

Veterans Advisory Committee on Education

801 18th Avenue,
Washington DC

October 25 and 26, 2007

Attendees:

Committee

Mr. James Bombard, Chair

Mr. James G. Blair

Dr. Michael Cappeto

Mr. Robert Clark

Dr. Jeff Cropsey

Ms. Faith DesLauriers

Rear Admiral Russell W. Gorman (Ret.)

Dr. Steve Kime

Ms. Lisa Lutz

Col Robert Norton (Ret.)

Mr. Stephen Rosmarin

Mr. George Rubin

Dr. Kathy Snead

Mr. C. Donald Sweeney

(*Not in attendance:* Mr. Colbert Boyd, Mr. Michael P. Cline, Mr. Joseph Sharpe)

VBA

Mr. Keith Wilson – Director, Education Service

Ms. Lynn Nelson – Asst. Director, Education Service

(New Exec. Committee Sec.)

Ms. Andrea Jones – Education Service

Mr. Salminio Garner – Education Service

Guests Present

See Attachment A

Thursday, 25, 2007

Meeting convenes, 8:35 a.m.

Jim Bombard opened the meeting by welcoming all members and recommended that members review the agenda. Mr. Bombard asked that the members review the minutes from the last meeting and comment if any changes were warranted. Minor changes were recommended by the committee and the minutes were then accepted.

Mr. Bombard began moving through the agenda and briefed the committee on the VACOE Total Force Working Group (TFW) letter dated June 4, 2007 that was sent to the Deputy Secretary. The letter offered opinion and comment to the Secretary on the TFW report. Mr. Bombard asked if the committee had any concerns in addition to those cited on the letter.

Members of the committee asked if the Secretary provided a response to the VACOE letter that provided comment on the TFW report.

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Mr. Bombard replied that he didn't believe a response was due to the Committee on the VACOE letter because VACOE simply made comments regarding the TFW report and did not require any reply from the Secretary.

Ms. Nelson replied that she was unaware of any request to respond and VBA Executive Review had not contacted the Education Service for comment.

Mr. Norton asked if the HVAC had received an official transmission on the TFW report.

Ms. Nelson stated that the report was not a VA report to Congress, but a Committee report.

Mr. Bombard confirmed that the TFW report did indeed go to Congress officially from VACOE.

Ms. Nelson added that the only recent VA required report that she was aware of was the Department's report on ways to streamline administrative processes and procedures, a requirement of Public Law 109-461. This report had been delayed and finally was approved by VA General Counsel for submission to Congress.

Mr. Norton asked Mr. Bombard to provide an overview of the background behind the VACOE's Total Force Proposal, for the benefit of some of the newer members. Mr. Bombard summarized how the Total Force Concept was fleshed out by a VACOE working group 2 years ago; it included elements of a tiered benefit approach in an effort to create a level benefit platform for those who serve in the military no matter if they are reservists or active duty service members. Mr. Bombard went on to comment that large veteran organizations such as the American Legion have expressed support for the TFW Concept. Since the VACOE's initial drafting of the proposal, there has been a great deal of interest in restructuring the GI Bill.

Admiral Gorman commented on the history of disparate increases in the annual payment increases for the MGIB-AD and SR programs.

Mr. Sweeney added that portability and equity were the corner stone of the letter to the Deputy Secretary from the VACOE. He directed the Committee's attention to the text in Mr. Bombard's June 4, 20076 letter to Deputy Secretary Mansfield discussing portability (paragraphs 4,5, and 6.) This text summarizes the difference between the TFW report and the VACOE's proposal.

Mr. Norton noted optimistically that the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) also accepted the 1st part of the concept to recodify the education benefits within title 10 as a part of title 38. He did note that neither the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) nor the Department of Defense (DoD) is fully behind the idea yet. He further noted that DoD has expressed concerns to the Senate Armed Services Committee that moving the

programs into title 38 and adding portability could adversely affect retention within the Guard and Reserve ranks. This argument may have had a chilling effect on the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees will to act on a Total Force type of proposal. In addition to these factors, Mr. Norton speculated that though recodification looks promising, portability will likely not be addressed this year because there is no off-set funding to implement it.

Mr. Norton commented that retention is the primary issue that DoD has a problem accepting. However, DoD must realize that people join because they want to and that active duty retention has not been harmed by the presence of a 10 year delimiting date; essentially, it appears the 1606 program is a sweetener for recruitment. Mr. Norton further added that it's unfortunate that no substantive improvements have been developed for 1606 in 10 years.

