This was another banner year for the VCNG as we launched a Team Red White and Blue Community, advocated for veteran’s issues, contributed to University recruitment efforts, and participated for the first time as a University in the Central New York, Veterans Higher Education Regional Consortium (CNY V-HERC). Our focus is on increasing the awareness of our group and the many activities we have planned to engage our veterans and community members.

**VCNG 2014 Activity Highlights**

The VCNG created a bookmark to hand out to various agencies across campus that lists our veteran resources and group information. This has been shared with teams across campus, from the on-boarding center, to admissions, to disability services, as well as off campus groups, like the local VFW and VA treatment center. In addition, this past semester, we began introductory meetings between Kevin Justian, our Veterans Affairs representative, and the various student services offices (admissions, financial aid, college admissions, etc.) across campus, to create an exchange of information between the two. We also hosted some of these representatives at our monthly meetings and will continue with this exchange through 2014.

We regularly host guest speakers from related services so we have more resources to refer veterans to. This fall included:

- Katherine Fahey from Student Disability Services shared how their program works
- Kerry Howell, from the Wellness program and Jennifer Austin from Gannett Services talked about the Spring Soup & Hope event and how the VCNG could participate in future events.
- Marv Hankinson from Project New Hope spoke about his group that hosts no-cost retreats for veterans and their families at Lions Camp Badger in nearby Spencer, NY
- Amberlee Clement from Cornell Cooperative extension near Fort Drum came to talk about their services.
- Faaiza Khan, an NSF REU Research Fellow, Syracuse University and SUNY Oswego, Psychology, Cornell University ’14, shared information about her research project - conducting a study on the factors that affect well-being after exposure to traumatic situations in veterans.
- Jared Woodrey, chair of the Johnson Veterans group spoke about their efforts to establish a partnering undergraduate club similar to their graduate club. The VCNG offered to support these efforts and both groups discussed the benefits of shared guest speaker opportunities and collaborating on some social events.

On July 24, 2013, the VCNG and the Veterans Affairs representative co-hosted a table at the annual Staff Development Day event, providing information and resources to Cornell community members.

In September 2013, the VCNG hosted a Fall networking event at the Moakley House, attracting about 30 guests.
The VCNG co-hosted a workshop with the Disability CNG on “From Military Life to Civilian Life: The Transition Experience of Disabled Veterans to a Civilian Workforces and Community Living” presented by Luz Semeah.

The VCNG supported the Fall Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans sponsored by the School of Hotel Administration by attending a number of the mentoring events, connecting with the participants, and presenting on the local resources available to the veteran attendees while at Cornell.

Cornell joined the CNY V-HERC (Central New York, Veterans Higher Education Regional Consortium) this year. The VCNG, in conjunction with the Recruitment and Employment Center at Cornell and the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion, helped to moderate their November event at Syracuse University and the student centered information gathered from this event was shared across the Cornell admissions, student services and certifying official roles at Cornell. Cornell hosted the next quarterly event on March 26 and focused on employing veterans, with Hannah Rudstam from the Workforce Disability Institute presenting her Employer Toolkit for Veterans. VCNG member Edgar Johnson, from Cornell Human Resources, is dedicated to recruiting veterans and he presented on the tactics Cornell has used to target veterans in their recruitment policies.

In November, the VCNG participated in a Veterans Day gathering at the Wortham Memorial Library, co-hosted with ROTC. At this event, we also launched our Memorials web site (http://veteransmemorials.cornell.edu/) that notes all the War Memorials on campus. In November, we sponsored a run of the Memorials with Team RWB-Ithaca (http://veteransmemorials.cornell.edu/files/2014/05/Tour-13-1mp14h.pdf) and will continue to do this at least two times per year. The Veterans Memorial site has had 696 page views (since its launch in November 2013 through May 2014).

Through the advocacy of the VCNG, the University administration increased the number of undergraduate Yellow Ribbon slots from 40 to 100, to be able to accommodate all veterans applying for benefits.

Through the efforts of the VCNG, the presence of the Veterans Affairs representative was increased from one to two days per week.

