



2013 RUTGERS JOURNAL OF LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY SYMPOSIUM: VETERANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

FOREWORD

As the Managing Symposium Editor of the Rutgers Journal of Law and Public Policy, it is my pleasure to invite you to read the transcript from our 2013 symposium, held on November 13, 2013, on the topic of Veterans and Higher Education. The Rutgers Journal of Law and Public Policy is a premier forum for legal scholarship in the intersections between the law and public policy. This year, we were proud to welcome leaders from throughout New Jersey who represented fields ranging across politics, academia, the military, and the law. These leaders included New Jersey Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande, New Jersey State Senator Donald Norcross, Rutgers School of Law–Camden Dean Rayman Solomon, Professor at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education Dr. Florence Hamrick, Director of the Academic Success Program at the Rutgers School of Law–Camden Alison Nissen, and Director of the Rutgers Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services Col. (Ret.) Stephen Abel.

Veterans often have unique experiences as they transition from the military to higher education. As of 2012, there were over 400,000 veterans in New Jersey, with over 300,000 of these veterans from the recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹ In 2010, there were 5,511 New Jersey veterans using GI Bill educational benefits.² As this population grows,

¹ *Veteran Population*, U.S. DEP'T OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, http://www.va.gov/vetdata/Veteran_Population.asp (last visited Feb. 9, 2014).

² *New Jersey and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, U.S. DEP'T OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (Nov. 2010), available at http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/ss_newjersey.pdf.

institutions of higher education and policy makers need to be appropriately prepared to address the needs of this deserving population. As Rutgers University transitions into the Big Ten Athletic Conference, the school also becomes a member of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC), the academic arm of the athletic conference. Rutgers University, along with the Ohio State University and Purdue University, recently established a Military and Veterans Services Peer Group, and held their inaugural conference in 2013.³

The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill went into effect in 2009, and more than 1.5 million veterans have been able to take advantage of those benefits to cover the costs of obtaining a college education.⁴ However, this assistance does not always cover all of the associated expenses of earning a college or graduate degree as the bill only covers veteran's tuition at public universities up to the in-state tuition amount. If a veteran chooses to attend a public university in a state where he or she is not a resident, he or she must either make up the difference or postpone enrollment until the residency requirement is met. Twenty states have passed some form of legislation waiving the in-state residency requirement for veteran students.⁵ Nine other states have similar legislation pending.⁶ In 2013, the Veterans Affairs Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives considered the Tuition Fairness Act of 2013, which would require public schools nationwide to charge in-state tuition rates for veteran students in order to ensure eligibility to receive G.I. Bill payments, but the bill has yet to be scheduled for a vote.⁷

³ *CIC Military & Veteran Services Peer Group Inaugural Conference*, MILITARY RESEARCH INST. AT PURDUE UNIV., <https://www.mfri.purdue.edu/view-event.aspx?e=64&l=76> (last visited Feb. 9, 2014).

⁴ Jenn Smola, *States Fight for In-State Tuition for Student Veterans*, USATODAY (Nov. 11, 2013, 5:37 p.m.), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/11/11/in-state-tuition-for-vets/3499603/>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

Topics that were discussed at the symposium included:

- Is it beneficial to have separate breakout sessions at orientations for veterans and military service members only?
- What is the value of conducting veteran/military only classes during the first term on campus for veteran students?
- What is the benefit of giving veterans and military students priority registration for classes?
- Should New Jersey and other states provide in-state tuition rates for out-of-state veterans?
- How important is it to recognize veterans and military students on campus for their service as members of the U.S. Armed Forces?
- What can or should be done to lower veteran unemployment rates?
- Is it appropriate for schools to maintain data on retention rates, graduation rates, disabilities, and accommodations, and then report such data to the Department of Education, Department of Defense, or the Department of Veterans Affairs?

It is our hope that this symposium will act as a springboard for further scholarship and discussion in this important area, which will lead to changes in policy at the institutional, state, and national levels. Make sure to check back with the *Rutgers Journal of Law and Public Policy* in the future for more information on this and other important topics, as well as future symposiums. Thank you very much for your interest.

Jordan Hollander
Submissions and Symposium Editor
Rutgers Journal of Law and Public Policy

VETERANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION: NOVEMBER 13, 2013

Jordan Hollander: May I have your attention please. Can I have everyone's attention please? We are going to get started. My name is Jordan Hollander. I am the Managing Symposium and Submissions Editor for the Journal of Law and Public Policy. On behalf of the Journal and of Rutgers-Camden I would like to welcome you to our 2013 Symposium on Veterans and Higher Education. This is an extremely important topic, especially as we observe Veterans Day on Monday. I would like to thank you all for coming and showing your support. The panelists will have an opportunity to introduce themselves when they speak, but I would like to quickly introduce them each now. You all know our dean, Dean Ray Solomon; New Jersey State Senator Donald Norcross of the Fifth Legislative District who serves on the New Jersey Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee; Rutgers Law-Camden Clinical Associate Professor and Director of Academic Success, Alison Nissen; Rutgers New Brunswick Professor Florence Hamrick who recently published a book, "Called to Serve: A Handbook on Student Veterans and Higher Education"; our fifth speaker, Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande, who is a Rutgers Law Alum from 2002, is running late, but she will be here in a few minutes; and our Moderator this evening will be Colonel Stephen Abel who is the Director for the Rutgers Office of Veterans and Military Programs and Services. I would like to introduce Colonel Abel. Thank you. (Applause.)

Col. Stephen Abel: Good Evening. Was everybody at the luncheon with Flo Darpino? Did anybody miss that? Anybody not know who Flo is—Flo Darpino is? So she is a Rutgers-Camden Law School graduate. She was a Brigadier General in the spring when I interviewed her here, and then she decided to skip the rank of Major General. And she is now a three-star Lieutenant General in the Army, and she is the Army's senior lawyer, and she was here this week to speak at a luncheon in honor of Veterans Day. So, if you are Staff and Faculty please raise your hand. Okay. So, we are going to start this off with a test question for Staff and Faculty. Did you receive an email from Dick Edwards yesterday about training for veterans?

(Florence Hamrick, Alison Nissen, and Dean Solomon nod their heads indicating they had; yes.)

Col. Abel: Did you complete your training?

Alison Nissen: No.

Dean Solomon: Ah Ha! (Recognizing Florence Hamrick as she shows the crowd her certificate indicating the completion of her training.)

Col. Abel: Somebody did! Very good!

Dean Solomon: We're on her team.

