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EBV Librarianship: Helping Disabled Veterans with Business Research

Jared Hoppenfeld, Trip Wyckoff, Jo Henson, Jenna Mayotte, and Hal Kirkwood



Author Information Page

Name: *Jared Hoppenfeld
Title: Assistant Professor, Business Librarian
Email: jhoppenf@tamu.edu
Address: West Campus Library
Texas A&M University
5001 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843
Phone: 979-862-1982

Name: Trip Wyckoff
Title: Associate Librarian, Business Subject Specialist
Email: twyckoff@fsu.edu
Address: Strozier Library
Florida State University
0027 G
Tallahassee, FL 32306
Phone: 850-645-1475

Name: Jo Ann J. Henson
Title: Business and Economics Librarian
Email: johenson@gmail.com
Address: Fenwick Library
George Mason University
4400 University Dr., MSN 2FL
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: 225-937-3291

Name: Jenna N. Mayotte
Title: Business Resource Center Coordinator
Email: jmayotte@simsburylibrary.info
Address: Simsbury Public Library
725 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070
Phone: 860-658-7663 x2107

Name: Hal P. Kirkwood Jr.
Title: Associate Professor
Email: kirkwood@purdue.edu
Address: Roland G. Parrish Library of Management & Economics
504 West State St. – KRAN
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN 47907
Phone: 765-494-2921

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Jared Hoppenfeld

Texas A&M University

Trip Wyckoff

Florida State University

Jo Ann J. Henson

Louisiana State University

Jenna N. Mayotte

Syracuse University

Hal P. Kirkwood Jr.

Purdue University

Author Note

Jared Hoppenfeld, West Campus Library, Texas A&M University; Trip Wyckoff, Strozier Library, Florida State University; Jo Ann J. Henson, Louisiana State University; Jenna N. Mayotte, E.S. Bird Library, Syracuse University; Hal P. Kirkwood Jr., Roland G. Parrish Library of Management & Economics, Purdue University.

Jo Ann J. Henson is now at George Mason University's Fenwick Library, and Jenna N. Mayotte is now at Simsbury Public Library's Business Resource Center.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jared Hoppenfeld, West Campus Library, Texas A&M University, 5001 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843.

E-mail: jhoppenf@tamu.edu

Abstract

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities is a national educational program that helps post-9/11 veterans discover their dreams of starting their own businesses. Although their story has been well documented, one story that has not been told is that of a group of business librarians who support the program. The authors present unique services and resources made available to participants of this program and discuss some of the challenges, results, and future aspirations of library support.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, library resources, veterans, business research

Introduction

Serving in the United States Military is serious business. Those who fight for the freedoms of others put their lives on the line and can suffer greatly upon returning to civilian life. Some come back with a disability and find it problematic securing a job. Thanks to a program designed for disabled veterans, a group of librarians have found a way to do their part.

Librarians take pride in assisting patrons from all walks of life. The typical questions librarians answer may provide great intrinsic value, but there are unique moments that truly provide a feeling of accomplishment and contentment. One such opportunity that a group of librarians have been more than happy to take on is supporting the research needs of participants in the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, or the EBV. The program, which is hosted by eight academic institutions and sponsored by numerous corporations (ITT Corporation, Walmart, Humana, JPMorgan Chase, PepsiCo, and Accenture, among others) “offers cutting edge training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines with service connected disabilities – and a passion for entrepreneurship” (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, 2011).

Few of the country’s 21.2 million veterans (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013) have opportunities such as this one, and many are in fact suffering unemployment rates higher than the rest of the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment of Gulf War era II (post-9/11) veterans increased from 8.9% to 10.9% from July to August 2012 (Institute for Veterans and Military Families [IVMF], 2012, August). This is higher than the total American unemployment rate of 7.9%. Compared to non-veterans of the same age, 20-24 year-old post-9/11 veterans suffer with a higher unemployment rate of 19% (IVMF, 2012, August). Of the approximately 30% of Gulf War era II veterans who have a service-connected disability

(Alvarez, 2012), only 70.3% were in the labor force as of August 2012 compared to 87% of those veterans without a disability being in the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013).

