that designates specific positions and roles to all of its members. Therefore once in a college setting, students tend to demonstrate a grappling effect throughout the transition with regards to social roles because students are no longer structured with a specific task (Pryce, 2016). Veteran students struggle with the lack of clearly defined structure and role as a student within the new environment of higher education, which impacts identity development (Hamrick & Rumann, 2010). This situation is a prominent theme because there is a common theme mentioned by a majority of the student veterans across the study. The results of the study found that with regards to Schlossberg's four "S" factor system, situation and support seemed to have the biggest impact on identity development. Improvements to these situations can come from further examination and research in order to best accommodate student veterans and their new positions in society (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Mitchell, 2009).

Internal Struggles

Social and environmental situations are primarily the focus of studies to better understand the transition of student veterans, however identity transitions occur as well and should be taken into consideration when observing transitions (Hamrick & Rumann, 2010). Elliot (2015) found in a study that stress can emerge as a result of new environments, feelings, and experiences especially for veteran students. Elliot (2015) used the stress process theory to evaluate veteran students and their feelings as they

experienced changes to their lifestyles such as identity, social status, and mental health. Studies that look at mental health challenges and conditions are able to identify changes in identity and are able to link certain factors to this phenomena. Elliot (2015) found several links to changes in identity by comparing several possible factors such as what branch of the military veterans served, which mental health challenges they faced such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, and exposure to combat. The study found that depression formed within student veterans is one of the main factors behind identity reconstruction entering higher education after military service (Elliot, 2015).

Disability Identity

Hamrick and Rumann (2012) found that veterans participating in more recent war time periods are returning with more injuries due to the medical and technological advances of weaponry and explosive devices. Only recently have “invisible injuries” such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder become an important focus in relation to veteran student injuries. Student veterans returning to campus with injuries such as these may label them as “disabled” which can alter and have an impact on their view of personal identity (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). Not only do they have the stress of being a disabled student in college, but they also struggle figuring out how to carry the label of a disabled person in their community. Studies focusing on veteran’s student’s conceptualization of their own disabilities within higher education would further advance the knowledge of transitions for veteran students in general.

Hamrick and Rumann (2012) explore the growing population of veteran students that have different disabilities. The qualitative study was conducted in 2008 at the University of Arizona and found that out of the roughly two million veteran students that

are expected to enroll in higher education throughout the next few years, at least a quarter of the population is expected to have at least one disability and are twice as likely to have a disability compared to students who are not veterans. Many veteran students who have disabilities struggle with the concept of disclosure and the process of doing so to friends, family, and even to the institution (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). Due to certain situations, some veteran students may be diagnosed with “polytrauma” which is the categorization of having multiple disabilities. This is an important note for higher education professionals to understand because some veteran students may identify with more than one disability. Understanding multiple of these identities can aid with the transition process (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). Because gaining a disability when not previously born with one can be a difficult concept to grasp, some veteran students may continue to identify as an individual without a disability. This self-perception by the students can sometimes be dangerous to themselves and others if the proper treatments or help are not being given (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). However, some veteran students have sustained their disabilities either when they were in the service (non-combat) or separate (non-service relation). The study found that these individuals in particular have a hard time with self-identification because they may not consider themselves as important or on the same level as those veteran students who gained their injuries/disabilities through combat (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012). The study also shows how identity development can be complicated further by media depictions of student veterans with disabilities. Oftentimes the media, news, or Hollywood either represent disabilities as tragic or pitiful. They can also be represented as heroic, superhuman, or villainous, and not as ordinary everyday things. This can be harmful to the identity development of veteran students as they

navigate their own feelings of their disability and what it means to have a disability (Hamrick & Rumann, 2012).

Chickering's Seven Vectors

Chickering and Reisser (1993) created a model that follows seven vectors for student development in higher education. The college student undergoes a transformation in the way of thinking, perceiving, and identifying. The student can achieve several levels of development through these seven vectors as they complete their undergraduate career (Cooper, 2017). The seven vectors are: developing competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, developing purpose, and establishing identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The first vector of developing competence refers to intellectual, physical, and interpersonal competence. The intellectual side is how an individual can conceptualize and process information and content but also develop the skills needed to practice this information (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This vector is also important to identity development because it allows for the individual to explore how to process and develop multiple points of view when attempting to make sense of something. Physical and manual competence refers to creativity and self-discipline. It is important for students to explore their sense of creativity and abilities to create things. Interpersonal competence takes into consideration the other competencies and works to analyze other individuals in relation to one's own beliefs and concepts (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Managing emotions as the second vector will be one of the most important vectors to this study. Managing emotions comes from the development of methods and ways to control emotions and feelings when they arise in the college environment such as stress, anger, and other overwhelming feelings.

Because college is an environment that provides a lot of stimulation, it is important for students to learn their triggers and how to control and manage their emotions as a way of proper self-control and self-expression (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The third developmental vector is moving through autonomy toward interdependence which references how a student is able to pursue self-proclaimed interests and responsibilities. This vector stresses the importance of not needing constant outside validation, but gaining the strength to feel comfortable with one's own decisions. Understanding that accumulating more autonomy makes for more reliable and healthier relationships with others is key to the successful development of this vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Developing mature interpersonal relationships as the fourth vector reviews how obtaining mature relationships requires having the tolerance and understanding of multiple views (found in the first vector) and retaining intimacy. Developing mature relationships rely on the student's abilities to view others without stereotypes and with many other possibilities of viewpoints and beliefs, even if they do not align with the student. Respecting differences in others helps the development of the fourth vector (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The fifth vector of Chickering and Reisser (1993) is establishing identity, which depends on the completion and understanding of the previous vectors. Developing identity entails many items working together at once such as comfortability with one's outer appearance, inner and outer identifications regarding sexuality and gender, sense of self in multiple contexts such as identity in social and cultural contexts, self-visualization, and comfortability with integration. The sixth vector is developing purpose, and describes how a college student makes decisions based on their own desires and needs and their ability to prioritize. This vector requires the ability

to analyze and think about decisions before they are made and understanding what the student holds to be important (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This also includes an individual's ability to formulate future vocational and educational plans, personal interests, and relationship commitments. The final vector is developing integrity and is very close to the sixth vector in regards to understanding what the individual wants to accomplish and what they hold to be important. However, the seventh vector is more in depth with decision making and relies on an individual's ability to humanize values, make connections to what is socially acceptable, and reiterate and confirm personal values and belief systems (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

This theoretical framework provides an important lens to view student veteran transitions through because just like typical aged college students, veteran students are also experiencing a new environment, a new role in society, and experience lots of different kinds of stimuli that may challenge their identities. Veteran students have unique factors that influence how they develop their identities, and looking at this process through the seven developmental factors may help to clarify what areas institutions should be focusing on the most in order to provide a more consistent and manageable transition as the students move from the military to becoming a college student.