Col. Abel: So, you did your training. That's important. (Inaudible). What I would like to have is the panel actually introduce themselves. And so when we start, if you would tell us who you are and what you do and what is your specific interest or connection to this evening's topic, Veterans and Higher Education. Senator, we start with you.

State Senator Donald Norcross: Good Afternoon. Good evening. My name is Donald Norcross. I represent the Fifth Legislative District, which is Camden, and runs down into Gloucester County to Mullica Hill. I was just reelected last Tuesday—was a very good day for us—and I have the pleasure and honor of serving on the Military and Veterans' Committee in Trenton where I have had the opportunity to author a number of bills directly relating to veterans and to their educational opportunities, in addition to that, to some items to help them get back on their feet economically, and I am looking forward to serving another four years in helping veterans.

Col. Abel: The Senator is a good friend. I knew him back when I was the Deputy Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs. He has supported veterans greatly. He has been on the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee since (Senate) President Sweeney established it. Good to have you here. Flo . . .

Florence Hamrick: Sure. My name is Flo Hamrick. I'm a professor at Rutgers-New Brunswick in the Graduate School of Education, and my specialty is higher education. And what got me interested in this, and this is a little bit of a flip, my research agenda has to do with under-represented/underserved students in higher education. And so the population of returning veterans and service members is very much that. And also since higher education, you know colleges and universities have lost a lot of institutional memory about working with vets since the Vietnam, Korea, and World War II, so I'm very interested but particularly my interest in higher education, my focus is on that students be served well. And Jordan was very nice to talk about the book. I also want to mention that Stephen Abel wrote one of the most wonderful chapters in the book. It's very popular.

Col. Abel: We'll get the big paycheck later on.

Dean Solomon: You won't! (Laughter.)

Col. Abel: So, so, no let me tell you. I got the paycheck for my chapter. It is very, very small. When you write, write fictions. Don't write anything that goes to a textbook publishing company. You get one free copy of the book and seven bucks. The book—Flo came to me, I guess it was, really, shortly after we both joined the university about the same time; it was within a few months of joining that we had talked about the project, and it was a little bit later that we actually began work on it. The goal of the book is to help colleges and universities across the country understand the challenges that veterans and military face when they come to universities. So it was meant for college administrator of a public university. And I was really honored that Flo included me in the project. Alison . . .

Alison Nissen: Most of you already know who I am cause I recognize most of you. I'm Alison Nissen. I'm the Director of Academic Success here at the law school. So I have the honor and privilege of working with nervous first years, and bored second years, and really excited to graduate third year law students. My interest and connection to this topic developed with my individual work with veteran and military law students and my scholarship efforts in this area. And, after hearing that

our campus, and particularly our university, was recognized for being veteran friendly, I decided to start researching to figure out, was our law school veteran friendly? And more particularly, were law schools in general veteran friendly? And I figured out, relatively quickly, that there is no real research at the grad school level on this issue. There is enough research to create this wonderful resource (holds Florence Hamrick's book), which I had autographed today, but there's really nothing at the grad school level, which I think is just as important to encourage and to support our veterans to persist and to be successful at the grad school level. So that's where my scholarship interests lie—that's why I am here today—with the support of Steve and Flo, and our administration has been wonderful in our efforts to really make our institution welcoming to our veteran type students.

Dean Solomon: I'm Ray Solomon. I'm the Dean of the law school. I became interested in veterans issues, probably I think it was September 18, 1968, when I enlisted in the US Navy Reserves. The Navy, in those days, had a system where you served two years of active . . . one year of active reserve duty and two years of active duty and then were out. I was part of the year period—it was the worst year, so we were the end of deferments. But, the lottery, I know this is ancient history to most of you in this room (laughter), the lottery had not come into effect. So, I was about to start law school I thought—but then I knew because I was in a small town and my friend's mother was the secretary of the draft ward—that my number would come up, that I would be drafted in October. So I looked around, and I liked the Navy program, and I joined. I was in the—so I did a year of basic training and weekly meetings in Arkansas where I grew up, and then I was on board a ship for eighteen months that went to Vietnam, and I am a Vietnam veteran. I was an E-4. I was a yeoman, and was the ship's . . . the captain's secretary basically. I was actually trained towards the end and became a legal yeoman and did all the disciplinary entry of records and things like that. So I came out, and I started history graduate school following that, and then in law school I was a recipient . . . I received GI benefits. It helped me tremendously during those early, three-to-four years that I received those benefits. I was also part of that generation that

served in the Vietnam War. I mean, I was on a ship, behind a carrier; I did not want to claim that I “saw action” as such. We saw results of action, which means when a plane was down we’d have to go see what we could do to help. But it was not something I really talked about. My brother—who was actually two years older, who was an army infantryman in Vietnam in the early days when they were setting up camps—came back, and he never talked about it either. We never really talked about those experiences. And I think it’s part of my interest in the issues surrounding today that I didn’t think it was right at the time. We had both served honorably as did many others. It was not a war that we particularly believed in. I was in various marches after I got out of the service. But it was something to deal with, and I thought that it was wrong at the time, and I believe it’s wrong now, and any help I can give to returning veterans today—returning to school, that is—I am more than interested in willing to help. (Inaudible).

Col. Abel: So what was your number?

Dean Solomon: It was B-78—something—3841, or something like that . . .

Col. Abel: Not your . . .

Dean Solomon: Oh you want my service number? My draft number?

Col. Abel: No, your lottery number?

Dean Solomon: My lottery number? Oh I never got it. No, I was the year before the lottery started. Well as it turned out I was already in basic training when they had the first lottery, and I was really low, so . . .

Col. Abel: So the Dean is a year older than me, because I wasn’t alive. It was the only lottery I ever won. (laughter/inaudible). Okay, so is there anybody in the room that does not know that we are now part of the Big Ten? Okay, no points subtracted from your score then. Well, when most folks talk about the Big Ten, they’re talking about football, basketball,

sports. But that part of the Big Ten is about this big (indicating a small amount), and the CIC part of the Big Ten—the academic side—is about this big (indicating a larger amount). And that’s the part that I’m attached to. So we had the opportunity in May to have the Executive Committee of the CIC dine at Veteran’s House; we went to campus, and we did burgers in the backyard. And one of the things that we asked the CIC to do at that meeting was to allow us to establish a peer group inside the Big Ten, my counterparts at the other thirteen schools. And they were anxious to allow us to do that. And so in October, the first week of October this year, we all met at Purdue. All thirteen schools were represented. And so many of the questions I am going to ask the panel to discuss this evening are issues that came up at the Big Ten meeting. It was interesting to say the least, there were exceptionally (inaudible) people at it. And we’re going to see if the panel can match the enthusiasm and the insight that the panel from the Big Ten did. One of the things that is often asked is at orientations, “Should we separate veterans from the larger group to deal specifically with veteran issues associated with the university that they’re attending?” So I will ask you to comment on the pluses and minuses of at some point during an orientation, to separate the veterans out. Would anyone like to start off before I pick someone to start off?