This trend makes it evident that America's veterans can use assistance with their pursuit of economic success. There are many organizations that exist to assist veterans in this way, and the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities is one of them. The participating libraries are proud to play a role in this program.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial support, development, and education have expanded noticeably over the last decade within academia. Libraries, both academic and public, provide valuable support services for local and regional economic development. Within the library literature, there are occasional articles on the connection between entrepreneurial development and libraries although it is not an area covered by extensive research. The three-point connection of libraries, entrepreneurship, and military veterans has even less in the way of substantive publications and mostly consists of general or trade press articles reporting on initiatives.

A recent special issue of the *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* focused specifically on librarianship and entrepreneurship outreach. Key articles from this issue delve into these aspects of support, development, and education. Campbell and Cook (2010) focused on a partnership between the business library and an experiential small business management course resulting in an embedded instructional arrangement. Relationship building within the role of a librarian's liaison work with an entrepreneurship department was described in Chung's (2010) article which further elaborated on how to develop deeper connections through an iterative process. McKeown (2010), in her role at ProQuest, conducted a research study into the

information needs of entrepreneurship programs that involved information gathering from entrepreneurship faculty, business librarians, and entrepreneurship administrators.

In this same special edition, there was a selection of articles highlighting case studies of business libraries engaged in external entrepreneurial endeavors. Fitzgerald, Anderson, and Kula (2010) detail the collaboration between the University of Toronto and the MaRS Discovery District to develop a market intelligence service to entrepreneurial clients. Leavitt, Hamilton-Pennell, and Fails (2010) report on the concept of “economic gardening” and the collaboration of the Michigan State University Business Library with several other organizations to provide research for small business clients. The University of Toledo's business librarian pursued an opportunity with a regional organization to create a collection of resources that would support small business development (Martin, 2010). Pike, Chapman, Brothers, and Hines (2010) also reported on their collaboration with a regional network to select and acquire resources for entrepreneurs, as well as offering training and website maintenance. These recent articles show the varied and widespread involvement of academic business libraries in regional economic development endeavors.

Writings specifically focused on libraries assisting the entrepreneurial efforts of military veterans are extremely limited. A study from the Canadian perspective (Smulders & Jagoda, 2011) was conducted involving interviews with entrepreneurs and managers to identify commonalities between military personnel who had undertaken an entrepreneurial endeavor. Canada lags behind the United States in the development of support mechanisms for military entrepreneurs. The article identifies several key themes and presents a model for assisting returning military veterans interested in starting their own businesses. Korsak (2008) presented an overview of the agencies, policies, and roles of federal departments providing support for

service-disabled veterans who own small businesses. The Small Business Administration published a report (Hope, Oh, & Mackin, 2011) that analyzed data to identify if military service provides an identifiable level of experience for entrepreneurship or some form of self-employment. Findings generally supported the hypothesis that military personnel are more prone to start their own business, however, some data showed that length of time within the military influenced the likelihood of becoming self-employed as well as some additional mitigating factors.

Outside of the academic literature, there have been numerous articles in the general news and trade press highlighting veteran entrepreneurial activities and the growing number of support options for veteran entrepreneurs. Maltby (2011), Moran (2012), Needleman (2011), and Taber (2012) all present recent activities that support returning military veterans interested in starting their own businesses. The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities is mentioned in at least one of these articles, along with other similar programs.

Background of EBV Program

According to the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (2012), “Military veterans are entrepreneurial” and they “exhibit a strong desire to achieve...and ease with uncertain situations.” They are also “likely to have cross-cultural and global experience” and “have more advanced technical skills and training than non-veterans” (p. 129). With a 45% higher likelihood of being self-employed than non-veterans (Taber, 2012), military veterans seem like perfect candidates to run their own businesses. Many veterans, especially those with service-related disabilities, do require some assistance when first starting out. Assistance did come and it began in Syracuse, New York.

