

UTSA[®]

The University of Texas at San Antonio[™]

Veteran & Military Affairs

Veteran Sense of Belonging

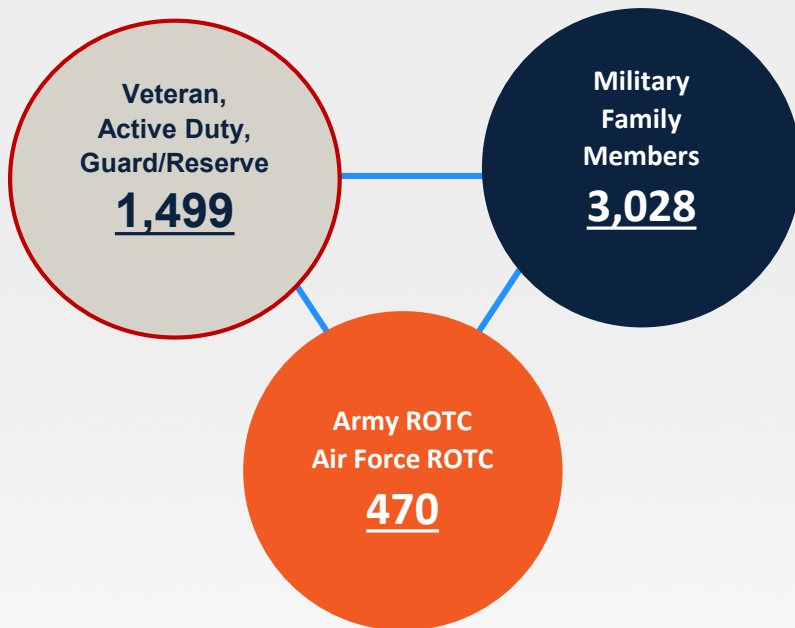
*11th Annual Texas Veterans Higher Education Symposium
3 October 2019*

Overview

- ❖ UTSA Military Affiliated Profile
- ❖ Military Culture
- ❖ Sense Of Belonging
- ❖ Literature
- ❖ The Primary Issues
- ❖ Theoretical Framework
- ❖ Methodology
- ❖ Findings
- ❖ Next Steps

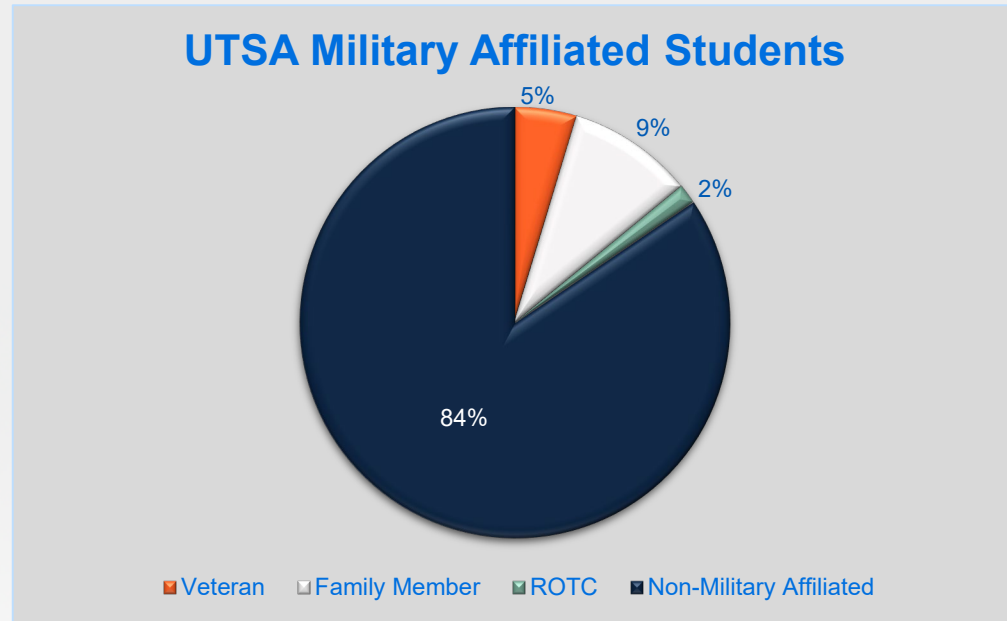


Fall 2018 Military Affiliated Profile



Military Affiliated Total: 4,997
15.57% of Student Population

Fall 2018 Faculty/Staff Vets: 403



Camaraderie Tribe Family



What Is Sense of Belonging?