Mr. Clark affirmed that DoD has concerns for certain portions of H.R. 1585 (Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008) which would move parts of title 10 to title 38 and provide portability.

Mr. Norton said that dealing with kickers could be a problem with the proposals currently under consideration; and the House has worked to make sure that a shift from title 10 to 38 is cost neutral. HVAC, under the leadership of Rep. Vic Snyder, has exhibited a will to make the recodification happen.

Dr. Kime recalled DoD's statements at last week's HVAC hearing expressing a belief that once the MGIB benefit rate reaches a certain level it becomes a disincentive for military personnel to stay in the Active Duty forces. He expressed concern that DoD's claim that 1606 is merely an important retention tool is not a sound theory. It has been said that DoD wants to put a cap of \$1,400 on the active duty benefit rate.

Mr. Clark sought to clarify the DoD position expressed at last week's hearing on the effect of educational benefits on force management. Mr. Clark affirmed that some analysis was done by DoD in 1999 and recent trends suggested that a tipping point between the enlistment bonuses and benefit rates was fast approaching. Recruitment bonuses must keep up with education benefit ratios. The question is when is the right time to put something in place to control the rates. Imposing a cap on education benefit payments could help prevent a situation where it would be more beneficial for officers to leave the military and go to school, rather than continuing their active duty service.

Ms. DesLauriers noted that perhaps if the benefit paid to Active Duty members was equal to the benefit paid to veterans, then this might eliminate the incentive to leave the active duty forces. Current provisions have the effect of often penalizing individuals for using their educational entitlement while on active duty. For example, both an active

duty servicemember and a veteran would use a full three months of entitlement for three months of full-time study; however, the maximum payment the active duty servicemember may receive is the amount of his or her tuition and fees (provided it does not exceed the equivalent of 3 months of full-time MGIB-AD payment for a separated servicemember.) An individual who has separated and is attending school full time for three months will receive three full payments of the appropriate full-time MGIB payment rate, currently \$1,101 per month. The separated individual or veteran will use 3 months of his or her entitlement and receive a total of \$3,303 for that period. In contrast, the payment that the active duty servicemember receives for three months of full-time study may or may not equal \$3,303, but the servicemember will still be charged three months of entitlement.

Mr. Clark noted that DoD has asked VA to investigate this and perhaps propose legislation to this effect.

Ms. Nelson confirmed that Education Service has presented legislative proposals to effect this. She then explained the VA legislative proposal process and summarized that legislative proposals are to improve the usefulness of the education benefit to the beneficiary. The legislative proposals explain the effect the legislative change would have as well as the costs or cost savings generated by the legislative change. Internally to VA, these proposals go through VA Executive Review, General Counsel and are then provided to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Ms. Nelson informed the committee that this is a lengthy process and there is no certainty the proposals will survive the entire concurrence process.

Ms. DesLauriers expressed concern that if these efforts to improve the programs are not embraced by those involved, then the idea of one GI Bill has no chance of survival either. She stated that this is truly an inequity that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Blair asked Ms. Nelson about various details of the legislative proposals and Ms. Nelson covered selected elements of those recommended legislative ideas.

Mr. Blair asked if there were other training or education programs that VA administered.

Ms. Nelson mentioned the VBA Employment and Training programs that help disabled veterans.

Mr. Bombard moved the discussion back to the concept of re-codification of the existing title 10 benefit programs. He stated that some of his sources have indicated that some of the current opposition to Total Force would be lessened if chapter 1607 were moved to title 38, and the chapter 1606 program was abolished, thereby leaving more money for bonuses and other incentives which could be processed through the DoD payroll system.

Mr. Norton stated that technically chapter 1606 is not a readjustment benefit.

Mr. Clark noted that there has been some discussion about this within DoD and there is a general feeling that VA should not be part of any force management initiatives.

Ms. DesLauriers asked Mr. Clark to explain.

Mr. Clark suggested that moving all DoD 1606 programs under DoD Tuition and Assistance (T&A) could be the solution.

Ms. Nelson added that the VA's implementation of the 1607 program was very challenging and it required massive information technological (IT) modifications.

Dr. Kime commented that 1606 and 1607 should be given entirely to VA.

Dr. Cropsey asked if there is a real advocate for this in Congress, i.e. a modern-day Sonny Montgomery.

Mr. Rubin asked if someone was going to champion this idea of the re-codification.

Mr. Norton responded by mentioning that Congressman Vic Snyder is a great advocate to re-codification and is a key member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). Mr. Snyder is also a member of the HVAC.

Dr. Kime agreed with Mr. Norton's high regard for Congressman Snyder.