Syracuse University (SU) has a long history of supporting U.S. veterans. After World War II, Chancellor William Tolley announced a “uniform admissions program”, which guaranteed admissions to veterans returning from war. This had an enormous impact on campus, as veterans attended in unprecedented and unexpected numbers. According to an exhibit in Syracuse University Archives, called *Remembering the GI Bulge*, by 1947, “SU ranked first in New York State and 17th in the country in veteran enrollment.” By all accounts, this time in SU’s history left a lasting legacy of support for students returning from military service. Perhaps today, the need for such support is even greater. Melvin T. Stith, former Dean of the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University, and Marty Whitman (2008) stated in an op-ed in the local newspaper, “today’s GI Bill is woefully inadequate in helping returning veterans resume their normal life-course through education” (E1).

Syracuse emphasizes entrepreneurship throughout campus and has a highly-ranked entrepreneurial program at the Whitman School of Management. It was, therefore, a logical next step for the business school to engage directly with veterans looking to start new businesses. In 2007, faculty member and U.S. Air Force veteran Dr. Mike Haynie founded the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities. The program began as an intensive residential “bootcamp”, leveraging the resources and academic talent at the business school to teach service-disabled veterans to harness their unique talents and effectively start and grow a business of their own. In fact, the course syllabus states, “...this course – and the entire EBV program – is about dreaming and action” (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, 2012).

In the past several years, the EBV program has grown from a single program at Syracuse University, to a curriculum deployed at eight universities across the country, including Texas

A&M University (TAMU), Florida State University (FSU), University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Purdue University, University of Connecticut (UConn), Louisiana State University (LSU), and Cornell University. According to Dr. Haynie, growth of the program is carefully managed and universities are welcomed after both careful consideration and a clear demonstration of campus commitment and support for veteran participants.

The year-long program covers business plans, accounting, human resources, legal issues, and marketing, among others, and consists of three phases. First, veterans participate in an online self-study curriculum, during which their business concepts are developed. The next phase is a nine-day residency at one of the eight EBV universities. Participants learn about the basics of business ownership through experiential workshops taught by business faculty, experienced entrepreneurs, and other professionals. The final phase includes ongoing technical assistance from faculty at the EBV Universities as well as EBV partners.

The application process includes filling out an online form and submitting two letters of recommendation. Eligibility for the program includes having a “service-connected disability, military service post-9/11, and a passion for starting your own business” (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, n.d.a). No college degree is necessary and the program does not use GI Bill benefits.

To date, 565 veterans, from every branch of the armed forces, have completed the program. Program graduates have come from all levels of education background and represent a broad range of ages, with 457 males and 108 females. Today, the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities is joined by the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans’ Families (EBV-F), V-WISE (Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship), an EBV National Training and Alumni Conference, and several other programs geared specifically towards

veterans. These programs are all managed under the unique Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University under the leadership of Dr. Mike Haynie as executive director.

Library Support of EBV Program

Of the eight universities participating in the EBV program, six librarians have had the opportunity to lend support so far, and a seventh has indicated an ongoing effort to be part of the program. The six participating libraries have done so to some extent from the first year the program was on their campuses. The following data and observations from 2012 are based on a series of communications with business librarians at seven participating schools.

The EBV program was founded at Syracuse University in 2007, with library involvement included at its inception. Syracuse University's E.S. Bird Library has 3,431,056 print volumes, 39,153 print and electronic journals, and approximately 450 databases, including 40 business databases. Although no requests have come from the EBV for library instruction, the participants have found their way to the E.S. Bird Library to ask for assistance, which has been gladly provided.

Two of the three universities which joined the EBV Consortium of Schools in 2008 have had library support since its inception, including the West Campus [Business] Library (WCL) at Texas A&M University. The West Campus Library was contacted by Dr. Richard Lester, Executive Director of the Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship and the Director of the EBV at Texas A&M University. Dr. Lester had experience with librarians giving library instruction sessions to his Management classes and knew who to contact for library support. TAMU Libraries have 4,525,696 volumes, 123,107 journals, and 929 databases with 91 being for

business. EBV participants are given access to these databases during their campus visit as well as three weeks prior, supporting the eLearning pre-program. The EBV librarian offers to retrieve any books from the WCL that participants may need during their visit. The WCL also lends laptops to those who need them for the entire nine day on-site program. Support continues after participants go home as the librarian maintains an “Access From Home” LibGuide. To create this online resource, the EBV librarian obtains a list of veterans’ home towns and creates a list of their local public and academic libraries along with the business resources available to them at those locations.

