

The Student Affairs Diversity Council (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

Diversity and Culture Among Veterans



By Paul Morgan
Director, Veteran Support Center

John Rambo doesn't represent most veterans but neither does the indestructible and undefeatable Chuck Norris. There isn't a "representative" veteran because they are as diverse as our American population. So who are veterans?

Student veterans at the U are more ethnically diverse than the overall student body. About 72% of students served by the Veterans Support Center are white, compared to 74% overall. Although there are proportionally more student veterans of color, only

28% are female, compared to about half of overall undergrads, but only 15% of the military is female.

James Henslin (2006) defined culture as "the symbols, language, beliefs, values, and artifacts that are part of any society." Most know about saluting, "Sir, yes, sir," stripes, and pushups. "Joe went AWOL, refused NJP, and got 6, 6, and a big chicken dinner" is an example of language in military culture.¹ Some of the culture stays with veterans. I still lace my shoes left over right as my drill instructors taught me. Sebastian Junger's *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (2016) describes how, particularly for combat veterans, intimate bonds

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formed in the culture of the military “tribe” are missed when many leave the service, much like losing family. This can make transitioning from the military challenging.

Some think that people enlist because they don’t have any options. However, 63% of enlisted personnel scored above the 50th percentile on the entrance exam compared to 51% of their civilian counterparts, and about 97% have high school diplomas and/or some college, compared to 85% (Center for Naval Analysis, 2014). Most state they enlisted to serve their country, not because they didn’t have options.

About 1 in 8 student veterans have a disability. Some have visible disabilities; others suffer from injuries such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, or moral injury.² However, as Alison Lighthall (2012) points out, most veterans don’t see themselves as victims and are reluctant to seek assistance. According to Edelman (2016), 40% of civilians believe that half of veterans suffer from mental illness and that they are unstable and physically aggressive, often from PTSD. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 8% of civilians have PTSD compared to 10-18% of veterans. VA studies found PTSD is no more a precursor to violence than anxiety or depression, but it is associated with a higher risk of self-harm. Veterans are 22% more likely to commit suicide than their civilian peers.

Some believe that most military personnel are extreme right-wing conservatives. For instance, in its August 2017 newsletter posted on a college campus, the Social Justice Collective stated that they should be banned from universities because “veterans usually are associated with extremist right-wing groups.” Not true. ABC (2013) found that 44% of service members are conservative, 29% moderate, and 20% liberal, whereas the public is 38%, 38%, and 19%, respectively.

The military is not full of automatons, as some think. While it’s true that the military has a clear set of regulations, personnel are also encouraged to solve problems creatively and think on their feet. This is one reason that America’s military is so powerful.

Are veterans foul-mouthed, crude, and loud? Yes, some can spew a fountain of expletives that makes the

Bellagio fountains seem ho-hum. While veterans care about social issues, they can be notoriously politically incorrect, using “shock and awe” for the sake of a laugh, and they can be as self-deprecating as they are insulting to fellow vets. In her first week, my former secretary, an Army vet, brought me something to sign and said, “I’m sorry that I don’t have a crayon for you, Marine.” I have heard insightful academic discussions, heated political debates, acerbic cut-downs, and detailed accounts of combat from our U Vets. For many, tactlessness, brutal candor, and feigned insensitivity were a part of military culture, so having a nonjudgmental space to appreciate and understand their military identities and experiences can assist them in succeeding in campus life.

Although each veteran has his/her own identity, the most prominent is the shared identity of Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman, Coast Guardsman, or veteran.



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Herold/Distillery, U.S. Air Force, Music: 2020

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Service members have a common mission that requires them to live, work, suffer, succeed, rejoice, mourn, and survive together. Of course, the military is not free of social justice challenges, but in carrying out their mission, most value their comrades based on their character and quality of work as part of a team, knowing that blood is red no matter who you are. The campus environment that emphasizes social justice is unfamiliar to many veterans, even those with marginalized identities. Although they come from a unique culture and close-knit community that served in multinational and multicultural communities, they served with a unifying and dominant purpose. It is not that veterans don't care about social justice issues – they all took oaths to “support and defend the Constitution” that gives us the rights and freedoms that citizens of countless other countries do not enjoy – it's that they come from a culture that emphasizes core values and standards of behavior expected of all, such

as prioritizing mission accomplishment and taking care of teammates, regardless of non-military identities. Respect for diverse perspectives and identities is shared by veterans, even though the language, approach, and manifestation may seem unconventional.