Recent/Direct Studies

Within the last decade, several studies have been conducted to directly observe the transition of student veterans into higher education through nearby institutions such as Rowan University and Stockton University. These most recent studies represent positive aspects of the transition experience and report little to no difficulty with the experience generally. Dahan (2008) conducted a study at Rowan University that applied adult

development theories to undergraduate veteran students. The main focus of the study was to examine the experience selected veteran students had while transitioning to Rowan University from the military through the lens of transformative learning theory. Dahan (2008) used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods including a survey as well as interviews. The findings in this study showcase the feelings that veterans generally had an easy time with transitioning onto campus and generally felt valued by advisors, faculty, and fellow students. However, 19.6% indicated that some faculty members did not always consider the other obligations of veteran students outside of the classroom that may contribute to any difficulties being felt by the veteran student (Dahan, 2008). Moreover, 21.5% of respondents felt that their questions asked created a negative change in demeanor in faculty and 29.4% of respondents felt that the questions were seen as “challenges to their authority” in regards to faculty members. Hamrick and Rumann (2009) explain that a possibility for this finding is due to the fact that it is less likely for current administration and faculty to have military experience or have an understanding of wartime duties compared to older generations. Another highlighted finding in this study includes how 43.1% of respondents felt that none of the other students on campus understood how difficult it got at times for the veteran students to be in the classroom as the only student veteran. Likewise, 41% of respondents felt that their experiences interfered with their interaction with other students on campus (Dahan, 2008). In general, the study conducted by Dahan (2008) found that majority of the veteran students that participated in the study agreed that they have had successful transitions onto campus and felt satisfied with the services provided by Rowan University. However, it is important to note that there is still a small percentage of subjects who felt there could be

improvements made around Rowan University's campus to help veteran students feel more comfortable with their higher education journey.

Replication of a study is another way to increase the gap in the knowledge base with regards to veteran student transition. Kurz (2013) created a replication of the study conducted by Dahan (2008) but instead shifted the focus to strictly female veteran students at Stockton University. The study also employed a mixed-method approach by using both a survey and conducting interviews to gather data. Kurz (2013) focused on women veteran experiences on campus and their transitions from the military to Stockton University. The findings of this study almost mirror the findings found in the study conducted by Dahan (2008). Kurz (2013) found that female veterans generally agreed that their transition to campus was easy because of the support received by administration, faculty, and students. While the study done by Dahan (2008) found a percentage believed that faculty found it difficult to consider outside obligations held by veteran students, Kurz (2013) found that subjects felt faculty and administration had a greater consideration of their obligations and duties outside of the classroom and were willing to work with them. It was also found that female veteran students viewed their age as a factor of difficulty in relating to other students in the classroom (Kurz, 2013). A highlighted aspect to note about this study is that female veteran students acknowledged that their role changed once attending Stockton University. In the interview portion of the research, several subjects noted that they took on new responsibilities and new identities in their new environment (Kurz, 2013). Issues with identity were briefly mentioned through the interview process, and themes that emerged from this study included how the

subjects were expected to fulfill a “gender-specific role,” social role changes, and how prior experience in the military had prepared subjects for the college life (Kurz, 2013).

Most recently in the spring of 2017, I conducted unpublished research containing raw data for my Procedures and Evaluation in Research course at Rowan University. This study was a strictly quantitative approach that focused on the transition of veteran students to Rowan University from military life. Focus questions of the study included which vectors of Chickering’s developmental theory seemed to be the hardest to achieve for veteran students and what factors seemed to affect identity development (Cooper, 2017). I created my own survey based off of the theoretical framework of Arthur Chickering’s seven developmental vectors of identity theory and created color-coded sections of questions based off of each vector. The subjects had to be veteran students at Rowan University and enrolled either part-time or full-time. The sample selection was random, as any veteran student who accessed the veteran affairs office on campus was offered the survey to complete. Findings from this pilot study included how 37.5% of subjects found it difficult to relate to their peers within the classroom, how 50% of subjects experienced stress in the college environment, how they also found it difficult to handle and comprehend new emotions that emerged since the transition, and how most subjects felt they have not changed their personal views or beliefs since transitioning to college (Cooper, 2017). As for the vectors that seemed hardest to achieve, Chickering’s first, second, and seventh vectors were found to be the most difficult for veteran students to grasp at Rowan University (Cooper, 2017).

These recent studies have only helped to fill the gap in the knowledge base about the transition of veteran students into higher education. There are studies that suggest the

transition can be easy for some students, while others suggest that some students may struggle with certain aspects of the transition. Both kinds of studies are important to the success of the veteran student and are important for institutions to learn where assistance is most needed for this demographic of student.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review explored a variety of studies particularly interested in the transition of student veterans. Many studies have been reviewed that use a multitude of theories and approaches when looking at the transition such as Schlossberg's transition theory and stress management theory. There is also a review of Chickering's seven developmental vectors, which is a crucial piece to this study and serves as the main theoretical framework guiding the research. Previous research conducted on this topic suggests that there is not enough research done on the individual internal effects of identity within veteran students, and alludes to the fact that this is necessary in order for universities and colleges to better serve this population of student. It is clear from the literature that veteran students have unique needs and experiences compared to a traditional college student and more research is necessary to pin-pointing the best practices, methods, and resources that are still needing to be developed in order to assist for a smooth transition for members of the military to higher education.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

Rowan University is the site where the study was conducted. Rowan University is a public, medium-sized school located in Glassboro, New Jersey. It is highly focused on research and continues to grow its aspirations for research through medical, engineering, and business schools (“Rowan Fast,” 2015). Rowan University began its roots in 1923 as a place that trained elementary school teachers in South Jersey (“History,” n.d). The town of Glassboro was an appropriate location for the school due to its central location in South Jersey and due to the rich resources in the area. Throughout the years of new presidents and new accomplishments, the college expanded from simply offering teacher education to now offering many other areas of education such as doctoral programs. Rowan also flourished and prospered from the establishment of other divisions such as the Colleges of Engineering and Communication (“History,” n.d). In 1997, the college changed its status from “college” to “university” and since then has progressed in research, enrollment, and prestige (“History,” n.d).

Since the fall of 2016, the total enrollment for Rowan is 17,372 students. This breaks down into 14,345 undergraduates, 1,821 transferred undergraduates, and 3,027 graduates (*Rowan University, n.d*). The ratio of student to faculty is 17:1, where there are 908 professional faculty members consisting of full time and part time positions. Class sizes at Rowan University are typically around 20 students (“Rowan Fast,” 2015).

This study utilized the Veteran Affairs Office in order to reach the target population of veteran students. The Veterans Office works directly with the Veterans

Administration (VA) processing office in New York. There are two main advisors who handle the benefits, student information, and deployment orders within the office while a few student workers handle the paperwork and organization within the office. The main objective of the Veteran Office at Rowan University is to help veteran students and dependents of veterans with the application and benefits process of enrollment. The office provides a number of online resources such as scholarship information, Stars & Stripes training about the several needs of veteran students, and information on injuries that are unique to veteran students. The office also provides programming for veteran students and dependents that helps provide information and build a sense of community on campus.

Population and Sampling

The targeted population for this study was undergraduate or graduate student veterans currently enrolled at Rowan University. The target sampling strategy was random with the use of an online survey, however since this is a very specific yet small demographic of student, all samples who were available were selected resulting in the sampling to be convenient. All individuals in the sampled population were required to be student veterans who have served or are currently serving in the military. The number of total veteran students who are enrolled at Rowan University is 252 as of the fall 2017 semester, which includes undergraduate, graduate, and online statuses. This study purposely excluded the dependent population since the study did not focus on the dependent population and their experiences. This number also includes students who are Reservists or National Guard. There are approximately 10-20 veteran students who frequent the Veteran Affairs office on campus daily, however majority of the students

utilize phone calls that can range from 20-100 in one day. This is because of several reasons including how not all veterans are local. It also heavily depends on current situations such as hurricanes or other crises that require the assistance and service of the military. For this research, the sample number of subjects was 152, which represents a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval at 5%. This study was able to operate at a 40% response rate which represents 60 subjects.

