



**HERC**

Higher Education  
Recruitment Consortium

# VETERANS

TRANSITIONING INTO

**HIGHER ED**



## Forward

Congratulations!

By downloading this ebook, you're on your way towards transitioning to a fulfilling career in higher education.

We're fortunate to have the expertise and insight from Adam Potter. Adam served for twenty years in the military, starting as an Airborne Infantryman to his retirement as the Senior Army Guidance Counselor of Butte Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS). Adam currently serves as Director of the Central Midwest Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) and as Senior Human Resources Specialist at the University of Iowa. The first three chapters in this ebook are based on interviews with Adam.

Please visit our website, [hercjobs.org](http://hercjobs.org), for additional resources to advance your career.

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# Why Consider Careers in Higher Education

## Why Your Military Experience Makes You a Strong Candidate for a Job at a College or University

Your military job likely has a counterpart in higher education. It takes all kinds of skills and knowledge to run a military operation—and the same goes for college campuses. Think of a college or university as a military installation regarding logistics: At the University of Iowa, we have a police force, logistics team, and facilities management staff.

The other day, I spoke to someone looking for a job as a pipefitter. I was able to pull up twelve pipefitter jobs on the HERC website. In higher ed, we have to get past the stereotype that many job seekers (not just veterans) have of higher ed: **We're not just hiring professors, there are plenty of staff and administrative roles.**

**Apply the commitment and flexibility you honed in the military.**

Right now, employers are really pushing to hire people with soft skills. A lot of veterans bring this to the table. *Veterans understand what it means to embrace an organization's mission and know what it takes to get the job done.* People who are used to working

at a fast-op tempo are very flexible. They're willing to embrace change in the higher ed workplace because they're used to a constantly-shifting environment.

**Myth:** *Colleges and Universities just want to hire professors*

### **Seek Out Veterans' Preference at Public Institutions**

Veterans' preference won't guarantee you a job, but it will open up certain venues to finding employment. Find out what veterans' preference means at your particular institution. For instance, at the University of Iowa, if veterans are applying but not getting interviews, or are interviewed but not getting hired, they can contact our Equal Opportunity Office and ask why. This knowledge may prompt you to update your application materials or finesse your interviewing skills.

### **Multiple Opportunities May Be a Good Fit**

I think veterans will be pleasantly surprised at the multiple types of higher ed jobs they're qualified for. I was talking to a veteran who

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works for the FBI right now, and he's looking for a new job opportunity. He could easily transfer to a security director role or become a risk specialist at a large university. Similarly, there are likely many jobs that could fit your specific expertise.

# Tips for Applying to Higher Ed Jobs

1. Tailor your resume so your military experience translates into the higher education realm.
2. Expect a collaborative and friendly culture.
3. Practice telling your stories, with a focus on the lessons you've learned.

## **Tailor your resume so your military experience translates into the higher education realm.**

Ensure that your resume is understandable to a civilian audience. Eliminate military jargon and ask a friend to proofread it. Here at the University of Iowa and our affiliated institutions, we are extremely rigid with candidate screenings. **We want you to clearly match all the required qualifications for a job, and your resume is the first place we screen for that fit.**

## **Expect a collaborative and friendly culture.**

Higher ed tends to be a very collaborative environment, so expect

multiple interviews, including interviews by committee. The culture in higher ed is warm and welcoming; when I first arrived at the university, we had a lot of celebrations and get-togethers for events. Overall, it was a fairly easy transition from navigating a large military installation to a large public university.

The levels of hierarchy can feel similar transitioning from the military to a large university, but there are fewer rules at the university (and no uniforms).

### **Practice Telling Your Stories, with a Focus on the Lessons You've Learned**

I recently read about how a veteran was screened out of a job because of how they responded to a question. The candidate had been in the Air Force and, when asked a question about the value of diversity, said, "When everyone's in blue, you don't see color." The candidate was trying to communicate that everyone in the military ought to be treated equally, but unfortunately worded an answer that seemed to erase the different lived experiences of fellow servicemembers. In the military you work in an incredibly diverse environment, but you may not be used to describing it in a certain way. For instance, *if asked about the*

"In the military you work in an incredibly diverse environment, but you may not be used to describing it in a certain way."

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*importance of diverse teams, you can speak about the esprit de'corps that you've developed working with people of diverse backgrounds towards the same unifying mission.*

When I do job coaching, I encourage candidates to think about their stories. Your interviewers don't care so much about the details of a particular situation so much as **the outcome—how you handled yourself through adversity and what you learned.** Focus on standard interview questions: Reflect on a time you had a disagreement with a supervisor or a time you led a team. Think of a story for each of these scenarios plus, most critically, be able to articulate the lessons you learned from your decisions.