At 11 a.m. on Friday, November 10 in the Union Ballroom, we will have our 20th Veterans Day commemoration honoring 11 remarkable Utah veterans. I invite everyone to attend. Although Chuck Norris will not be there, you will hear eleven amazing stories.

¹Joe was absent without leave, chose a court martial instead of non-judicial punishment (court instead of letting his commander adjudicate the charges), and received 6 months in the brig, 6 months without pay, and a bad conduct discharge.

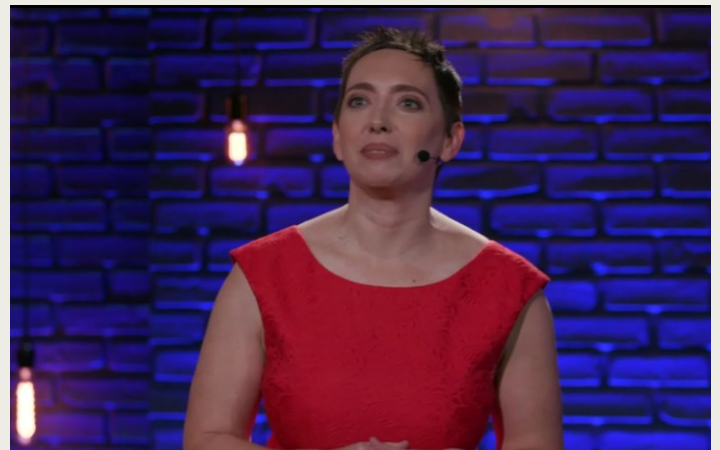
²Moral injury can be described as emotional damage resulting from acting, not acting, or witnessing acts that challenge one's moral values or behavioral expectations. For example, moral injury might result from leading a combat mission during which a fellow service member is killed.

TED Talks



[Theo E.J. Wilson: A black man goes undercover in the alt-right](#)

In an unmissable talk about race and politics in America, Theo E.J. Wilson tells the story of becoming Lucius25, white supremacist lurker, and the unexpected compassion and surprising perspective he found from engaging with people he disagrees with. He encourages us to let go of fear, embrace curiosity and have courageous conversations with people who think differently from us. "Conversations stop violence, conversations start countries and build bridges," he says.



[Susan Robinson: How I fail at being disabled](#)

Born with a genetic visual impairment that has no correction or cure, Susan Robinson is legally blind (or partially sighted, as she prefers it) and entitled to a label she hates: "disabled." In this funny and personal talk, she digs at our hidden biases by explaining five ways she flips expectations of disability upside down.

[Explore more TED Talks on www.ted.com.](http://www.ted.com)

Upcoming Seminar



Mental Health Challenges at the U and How You Can Help

Presenters: Lauren Weitzman, Ph.D., Cindy Harling, MSW, LCSW, Jake Van Epps, Ph.D., Lois Huebner, Ph.D.

Date: November 8, 2017, 12-1:30pm

Location: Pano East, Union

[\[more information\]](#)

Recently On NPR



Breaking Cultures of Silence on Sexual Harassment

After the accusations against film industry executive Harvey Weinstein came to light, many more women and men have shared their stories of how sexual harassment and assault have impacted their lives. How would it have made a difference if those who knew had helped? And with most of the focus on women as victims, what about the role men can play in creating a safe environment at work? We continue our conversation on workplace sexual harassment and consider how to go from being a bystander to taking a stand.