Perception of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others

Why Sense of Belonging?

Positive sense of belonging is related to student motivation, commitment, engagement, and valuing of schoolwork among college students

i.e., successful academic and social adjustment

Sense of Belonging in Military Culture

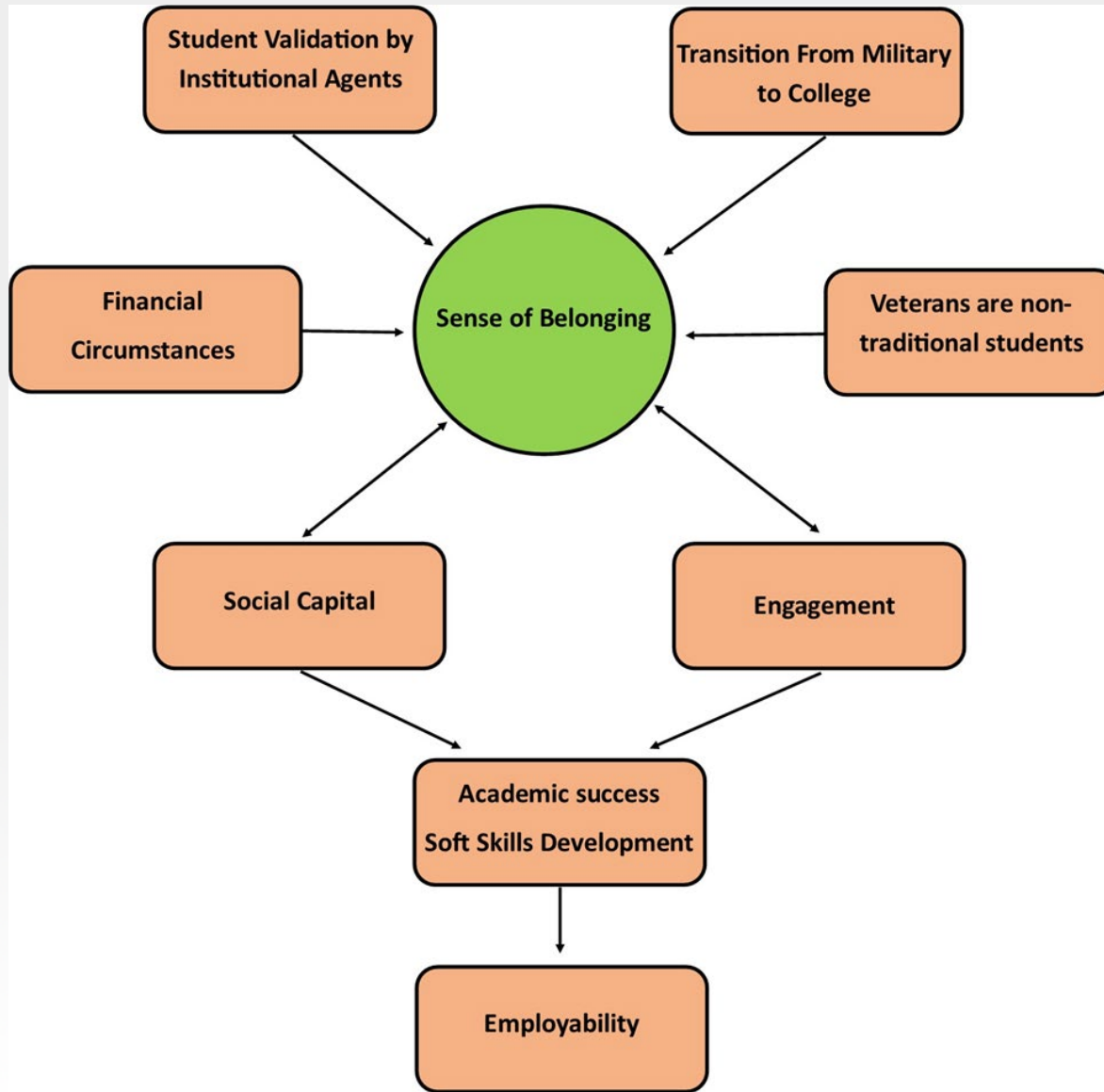
- Life and death situations
- Ethos
 - Solidarity
 - Selfless commitment
 - Shared mission



