TO DO LIST:

1. Choose a school that has an academic or technical program you are interested in.

2. Choose a school that you believe will be a good fit (academically, socially, environmentally).

3. Visit the campus in advance.

4. Apply to the school through the Admissions office. (The admissions process may not inquire of a disability)

5. Set achievable goals to help you be successful.
   - Choose part-time instead of full-time coursework
   - Commute instead of living on campus
   - Plan a degree and work at it one course at a time

6. Each student veteran with a disability should visit the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is assigned to his/her school. This representative is one extra layer of support.
   - Inquire about all benefits you may qualify for through VA and/or Social Security
   - Seek connections on campus with other veterans
   - Join a veterans group on campus
   - Form a veterans group

7. Students with a disability should check out the disability office link or make an appointment to meet with the disability specialist available on campus to find out what support services are available. Examples of support services are:
   - Accommodations/modifications
   - Peer Tutoring
   - Learning Specialist
   - Academic Advisor/Faculty Advisor
   - Learning Center
   - Writing Center
   - Health Center
   - Counseling Center

8. Self-advocate for all your needs.

RESOURCES FOR STUDENT VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES:

Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
Office: (617) 287–3880
Fax: (617) 287–3881
www.ahead.org

Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
Phone: (800) 526-7234, (877) 781-9403 TTY
http://www.jan.wvu.edu

New Hampshire Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation
http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/adultlearning/VR/testing.htm

New Hampshire State Veterans Council
http://www.nh.gov/nhveterans/

Student Veterans of America
http://www.studentveterans.org/

New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission
http://www.nh.gov/postsecondary/

US Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)
www.vba.va.gov

US Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation
1–800–827–1000
www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre/index.htm

If you are a student veteran with a disability (SVWD) and have questions about how to navigate the college setting, or if you are a SVWD and have information that would aid other veterans in adjusting and integrating into the college setting then please post your comments at http://studentveteranswithdisabilities.blogspot.com

This publication is made available by the Educational Subcommittee of the PA CARES Task Force, www.pacares.org.

College Bound Veterans WITH DISABILITIES & Postsecondary Education

“HAVING EDUCATION as an outlet when you come home from a combat zone is one of the most grounding and focusing avenues a veteran has to his (/her) advantage.”

Rick Scavetta, veteran of the Army Reserves
Chronicles of Higher Education – June 6, 2007

NC National Guard Unit 252-Iraq 2009
Star of MTV’s Real World
Student at Harrisburg Area Community College
In the past twenty years the number of students with disabilities pursuing advanced educational degrees has nearly tripled. To date, students with disabilities represent over 11% of all undergraduates nationwide, with the highest percentages present at two-year colleges. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990; ADA) were enacted in the post Vietnam War era and designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in many areas, including employment and postsecondary education. This legislation also helps to ensure a level playing field for students with documented disabilities.

WHAT VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES SHOULD KNOW WHEN PURSUING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION:

- Even if you do not qualify as an individual with a disability under the Veterans Administration (VA) you might qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) while studying in a postsecondary institution. The ADA definition* of a disability may be more inclusive than the VA in considering a functional limitation as a disability if the functional limitation affects:
  - major life activities such as “caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working”
  - major bodily functions, which include “functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.”
- A student with a disability has the autonomy in choosing or not choosing to disclose his or her disability to the school.

* For a full definition of a disability, please refer to the ADA Amendments Act of 2008.

WHAT type of institution qualifies as postsecondary education?

A: Two-year colleges
   Four-year colleges
   Public and Private colleges/universities
   Vocational/Technical schools
   Graduate Schools
   • Masters programs
   • Doctoral programs
   • Medical schools
   • Law schools
   • Dental schools
   • Pharmacy schools
   • Veterinary schools

WHAT are accommodations and how can they help me?

A: Schools are required to make academic adjustments (also known as accommodations/modifications) for eligible students with disabilities who meet the academic and technical standards for admission. Accommodations/modifications are implemented in order to provide students with access to information presented in the learning environment. Accommodations exist in both the learning and living environment on campuses.

Examples: A student who has a functional limitation affecting fine motor skills may have difficulty writing and may qualify for the use of a note-taker in his/her classes. A student who has difficulty reading or concentrating due to a TBI, PTSD, psychological, or other impairment may qualify for extended time on testing. Another student who is deaf or visually impaired may qualify for adaptive technology such as text-to-speech equipment, voice recognition, magnification or auditory enhancement equipment.

Some examples of accommodations/modifications available:
- Extended time on tests and quizzes
- Testing in a distraction-reduced environment
- Use of a note-taker
- Use of a reader
- Use of a scribe
- Use of sign language interpreter
- Adaptive/assistive technology
- Text-to-speech equipment
- Voice recognition equipment
- Auditory enhancement equipment
- Magnification equipment

WHAT are accommodations and how can they help me?

A: Students with disabilities are protected from discrimination in enrollment and access to programs.

Qualified individuals may not be denied admission on the sole basis of a disability.

A “qualified individual” is a person who meets the academic and technical standards required for admission or participation in a program.

HOW are individuals with disabilities protected under ADA/Section 504?

WHO is considered to have a disability according to ADA?

A: An individual who has:
   “(A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual;”
   “(B) a record of such impairment; or”
   “(C) being regarded as having such an impairment.”

Impairment means:
- “major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working”
- “a major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.”