Data Collection Instrument

The instrument (Appendix B) used in this research was developed in relation to Arthur Chickering's seven student developmental vectors in order to better relate to the research questions. The instrument is a 30 item survey that aims to gauge the feelings of Rowan veteran students about their transition into the college environment from the military environment. The survey was created by me through the lens of Chickering's identity development theory, where the statements are grouped by each vector. For my usage, the grouped statements are color coded in order to best identify the statements and what vector they represent. For example, the first set of statements are black to represent the developing competence vector of Chickering's theory while the second set of questions are green to represent the managing emotions vector of the theory. The survey opens with demographic questions regarding age, race/ethnicity, sex, and branch of military. The purpose of the demographics section is to understand the diversity of the subjects such as differences in race, gender, and branch of military. The survey uses a Likert scale format, with the responses ranging from one to five, one being "very false," two being "false," three being "neutral," four being "true," and five being "very true." The statements range from four to six statements in each section and represent aspects of

each vector. For example, the second section of statements pertains to the managing emotions vector which lists statements regarding subject's opinions on stress and emotions. I created the survey in response to the lack of information of veteran affairs in relation to Chickering's seven developmental vectors. The vectors were researched and studied individually in order to create questions that best fit into each vector. The instrument was tested for validity and reliability by using a pilot run consisting of a previous project completed with the use of this instrument. This project was conducted in the veteran affairs office at Rowan University. I distributed the surveys to willing subjects to complete and return to me. The instrument was distributed to 24 random individuals who gave positive feedback on the survey and whose answers were used as a research project in the spring of 2017. Reliability of this instrument was demonstrated through the quality of data gathered from the completed surveys. Reliability also came from positive feedback about the survey from the subjects, particularly commenting on the accuracy of the subjects taking on average 10 minutes to complete it. The data yielded results that could be measured and examined.

Data Gathering Procedures

An Institutional Research Board application (Appendix A) was completed and approved before the start of any data collection. The completion of the survey implied consent from subjects, which was explained clearly and explicitly on the first page of the survey and in person by me when surveys were given out. It was ensured that no personally identifiable information would be gained from the completion of the surveys and that subjects were only identified by the order in which they completed the survey (i.e. participant #1, participant #2, etc.). After the electronic response rate proved to be

slow, incentives of various food products and a gift card were used in order to get a higher response rate. After a month of strictly online data collection, the paper surveys were implemented and used in the Veteran Affairs Office at Rowan University as the students visited the office. While the paper surveys were being utilized, online data collection was also continued to further the response rate. Data collection lasted approximately two months.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the surveying process was entered in an Excel spreadsheet in order to best organize the total number of results from the survey. Each subject's answers were then added into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programming in order to find frequencies and importance levels for each statement. Target answers that were evaluated within each section of statements were those that had a mean score above and below 3.0. Scores above 3.0 indicated an agreement to the statement while scores below 3.0 indicated disagreement with the statement. Independent variables in this study were identified in the beginning of the survey, including gender, military branch, age, race, and status at Rowan University. The dependent variables are the responses to the statements of the survey. Variations of answers across all surveys were analyzed further by creating frequency tables and calculations of standard deviation and mean scores. The statistics that were be used to analyze the data include high scoring statements relevant to factors of being on campus and emotion/stress managing. Other statistics that were used include statements that score either very high or low to determine strong responses to certain vectors. Finally, mean scores, standard deviations,

frequencies, and percentages were generated through all responses to the survey in order to determine what ways the overall transition is difficult.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

This study consisted of one variable group; conveniently selected veteran students at Rowan University. A total of 60 veteran students were contacted through two methods: several mass emails that included a link to the electronic version of the survey and by being asked to complete a paper survey if they visited the Veteran Affairs Office at Rowan University, if they gave permission to participate. The research was restricted to only those students currently enrolled at Rowan University and who are currently serving or have served in the military. There were no limitations in who could participate in relation to descriptive demographics, however dependent students were excluded because the study is not relevant to their experiences on campus. Online data collection spanned from February to April 2018 while paper collection began March 2018 and continued until April 2018. The response rate was 40% with the participation of 60 subjects.

Table 4.1 shows the demographics of the subjects. Nine subjects were under 20 years of age (15.0%), 30 subjects were between the ages of 20-24 (50.0%), six were between the ages of 25-29 (10.0%), nine were between the ages of 30-34 (15.0%), three were between the ages of 35-44 (5.0%), two were between the ages of 45-49 (3.3%), and one subject identified with an age of 50 or over (1.7%). Majority of the subjects identified as White/Caucasian, representing 47 subjects (78.3%) while five identified as African American (8.3%), one identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (1.7%), five identified as Hispanic (8.3%), and two chose not to specify (3.3%). There were 43 males (71.7%) and 17 females (28.3%) who participated in the study. Various classes at Rowan

University were represented including 11 freshmen (18.3%), 12 sophomores (20.0%), 13 juniors (21.7%), 16 seniors (26.7%), and eight graduate students (13.3%). There were also 50 subjects who were attending as full time students (83.3%) and 10 attending at part time (16.7%). Every branch of the military was represented through this data set including nine subjects in the Air Force (15.0%), 11 Marines (18.3%), 37 in the Army (61.7%), two from the Navy (3.3%) and one from the Coast Guard (1.7%).

Table 4.1

Subject Demographics (N=60)

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Current Age		
Under 20	9	15.0
20-24	30	50.0
25-29	6	10.0
30-34	9	15.0
35-44	3	5.0
45-49	2	3.3
50 and Over	1	1.7
Racial/Ethnic Group		
African American	5	8.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1.7
Hispanic	5	8.3
White/Caucasian	47	78.3
Choose not to specify	2	3.3

Table 4.1 (continued)

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Sex		
Male	43	71.7
Female	17	28.3
Other	0	0
Status at Rowan University		
Freshman	11	18.3
Sophomore	12	20.0
Junior	13	21.7
Senior	16	26.7
Graduate	8	13.3
Student Enrollment Status		
Full Time	50	83.3
Part Time	10	16.7
Branch of Military		
Air Force	9	15.0
Marines	11	18.3
Army	37	61.7
Navy	2	3.3
Coast Guard	1	1.7

Analysis of the Data

The following tables (4.2-4.8) are included to assess the research questions and present the results of the survey items. The tables are divided by sections of questions that represent each of Chickering's seven developmental vectors, starting with the first vector and working down to the last vector. The survey items were arranged in a Likert Scale format ranging from very false=1, false=2, neutral=3, true=4, and very true=5. Shown in the tables are the frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, means, and numbers of the subjects. For the purpose of this study, a mean score of 3.0 and above

indicates a general agreement of the statement whereas a mean score below 3.0 indicates a general disagreement of a statement.

Research question 1. Using the lens of Chickering’s identity development theory, what external factors affect internal development in student veterans?