Florence Hamrick: Okay, I’ll jump in. Okay so the question: Is it beneficial to have separate ‘breakout’ sessions at orientation for veterans military service members only? I think that it would be incredibly helpful. New student orientation for all college students is about transitioning and getting advice on transitioning for most of the students from a high school environment into a college environment. And also giving students a good “heads up” on what structure will be present and not present, the role that you will now play in your education—it might be different than what you’re used to—and so forth. And so I think it makes perfect sense to have breakout sessions for veterans and military service members because it’s also about transition. It’s not going to be sufficient, right, the one break out session. But it does bring those issues on the table in the particular context of our military students. And so I think it’s incredibly helpful. It will also help people get started with their peer network. Some people have talked about should

it be mandatory. I don't think it should be mandatory if I had to decide. But I do think that veterans and military service members should be invited personally so that they understand and they get the sense of the significance of it and also get the sense that they are wanted here at the university or college and at the orientation session.

State Sen. Norcross: I have some other comments. We authored a bill that I think was signed into a law about a year ago: Peer to Peer counseling to allow veterans to speak to veterans on issues that many of them have, particularly those who served actively. And whether it's in a college setting or a work setting they have the opportunity to see and be with people who experienced many of the things that they have. I know we have some veterans out here in our audience who understand that on a level that folks like I do—that have never served—will never understand at that level. So I think it's been incredibly helpful for them to know that there are other people that have been in their shoes that have been down this road.

Alison Nissen: We were able to have a welcome lunch-slash-orientation session this year for our entering 1L veteran and military students that I felt worked very well in order to identify the entering students and then invite them and gather up our upper-class military students and then invite them as well. We also had administrators and faculty who are veterans at the lunch, and it allowed the 1L students to realize that they have a support system in place—they could ask questions; they had been here for maybe two weeks at the time, so they had questions and felt comfortable asking faculty members, administrators, and the Dean questions at the lunch. Then they networked with 2L and 3L students who were able to start kind of an informal mentoring program also.

Col. Abel: Good. Assemblywoman, welcome!

Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande: Thank you. I apologize I'm late but I wanted to keep myself consistent with my Rutgers-Camden experience.

Audience: (Laughter.)

Dean Solomon: Dean Baker might have something to say about that.

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Thank you.

Col. Abel: You're welcome.

Assemblywoman Casagrande: I'm sorry, what is the question?

Col. Abel: So why don't you just say a little bit about your background?

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Oh sure. Okay. My name is Caroline Casagrande. I was recently re-elected to my fourth term in the legislature. I am a Rutgers Law alum. I graduated here in 2002. When I was elected, I was the youngest woman ever elected to the legislature here in New Jersey—a title I still hold, though I am no longer the youngest legislator. I came out of law school; I practiced municipal law; I was a township attorney for Manalapan Township, and a Borough attorney for Fairhaven in Monmouth County; and I currently serve on the Appropriations Committee and the Women and Children's Committee.

Dean Solomon: (Inaudible.) So, I, also agree, on what all three of the others have said. That it is helpful. It's about, as Flo said, it is about transitions. And, as the Senator said, it is about people, being able to relate to each other, as well. And I think in law school, I mean all of us, at least, on the law school level, this is probably true on the undergraduate level as well or any professional school—there is a certain anxiety, no matter what your background is or what your experience is. Did they make a mistake when I was admitted? Did they think it was somebody else? Or, you know, am I going to be able to do this, or am I here by fluke? And, I think the more opportunities people have to really get to know each other and interact, you realize your backgrounds are similar, your experiences—there are other people with the same experiences. That is just simply reinforcing and helps with the transition. It helps with it and

maybe those friendships stay strong throughout the three years of law school and later in life. Maybe they don't. Maybe they're sort of transitory in nature, but it's important to have those experiences of getting to know and to ask questions of each other. How do you think you're going to handle this? Or knowing someone you can turn to and say "I'm having trouble with the following problem" and knowing that person will understand what the problem is and will help you out. So, I think it's very important.

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Well, certainly, I think, we were talking about the break-out sessions. Everybody has mentioned the camaraderie, and that's important. One of the things I thought when I read this—it actually took me back to the summer. I spent some time in the summer in Israel. And in Israel, everyone goes to the military, and they come out at 19. And as a result of that, they have a booming tech sector because so many people have millions of dollars in training by the time they come through the military, and I think so many of our servicemen and women have that sort of training—millions of dollars in technological training. And, I think that for veterans having those early breakout sessions would really give them a good opportunity to say well, "What is your background?"; "What is your training?"; and "How can we merge that with your education here to really fly?"; and I think that would be a very helpful thing for veterans to focus on—what they're bringing to the table, which is enormous. We couldn't even pay as a government to train our students with all the things these veterans come in knowing from the military, and I think that'd be very helpful.

Col. Abel: So, along the same lines, but let's take it one big step. Veterans are non-traditional students; when you see them in the classroom they tend to be a tad older, in some cases, a lot older than other students, especially those coming directly out of high school or directly from an undergraduate program to a graduate program, and so what some of the Big Ten schools have done on the undergraduate side of the house is created a course that is restricted to veterans and military only. At one school it's called Global Arts 101, and at some schools it's called Veterans in Transition. It's not unlike, I guess, the Students in

Transition course that we have on the New Brunswick campus in the School of Arts and Sciences, and so my question to the panelist: Is there value at putting—this would take place in the first term—is there value in creating a veterans only Veterans in Transition course, for lack of a better term; is there value in that? Should Rutgers be doing that? Anybody like to take that on?

Florence Hamrick: I'll start. My answer is yes. I think that any time we take advantage of opportunities to provide spaces for students to gather that have things in common and can learn from each other—and in this case we're using an academic course to fulfill the purposes—so Liberal Arts 101 or transitional issues, the course that Steve brought up Students in Transition in the School of Arts and Sciences that is specifically for transfer students most of whom are also older and new to Rutgers. I think one of the potential concerns really with that would be—speaking from a faculty perspective—in my mind it would be tough if that course were offered and even if credits were awarded for it, but if the credits then didn't count, even towards elective credits or liberal arts and science credits. So, I think it's important that if it's a course it's a course. It should be credit bearing, but then it should also be like other courses that people would take as first year, second year, and so forth students. So, my concern would be that not every course like this—and Rutgers has some examples in New Brunswick—it's too extreme to say they don't count, but, they don't count.