# Translating Your Military Experience to the Higher Ed Job Search

There are several websites that can convert MOC/MOS's (Military Occupation Codes/Military Occupational Specialties) into civilian language. Here are a few:

- <https://www.cool.army.mil/overview/servicemembers.htm>
- <https://www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/>
- <https://www.careerinfonet.org/moc/>
- <https://www.taonline.com/military-skills-translator/>

# **Sample Resumes for Transitioning Veterans**

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## **James West, MBA**

**Telephone:** 555-555-5555 **Email:** [sample@sample.com](mailto:sample@sample.com) **Online:** <http://www.linkedin.com/12345>

### **Professional Experience**

#### **1/2015 to present Gilcrest University Police Department | Business Manager Gilcrest, WY**

*Assistant to the Chief of Police; managed a university police department.*

- **Financial Management:**
  - Develop and execute a \$5M Budget, prepare financial journals and reports, process accounts receivable and payable. Approve all invoices for payment.
- **Procurement:**
  - Execute over 220 purchase orders for services, supplies, and equipment worth over \$600K.
- **Process Improvement:**
  - Conducted an audit of the personnel budget and identified excess funding available for two additional officers, increasing police officer staffing from 19 to 21. Created the department's first police officer trainee position and recruited to fill the two positions.

#### **7/2012 to 12/2014 Defense Contract Management Agency | Contract Administrator Hartford, CT**

*Monitored contractor performance for quality, cost, and delivery of products and services.*

- **Contracting:**
  - Post award management of over 250 Department of Defense Acquisition Enterprise contracts worth over \$55M. Reviewed contract clauses, specifications and schedules.
  - Performed final closeout of assigned contracts.
- **Process Improvement:**
  - Achieved a 65% reduction in the number delinquent contracts for contract team DJ2 that were 120 days past final delivery date.

#### **1/2011 to 6/2012 Naval Postgraduate School | Graduate School Student Monterey, CA**

#### **12/2007 to 12/2010 Naval Submarine Support Center | Squadron Supply Officer Groton, CT**

*Led a department of 20 personnel in the training, support and assessment of 18 submarines, identifying sources of supply and expediting critical repair parts to units operating worldwide.*

- **Financial Management:**
  - Executed a \$31M budget for the command, three submarine squadron staffs and 18 submarines. Conducted financial, budgetary and resource analysis. Established operational budgets for the submarines and re-allocated funding to submarines based on spend rates and resource

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availability.

- **Supply Chain:**
  - Developed an inspection schedule to review all submarines and developed a mission critical spare parts listing. Identified sources of supply and ensured 100% of all critical spare parts were received and stored on board each submarine prior to deployment.
- **Program Management/Inventory Management:**
  - Conducted periodic assessments of supply operations for 18 submarines in financial management, logistics, and inventory management for parts and food. Provided management reports with root cause analysis of process failures with recommended corrective actions.
  - Management of inventory database and warehouse for supplies, repair parts and equipment.

## **12/2008 to 12/2009 Multi-National Security Transition Command | Budget Analyst Baghdad, Iraq**

*Led Budget Analyst executing the management of the Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF) appropriation.*

- **Financial Management:**
  - Responsible for the management and auditing of a \$3B Iraqi Security Forces Fund (ISFF) appropriation for the rebuilding of the Iraqi security forces. Coordinated the funding of the largest foreign military sale to Iraq of \$150M for patrol boats for the Iraqi Navy.
  - Awarded the Joint Service Achievement Medal by ensuring ISFF appropriation was 100% executed at fiscal year closeout. Identified two essential programs to legally expend \$2M in funding that was returned unused by other programs less than 18 hours prior to fiscal year end close.
  - Awarded the Bronze Star Medal as an end of tour award for meritorious service working for the Comptroller.
- **Procurement/Program Management:**
  - Executed and monitored the acquisition and delivery of major weapon systems for the Iraqi Security Forces through contract procurement, foreign military sales and transfer of U.S. military equipment.

## **1/2006 to 12/2007 USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) | Stock & Material Officer San Diego, CA**

*Led a team of 22 personnel in the financial management and inventory control and warehouse management of 32 storerooms with \$17.5M in repair parts and general stores on a large deck amphibious/aircraft carrier. Deployed to the Arabian Gulf in 2007 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

- **Financial Management:**
  - Executed a \$23M operational and aviation budget.
- **Supply Chain:**
  - Material Control Officer for the Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group, responsible for locating and expediting the shipment of high priority casualty repair parts to ships in the Strike Group.
- **Process Improvement:**
  - Implemented regular and spot inventory audits to ensure inventory database reflected the correct quantity and location of material received and stored. Successfully improved inventory validity from 85% to 97% for 32 storerooms with 29K line items. This contributed to the Supply

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Department earning the Blue "E" award recognition for supply excellence in 2007.