Table 4.2 contains the results of four items pertaining to Chickering’s first vector of developmental theory of developing competence, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The second item on Table 4.2 “prior experience with transitions has helped me be more successful with the transition to college” had a mean score of 3.63 with a standard deviation of .920 with 45% of subjects answering “True” and 31.7% answering “Neutral.” The third item on this table “it has been easy for me to make friends in the classroom around campus” had a mean score of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.112 with 33.3% of subjects answering “Neutral” and 25% subjects answering “True.” Finally, the last item on this table “I can relate to my peers and classmates” had a mean score of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.198 with 35% of subjects answering “True” and 23.3% answering “Neutral.”

Table 4.2

Chickering’s First Vector: Developing Competence (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False		False		Neutral		True		Very True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I feel that I can be successful in my new role in college. <i>M=4.27,</i>			1	1.7	4	6.7	33	55.0	22	36.7

Table 4.2 (continued)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False <i>f</i>	%	False <i>f</i>	%	Neutral <i>f</i>	%	True <i>f</i>	%	Very True <i>f</i>	%
Prior experience with transitions has helped me be more successful with the transition to college. $M=3.63$, $SD=.920$	2	3.3	3	5.0	19	31.7	27	45.0	9	15.0
It has been easy for me to make friends in the classroom or around campus. $M=3.50$, $SD=1.112$	2	3.3	9	15.0	20	33.3	15	25.0	14	23.3
I can relate to my peers and classmates. $M=3.23$, $SD=1.198$	6	10.0	11	18.3	14	23.3	21	35.0	8	13.3

Table 4.3 contains the results of four items pertaining to Chickering's second developmental vector of managing emotions, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The second item of Table 4.3 that states "I feel pressure/stress in the college environment" had a mean score of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 1.139, with 43.3% of subjects answering "True" and 23.3% answering "Neutral" while the first item "I utilize resources or have methods for controlling emotions/stress" had a mean score of 3.55 with a standard deviation of .946 with 48.3% of subjects answering "True" and 26.7% answering "Neutral."

Table 4.3

Chickering's Second Vector: Managing Emotions (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False		False		Neutral		True		Very True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I utilize resources or have methods for controlling emotions/stress. <i>M</i> =3.55, <i>SD</i> =.946	2	3.3	6	10.0	16	26.7	29	48.3	7	11.7
I feel pressure/stress in the college environment. <i>M</i> =3.30, <i>SD</i> =1.139	6	10.0	8	13.3	14	23.3	26	43.3	6	10.0
I have experienced new emotions since starting college. <i>M</i> =2.73, <i>SD</i> =1.191	9	15.0	21	35.0	11	18.3	15	25.0	4	6.7
I sometimes struggle to control my emotions. <i>M</i> =2.23, <i>SD</i> =1.064	16	26.7	26	43.3	6	10.0	12	20.0		

Table 4.4 contains the results of four items pertaining to Chickering's third developmental vector of moving through autonomy toward interdependence, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The first item on the table "I can easily ask for help if I need it" had a mean score of 3.85 with a standard deviation of .954 with 51.7% of subjects answering "True" and 23.3% answering "Very True." The second item on Table 4.4 of "I am more comfortable working alone than in a group" had a mean score of 3.67 and a standard deviation of .968 with 35.0% of subjects answering "True" and 33.3% of subjects answering "Neutral." The last item on this table "I do not care

about acceptance from my peers” had a mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 1.056 with 33.3% of subjects answering “Neutral” and 28.3% of subjects answering “True.

Table 4.4

Chickering's Third Vector: Developing Autonomy (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False <i>f</i>	%	False <i>f</i>	%	Neutral <i>f</i>	%	True <i>f</i>	%	Very True <i>f</i>	%
I can easily ask for help if I need it. <i>M=3.85, SD=.954</i>	1	1.7	6	10.0	8	13.3	31	51.7	14	23.3
I am more comfortable working alone than in a group. <i>M=3.67, SD=.968</i>	1	1.7	5	8.3	20	33.3	21	35.0	13	21.7
I have willingly gone out of my comfort zone to experience new things in college. <i>M=3.58, SD=.869</i>			8	13.3	16	26.7	29	48.3	7	11.7
I do not care about acceptance from my peers. <i>M=3.27, SD=1.056</i>	2	3.3	13	21.7	20	33.3	17	28.3	8	13.3

Table 4.5 contains the results of four items pertaining to Chickering’s fourth developmental vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The first item on Table 4.5 that states “diversity is important for a college campus” had a mean score of 4.34 with a standard deviation of .822 with 51.7% of subjects answering “Very True” and 31.7% answering “True.” The

third item “on campus, I have interacted with individuals who have beliefs and values that differ from my own” had a mean score of 4.15 and a standard deviation of .827 with 40.0% of subjects answering “True” and 38.3% answering with “Very True.” The final item on this table “I tend to surround myself with people who only share my beliefs and values” had a mean score of 2.80 and a standard deviation of 1.095 with 40.0% subjects answering “False” and 28.3% answering “Neutral.”

Table 4.5

Chickering's Fourth Vector: Establishing Identity (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False		False		Neutral		True		Very True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Diversity is important for a college campus. <i>M</i> =4.34, <i>SD</i> =.822			2	3.3	7	11.7	19	31.7	31	51.7
I am tolerant of those who believe things I don't agree with. <i>M</i> =4.20, <i>SD</i> =.738			1	1.7	8	13.3	28	46.7	22	36.7
On campus, I have interacted with individuals who have beliefs and values that differ from my own. <i>M</i> =4.15, <i>SD</i> =.827			2	3.3	10	16.7	24	40.0	23	38.3
I tend to surround myself with people who only share my beliefs and values. <i>M</i> =2.80, <i>SD</i> =1.095	4	6.7	24	40.0	17	28.3	8	13.3	6	10.0

Table 4.6 contains the results of four items pertaining to Chickering's fifth developmental vector of establishing identity, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The second item "I think I am well liked by my professors or classmates" had a mean score of 4.13 and a standard deviation of .596 with 63.3% of subjects answering "True" and 41.7% answering "Very True." The third item "I get along with most people I meet on campus" had a mean score of 4.18 with a standard deviation of .537 with 68.3% of subjects answering "True" and 25.0% answering "Very True." The last item of "professors or students treat me differently when they hear about my background" had a mean score of 2.63 and a standard deviation of .938 with 40.0% of subjects answering "False" and 35.0% answering "Neutral."

Table 4.6

Chickering's Fifth Vector: Freeing Interpersonal Relationships (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False		False		Neutral		True		Very True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I am confident with myself and my abilities. <i>M=4.35, SD=.606</i>					4	6.7	31	51.7	25	41.7
I think I am well liked by my professors or classmates. <i>M=4.13, SD=.596</i>					7	11.7	38	63.3	25	41.7

Table 4.6 (continued)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False		False		Neutral		True		Very True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I get along with most people I meet on campus. <i>M</i> =4.18, <i>SD</i> =.537					4	6.7	41	68.3	15	25.0
Professors or students treat me differently when they hear about my background. <i>M</i> =2.63, <i>SD</i> =.938	5	8.3	24	40.0	21	35.0	8	13.3	2	3.3

Table 4.7 contains the results of four items pertaining to Chickering's sixth developmental vector of developing purpose, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The first item "while in college, I have found something that I love learning about" had a mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of .930 with 46.4% of subjects answering "True" and 32.1% answering "Very True." The last item on the Table of "my purpose in college is only to get a better job" had a mean score of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 1.180 with 28.3% of subjects answering "False" while 26.7% of subjects answered with "True" and 23.3% answering "Neutral."