Dean Solomon: At the law school level, it's hard to sort of figure out how it would work or whether it's relevant, which isn't to say that some sort of study group, reading group, or support group that was meeting informally or with guidance from someone like Alison wouldn't be helpful. That's something we could look at, but a course, as such, would be hard to figure out how it would work within the law school context. Probably that's also true whether it's business school, an MBA program, or even an Arts and Sciences, Ph.D, or Masters level program, as well.

Alison Nissen: The first year curriculum is so lock-step that it would be, like the Dean said, it would be difficult to fit, in

the first term, a course like this in. We are offering, in the spring, we are trying to offer a Military Law course. We've gone to great lengths trying to figure out scheduling-wise how to make sure it's available for as many of our veteran and military students as possible if they are interested in taking it. So, we're trying to do things like that as opposed to making this type of course. At the graduate school level, I think it's a different issue at the undergraduate level where if it is credit bearing and it even satisfies a course requirement, then it probably—then it becomes an issue are they required to take it or not. That's another issue to address.

Col. Abel: All right. So, the issue of in-state and out-of-state tuition pops up a lot with military veterans. A lot of states are passing state laws that would require all state schools to provide in-state tuition for veterans whether they were from that state or not. There is, in fact, a piece of legislation on the federal level that is being considered currently as well that would require all state schools in the country to provide in-state tuition for out-of-state students. Can you talk to the benefits of doing that or the disadvantages?

State Sen. Norcross: I'll play with this one. Yes, no, maybe—a typical politician. My first initial thought was: yeah, sure. Then, I started looking at dollars and cents. Why are we providing opportunities for Pennsylvania kids coming over here? It's our money. That's trying to make the dollars work but after I thought about it, there's not a veteran out there who is serving—whether it is in Afghanistan or Iraq—that was saying "I'm only defending New Jersey, not Pennsylvania." So, the fact of the matter is, that's the least we can do and we should do it. And we should be pursuing that as soon as we can. Because, you know, as soon as people come to New Jersey and attend schools they're going to want to stay here. They're going to want to move their families here, because we have the best opportunities and quite frankly, we've done that on a number of levels in the legislature whether we're providing for civil service. A person, a veteran in civil service who was serving used to lose their spot; we've changed that. And that's what, quite frankly, the Veterans' Committee has focused on—those items where it's just common sense that we should be doing them, and this was

common sense. The fact of the matter is that's the least we can do. And, I think every state should be doing it.

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Since we're talking politics I'll join in. I guess over twenty states have done it, right? And that's a great movement, and it's very recent. And I think the one state where it went down is Florida, and that had to do with—relaxed some of the immigration policies and allowed for some undocumented citizens to come in at the in-state tuition rate—so that was Florida's problem with their bill. But I think when you look at exactly what the Senator said, which was so eloquent by the way, that these people have fought for all of us and not every state—you're 100% right and I think—we feel a lot of the time exactly a lot of the time that the U.S. Congress really needs to make a decision on that right, and we shouldn't have to be picking all of the apples off the tree one-by-one all the time.

State Sen. Norcross: (Inaudible.)

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Right; we're not holding our breath; we're not holding our breath, but certainly, and I think as a policy perspective, one of the things that's certainly worth noting is that as lawmakers you would like to see people with the quality of character that you have in veterans. That will give back to their country, that are civil servants, that know they have the kind of leadership that you look for in a classroom—that is taught in the military, and that is something that I think from a policy perspective benefits all New Jerseyans if we can have additional military, ex-military personnel here. Although not ex-Marines, because you're never an ex-Marine; I have been corrected on that several times.

Dean Solomon: Well I certainly would favor it. I think that following what both the Senator and Assemblywoman have said is actually right. I think that it is a small benefit that we are adding dollar wise and as long as it's—I mean one way to think about it is, it's money we wouldn't be getting as opposed to money we are handing out. And it makes it easier, right, if you don't have to write the check, but rather it's tuition that we don't receive. It's still money that we might otherwise get, but then

those veterans have nineteen or twenty other states that they can choose to get in-state tuition. So I think it's more a symbolic issue, as I think both have said, and I agree with it. I think the symbolism is exactly right; it is a small price for us to pay to repay the debt of the service.

Alison Nissen: I agree, and I think it doesn't make sense that across the country all the residency rules are so complicated, and it makes it so difficult for our veterans who are trying to use their educational benefits. It makes it so complicated for them to establish residency, or they have to wait a year or plus, and then if they're moved around it makes it even more complicated; it's just so complicated for them to actually use the benefits they want to use, and then on top of it if they don't have the in-state tuition they're penalized. So to have across the board in-state tuition rate just makes sense to make it easier for them to use the benefits.

State Sen. Norcross: Are we going to get into what defines a veteran?

Col. Abel: No, no, we're not talking about that. As you might know, New Jersey is the only state in the Union that doesn't follow the federal definition of who a veteran is. We have our own rules; we pass legislation for every rule, and don't want to talk about that. But, the next subject is one that has been forced upon schools across the country because of some for-profit and some private schools who have been taking a lot of money, running veterans into debt, and not providing a quality education. So there is one very popular on-going school that advertises a lot on television. I won't mention its name tonight—as a matter of conversation I always mentions its name. And that school has a graduation rate of four percent; their credits are twice as expensive as Rutgers' credits. And their parent company also owns Wells Fargo Bank, and their students all walk away from that school without degrees at 50-to-100,000 dollars in debt. So as a result of that the President of the United States has issued an executive order; the Department of Defense (DoD) has required schools to sign a DoD Memorandum of Understanding before the DoD will give money to the school. The VA and Department of Education have also jointly signed a

number of bills; there's legislation that will require the VA to rank schools in the country. So that veterans prior to their decision of what school they will attend will make an informed decision. That, all of what I just mentioned—the President, the Congress, and the departments of the federal government, in order to do what all of those documents say they are to do, are now requiring schools to accumulate a great deal of data on their veteran students, to provide data to the federal government and a number of agencies on retention rates, persistence rates, graduation rates. And so the question is: Is it appropriate to maintain such data? Should we be providing that kind of data to the federal government or to—in the state, to state agencies that require that data on veterans specifically as opposed to the population at large?

