



NC STRIVE, a consortium of two-year and four-year public and private schools; federal and state agencies; and advocates began offering conferences to administrators, staff, and faculty at institutions of higher education in 2015. The purpose of these conferences was to increase awareness and knowledge about issues affecting Veterans and their families as they made the transition from the military to the academic setting. The intent was to educate those employed in higher education so that they could provide any necessary services and supports or referrals to federal, state, or local resources. In this way, they could assist student Veterans in their successful pursuit of advanced degrees. For more information, go to strive.ncwgw.org.

In 2019, four regional conferences were held in the following locations:

Conference	Location	Number of Attendees
Western – April 9, 2019	Blue Ridge Comm College	102
Central West – April 23, 2019	Central Piedmont Comm College	61
Eastern – April 24, 2019	Craven Comm College	62
Central East – June 6, 2019	North Carolina State University	305
TOTAL		530

NC STRIVE introduced live streaming of specific sessions at the Central East conference. With its partners—North Carolina State University, NC Governor’s Working Group, NCServes, and Student Veterans of America—NC STRIVE reached far more viewers than just those who attended the conference. About 1760 tuned in to hear the plenary speaker, Jared Lyon, CEO, Student Veterans of America, who presented on the *Student Veteran Experience: Impact and Value* and the student Veteran panel, *Beyond the Transition: A Round Table Discussion with Today’s Student Veterans*. The addition of 1760 viewers brought the total number of conference participants to 2,290.

Jeff Smith, Director of Military and Veterans Affairs, UNC-TV, moderated a panel of four currently enrolled student Veterans (<https://video.unc.tv/video/nc-strive-2019-i611loc/>). The students discussed transitional services offered by their institution, tips, financial support, and effects of attending school on spouses and children. The panel was followed by an interview of Mr. Lyon who discussed the benefits of the GI Bill, including a research study of educational outcomes of post 9/11 student Veterans.

To assist the planning for the 2020 regional conferences, NC STRIVE has developed two short surveys, one for 2019 conference attendees, <http://app.surveymethods.com/EndUser.aspx?E6C2AEB6EEA6BABDEC>, and the other for student Veterans at all two-year and four-year public and private institutions of higher education, <http://app.surveymethods.com/EndUser.aspx?FEDAB6AEF6BEA2A5FB>. The one that is directed to student Veterans also asks respondents to identify best practices at their schools, gaps in services and/or resources, and what they think that administrators, staff, and faculty need to know at their schools about Veterans. All Student Veterans should feel free to complete the survey at <http://app.surveymethods.com/EndUser.aspx?FEDAB6AEF6BEA2A5FB>.

We encourage all higher education employees to attend one of the NC STRIVE conferences in 2020. It is vital to ensure that schools with large numbers of student Veterans be represented. In 2016, the latest year that data are available for the number of student Veterans and military-connected dependents on the GI Bill in North Carolina, 15,678 were in community colleges, 8685 were in the University of North Carolina System, and 3,980 were in NCICU (NC Independent Colleges and Universities)-affiliated schools.