Sense of Belonging in Higher Education

- Engagement with campus culture
- Soft skills development
- Significance



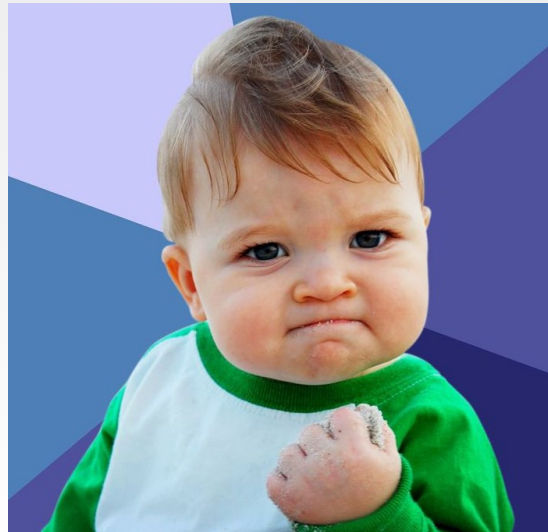


The Primary Issues

- Sense of belonging data sources
- Soft skills development

Academic success

Post graduation success



Theoretical Framework

- Tinto's (1993) student departure theory
- Rendon's (1994) validation theory
- Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory
- Social capital
- Student engagement
- And...

Financial Circumstances

➤ Affects **EVERYTHING**

Academic factors, the socialization process, satisfaction with the institution, sense of belonging, perceived usefulness of the education obtained from the institution, Intent to persist