[Listen to 1A on NPR>>](#)



A History of Mormons and Homosexuality

We're talking about the complicated relationship between the Mormon Church and homosexuality. Our guest is historian Gregory Prince who is working on a history that includes the public and not-so-public campaigns against same-sex marriage and their attempt at punishing and curing same-sex attraction. He also examines whether the LDS theology of an afterlife will ever have room for gay people. Prince recently came to Utah, and joins us to talk about Mormons and Gays.

[Listen to RadioWest on NPR>>](#)

Pursuit of Inclusion Award 2017

Submit Your Nomination

Please consider submitting a nomination for the Student Affairs Diversity Council Pursuit of Inclusion Award. This award is to recognize individuals or programs that strive to cultivate an environment that embraces and promote the broad scope of diversity within the division and the University Community.

We will be selecting two award recipients, a Student Affairs staff member and a student. While the award is open to any student who is making a difference on campus, we ask that you particularly consider your student staff.

<http://sadc.utah.edu/events/staff-award.php>

<http://sadc.utah.edu/events/student-award.php>

Nominations are submitted online and are due on **Wednesday, November 22.**



Women, Work and the Will to Lead

Please join us the 1st Wednesday of each month to gain insights and skills to help you grow professionally.



TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FALL 2017

Women & Networking

Sep 6th | 11am - 12pm | SSB 350

Shonda's Ted Talk on Saying Yes

Oct 4th | 11am - 12pm | SSB 350

Salary Negotiation

Nov 1st | 11am - 12pm | SSB 350

Mentorship & Leadership

Dec 6th | 11am - 12pm | SSB 350

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WOMEN'S ENROLLMENT INITIATIVE & THE CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Upcoming Events

Nov 1 @ 12-1pm

Film & Discussion: The Eternal Jew
CTIHB Jewel Box [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 1 @ 1-2pm

Tea Tim with Women in STEM
Curie Club Active Learning Center [\[more info\]](#)



Nov 1 @ 5:30-7:30pm

It Starts With You Speaker Series
Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 2 @ 12pm

Jason Stanley: The Destruction of Reality
Child Hall, SFEBC [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 2 @ 12-1:30pm

Women Inspiring Women: Join The Conversation
155A College of Social Work [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 2, 9, 16, 30, Dec 7, & 14 @ 12-1pm

Barriers & Belonging: Personal Narratives of Disability, Eccles Health Science Library [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 3 @ 12:30pm

Navigating Campus: Propaganda and Campus Climate (Student Panel), Location [\[more info\]](#)

Every Friday @ 3-5pm

Fabulous Fridays, LGBT Resource Center Room 409



Nov 8 @ 3-4:30pm

Become A Citizen Activist
LNCO 2110 [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 9 @ 4-5pm

Presente! The Politics of Presence
Pano East, Union [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 10 @ 9:30-10:40am

Indian Textualities and the Tropes of Jewish-Muslim Difference, Union Theater [\[more info\]](#)

Nov 18 @ 7-9pm

HeForShe Gala for United Nations Women
Crimson View, Union [\[more info\]](#)



Nov 13 @ 12-1pm

GEM Series: Womxn & the Impostor Syndrome
Union Den [\[more info\]](#)



Debra Daniels (Co-chair), Women's Resource Center
Kari Ellingson (Co-chair), Student Development
Michael Bard, Registrar's Office
Gabriella Blanchard, LGBT Resource Center
Ella Butler, Career Services
Branden Dalley, Union Administration
Tim Davis, Housing & Residential Education
Kyle Ethelbah, TRIO Programs
Cairisti Flatley, Campus Recreation Services
Morgan Gallegos, University Guest House & Conference Center
Darrah Jones, Center for Student Wellness

Roberto Martinez, Counseling Center
Chuck Masoka, Assessment, Evaluation, & Research
Paul Morgan, Veteran Support Center
Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, Office of Inclusion Excellence
Natalie Pinkney, Office of Admissions
Matthew Plooster, Scholarships & Financial Aid
Nomani Satuala, Center for New Student & Family Programs
Laura Schwartz, Bennion Community Service Center
Ulysses Tongaonevai, Office of the Dean of Students
Melissa (Lissa) Wanserski, Center for Student Health