Florence Hamrick: I'll start. I think that particularly with your comments about for-profit, at least the sector of for-profit education, has—I'm not sure how else to say it—has really been predatory, really preying on student veterans, and promising things that may or may not help, may or may not happen. And the concern with my higher education perspective is, my sense is, and what I'm not quite unfamiliar with is, when folks finish their service and they leave the military there's an awful a lot of interest in "I want to get on with my life, I want to get on with my life" and for a lot of them, school or college might not be part of "I want to do that as quickly as possible and get on with my life." And some of the promises are unconscionable. So in that sense, yes, I think it would be really important for institutions to report data, not just on entering students but for following up students. I think they really do need to know what the retention rates are and so forth. And even if it's for only military students or veterans who are enrolled at those colleges, frankly my sense is that whoever we are talking about in the federal government, they're right to want that accountability because many of the students are using federal benefits, so I think that makes a whole lot of sense that they would be asking for this type of information, and it doesn't strike me as being so terribly onerous that institutions don't need to do that. So I think that's fair.

Dean Solomon: I certainly agree. The problem with data collection—we collect all sorts of data for the ABA for accreditation anyway. They don't ask anything about veterans' status; it's not something that the ABA collects; it's not something that the US News ranks on; it would be new data for us to collect. The problem with collection of any data is how it's used and for what it's used, and the debate over the NSA right now is about that. So I think I completely agree that in order to weed out predatory practices by for-profit schools, it makes sense to collect it. You are much better collecting the data and analyzing it than waiting for a lawsuit and then having discovery and going through five years before it can be corrected. So, I mean I don't think there is a problem with it. I mean I guess the question is whether there is going to be other potentially harmful future uses of the data. The creativity of mankind is quite amazing sometimes. (Inaudible.) I don't see the problem, but I could foresee that there could be a problem.

State Sen. Norcross: The government, particularly the legislature and Congress, are very good at asking for lots and lots of reports, but certainly when we are spending the taxpayers' dollars I think particularly there is accountability. Listen, it's the five percent on either end of the scale that usually causes this issue, and sure, having the statistics so that veterans can take a look and see what is going on, is a better way of making an informed decision. So I think that would make sense to do something like that. But without tying the hands of the school but, as you know, rankings mean a lot, and you need to know if a school is producing, what they're saying, when you're spending federal dollars.

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Yeah, and it seems to be a very global problem—not necessarily limited to veterans. Although, I guess, in this instance, the federal government is much more of a vested player at the table than they are with the average student, which is, perhaps, one reason that it would move forward, but certainly not a unique problem to veterans—definitely a current problem in our country.

Col. Abel: So the VA in August of 2011 looked out and saw veterans making a profit by going to school. They were double

dipping and triple dipping. They received their GI bill benefit as a first payer; then if they went out and got scholarships and grants and other things, they collected those as well, and so it was possible to have 100% of your tuition and your fees and your \$1,000 a year for books and your stipend paid for by the federal government, and then still get money on top of it. So in August 2011, the VA decided that it would become a second payer, and that all tuition, all scholarships, and grants would be deducted with the exception of entitlements. So a Pell Grant is an educational entitlement. Here at Rutgers we have things called TAGs and RAGs. A TAG is a state tuition assistance grant. A RAG is a Rutgers tuition assistance grant. So the question is when a veteran receives his or her financial aid stimulus at the beginning of the year—looking at the term bill TAGs and RAGs are on the statement. Because they are on the statement some folks believe that they are entitlements as opposed to financial aid. Do we have an obligation because they qualify under state law and under Rutgers' rules to distribute those two specific grants, or is it right for the state to withhold that money, and is it right for Rutgers to withhold that money for people who are in financial need?

State Sen. Norcross: There's a jump ball [inaudible].

Dean Solomon: I mean I actually don't know the state of the GI Bill. In my day, it was, you know, you got \$130 a month, and there was no tuition assistance so . . .

Col. Abel: So let me describe it; if you spent thirty-six months on active duty, then you qualify for and you are an Iraq/Afghan, post-9/11 veteran, you qualify for 100% tuition, 100% fees, \$1,000 a year for books, and for our zip code in New Brunswick, \$1,986 a month for living. So, for the most part you can live off of that. We have veterans who come in with families. We have a veteran living in graduate school housing who has three kids and a wife and they are living in graduate school housing. 1,986 bucks a month is kind of tight for a family of five.

Dean Solomon: So, but in terms of the state grants—

Col. Abel: So a TAG could be as much as, probably five or six thousand dollars a year, divided into two terms. A RAG could potentially be even more than that actually. I think, the highest RAG I have seen has been about ten thousand dollars; five thousand dollars a term.

Dean Solomon: And these are clearly all in-state people because in-state are not—

Col. Abel: That's right these would be for only in-state students—

Dean Solomon: It's not the earlier problem with—

Col. Abel: It is not. Out of state students do not qualify for either of the two.

Dean Solomon: So the, well clearly since Congressman Andrews isn't here, it's easy to pander to the state by saying, "well the federal government oughta step up and pay that first and then TAG and RAG ought to come in second." Is that the politically correct answer? (laughter) But I think that is the question you're—I mean the policy question is should the federal government—

Col. Abel: No, no, it's really a state question—

State Sen. Norcross: So do you give somebody over 100%?

Col. Abel: If you qualify for an entitlement, a federal entitlement, you will get that. So anybody who qualifies for Post-9/11 GI Bill at the 100% level will get 100%, even as a second payer. And anybody who qualifies for a Pell Grant, for example, will get the Pell Grant because it's an entitlement. But then you drop down to the next category and those are those two state pieces. They are not federal entitlements, so there is flexibility as to what you can do with them. And, those aren't applied to tuition; that's already been paid by the federal government. So the question is: Should a veteran be able to

walk away with a Pell Grant and a TAG if his tuition's already been paid for?

Dean Solomon: Could you make, I mean . . . those are not “means” tested? I mean so . . .

Col. Abel: They are.

Dean Solomon: . . . the veteran with five people in his family is one question. A single person would seem to be another.

Col. Abel: Actually, the university rule is that if you get 100% of Post-9/11 GI Bill you do not qualify for a RAG and the state when its computing its TAG through HESAA⁸ I think it's...

Dean Solomon: Higher Education—

Col. Abel: Yes, what they do is it is means tested, so unlike the you do not have to disclose your VA benefit, but at the state level in order to qualify for TAG you must disclose and so the state does in fact pull back TAGs on a regular basis and Rutgers pulls back TAGs on those who are 100%. And, it allows TAGs to go forward on folks that are less than 100% of the VA benefit. But the question is: Are we doing that the wrong way? Should we be doing it the way the federal government is doing it? If you serve, should you get the money?

Assemblywoman Casagrande: I'll be happy to say, on a very complicated question, I think I have a simple answer. In my humble opinion, tuition assistance is for paying tuition and so if your tuition is paid, if your room and board is paid, then let's put that money towards another student. That's how I feel as a policy—public policy.