Table 4.7

Chickering's Sixth Vector: Developing Purpose (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

<i>Statements</i>	<i>VF</i>		<i>F</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>T</i>		<i>VT</i>	
	<i>Very False</i>		<i>False</i>		<i>Neutral</i>		<i>True</i>		<i>Very True</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
While in college, I have found something that I love learning about. <i>M</i> =3.98, <i>SD</i> =.930	2	3.6	1	1.8	9	16.1	26	46.4	18	32.1
I enjoy college. <i>M</i> =3.95, <i>SD</i> =1.126	4	6.7	3	5.0	6	10.0	26	43.3	21	35.0
I have learned more about myself since starting college. <i>M</i> =3.62, <i>SD</i> =1.059	1	1.8	10	17.9	10	17.9	23	41.1	12	21.4
My purpose in college is only to get a better job. <i>M</i> =3.22, <i>SD</i> =1.180	3	5.0	17	28.3	14	23.3	16	26.7	10	16.7

Table 4.8 contains the results of six items pertaining to Chickering's seventh developmental vector of developing integrity, ordered from most to least positive using mean scores. The first item on the Table of "I believe that support from family/friends/peers will help me become more successful in college" had a mean score of 4.28 and a standard deviation of .715 with 51.7% of subjects answering "True" and 40.0% answering "Very True." The item "the things I have learned/experienced in the military have helped me with my college experience" had a mean score of 3.93 and a standard deviation of .899 with 53.3% of subjects answering "True" and 25.0%

answering “Very True.” Finally, the item “going to college has been a difficult transition for me” had a mean score of 2.52 and a standard deviation of 1.081 with 48.3% of subjects answering “False” and 16.7% of subjects answering with both “Neutral” and “True.”

Table 4.8

Chickering's Seventh Vector: Establishing Identity (N=60)
(1=Very False, 2=False, 3=Neutral, 4=True, 5=Very True)

<i>Statements</i>	<i>VF</i>		<i>F</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>T</i>		<i>VT</i>	
	<i>Very False</i>		<i>False</i>		<i>Neutral</i>		<i>True</i>		<i>Very True</i>	
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
I believe that support from family/friends/peers will help me become more successful in college. <i>M=4.28, SD=.715</i>			2	3.3	3	5.0	31	51.7	24	40.0
I am comfortable with talking about things that I believe to be important. <i>M=4.23, SD=.745</i>	1	1.7	1	1.7	2	3.3	35	58.3	21	35.0
The things I have learned/experienced in the military have helped me with my college experience. <i>M=3.93, SD=.899</i>	1	1.7	4	6.7	8	13.3	32	53.3	15	25.0
My values and beliefs have changed since being in college. <i>M=2.62, SD=1.136</i>	11	18.3	19	31.7	14	23.3	14	23.3	2	3.3

Table 4.8 (continued)

Statements	VF		F		N		T		VT	
	Very False		False		Neutral		True		Very True	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Going to college has been a difficult transition for me. <i>M</i> =2.52, <i>SD</i> =1.081	8	13.3	29	48.3	10	16.7	10	16.7	3	5.0
My opinions are easily swayed. <i>M</i> =1.87, <i>SD</i> =.791	22	36.7	25	41.7	12	20.0	1	1.7		

Research question 2. Using the lens of Chickering’s identity development theory, what internal factors affect internal development in student veterans?

In the first vector, Table 4.2 shows the item “I feel that I can be successful in my new role in college” having a mean score of 4.27 with a standard deviation of .660 with 55.0% of subjects answering with “True” and 36.7% of subjects answering “Very True.” In Table 4.3, the item “I sometimes struggle to control my emotions” had a mean score of 2.23 with a standard deviation of 1.064 with 43.3% of subjects answering “False” and 26.7% of subjects answering “Very False.” From the same table, the item “I have experienced new emotions since starting college” had a mean score of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 1.191 with 35.0% of subjects answering “False” and 25.0% of subjects answering “True.” The item “I have willingly gone out of my comfort zone to experience new things in college” on Table 4.4 received a mean score of 3.58 and a standard deviation of .869 with 48.3% of subjects answering “True” and 26.7% of subjects answering “Neutral.” On Table 4.5 the item “I am tolerant of those who believe

things that I don't agree with" had a mean score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of .738 with 46.7% of subjects answering "True" and 36.7% of subjects answering "Very True."

Table 4.6 contains the item "I am confident with myself and my abilities" which had a mean score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of .606 with 51.7% of subjects answering "True" and 41.7% of subjects answering "Very True." In Table 4.7 the item "I enjoy college" had a mean score of 3.95 with a standard deviation of 1.126 with 43.3% of subjects answering "True" and 35.0% answering "Very True." Also in this table is the item "I have learned more about myself since starting college" which had a mean score of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 1.059 with 41.1% of subjects answering "True" and 21.4% of subjects answering "Very True." There were also an equal number of subjects answering as both "False" and Neutral" with 17.9%. Finally, Table 4.8 contains the item "I am comfortable with talking about things that I believe to be important" had a mean score of 4.23 and a standard deviation of .745 with 58.3% of subjects answering "True" and 35.0% of subjects answering "Very True." The items "my values and beliefs have changed since being in college" and "my opinions are easily swayed" which both elicited mean scores of 2.62 and 1.87 respectively. The item "my values and beliefs have changed since being in college" had 31.7% of subjects answer with "False" while 23.3% of subjects answered with both "Neutral" and "True" equally. The last item "my opinions are easily swayed" had a mean score of 1.87 and a standard deviation of .791 with 41.7% of subjects answering with "False" and 36.7% of subjects answering "Very False."

Research question 3. What vectors of Chickering’s identity development theory evoke a strong response?

The item “diversity is important for a college campus” in Table 4.5 had a mean score of 4.34 and a standard deviation of .822 with 51.7% of subjects answering “Very True” and 31.7% of subjects answering “True.” The item “my opinions are easily swayed” in Table 4.8 had a mean score of 1.87 and a standard deviation of .791 with 41.7% of subjects answering “False” and 36.7% of subjects answering “Very False.”

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This quantitative study utilized Chickering's seven vector identity development theory as a framework to better understand the transition of veteran students from military life to the college life at Rowan University. A total of 60 subjects participated in the study by either taking an electronic survey or completing a paper survey when they came to the Veteran Affairs Office on campus at Rowan University. The subjects in the study represented all branches of the military, various races/ethnicities, and included both male and female students. They also represented both part time and full time enrollment statuses as well as all classes from freshmen to graduate students. Data were collected using surveys both online and in person. The surveys were designed by me in direct relation to Chickering's seven developmental vectors. Each set of statements correspond to each vector in the theory. The paper copies of the survey contained color coded sections so I could easily identify which vector the section represented. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) technology was utilized in order to analyze the data through measures of central tendency.

Discussion of the Findings

The data analysis for this study found several external and internal factors that affected identity development for veteran students at Rowan University. These external factors include feeling stress and/or pressure in the college environment, utilizing resources or methods in order to control emotions, establishing relationships with professors and students, having prior experience with transitions as well as

experience/knowledge in the military, being more comfortable working alone than in a group, not caring about acceptance from peers, and the ability to easily ask for help when needed. Internal factors include a sense of established pride, self, ego, and confidence, as well as established values and beliefs with the tolerance and acknowledgement of other values and beliefs held by others. These conclusions are based off of the following research questions.