The VCNG contributed veteran specific recommendations for units looking to increase their veteran presence through the “Towards New Destinations” initiative.

On April 28, 2014, VCNG leadership participated in the open forum hosted by the Cornell University Presidential Search Committee and a separate luncheon comprised of representatives from diverse groups across campus. Participation included emphasizing the need for a new president to have experience in creating inclusive and diverse communities as well as being committed to continuing the current initiatives, which include the recruitment of veterans into the Cornell community.
In April the VCNG hosted a Spring networking and recognition event held April 29, 2014. We invited student veterans to recognize their educational achievements. We attracted about 15 attendees.

At the May 2014 commencement, the VCNG further recognized the achievement of eight graduating veterans with red, white and blue honor cords, which we will sponsor annually.

Cornell became a partner in the Vietnam Veteran Commemorative Partner Program and will host our first event at the end of 2014. The VCNG has been integral to this planning. The VCNG will host a Walking Tour of the War Memorials on June 6th of Reunion Weekend to engage alumni veterans and their families and raise awareness around the Vietnam Veteran collection in the University Archives. In addition, at noon that day, the VCNG will sponsor a 5k run around the Memorials and we provided informational materials to the University Library for their display.

Our VCNG blog site drew over 1,632 page views (with over 88% of users being new visitors) from June 2013 to May 2014.

**VCNG and Veteran Recruitment**

As noted above, Edgar Johnson, a staffing consultant at the Recruitment and Employment Center and a member of the VCNG, is a critical liaison between the VCNG and REC and our work together is ongoing.

- The VCNG works with Edgar to identify opportunities for veteran recruitment.
- Edgar is the single point of contact for veteran referrals from VCNG members and from inquiries to the listserv or through the web page.
- VCNG members support the hiring of veterans by offering “informational interviews” to veterans seeking employment at Cornell.

Between July 1, 2013 and May 31, 2014, 41 veterans were added to Cornell’s workforce (based on those who self-identified) in banded and union jobs.

**VCNG Recognition/Press**

- The VCNG partnered with the Recruitment and Employment Center in the creation of a veteran recruitment/marketing video highlighting current veterans and their experience at Cornell. The video was released in Fall 2013: [http://www.cornell.edu/video/military-personnel-and-veterans-find-success-at-cornell](http://www.cornell.edu/video/military-personnel-and-veterans-find-success-at-cornell)
- The VCNG was recognized in Slope Magazine (a student publication) in their Spring 2014 issue: [http://issuu.com/slopetech/docs/spring14mag_online/33?e=10180175/7735398](http://issuu.com/slopetech/docs/spring14mag_online/33?e=10180175/7735398).
- VCNG members interviewed for the Spring 2014 Ezra Magazine cover article diversity and inclusion: [http://ezramagazine.cornell.edu/SPRING14/cover.html](http://ezramagazine.cornell.edu/SPRING14/cover.html).
Team Red, White and Blue-Ithaca

As our community outreach, the VCNG decided to participate in Team Red White and Blue, a national organization that encourages veteran re-integration through athletics and community outreach. We became an official community of Team Red White and Blue titled Team RWB-Ithaca in the Spring. Our commitment includes sponsoring a weekly athletic event as well as a quarterly social and a larger community outreach athletics event. We started off the Fall strong, partnering with the Cornell Plantations 5k runs. Participation continues to grow as more people become aware of our efforts.

Our Team Red White and Blue activities to date include:

- Weekly runs, usually two miles around campus
- Continued partnership with the Plantations bi-monthly 5k runs which resumed this spring.
- Hosted Run-As-One 5k at the Lansing Trails and networking event. Over 30 supporters joined us for this event.
- Sponsored a team for the Mud Sweat and Cheers Bordoni Cross fit Challenge.
- Marched in the Dryden Memorial Day Parade
- Hosted a networking bowling party
- Participated in the Ithaca Youth Bureau Festival Mile
- Ithaca Twilight 5k

The Team has established a Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/TeamRWBIthaca/) where the group shares news and upcoming events as well as our full 2014 event calendar, which includes a number of races/fun runs/cross fit challenges and social events. In addition, the Team has a blog site to highlight their activities: http://teamrwbithaca.org/.