Florence Hamrick: One of the things that you talked about early on in your presentation about this question was that, you know, you made appeal to the athletic students in need and

⁸ New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

clearly there are a number of veterans who will be in need of this kind of support. But I completely agree that tuition is tuition, if it's paid, it's paid. The potential concern, I don't know how big of a deal this is in actuality, but, you also talked about if they're awarded scholarships and things like that. What I have concern about is that, if it is a merit scholarship, it would seem to be odd to have a, what could be perceived as a "disincentive" to being an outstanding student. If you don't have access, or if you are not awarded that scholarship money like any other outstanding student.

Col. Abel: It is complicated. So, the rules for scholarships are: If a scholarship is for tuition only that becomes a first-pay. It must be deducted from whatever we bill the VA. But if it is a scholarship that can be used for tuition, fees, and books, then that does not get subtracted from what we charge the VA.

State Sen. Norcross: I don't know of any student that will say to you, "I will work less because I can get good money." They can be awarded the scholarship without the money, and then you get the notations and all their . . . but it is very difficult in any legislative process, when there's so few resources, particularly nowadays, and when employment for veterans, particularly those coming home from the wars, you got to make it work. So, sometimes, you have to look people in the eye and say, "we want to be fair to everyone." And I have to agree with the Assemblywoman [*Caroline Casagrande*]. The idea, and the premise, is here to pay for tuition and your fees and books, then that's what the rules are. So everybody can get a little bit more. It's the same way as I hear, you know, the military runs, "we're all in this together." We are not just going to give a few a couple extra. So I have to agree with that, given a very complicated setup.

Col. Abel: All right, so, we'll pick an easier question this time. The VA continues to report an extraordinarily high unemployment rates among veterans, especially in the age groups eighteen through thirty-four. What should colleges and universities be doing, specifically for veterans, to lower the unemployment rates of their graduates?

State Sen. Norcross: I think they should build more schools. (Laughter.) I say that jokingly, but the Bond Act is certainly one that's literally going to produce billions of dollars worth of work for many of those who are returning home. A good economy, as they say, "a rising tide lifts all boats." And certainly, that is one way to do it. Maybe a college education, as we all know, will increase your opportunities in life. And I think that letting those opportunities go, and we [*State Sen. Don Norcross and Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande*], in fact, I think signed less than a year ago, is giving governments the opportunity to set aside certain contracts for either veterans or veteran-owned companies, creating those opportunities because, again, when they leave, they leave home, they leave school, they leave their employment. We owe them an opportunity when they return to give them a little bit of a jumpstart from where they were. So I think that is the least we could do.

Assemblywoman Casagrande: And I think absolutely that expanding on some of those opportunities, but one area I think as a nation we fail is harnessing the resources that veterans have coming out of the military. Earlier I mentioned Israel and the tech sector because right now they have more companies on the NASDAQ 500 than all of Europe combined. And when I met with them, they said that it's "because our students come out with this unbelievable technical knowledge." And we then, when they come to that university with that knowledge, hyper-focus them on those STEM careers. Earlier we were talking about a liberal arts class for incoming veterans, and in my mind I was thinking "well that's great, but I don't necessarily think that's necessarily the highest and best use of some of the skills that those veterans have picked up over the years." STEM jobs in New Jersey, and one of the most depressing things that I have ever done as a lawmaker is to hear from the New Jersey Tech Counsel tell me that he needed more visas because they can't build all of the jobs they have available because we don't have enough scientists, because we don't have enough engineers, for those positions. And I think, as a country, if we could focus some of those people leaving the military on the unbelievable skills they had, and on the millions of dollars of training they had, into some of these jobs that we have open and

some additional STEM curriculums, I think it would be a great benefit to the whole GDP of New Jersey and the country.

Alison Nissen: I think that tails perfectly into my scholarship interests in that I don't think it is enough today for veterans and military students just to get a college degree. I like to see more research done, to see what the rates are in graduate school, not just law school, but, you know, in Masters' degrees or PhD programs in the STEM area, medical school, so that they're persisting beyond college, and filling jobs, and other occupations where they are underrepresented, and pursuing employment opportunities across the board. It is using these educational benefits at in-state tuition rates across the country in grad schools, and filling grad schools with veterans and military students.

Florence Hamrick: I think that an issue that I bring up as well is that we say, "well, what can be done, or should be done" by universities or colleges or by anybody. I don't know, but the point that I would make is that if we're thinking about college and universities in particular, this is not, I mean, I understand the differential unemployment rates, but I also want to note that this is also something that we are seeing anyway. Right, people have/get educations, technical training, and so forth. It is often very important to do re-training, or get additional education, possibly in the form of a graduate degree, maybe not. And so, again, my position is from higher education, so I see this as a bill letter, another opportunity similar with adult students, how can higher education make itself be accessible to the people who need the additional education and are seeking it?

Dean Solomon: Well, I think, again being parochial and looking at legal education, I mean, I don't know, since we don't collect data in the way we do as Alison was saying. I don't really know; my knowledge of this is anecdotal. But I do think that for veterans, and for all students, we try to do individualized counseling and through the career services office. And, I think, what the veterans bring as a group to this process is not just, say, the technical training they learned in the military. But also, one can never discount the importance of having to get up at a certain time and be somewhere at a certain time for a certain

number of years. There is proof that you will show up. Sorry, ha, I didn't mean that exactly (gesturing to *Assemblywoman Caroline Casagrande*).

Assemblywoman Casagrande: It is all right! I didn't mean it. Ha, I didn't mean it so far (Laughter).

Dean Solomon: But, it's an experience. Employers are looking for people that know how to work and to be at a job. And it's an invaluable experience. And our help in being able to help them to really interview well. And to bring those, that maturity, and judgment to their interview is something that we try to do and work on, and I think is crucial, and we try to work on with all students. But I think that veterans have a particular set of skills that they can market and are in demand in this economy.

Col. Abel: The last question will be a "softball" question. You know, ha, sigh, relief. How important is it to recognize veterans and military students on campus for their service to the nation as members of our armed forces?