## **12/2003 to 12/2005 Naval Submarine Support Center | Squadron Supply Officer Groton, CT**

*Led a department of 20 personnel in the training, support and assessment of 18 submarines, identifying sources of supply and expediting critical repair parts to units operating worldwide.*

- **Financial Management:**
  - Executed a \$31M budget for the command, three submarine squadron staffs and 18 submarines. Conducted financial, budgetary and resource analysis. Established operational budgets for the submarines and re-allocated funding to submarines based on spend rates and resource availability.
- **Program Management/Inventory Management:**
  - Conducted periodic assessments of supply operations for 18 submarines in financial management, logistics, and inventory management for parts and food. Provided management reports with root cause analysis of process failures with recommended corrective actions.
  - Management of inventory database and warehouse for supplies, repair parts and equipment.

## **6/2001 to 12/2003 USS PASADENA (SSN 752) | Supply Officer Pearl Harbor, HI**

*Led a Supply Department of 10 personnel running a 24/7 operation to feed a crew of 120 and support a Los Angeles class fast attack submarine. Deployed to Arabian Gulf in 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

- **Leadership:**
  - Ranked 1 of 7 Supply Corps Officers in all of Submarine Squadron 7.
- **Inventory Management:**
  - Instituted periodic and spot inventory schedules that led to inventory validities being in excess of 95%, which helped the supply department earn the Supply Blue "E" award for supply excellence and being ranked 1 of 7 supply departments in Submarine Squadron 7.

## **7/1999 to 2/2001 USS HOPPER (DDG 70) | Disbursing and Sales Officer Pearl Harbor, HI**

*Led a team of 9 personnel running the ship's store, inventory storerooms and the disbursing operation on an Arleigh Burke class destroyer. Deployed to Arabian Gulf in 2000 in support of United Nations embargo.*

## **Education**

Naval Postgraduate School - Monterey, CA – Master of Business Administration (2012)

University of Texas - Austin, TX – Bachelor of Arts, Government Major (1990)

Western New England College of Law – 20 semester hours first year law program

Eastern Connecticut State University – 36 semester hours in accounting and business courses

South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium – 188 hours, Basic Police Academy

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## **Clearance & Certifications**

Previously held a Top Secret clearance (expired 15 November 2015)

Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Certification

- Level 2 Contracting
- Level 1 Program Management

## **Awards & Honors**

Bronze Star Medal, Navy & Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal

## **Skills**

Inventory Management, Logistics, Supply Chain Management, Procurement, Financial and Resource Management, Auditing, detail oriented, leader, process improvement and problem solver

## **IT Systems & Software experience**

Federal Logistics database, One Touch Supply System, Relational Supply Database, Financial Information Systems, Payroll Personnel System (PPS), Purchasing System, and Time Keeping System. Word, Excel & PowerPoint (PC and Apple versions).

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## ELIZABETH SUITER

2425 Jones Street, Clark, AL 12345 | (555) 555-5555 | sample@sample.com

### EDUCATION

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|-------------------|--|
| <b>May 2019</b>   | <b>Master of Divinity</b> , <i>Pacific Divinity School</i><br><i>San Diego, California</i>   |
| <b>April 2019</b> | <b>Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course</b> , <i>US Army Chaplain Center and School Fort Washington, Georgia</i>                                       |
| <b>May 2018</b>   | <b>Clinical Pastoral Education Intern</b> , <i>Rebecca Kapor Medical Center</i><br><i>Kennesaw Air Force Base, California, Supervisor: Rev. Sarah Dave</i> |
| <b>May 2018</b>   | <b>Master of Theological Studies</b> , <i>Pacific Divinity School</i><br><i>Concentration: Counseling with Marginalized Communities</i>                    |
| <b>April 2017</b> | <b>Bachelor of Social Work</b> , <i>Alabama Gulf University</i><br><i>Clark, Alabama</i>   |
| <b>April 2002</b> | <b>Bachelor of Arts</b> , <i>Alabama Gulf University</i><br><i>Major: Political Science, Minor: Sociology</i><br><i>Clark, Alabama</i>                     |

### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

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|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>March 2017 - present</b> | <b>Chaplain Candidate, Second Lieutenant, <i>Alabama Army National Guard</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acting chaplain for the Special Troops Battalion, 222nd Theater Sustainment Command</li><li>• Provide pastoral and spiritual care and counseling</li><li>• Connect soldiers and families to services and provide for religious freedom and support</li><li>• Advise commanders on religious and spiritual needs and issues</li><li>• ASIST (Suicide Prevention) Certified, 2017; renewed 2019</li><li>• Strong Bonds Facilitator, Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage Certified, 2018</li><li>• SYMBIS (Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts) Certified, 2019</li></ul> |
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**May 2019 - present**