The Strozier Library at Florida State University also provides support to EBV participants. The Library contains 2,965,660 volumes, 72,825 journals, and 771 databases, with approximately 60 being for business. A unique service provided at the FSU program includes MBA and undergraduate entrepreneurship students standing alongside professors and the EBV librarian, ready to assist veterans during the nighttime research sessions.

Although not currently providing support to their EBV program, there is a possibility for future involvement of the Rosenfeld Management Library at the University of California, Los Angeles. The UCLA Library System contains over 9 million volumes, 78,000+ current serial titles, and numerous databases. The Rosenfeld Management Library holds 166,800 volumes, 2,800 currently received serials, and 89 business databases among many others. These library resources are available to EBV participants on the same level that they would be to the public.

The Roland G. Parrish Library of Management & Economics at Purdue University has been assisting the EBV program since its arrival on campus in 2009. This library has 84,457 volumes, 248 journals, and 462 databases of which 110 are for business research. Purdue University treats EBV participants as registered students, and Information Technology at Purdue

(ITaP) creates accounts for them that last one year from the time of the initial Bootcamp. This gives them access to about 95% of their databases (with the 5% being databases only available on campus.) In addition to providing a scheduled business information research session during the on-campus visit, the EBV librarian also makes himself available by email and phone for the year-long program and beyond.

The Homer Babbidge Library at the University of Connecticut was also added in 2009. This library holds approximately 2 million volumes, 75,000+ journals, and 250+ databases, including around 60 business databases. The Library has been involved with the EBV program since its inception at UConn, providing an hour-long presentation, maintaining a LibGuide, and answering questions by email and working one-on-one with veterans to address their specific needs regarding their business ideas.

The next library to lend its support to the EBV program was Louisiana State University Libraries in 2012. The EBV librarian at LSU learned about EBV being held on her campus by direct contact from an EBV librarian at another university who shared his experiences and encouraged the LSU Libraries to participate. The librarian at LSU reached out to the local program director, with whom she already had a working relationship. LSU Libraries have approximately 3 million volumes, 83,000 journals, and 400 databases, including 70 that are for business. In addition to providing access to these databases during the on-campus phase, LSU Libraries worked with the Mergent database vendor to secure passwords for participants for 30 days after the program ended. In addition to a presentation, subject guide, and nighttime research support, the librarian also brought participants to the library for additional instruction.

The latest addition to the consortium, the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University, “is the first to offer a specialized program focused on hospitality and real estate

entrepreneurship” (Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, 2013). This program is still in its infancy and has yet to obtain library support. Cornell University Library holds 7.8 million print volumes and over 80,000 current electronic serial titles.

There are many similarities in the resources and services provided by the libraries that are engaged with the EBV program. Three of the six libraries that participate offer print resources, including New Strategist consumer books, Entrepreneur Magazine's Startup Guides, Who's Buying series, Market Share Reporter, demographic books, venture capital directories, and Business Plans Handbook (among other business plan books). Other print resources that are made available are SRDS media guides, RMA Annual Statement Studies, and S&P Industry Surveys. Some librarians also prepare a print handout of recommended library resources. Seven libraries provide participants with access to electronic resources. Five of those universities provide access to resources through the use of Net ID/University ID, providing access on and off campus during the on-campus week of the program. Five of the six librarians who participate use electronic resources with participants, and all five use Business Source Complete/Premier. Other e-resources that are used include ABI/INFORM, Factiva, LexisNexis, and Mergent Online, as well as market and industry databases such as IBISWorld, Mintel, Plunkett, and BizMiner. Additionally, all six participating librarians have prepared online guides specifically for the program participants.

In addition to providing print and electronic resources, the librarians who have had the opportunity to participate have all been given some time for a formal presentation with the participants. Presentation times vary from 20 to 90 minutes, and the sessions include information on using databases, books, and websites. The librarians also provide information on creating business plans, performing competitive and industry analysis, and finding market

research data as well as census data at a local level. Three librarians also participate in evening sessions during the week. Seven librarians have expressed an interest in increased time with the participants.