Research question 1. Using the lens of Chickering's identity development theory, what external factors affect internal development in student veterans?

The first vector of the developmental theory is the development of competence. Developing competence encompasses the ability to mentally interpret, comprehend, reflect, and analyze which allows the individual process their surroundings and interactions in order to make sense out of them (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The survey item "prior experience with transitions has helped me be more successful with the transition to college" demonstrated a theme of agreeance among subjects. While the definition of transition for this item is not specific, the general agreement of the statement by the subjects indicates that having experience with similar transitional situations have aided in the transition to college. This coincides with the study conducted by Shiavone and Gentry (2014), where they made a point about veteran identities on deployment compared to their identities once in college. Their study found that subjects were able to draw upon previous experiences with transitions and knowledge from being in the military in order to ease their transition into college. The second item, "it has been easy for me to make friends in the classroom and around campus" indicates that relationships around campus and in the classroom have not been difficult for the subjects to establish

and suggests that competence of the relationships with others is achievable. This was also demonstrated in a study by Jones (2013), who found an importance placed upon the role of professionals aiding with the transition process. Also found in Jones (2013) that coincides with my study is the indication that majority of the subjects felt that they could establish relationships with their professors and felt well-liked by them. Likewise, the item “I can relate to my peers and classmates” indicates that subjects are able to identify on some level with their classmates and understand the similarities between them.

The second developmental vector is managing emotions, which explores how college students handle the multitude of emotions that can be experienced when entering a new environment such as college. These emotions can include anger, frustration, anxiety, and depression (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). External factors that affect the managing emotions vector appearing from the data include feeling pressure/stress from the college environment and the utilization of resources or methods for controlling emotions or stress. The items “I feel pressure/stress in the college environment,” and “I utilize resources or have methods for controlling emotions/stress” indicate that subjects have experienced stress in their college environment but have also identified that they have methods or resources for managing these emotions. Utilization of resources is important to the success of the managing emotions vector because it indicates growth in understanding personal needs and furthers the development of competency. This was also a similar theme from the pilot test I conducted in the spring of 2017, with 53.3% of subjects agreeing with feeling stress in the environment. However for the pilot study, there were fewer subjects that had methods for controlling their emotions and stress compared to the subjects in this study. Shiavone and Gentry (2014) found several factors

that affect student veterans such as social role identities and emotional struggle such as stress in the environment. Likewise, the findings in my study insinuate that veteran students at Rowan University also felt the typical emotions of stress and pressure in the college environment, but show that the subjects also had means of handling such emotions.

Items relating to Chickering's third developmental vector of moving through autonomy toward interdependence, pertain to an individual's ability to take responsibility for self-support in ways of finding the ability to stray from the sole reliance on oneself and to place a degree of dependence on another individual or thing (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). External factors affecting the development of this vector include subjects being more comfortable working alone than in a group, not caring about acceptance from peers, and the ability to easily ask for help when needed. The item, "I am more comfortable working alone than in a group" yielded a general agreement of this statement, which indicates that subjects have a strong concept of self-dependence and self-support without reliance of others and also rejects the idea of dependence. This is further propelled by the item "I do not care about acceptance from my peers" which indicates that subjects are comfortable with their independence. However the development of moving towards interdependence is observed through the item "I can easily ask for help if I need it" where ability to ask for help is strong within the subjects which suggests that this factor aids in the development of this vector.

Chickering's fourth developmental vector is developing mature interpersonal relationships, which includes how students value their connections with others and how these relationships impact their lives (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The item, "on

campus, I have interacted with individuals who have beliefs and values that differ from my own” suggests that subjects recognize that there are other individuals in their surroundings that differ from their own ways of thinking but still pursue an interaction. The item, “I tend to surround myself with people who only share my beliefs and values” had a general disagreement and indicates that subjects have established mature relationships with individuals who might have different beliefs and values that are different from their own. The item, “diversity is important for a college campus” reflects the notion that mature relationships can be developed on a campus that contains individuals from different backgrounds. Hamrick and Rumann (2010) defined that individuals experience identity development differently compared to others, which can potentially demonstrate how subjects acknowledge that they interact with those who have different ideas and beliefs from them.

Chickering’s fifth developmental vector of establishing identity, is dependent upon a strong ego and high self-esteem development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). The item, “I think I am well liked by my professors or classmates” suggests that subjects have established a positive and healthy sense of ego which influences high self-esteem. The item, “I get along with most people I meet on campus” shows that subjects have a well - developed self-esteem with their positive perception of themselves in relation to those they meet on campus. This finding is similar to one found in Dahan (2008) where subjects also felt valued by their peers and faculty members. Subjects demonstrated that they felt they are not treated differently when professors or their classmates learn about their military background, which coincides with the findings by Jones (2013). The subjects in his study also felt as though faculty and staff did not treat them differently

after hearing about their background in the military. The external factors of having a positive relationship with others on campus helps with development of an internal sense of ego and positive self-esteem. The general disagreement with this statement indicates that the subject's background does not affect the establishment and development of their identity.

Developing purpose focuses on the basic question of who the individual is and what their role is in society. This represents the sixth developmental vector in Chickering's developmental model. External factors affecting the development of this vector include the notion of college existing only to pursue a better job and finding something enjoyable to learn about while in college. The item, "my purpose in college is only to get a better job" indicates overall subjects felt that their purpose in college was clear and achievements were directly related to the single purpose of getting a better job. The item, "while in college, I have found something that I love learning about" suggests that while subject's only goal in college is to pursue a better job, they still developed a sense of passion for what they were studying. This was a similar finding from the pilot study I conducted in the spring of 2017.

Finally, Chickering's last developmental vector is developing integrity. This vector incorporates a summary of the previous vectors, where the individual has developed and maintained a foundation for analyzing situations, measuring out reactionary behavior, and maintaining integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). External factors found to aid in the development of this vector include receiving support from family and friends, acknowledging the transition to college as not being difficult, and having prior experience/knowledge from the military as a tool for the college experience.

Subjects believe that having support from family/friends/peers will help them become more successful in college, which ties into the success of establishing mature relationships and developing a sense of interdependence with others to ensure success. The item, “going to college has been a difficult transition for me” represents a general disagreement with the statement. This coincides with findings of subjects finding the transition positive from Dahan (2008). Subjects have acknowledged going to college has not been a difficult transition, which may be in relation to having a clear development of other vectors established. The external factor of having previous experience and knowledge from the military had a positive influence on the college experience for subjects. This suggests that subjects were able to synthesize previous processes in order to relate it to the various situations in college.

Research question 2. Using the lens of Chickering’s identity development theory, what internal factors affect internal development in student veterans?

In the first vector the item, “I feel that I can be successful in my new role in college” suggests that subjects were able to demonstrate the development of competency of their surroundings and develop confidence from this analysis. This also suggests that confidence as an internal emotion influences competency development in a positive way. Moreover the item, “I sometimes struggle to control my emotions” indicates subjects generally disagreed with this statement. The data suggest that subjects do not struggle with internal juggling and handling of different emotions. This also differs from the spring 2017 pilot study I conducted, where subjects generally agreed to this statement. This could indicate an increase in use of resources and methods of handling stress and emotions or an increase in understanding of the emotions. Subjects also disagreed with

the item, “I have experienced new emotions since starting college.” These responses affect the management of emotions vector in a way that suggests the emotions of the subjects are understood and can be handled independently.