State Sen. Norcross: It is a softball. But coming off Veterans Day, and right outside there is Jeremy's⁹ plaque who paid the ultimate price. And seeing a room of folks who have served every day, and we just came off of Election Day, where so many people in the world would give anything just to have a democracy, to have a vote, and we were out there, just the other day, and Jeremy's plaque was there; he was a real person; he was a real student here at this school, sitting in one of these seats just like you, and he's not here anymore and it makes it very personal when you know somebody who did this and recognition that you wouldn't be sitting here today if it wasn't for those people who came before us. Let's not get mushy or anything but this is absolutely real. We enjoy what we have, the ability for me to sit up here cause of what they did and what they

⁹ Jeremy Kane was a Marine Reservist and Cherry Hill resident enrolled at Rutgers-Camden University when he was killed in live action on January 23, 2010 while serving in Afghanistan. See *Fifth Annual Jeremy Kane Benefit Run*, JEREMY KANE BENEFIT RUN, <http://jeremykanebenefitrun.webs.com> (last visited Feb. 13, 2014).

do every day, and so we have to do it, we look to them, the Jeremy's of the world.

Florence Hamrick: Well, for me it is kind of a softball, but also what I want to do is personalize it a little bit, in my life. I have not been the military, I am not a veteran. My father was a World War II veteran and one of those folks who up until he passed he never would talk about anything like that. He kept his focus on what his family can now do and what his children can do. And so what I try to keep in mind, without that direct military affiliation, is that there is nothing about my father's background that would have suggested he would have gone to college, but yet he had a GI Bill after he finished his service and he was a dentist. So it really helped him with his own education and brings home to me that the GI Bill, any of the GI Bills, but in this case specifically for WWII, that they do benefit the individual service people, service members and veterans, but it also benefits me. So I am a second-generation college student only because, in my estimation, of the GI Bill that enabled my father to do what he did. And so, I think that kind of a connection, again in an educational setting, and looking at the generational, the cascading benefits, it's not special treatment for veterans; it's something larger than that. The other thing is that honoring veterans on campus clearly that should be honored, living veterans as well as veterans who have passed or been killed in battle, I think particularly though for the current generation of veterans and veterans on campus, I think that there are a lot of different ways to exemplify service and citizenship. You know being part something larger than yourself and it seems to me that the generations of veterans, they exemplify that. So when we talk about the examples and what veterans bring with them, they really are a model for, "I'm not just coming in at eighteen. I have done a lot of service. I have been a citizen in this really important way." And I do think it's important to honor veterans for that reasons, and I also think it's important for other students to see that and be able to understand that

Alison Nissen: I agree on actually both points, I am also a second-generation beneficiary of the GI Bill. My father, he came from a background where he wouldn't have been able to go, not

only to college, but also pursue a Masters degree if it wasn't for his time served in Korea, and I grew up going, "my dad went to college in eighteen months on the GI Bill." We learned that statement and that was his narrative, about coming back from Korea and going to college. And I never thought about it in the way you just put it. And my father-in-law was a World War II veteran and neither of them, my father-in-law, spoke about their time during the war, and my mother never shares his stories either. But I think it's like Flo said, to honor and respect our military students as one of our institutions, one of the most important things we do as faculty, staff, administrators, and as other students, it's important to recognize these students for the strength and knowledge and character and leadership that they bring to our institution on a daily basis, what they have done for our institution in the past and what they will do for our institution in the future. And our administration has done a wonderful job of incorporating every strategy that I bring, I'll say what about this and can we do this and I think this would be a great idea, and it's really been wonderful to see a sense of community that our students have now in working with Steve and working with Fred Davis on the Camden campus. And I just hope that it continues to grow working with our New Jersey Assembly with the congressman to continue build a sense of community and continue to honor and acknowledge and welcome and grow the number of students we have at the law school.

Dean Solomon: Well I would endorse all of the above, and I think that schools should figure ways to honor all sorts of people for all sorts of achievements. And I don't think we do a bad job; I don't think we do a perfect job. Whether it be journal service, whether it be pro bono activities. As the senator said this is a special type of service that people have given time away from other things, other pursuits they could have undertaken, and they have accomplished a lot in getting here and figuring out ways to validate and honor that is crucially important, both to reinforce their own sense of accomplishment and self commitment, but also as an example to others. I don't know whether we quantify this, but there are probably four to eight people a year who pursue going into the JAG as a career after law school and that opportunity is enriched by talking to people

who have been in the military, even though they were not in JAG. So I think it's important honoring them; honoring veterans is a way of making that real to other people

Assemblywoman Casagrande: Yeah, I think it's a good thing, and one thing as politicians we do participate a lot in Veterans Day ceremonies and I don't know that when I was at Rutgers Law that I had the perspective that I have now having spent the amount of time with families who have lost somebody and even veterans themselves. I mean it should never be lost on you for a heartbeat that you couldn't study in tort, that there'd be no such thing as civil procedure, that constitutional law would not exist if not for these amazing men and woman that risk their lives and so I think that should be the starting place when you study the law. The study of the law is possible because people risk their life for you to do so, because there are a lot of bad actors in this globe. What I do personally, we just had Veterans Day, I just call the veterans in my phone book, and I say thank you, and they appreciate it. Sometimes I am the only person that called, but I think taking that second to acknowledge that, just on a human level, thank you for my freedom, thank you for laying in that cave in Afghanistan, I am sure that was awful getting shot at, but I am free because you risked your life and now I can be here at Rutgers and study and live in this civilized society and how wonderful is that. Just taking that moment from that perspective to say thank you is so important and as I understand it and I am not a veteran, and from the veterans I spoke with, but it's nice to be acknowledged, that people understand what you did and what you risked and time you dedicated and that's just a simple thing that we can do.

Col. Abel: So in a minute we're going to take questions. But what I would like to do is introduce one of your fellow students. You probably don't know who he is, he is a rather shy and reserved individual, somewhat of a wallflower, Bill Brown, please raise your hand. Does anyone know Bill Brown? (Applause.) Now why would I introduce Bill Brown? Well, I'm going to give you a history lesson, a Rutgers history lesson. Prior to September 2008, early in 2008, he and another Camden student, Brian Adams, wrote the president of the university a letter. And they said to the president, we don't

think Rutgers is doing enough to get veterans to come to Rutgers, we don't think Rutgers is doing enough to make them successful here at Rutgers. And the president's a busy guy, he doesn't open all his mail. I'm going to say that probably someone in the office looked at that letter and pitched it. But that wasn't enough for these two. So they decided to attend the first university's Senate Meeting of Academic Year of 2008–2009. And President McCormick was a great guy, he would give his thirty–forty minute address, he would take questions from the Senate, then he would take questions from the staff and faculty, and eventually he would get around to taking questions from the students. He stayed at that microphone until people were too tired to ask questions. I joined the university in 2010 and I went to that first Senate meeting of that academic year and at the four-and-a-half hour mark, I left. I had had enough. Bill and Brian went to the microphone and they said to the president, the only reason we're here is because you don't answer your mail. So we thought we would pose the questions to you directly so you would have the opportunity to actually answer them. Not exactly, it was a little tense that day. But the end result was that President McCormick really hadn't thought about what Rutgers veterans were doing, what Rutgers was doing for veterans. And out of that grew, um, what now is ranked, this year the ranking came out on Veterans Day, we're now number four in the nation of all four-year schools for taking care of veterans. We were three the year before and three the year before that, so Rutgers has made a serious commitment to the men and women who have served our nation and who have sacrificed greatly. And so we thank Bill for that. To Bill's credit and to Brian's credit, two years later they went back to the same microphone and they said to the president, thank you for doing what you said you would do. So that was a good news story. There's not a lot of folks who go and complain and then return and thank the president for doing anything.