**Commissioned Community Family Life Minister/Associate Pastor, *First Church of Christ, Clark, Alabama***

- Create and administer family programs within the church and community
- Advocate for social, racial, and economic justice
- Educate on Biblical teaching, wellness, and resiliency
- Promote inclusion of marginalized people and communities within the church and community
- Connect church and community members to needed resources
- Provide pastoral and spiritual care and counseling
- Preach and administer sacraments

**December 2005 - January 2010**

**Logistics Management Specialist, Public Affairs Officer, Family Readiness Support Assistant, and Quality of Life Program Manager, *United States Army***

- As a Department of the Army Civilian, served in various capacities throughout Stone Bridge Arsenal
- Managed the Installation Army Family Team Building, Army Family Action Plan, and Army Volunteer Corps programs
- Deployed in support of contingency operations to Balad and Mosul, Iraq, serving as the Public Affairs Officer for the 412th Army Field Support Brigade
- Logistics Management Specialist, Public Affairs Officer, Family Readiness Support Assistant, and Quality of Life Program Manager, United States Army

**January 2007 - January 2010**

**Army Master Trainer and Army Family Team Building Volunteer, *Army Community Service, Stonebridge Arsenal, Alabama***

- Taught a variety of classes as part of the Army Family Team Building program
- Facilitated Marriage, Parenting, Childbirth, and Personal Growth Education Groups
- Certified in May 2009 as an Army Master Trainer; trained other volunteers

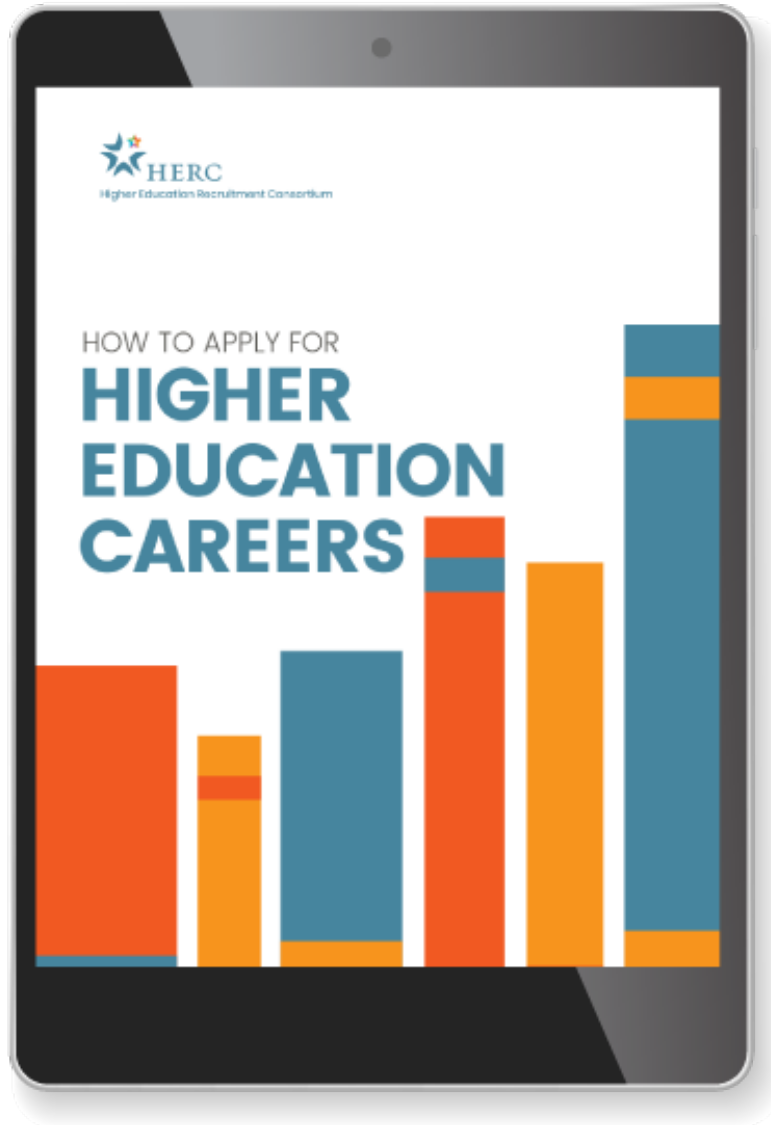
## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

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American Association of Pastoral Counselors  
American Association of University Women  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Chaplains  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) LGBTQ+ Alliance  
Junior League of Clark, Alabama  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Council on Family Relations  
National Guard Association of the United States



For more tips and advice, [download \*How to Apply for Higher Education Careers\* ebook.](#)





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## About HERC

The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) is a non-profit coalition of over 700 colleges, universities, hospitals, research labs, government agencies, and related non- and for-profit organizations, committed to diversifying the pipeline of faculty, staff, and executives in academia. HERC supports our member institutions in recruiting and retaining outstanding and diverse employees.

<https://hercjobs.org>