The internal factor affecting the third vector of moving towards interdependence is how subjects generally agreed that they have willingly gone out of their comfort zones to experience new things in college. This suggests that subjects have broken some barriers in order to accomplish goals, which could include going outside the comfort of independence. The item, “I am tolerant of those who believe things I don’t agree with” suggests that the internal factor of tolerance gives subjects the ability to develop the fourth vector of establishing mature relationships. Being able to make these connections with individuals who hold different values and beliefs is shown from the general agreement of the statement. The item, “I am confident with myself and my abilities” which represents the internal factor of confidence aiding in the development of the fifth vector of establishing identity in relation to developing a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence in abilities. The sixth vector of developing purpose is affected by the internal factor of self-discovery through the item, “I have learned more about myself since starting college” suggesting that self-exploration and discovery was generally felt by the subjects since starting college which enhances the path of developing purpose for an individual. This is also reflected in the item, “I enjoy college” and in the study by Kurz (2013) where subjects regarded the transition as positive due to an enjoyment in the process of discovery and making connections. The findings suggest that the subjects are enjoying their college experience which can aid in the developing complexity of finding purpose. Finally, the items, “my values and beliefs have changed since being in college”

and, “my opinions are easily swayed” are connected to the internal factors of establishing integrity, which include a sense of solidarity in the subject’s firm beliefs and resistance to changing of these beliefs. Also the item, “I am comfortable with talking about things that I believe to be important” suggests that subjects have a basic foundation of what they hold to be important to them and have the confidence to speak on these topics.

Research question 3. What vectors of Chickering’s identity development theory evoke a strong response?

The highest degree of agreement among all of the data was for the item “diversity is important for a college campus,” whereas the highest degree of disagreement among all the data was for item “my opinions are easily swayed.” The strongest response of agreement suggests that subjects have a strength in the development of mature relationships and agreed that campuses benefit from having a variety of students with a variety of ideas, beliefs, and backgrounds. The strongest response of disagreement came from subjects feeling as though their opinions were not easily swayed and demonstrates the importance and development of Chickering’s seventh vector by showing a self-confidence of who they are and what they stand for, with little variance based on outside opinions. This also suggests that a basic foundation of the subjects’ ideologies exists and continues to be built upon throughout the transition and interactions.

Conclusions

The quantitative study analyzed the attitudes of 60 subjects who were enrolled as students at Rowan University and have served or are currently serving in the United States military. The research findings of this study coincide with several themes found in other studies. Overall the study concludes that generally students at Rowan University

felt that the transition to college is an easy one, subjects utilize resources or have methods of managing emotions, subjects felt connected to fellow students and professors, and are generally enjoying their college career. The findings of this study coincided with several studies that focused on the external factors of development. This study looked at the internal feelings relating to the transition, which is beneficial to the gap in the knowledge base. The knowledge base lacks an internal view of this transition and instead focuses on the external factors which brings a different perspective to the transition and perspectives involved. Understanding what kinds of emotions are experienced throughout this process for veteran students can help lead to better programming, resources, and connections for these students.

Recommendations for Practice

The following are recommendations for practice at Rowan University and possibly other institutions based off of the findings included in this research:

1. More programming be implemented on campus to allow veteran students to explore other purposes of college other than just getting a job.
2. Create a place for use only by veteran students on campus so they have their own space to handle stress/emotions, do school work, and interact with other students who have similar experiences to themselves.
3. The creation or strengthening of student veteran organization partnerships with other groups on campus in order to maximize relationships among students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following are recommendations for future research based off of the findings and conclusions of this study:

1. Use a mixed-method approach of qualitative and quantitative data collection when using Chickering's seven vector developmental theory.
2. Include a larger population sample to get more generalized data which may better represent the feelings of the population.
3. Use both electronic and paper surveys at the start of data collection if a qualitative approach is used.
4. Recreation of the study at various other institutions to determine if feelings on campus are similar or differ from those at Rowan University.
5. Focus on the internal development of individuals who do not identify as White/Caucasian to explore possible other factors behind identity development in minority groups of military personnel.
6. Conduct a recreation of this study but with only using women as the subjects to determine possible differences in women's development.
7. Conduct a recreation of this study but with using veteran students who identify with a disability (PTSD, TBI, etc.) to examine other factors affecting internal identity development.


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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval

 **Rowan University**

** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111
IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy
Effective Date:

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID: Pro2017001977
Title: Veteran Students Transitions into Higher Education Using Chickering's Seven Vector Development Theory

Principal Investigator:	Burton Sisco	Study Coordinator:	None
Co-Investigator(s):	Taryn Cooper	Other Study Staff:	There are no items to display
Sponsor:	Department Funded	Approval Cycle:	Not Applicable
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	Device Determination:	Not Applicable
Review Type:	Exempt	Exempt Category:	2
Subjects:	152		

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:	Research Protocol/Study	Submission Status:	Approved
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Approval Date: 1/31/2018 Expiration Date:

Pregnancy Code: No Pregnant Women as Subjects Pediatric Code: No Children As Subjects Prisoner Code: No Prisoners As Subjects

<p>Online Consent Form Paper Consent Form</p> <p>Protocol: Recruitment Email Protocol Reminder Email Qualtrics Link</p>	<p>Consent:</p>	<p>There are no items to display</p>	<p>Recruitment Materials:</p>	<p>Reminder Email Initial Recruitment Email</p>
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* Study Performance Sites:

Glassboro Campus 201 Mullica Hill Road, Glassboro 08028, NJ

There are no items to display

ALL APPROVED INVESTIGATOR(S) MUST COMPLY WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Conduct the research in accordance with the protocol, applicable laws and regulations, and the principles of research ethics as set forth in the Belmont Report.
2. **Continuing Review:** Approval is valid until the protocol expiration date shown above. To avoid lapses in approval, submit a continuation application at least eight weeks before the study expiration date.
3. **Expiration of IRB Approval:** If IRB approval expires, effective the date of expiration and until the continuing review approval is issued: **All research activities must stop unless the IRB finds that it is in the best interest of individual subjects to continue. (This determination shall be based on a separate written request from the PI to the IRB.) No new subjects may be enrolled and no samples/charts/surveys may be collected, reviewed, and/or analyzed.**
4. **Amendments/Modifications/Revisions:** If you wish to change any aspect of this study, including but not limited to, study procedures, consent form(s), investigators, advertisements, the protocol document, investigator drug brochure, or accrual goals, you are required to obtain IRB review and approval prior to implementation of these changes unless necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects.

5. **Unanticipated Problems:** Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

6. **Protocol Deviations and Violations:** Deviations from/violations of the approved study protocol must be reported to the IRB Office (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 312, 812) as required, in the appropriate time as specified in the attachment online at: <http://www.rowan.edu/som/hsp/>

7. **Consent/Assent:** The IRB has reviewed and approved the consent and/or assent process, waiver and/or alteration described in this protocol as required by 45 CFR 46 and 21 CFR 50, 56, (if FDA regulated research). Only the versions of the documents included in the approved process may be used to document informed consent and/or assent of study subjects; each subject must receive a copy of the approved form(s); and a copy of each signed form must be filed in a secure place in the subject's medical/patient/research record.

8. **Completion of Study:** Notify the IRB when your study has been stopped for any reason. Neither study closure by the sponsor or the investigator removes the obligation for submission of timely continuing review application or final report.