State Sen. Norcross: He was also recognized by the Governor. (Laughter.)

Col. Abel: He was, he was.

State Sen. Norcross: And on a true side, the G.I. Go Fund from Newark recognize Bill and Brian on Friday night, for their great works and we were proud to be there for you.

Audience: Thank you, sir.

State Sen. Norcross: Thank you.

Col. Abel: So with that, we have a full-time office; I'm the director. I'm not on the unemployment roll, one of the statistics you were telling me about earlier, thank you Bill. We have a university-wide committee that includes all three campuses [inaudible]. But folks like Alison who provides a specific service. And that committee meets, it used to meet more often when students have to use that committee for means of addressing issues. I, quite frankly, have a hard time getting students to come to that meeting now, but it is still vital meeting. Some of the things we talked about earlier today, in the questions, were issues that came before the last committee meeting on the thirtieth of October. I actually sit on about eight or ten committees at Rutgers, disability services, academic oversight, I could name them all. I think we're the only university in the country who has asked their Director of Veteran Services to not only take care of the veterans, but to be there as policies are discussed and to ensure that at least that the veterans' perspective is at least considered as the policy is made. So I think we've done so really well. There's some really great top-down leadership, leadership like you have here in the law school, leadership like I have up at the New Brunswick campus. When I was hired, I was hired by the Dean of Students. Just this summer, the Executive Vice President of the university, moved me up to work directly for him because he thought that's how important taking care of our veterans is. We have veterans support teams on all three campuses. So Fred down here [*Fred Davis, Campus Director of Veterans Affairs, Rutgers University – Camden*], Alison if she needs to, can reach out to offices on campus to get specific services provided. We have the most extensive network of service providers on campus, off campus, connected to the V.A. of any university in the country. We can deal with post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and issues relating to those two. So I, on my first day

when I was driving to Rutgers was a bit concerned. I knew that Brian and Bill would be happy to see me on campus. Brian was actually one of the students who interviewed me for the job. But as I drove here on that first day, Fourth of July, 2010, I wondered how the rest of the University would welcome the first Director of Veteran Services. Rutgers is a pretty big and very liberal university. I can tell you that any apprehension I had was for not. It was a waste of energy thinking about it. Rutgers has been a great place, it has taken care of its veterans at a most top-notch manner, to match its academic excellence. And with that, we'll take some questions from the audience. The panel is anxious to answer your questions.

Audience: I just want to thank all my fellow students, classmates, colleagues for staying here this late; I think that's pretty cool. I want to thank Senator Donald Norcross and Assemblywoman Casagrande, and Rutgers' Professor Nissen. You've done so much from the first day I stepped foot here and thank you for your work. Dean Solomon, thank you for supporting.

Col. Abel: I think I went over on the time. No other questions?

Audience: Thank you all for coming tonight and talking about veterans and higher education. Just one question, something that has been discussed, what about talking to veterans about possibly, instead of saying at higher educational institution, maybe using those technical skills that they learn in the military, let's say vocational schools or those kinds. Do we have that kind of support service for the veterans to be able to...

Col. Abel: Can I answer this one? I've been dying to answer all these questions. So the answer is, you're exactly right. There's more percentage of veterans coming off active duty that actually choose to get four-year degrees or bachelor's degrees. My assistant and I, he's a Navy Vet, we go to career fairs and job fairs around the state. I have no jobs to offer in my office. I am hiring no one. I wish the boss would give me a little bit more money. I would like to hire one more person full time for each of the three campuses. But we go there to see veterans who are

having a difficult time finding employment. And to offer them an alternative, and not an educational alternative that looks like a four-year degree. So here's a test question. We have about 66,000 students at Rutgers working on degrees of some sort or another. How many students at Rutgers do we have in a one-year period working on continued education requirements, certificate programs, those kinds of things. Any idea? 50,000. And veterans education benefits can be used to get a certificate. And I jokingly pick on North Dakota. Anyone here from North Dakota? Good. So I always pick on North Dakota when I'm giving this example, but if you went to a small technical school in North Dakota, and you got a certificate in radiology and you wanted a job in one of our nice hospitals, in the radiology department, and you came up against a Rutgers graduate with a certificate in radiology, who's going to get the job? In my mind, unless the fellow or gal from North Dakota really stumbles in the interview process, it's an easy choice. I mean, the academic excellence of a university like Rutgers gives you a great edge in those kinds of things. On Monday, on this coming Monday, Deutsche Bank is going to be on campus in New Brunswick. And they are going to make a presentation to the broader Rutgers community. It's going to happen 5:30, 6 o'clock, and go until 7:45. But when we're finished there, they're coming to Veterans House and they're going to spend the rest of the evening talking to veterans. And I got caught, I sent something to Bill last week actually. There's something called Veterans on Wall Street, who are anxious to have Rutgers graduates in those banking firms. So you're absolutely right, there's all kinds of options, and not all of them are four-year degrees, and the V.A. will pay for that.

State Sen. Norcross: Let me just quickly, I was reluctant to bring up not going to college here at a college, but there's a number of programs, one of them is "Helmets to Hard-hats." Whether it's here at Rutgers, and everybody wants to go to college for a variety of reasons, and there are plenty of other options, and certainly that's one of them for those who elected not to go to college. They are some of the best workers out there and that's why those courses and "Helmets to Hard-hats" is one that is very successful in taking them right into the construction industry.

Col. Abel: Any other questions?

Jordan Hollander: I want to thank everyone for coming tonight and all the work that's been done by Colonel Abel for helping out tonight. The journal will be publishing the transcript of tonight's event in a forthcoming issue. And we hope that tonight will be used as a springboard for further discussions, further scholarship, and further action, as well as saying how important this issue is. Before we get to the food, we have some gifts for each of the panelists to handout.

Col. Abel: This is my third time down here in the last year, do I get any academic credits?

Dean Solomon: That depends on whether you pay me tuition.

End of Symposium