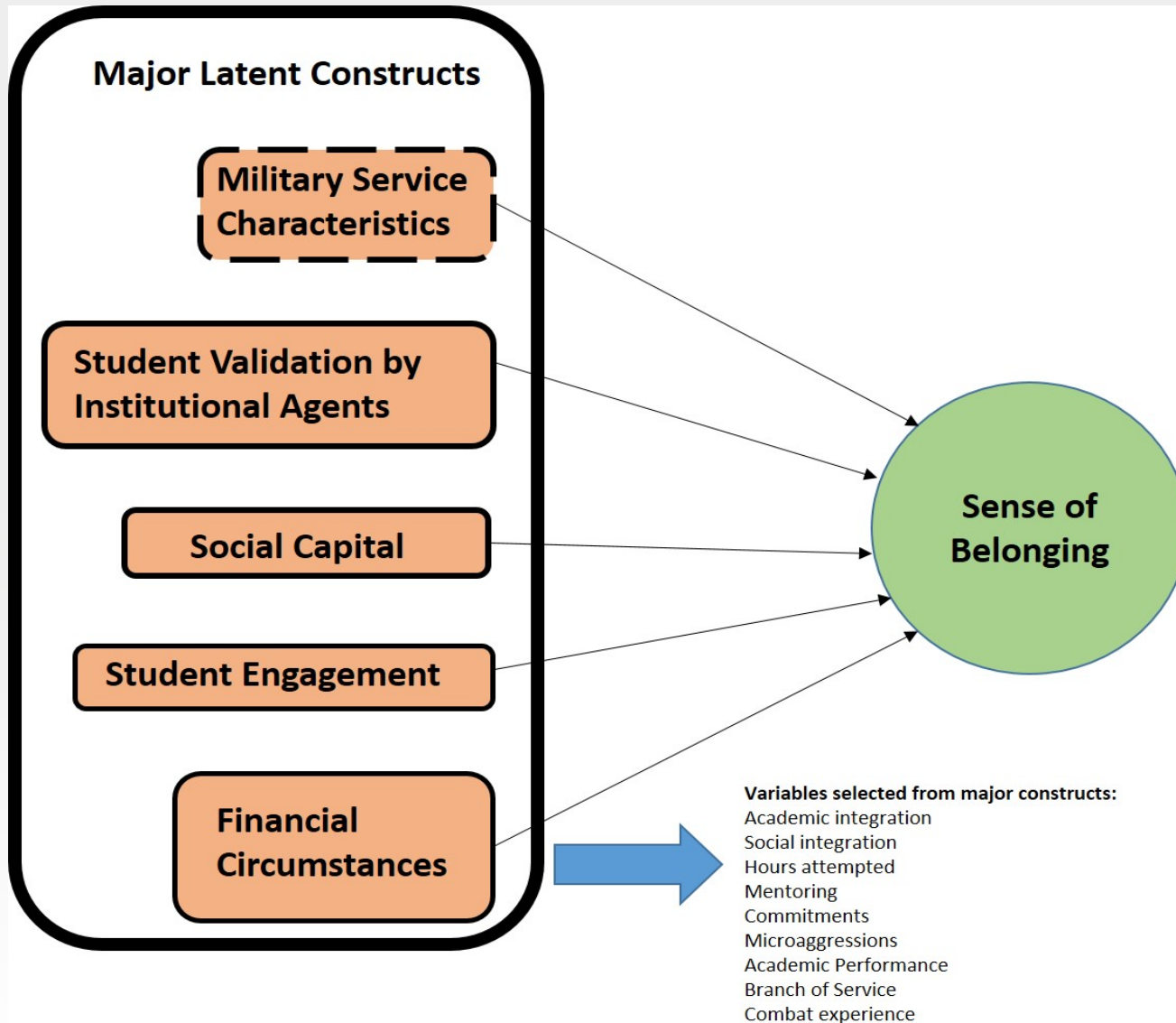
➤ Veterans generally carry more personal debt

➤ Engaging in non-bank, alternative borrowing methods

➤ Delays in processing benefits

Methodology

- Survey
 - Cross-sectional (snapshot)
 - 146 questions
 - Created in collaboration with faculty
 - Likert scales
 - Sent to 1068 enrolled student veterans
 - 47% response rate
 - 12 sense of belonging questions
 - Created a scale (singular measure for sense of belonging)



Findings

Overall positive sense of belonging on campus

Scale of 1 (high) to 5 (low) Veterans = 2.399



Findings

**No significantly different sense of belonging
between
Gender
Ethnicities
Branch of Service**



Findings

Main factors of validation (>.750)

At least one faculty member has shown concern about my progress

I feel that most faculty at UTSA value who I am

My professors generally are interested in what I have to offer in class

Findings

Main factors of mentoring (>.850)

Someone in my life has helped me to develop better coping strategies to reach academic goals

Someone in my life has engaged me in a discussion that required me to reflect on the skills needed to achieve my future goals

Someone in my life was involved in helping me to develop a realistic view of my skills and academic strengths

Findings

Main factors of social capital (>.750)

The mission oriented culture of the military allows me to be more focused and do better in my classes in college

I feel that my veteran status may hurt my ability to communicate effectively with faculty and other students in the classroom

I believe that no matter what life throws at me, I will remain committed to earning a college degree

Findings

Main factors of financial concerns (>.800)

As a student at UTSA I am stressed out about money

I do need to use credit cards to meet college related expenses

Receiving financial aid helps me to devote more time to my studies because I do not need to work

Next Steps

- Narrow down survey instrument based on results of factor analysis
- Conduct survey at regular intervals
- Analyze data further to uncover additional relationships among the data
- Utilize survey analysis as part of strategic assessment
- Encourage faculty and students to conduct additional research with the available data

UTSA Veteran and Military Affairs



Thank You

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