9. The Investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.

10. **Letter Comments:** *There are no additional comments.*

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This email communication may contain private, confidential, or legally privileged information intended for the sole use of the designated and/or duly authorized recipients(s). If you are not the intended recipient or have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by email and permanently delete all copies of this email including all attachments without reading them. If you are the intended recipient, secure the contents in a manner that conforms to all applicable state and/or federal requirements related to privacy and confidentiality of such information.

Appendix B

Academic Success Center Consent



November 15, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

May this letter confirm my support for Taryn Cooper to be granted IRB approval to survey Veteran students registered with the Academic Success Center.

I believe Taryn will be doing important research that can only enhance understanding the needs of veteran students succeeding in the college environment.

Please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



John Woodruff
Director, Academic Success Center
& Disability Resources
Savitz Hall 3rd Floor
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Appendix C

Survey Alternate Consent Form



You are invited to participate in this online research survey entitled Veteran Student Survey: Understanding Transitions. You are included in this survey because you are or have been a member of the military who is currently a student at Rowan University. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be approximately 250.

The survey may take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. Data collection will last approximately two months.

The purpose of this research study is to gauge veteran student's feelings about the college environment and their transition from the military into college life. This research is important for higher educational professionals and institutions to understand how to best assist veteran students with their transition so they are the most successful in their college careers.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There is no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help to better understand the transition veteran students make from military life to college life and the emotions that come with it.

Your response will be kept confidential. I will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will be destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact me at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Please complete the checkbox below.

To participate in this survey, you must be a current student at Rowan University and have served or is currently serving in the military. Place a check box here

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey

Researcher Contact Information:

Taryn Cooper
coopert7@students.rowan.edu
Rowan University

Burton Sisco, Ed.D
sisco@rowan.edu
Rowan University, Thesis Chair

Appendix D



Survey Paper Consent Form

I am inviting you to participate in a research survey entitled “Veteran Students Transition into Higher Education”. I am inviting you because you are a student currently enrolled at Rowan University and have either served or are still currently serving in the military. In order to participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older.

The survey may take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this paper survey. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be 252.

The purpose of this research study is to gauge veteran student’s feelings about the college environment and their transition from the military into college life. This research is important for higher educational professionals and institutions to provide programming and services needed for this population of student.

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey.

There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us understand how to best assist veteran students with their transition so they are the most successful in their college careers.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure cabinet in the investigators office that is locked on campus. Files will destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact me at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Contact Information:

Taryn Cooper
Coopert7@students.rowan.edu

Burton Sisco, Ed.D
sisco@rowan.edu
Rowan University, Thesis Chair

Appendix E

Instrument: Veteran Survey



Demographics

~Please put a check next to the selection that best applies to you~

1.) Current Age

- Under 20
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-44
- 45-49
- 50 and over

2.) Racial/Ethnic Group

- African American
- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- Indian/Native American
- White/Caucasian
- Choose not to specify

3.) Sex

- Male
- Female
- Other

4.) Status at Rowan University

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate

5.) Student Enrollment Status

- Full Time
- Part Time

6.) Branch of Military

- Air Force
- Marines
- Army
- Navy
- Coast Guard

Rowan University Student Veteran Survey

For each item identified below, circle the number to the right that best fits your honest feelings about the statement.

Item Description	Very False	False	Neutral	True	Very True
1. Prior experience with transitions has helped me be more successful with the transition to college.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It has been easy for me to make friends in the classroom or around campus.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can relate to my peers and classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that I can be successful in my new role in college.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I sometimes struggle to control my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel pressure/stress in the college environment.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have experienced new emotions since starting college.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I utilize resources or have methods for controlling emotions/stress.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am more comfortable working alone than in a group.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have willingly gone out of my comfort zone to experience new things in college.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I do not care about acceptance from my peers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I can easily ask for help if I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
13. On campus, I have interacted with individuals who have beliefs and values that differ from my own.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I tend to surround myself with people who only share my beliefs and values.	1	2	3	4	5

15. I am tolerant of those who believe things I don't agree with.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Diversity is important for a college campus.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am confident with myself and my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I think I am well liked by my professors or classmates.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I get along with most people I meet on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Professors or students treat me differently when they hear about my background.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My purpose in college is only to get a better job.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I have learned more about myself since starting college.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I enjoy college.	1	2	3	4	5
24. While in college, I have found something that I love learning about.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I believe that support from family/friends/peers will help me become more successful in college.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Going to college has been a difficult transition for me.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The things I have learned/experienced in the military have helped me with my college experience.	1	2	3	4	5
28. My values and beliefs have changed since being in college.	1	2	3	4	5
29. My opinions are easily swayed.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I am comfortable with talking about things that I believe to be important.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for your cooperation! Please return this survey to the Veteran Affairs office in Savitz 301.

Appendix F

Recruitment Email

Greetings,

My name is Taryn Cooper and I am a graduate student at Rowan University. As part of the requirements for my M.A. in Higher Education Administration, I am conducting thesis research for the purpose of understanding the transition veteran students make from military to college life particularly at Rowan University.

The landscape of higher education has been changing over the years to accommodate veteran students and their unique needs, however there is a lack of research regarding what kinds of emotions and identity developments occur within veteran students as they are making their transition into a college student. This study hopes to aid in identifying what emotions and identity developments are experienced throughout this process, which can therefore help in the creation of programming and support from higher educational professionals.

I am asking you to help me with this research since you are a student at Rowan University and have served or are currently serving in the military. Your help can be provided by taking a quick survey, which will take no more than 10-20 minutes to complete with no personally identifying information being asked. All responses will also be kept confidential. By taking time to complete this survey, you will help expand the knowledge base on veteran students and provide further suggestions for future programming and support.

Thank you in advance for your participation and thank you for your service to the country. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at coopert7@students.rowan.edu or my thesis chair, Dr. Burton Sisco, at sisco@rowan.edu.

Follow this link to the Survey:

https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a9N3QYVevJxMfUp

Or copy and paste the URL below to your internet browser:

https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a9N3QYVevJxMfUp

Thank you again!

Sincerely,
Taryn Cooper
M.A. Higher Education Administration
Rowan University, 2018

Appendix G

Reminder Email

Good Afternoon,

My name is Taryn Cooper and I am a graduate student at Rowan University. Recently, I emailed you a survey seeking your opinions about the emotional and identity development of veteran students for my graduate thesis requirement. I understand that this may be a busy time for you, however your opinion is crucial for the success of this study. The link for the survey is in this email for your convenience.

I am asking you to help me with this research since you are a student at Rowan University and have served or are currently serving in the military. Your help can be provided by taking a quick survey, which will take no more than 10-20 minutes to complete with no personally identifying information being asked. All responses will also be kept confidential. By taking time to complete this survey, you will help expand the knowledge base on veteran students and provide further suggestions for future programming and support.

Thank you in advance for your participation and thank you for your service to the country. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at coopert7@students.rowan.edu or my thesis chair, Dr. Burton Sisco, at sisco@rowan.edu.

Follow this link to the Survey:

https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a9N3QYVevJxMfUp

Or copy and paste the URL below to your internet browser:

https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a9N3QYVevJxMfUp

Thank you again!

Sincerely,
Taryn Cooper
M.A. Higher Education Administration
Rowan University, 2018