Team RWB-Ithaca Press

- Pawprint coverage of Run As One, posted on 4/3/2014: http://pawprint.cornell.edu/?q=articles/2014/04/run-as-one-april-12
- WHCU also covered the Run As One event on the following Monday (April 14) in the morning but no print version was captured.
- Buzzsaw Magazine from Ithaca College, coverage of strength based veteran programs, posted 5/1/2014: http://www.buzzsawmag.org/2014/05/01/a-camouflaged-community/
VCNG Future Plans/Projects/Goals

- The VCNG has developed a position description and vision for a dedicated veterans representative and one of our main goals for the coming year is to explore (with our senior leadership) how this position could be financed and where it would fit within the organizational structure.
- The VCNG is working to increase the visibility of our group – through the many activities we sponsor, the variety of places we leave information, and the number of people across campus we reach out to.
- The VCNG is working with Human Resources to add depth to the resources they have in place for college and/or unit level training on veterans’ special opportunities/needs, the transfer of resume skills, development of university policies affecting veterans, and other recruitment and retention issues.
- The VCNG is developing a veteran to veteran volunteer mentoring program (for staff, faculty, and student interactions) to improve recruitment opportunity, increase staff job satisfaction and retention.

VCNG Challenges
The VCNG is eager to develop a position for a dedicated veteran’s representative on campus. We have established a committee that is developing a strategy on how best to realize this goal.

Summary
The VCNG is developing recognition around campus and our efforts in the coming year will focus on greater promotion of our many efforts. The dedication and bonding of this group is the backbone of our veteran community on campus and continues to inspire new veterans interested in joining Cornell.

VCNG Mission/Executive Officers
The Cornell University Veteran’s Colleague Networking Group (VCNG) was formed in 2010 and in accordance with University guidelines, the mission of the VCNG is “to raise awareness of Veteran issues here at the University, provide a forum for Veterans and their supporters to meet and discuss topics of mutual interest and concern, and to support the University's recruitment and retention of Veterans at Cornell University”. In support of this mission, we have defined our vision principles as the following:

- "We are a leader to, and resource for, all veteran faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners, and allies at Cornell University.
- We position ourselves to support a diverse veteran community while maintaining alignment with the University's strategic goals.
- Our services partner combinations of public, private, and military resources which set the standard for supporting veterans; from new students recently completing honorable military service to faculty and staff with past honorable service.
- We improve climate for all service men and women through our military friendly events, educational lectures, networking programs, and town/gown relations."
The VCNG currently has 325 people on the veterans and military-l listserv and 15-20 regularly attending members at our monthly meetings. In addition, veteran@cornell.edu email account fielded 57 inquiries from external veterans or allies of veterans. Most are student veterans interested in attending Cornell. The next largest number is for veterans interested in employment at Cornell. Finally, the remaining group consists of researchers/vendors with an interest specific to veterans. Our executive committee consists of the following:

Leadership Term: 2013-2015
Emily Franco, Co-Chair
Dennis Shaw, Co-Chair
Glenn Larratt, Historian
Dave Juers, Member-at-Large
Robert Morris, Member-at-Large (2014 to 2016)
Luz Semeah, Member-at-Large (2014 to 2016)
Keith G. Tidball, Member-at-Large (2014 to 2016)
Sue Withers, Member-at-Large
Cassie Joseph, Public Relations
Rick Roper, Events Coordinator
Nicole Jefferson, Community Service (2014 to 2016)
Steven Headrick, Local Community Connections
Lynette Chappell-Williams, Executive Liaison

Team Red White and Blue-Ithaca Leadership
Jase Baese – Team Captain
Rick Roper – Athletic Director
Amy Layton – Community Outreach Director
Steve Headrick – Veteran Outreach Director
Seamus Murphy – Veteran Outreach Director
Kamilah Knight – Social Director