Several library services and resources are unique to the individual EBV programs. Notably, one librarian offers actual entrepreneurship instruction on developing business plans and researching markets and industries. During the on-campus segment of the program, two libraries allow participants to check out books during their campus visit. Two libraries provide access to public computers, from which participants can access any of the library resources. In one, reference librarians on duty are made aware of this service and help anyone who wishes to search databases. In the other, the business librarian is “always available” to help EBV students.

Challenges

Providing research support to EBV participants comes with some challenges. A lack of standardization among the EBV programs and libraries is perhaps an overarching challenge over all libraries that support the efforts of the EBV program. It is never easy to have a one size fits all program when working with such a diverse population, especially one that is spread out among seven different states across the country.

There is currently no uniform standard for providing access to library databases or including an embedded librarian within the boundaries of the EBV program. At some locations, the business librarian on staff has been invited to conduct research workshops while other campuses simply provide contact information for the librarian. This leaves the onus on the students to follow up with the librarian for assistance.

Databases geared towards business literature, market research, and market data can be very costly. Library budgets and funds available for new materials vary across campuses. A resource purchased for use in one EBV program may or may not be made available at another campus. In another example, a resource acquired specifically for EBV students at one campus had to be discontinued in subsequent semesters due to lack of renewal money.

Physical and online access can also be a challenge as procedures and policies vary across campuses. While several campuses provide EBV students with network IDs and unrestricted access during the on-campus program, some even for a period of time beforehand, other locations only provide limited access to “public” terminals available physically in the library. These barriers make it difficult to provide all the students across the program important resources that are typically available to traditional students. It also makes it difficult for individual business librarians to collaborate across the program at a national level.

Collaboration limitations amongst librarians on different campuses also exacerbate the problem of inadequate staff time available for research assistance. Some campuses only have one business librarian. This specialist is tasked with meeting the special needs of this program, while also balancing the needs of the other students and faculty on campus. The timing of evening programming can make scheduling staff time problematic, and in some cases, prohibitive. It can be difficult to shift schedules to accommodate evening workshops and sometimes equally challenging to put in extra hours.

Perhaps the biggest challenge is working with a population that has greater or different needs than those commonly served by a university library. The range of educational backgrounds and academic preparedness is wider than in a typical university course. Although applicants are screened and acceptance to the program is highly selective, experience with

academic research certainly varies. The sources, materials, and tools used in an academic context can be new or unfamiliar. In fact, the research process itself may be unfamiliar. However, in preparing for these incoming students, it is less helpful to make generalizations about their backgrounds, but instead necessary for the librarian to be prepared for the variance and possibly adjust their teaching style or expectations of time demands.

Success Stories

Despite the numerous challenges the EBV librarians face, there is a high level of success within the EBV program with 65% of EBV graduates running their own businesses (Taber, 2012). Nine graduates are running multimillion dollar businesses including a technology company having revenues of over \$40 million (Gupta, 2013).

Success can be found across the nation's eight EBV campuses. Syracuse EBV graduates Brad Lang and Johnny Morris started Stumpies Custom Guns, Inc., out of a shed in the backyard. Their many services include making custom modifications for people with disabilities (Gupta, 2013). Another Syracuse graduate, Dali Rivera, class of 2010, started Elite Revolutionary Solutions, LLC, a company that creates and sells handcrafted, high-end cutting boards and cutting blocks (Rivera, 2013).

Jonathan Williams, a Texas A&M University EBV graduate, is the President and CEO of Accord Federal Services, LLC (AFS). They provide facility management services to government clients such as the Army, Navy, and VA. Having been in business since June 2010, they are approaching \$1 million in annual revenue. Williams is also the founder and Chairman of the Tennessee Veterans Business Association (TVBA), which is a 501(c)3 that provides business to business networking and marketing assistance to veteran-owned businesses in

Eastern Tennessee. They currently have over 160 member companies. Referring to his time in the EBV program, Williams said in an email, “Attending this program totally changed my business focus and allowed me the time I needed to step back and reflect on the direction I wished to take my company.”

