

Interdisciplinary collaboration between engineering, mathematics and science

SEMS Research Highlights

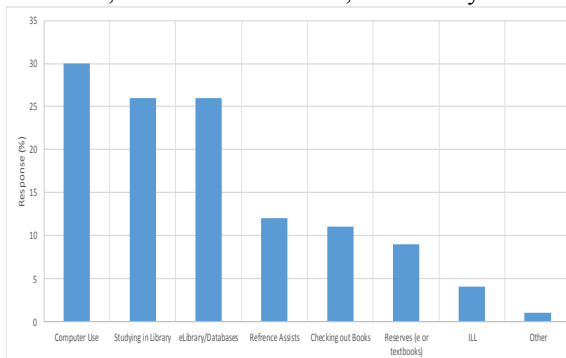
Student Veterans and the Academic Library

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This newsletter presents the research conducted within the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science (SEMS) at Robert Morris University (RMU). It covers various relevant topics including: interdisciplinary efforts, successful research grants, student research, posters and papers, journal publications, presentations at national and international conferences, contribution to professional societies, STEM educational research, industrial consulting collaborations and applied research.



Survey question: Which library services or resources do you use? Check all that apply. Top four responses are: Computer Use (30%), Studying in Library (26%), eLibrary and Research Databases (26%), and Reference Assistance (12%).

This research study constitutes an initial attempt at describing and understanding the student veteran population from the perspective of library services. A survey (n = 46) was administered both online and in paper copies to current student veterans at Robert Morris University (RMU). The survey results pointed to several trends, but the researchers felt these results indicated a need for additional investigation, which was performed through a series of face-to-face interviews. The themes that emerged from the surveys and the interviews are summarized as follows:

Theme #1: Student veterans perceive themselves as other: Student veterans felt distinctly different and isolated from nonveteran students because of their military service experi-

ences, which influenced their serious and business-like approach to higher education. Specifically, student veterans felt that they differed significantly from traditional college students, whom they viewed as immature. However, they also felt different from non-veteran, adult students, whom they viewed as being more open and willing to interact with the traditional students.

Theme #2: Student veterans are self-motivated for efficiency and seek expertise: The majority of participants felt that their military training made them more inclined to seek out specialists and ask for help rather than proceeding on their own and potentially “wasting time.” Most participants felt that a librari-

an class visit to their courses was valuable, even if only to introduce students to a librarian and how librarians can assist them with their research.

Theme #3: Student veterans desire and form community: Participants described the importance of shared community among student veterans as necessary for support and understanding. In the case of RMU, the VETS Center played a key role in both the recruitment of student veterans and providing them a venue for the interactions they seek. For full details, see: Mills, C. P., Paladino, E. B., and Klentzin, J. C. (2015). Student veterans and the academic library. *Reference Services Review*, 43(2), 262-279.

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