J.R. Martinez overcame being severely burned by an improvised explosive device while serving in Iraq. After attending Florida State University’s EBV program, Martinez went on to become an actor and motivational speaker. He has starred on the soap opera “All My Children” and was the Season 13 winner of ABC’s “Dancing with the Stars.” He admits that the EBV has played an important role in his success, stating, “The biggest thing I learned was how to take the concept of what I want to do and take it to another level” (Baxley, 2012). The EBV program still holds a place in his heart as Martinez spoke at the 2012 opening ceremonies for the FSU EBV program.

Ed Young combined his military experience as a truck driver in wartime Iraq with the training he received in the University of Connecticut’s EBV program to open his own car-transportation business. Although, like many veterans, Young has had to return to civilian life during one of the worst economic slumps in American history, he has made use of what he learned in the program. “Basically, it’s like in the military. Just accomplish the mission. That is your job, to accomplish your mission, no matter what” (Melia, 2012).

Kim Robinson, a 20-year Army veteran, was a member of the first EBV class at Louisiana State University. She was impressed with the program since day one when she went through the application process, which she has said was very smooth with representatives more than willing to answer her questions. She was originally interested in opening a Subway franchise, but due to the business research she conducted, she found the local market to be

saturated. Instead, she plans to open a mechanic shop with her son. As a current LSU employee, Robinson has an advantage over most EBV graduates as she continues to enjoy university library access. In communicating with one of the authors, she said, “the library resources that we were introduced to during the program were really helpful...this information helped me develop a rock solid business plan.”

Opportunities

Even with such great stories of success, the potential exists for EBV librarians to take their involvement to a much higher level within the EBV umbrella nationally. However, these future opportunities will require a higher level of involvement and participation. This participation will have a cost in time and effort that will need to be balanced against the librarians’ primary responsibilities to the universities’ core constituencies. The EBV librarians have been involved in numerous discussions to explore possibilities of future library support of the EBV program.

Shared Resources

EBV librarians have several ideas to overcome some of the challenges that have been identified by this group. One such challenge is the lack of long-term standardized resources available to all EBV participants. As one EBV librarian stated, “not giving these students full online access to our electronic resources really ties my hands. I’m always trying to find free resources and alternatives, especially if they ask questions after they’ve gone home.”

The development of an online research platform to host the educational outreach and research by EBV students has potential for future development. A “Technical Assistance

Program”, or TAC, already exists online where EBV graduates may find resources in the form of “professors, entrepreneurs, and other individuals who are willing to share their expertise in the different facets of business and entrepreneurship” (Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities, n.d.b). There is the possibility of the TAC being involved with this suggested online resource. Randy Blass, Director of the Jim Moran Institute for Global Entrepreneurship and supervisor of the EBV/EBV-F programs at Florida State University, communicated the following to one of the EBV librarians: “The one area I see need[ed] is developing an online resource for the EBV student vets. The online program has huge opportunities...Go after improvements here.”

The librarians’ role could be twofold in the development of such a shared resource. They are already familiar with potential databases that could be included and in many cases, already have a working relationship with the vendors. They could collectively work at securing access to these resources for the veterans.

The authors believe that having databases available on a common portal for all EBV participants, behind a password-protected firewall, would facilitate contract negotiations. Library subscription pricing is often based on the number of full-time equivalent students on campus, or possibly the number of students enrolled in the business program. Restricting access to these costly resources only to students enrolled in the EBV program may make them more affordable in the long run. The possibility also exists for vendors donating access to their databases as a sign of goodwill to thank veterans for their service.

In addition to setting up vendor-EBV relations, the librarians themselves would also be willing to help with content creation. With EBV participants being in need of information on niche and small business industries, librarians could track and pool relevant information and

create unique guides, or “how to’s”, on business research. These resources could be webpages or recorded presentations with screen captures for use by all EBV as well as other IVMF programs.

The authors would hope that an online resource they help develop would keep EBV students and faculty engaged and up-to-date and could lead to a stronger connection between the EBV students, the local EBV programs, and the national program.

Collaboration

Another opportunity the EBV librarians could pursue is more collaboration amongst the group. EBV librarians have noted significant benefits from speaking with other EBV librarians, and more importantly, visiting different EBV programs.

Experienced EBV librarians have visited new EBV university partners and their libraries during the startup phase, which has been effective. The shared suggestions and techniques have helped to guide newer librarians in understanding the special needs and challenges common among the EBV clientele. A surprising result of these visits, as well as other communications, has been the development of mentorship among the group of EBV librarians.

These campus visits to a time-intensive support program are also quite beneficial with the addition of a second librarian who is familiar with the challenges and rewards of working with the veterans. Sometimes even one extra person isn't enough, so collaboration may include numerous librarians from other EBV institutions or additional local librarians or business students.

Site visits have had surprising payoffs. One librarian noted the effect of a more experienced librarian visiting her on her ability to increase her outreach in the business school as the faculty sees her collaborating with other librarians in the EBV program. She said, "I do

believe working together would be helpful for those of us who haven't had much luck making headway in marketing our skills and services to the administration/faculty in the (EBV) program." Another EBV librarian echoed these thoughts as she noted library support of the EBV as being an opportunity to demonstrate librarian value to business faculty. She received several invitations to speak to classes as a direct result of contacts made through her work with the EBV.

In addition to campus visits, communication amongst the group by email and phone have also been quite helpful and is something the group wishes to expand upon. These communication efforts allow EBV librarians to see what kinds of support are being offered at other institutions and to get new ideas for themselves. It also helps with better consistency across the programs, which addresses the challenge of having a lack of standardization within the EBV programs and libraries.

Increased Library Involvement

There is a desire by EBV librarians to increase the amount of time they have with EBV participants so they can ensure they have the business research skills necessary to succeed. The librarians are currently given times ranging from a short presentation to numerous days and nights of being embedded in the program. Even the latter isn't quite enough. Incoming students' research skills are often limited to the internet and "Googling," and the EBV librarians feel it is their jobs to improve upon these skills.

One clear challenge is a varied level of research experience among EBV participants. Many incoming students have specific niche business ideas and local industries they wish to research yet spend the first (online) phase of the EBV program lacking the research skills needed to find this information. The following are just a small sample of industries EBV participants

have researched: cosmetics, motivational speaking, guns, wigs, software development, and media production. It is not uncommon for businesses created by EBV participants to be tailored to a military or veteran customer base, which also requires niche market and demographic data on veterans.

The EBV librarians would prefer involvement beginning during the first phase of the program. The Florida State University EBV librarian experimented with this idea during the spring of 2013 in providing early outreach to the FSU EBV-Families class. The opportunity focused on industry and demographic questions asked approximately two weeks before the on-site bootcamp by five (of 18) EBV-F students. Informal feedback was extremely positive and several thank you notes were received.

One librarian has spoken with his local EBV program about becoming involved during phase one in the summer of 2013. Ideas under consideration are holding a webinar to introduce the EBV participants to the library's business resources a full month before their on-site visit. Online video tutorials being made available to participants during the first phase is another possibility.

The EBV librarians are passionate about providing the students with the tools and support they need throughout their time in the program, and beyond. As one EBV librarian put it, "really getting involved means devoting significant time to the students in order to really help them. I don't believe in just handing them a set of links, or providing access to our online databases is enough to make an impact." Earlier contact with the students and maintaining contact after they leave is key to enhancing the EBV experience.

Conclusion

The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities has changed lives. The program has helped veterans acclimate back into civilian life and become successful “vetrepreneurs,” a term used by EBV Program Director of Education Tina Kapral (Taber, 2012). The EBV librarians’ research expertise has played a role in veterans’ abilities to find the best information for their business plans and make good choices in their entrepreneurial ventures. Library involvement in the EBV program has a positive impact on the veterans’ EBV experience as the librarians strive to improve the participants’ potential for success.

Veterans are not the only ones who have benefited from the EBV program. In addition to the intrinsic value gained from supporting the program, this group of EBV librarians has found new professional relationships and teaching opportunities as a direct result of the program. This group of professionals from the field of librarianship is proud to help those who have come home from the fields of battle and plan to continue supporting their research needs for many years to come.

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