Dr. Cropsey expressed concern that the DoD's Tuition Assistance (TA) program is a discretionary program and it is applied differently in all branches of service. For example, the general opinion was that the Air Force was very generous, while the Navy imposed strict eligibility criteria.

Ms. Lutz added that she is also aware that at times DoD TA funding runs out.

Mr. Bombard introduced Mr. Ron Chamrin of the America Legion to the committee. Mr. Chamrin is an education resource with the American Legion, but he is also an active member of the Guard and Reserves. He highlighted that there must be some guaranteed funding for education for the Reserves. The 1606 benefit achieves this while the DoD TA program does not.

Mr. Norton noted that branches of service do not have a guarantee that the money is always available to TA.

Mr. Chamrin affirmed that to his knowledge that is true.

Break 10:10 a.m.

Reconvene 10:20 am

Mr. Chamrin continued, noting the importance of adding portability to the 1607 benefit given the nature of the service completed by these individuals.

Mr. Clark stated that adding portability will require additional bonuses to keep the force numbers up. Mr. Chamrin also discussed the fact that active duty service often inhibits individuals from going to school, thus making portability even more critical for individuals eligible for chapter 1607.

Mr. Norton discussed the situation with the Minnesota National Guard. He explained that half of the unit could apply for the Active Duty GI Bill after paying \$1200. Norton noted that the 80% REAP is the same as the two-year rate, but the MGIB-AD allows portability. He concluded that the key factor for these reservists is actually the portability. In essence, portability was at the heart of the Minnesota Guard issue.

Mr. Norton also stated that the Minnesota guard and others are being called back up, but they cannot accrue their service to get the more advantageous benefit. Mr. Norton stated that he has been pushing the message to both congressional Veterans' Affairs committees that the accrual factor and portability are critical. If these individuals have done two years and are called up again, eventually they will accrue thirty-six months. At some point, we will have to figure out what to do when that happens. Currently under the 1607 program, only the first call-up will count.

RADM Gorman cited the adverse impact of these call-ups on the individuals affected. He is concerned that with all of these call-ups in ten years time we may not have a reserve force.

Mr. Clark responded by explaining the top-up issue and discussed with the committee the \$100.00.

Ms. DesLauriers also expressed her concerns about the issue.

Mr. Norton proposed that the VACOE recommend or propose a communiqué highlighting the accrual issues. Ms. DesLauriers and Mr. Clark will contribute something on the top-up, non top-up discrepancy. There was discussion about possible themes for inclusion in the letter. They included:

- Support for armed forces retention,
- Professional development,
- Improved readiness, and

- Using the GI Bill for active duty in an advantageous way.

Mr. Norton suggested that the theme of the VACOE letter should convey that we support armed forces retention, and incentive for school's use of the GI Bill.

Ms. Nelson suggested that the VACOE recommend that the determination of the entitlement charge be calculated using the same method currently used for charging entitlement for Tuition Assistance Top-up, correspondence training and flight training for servicemembers using the MGIB for college or technical training. This method determines entitlement by dividing the amount of assistance received by the applicable full-time rate. For example, one month of entitlement will be charged for every \$1,110 paid, whether or not the recipient is a servicemember or a veteran. Making this change would make our entitlement computations more uniform. She noted that Education Service will provide a copy of their legislative proposal on this topic to Mr. Bombard.

Mr. Bombard asked Ms. Nelson to cover the other items on the agenda regarding the chapter 1606 eligibility extension matter and pending legislation.

Ms. Nelson said VA has been paying Reservists based on the 1606 extension (Active duty service time served plus four months) since the 1990's. If a Guard member or Reservist is called up for 12 months and then separates, then his/her extension will be for 12 months plus 4 additional months. VA and DoD have both provided information to Points of Contact such as the Education Liaison Representatives and it appears both DoD and VA are on the same page. An informational notice has also been placed on VA's www.GIBill.va.gov website to ensure that returning servicemembers and veterans are aware of the 1606 extension.

Ms. Nelson also began to discuss legislation under consideration before the 110th congress. Some of the major themes include recodification of the title 10 programs, expansion of accelerated payment, creation of a new post 9/11 GI Bill benefit, and making reservists eligible for education benefits if they have served an aggregate of 2 years.

Some bills, including S.22 and S. 1409, have proposed to create a new chapter 33 benefit. These types of proposals were found to be very expensive and would require major systems changes to implement, while adding to the complexity of the existing benefits structure. In general, VA would prefer that the existing benefits structure be enhanced, in lieu of legislation creating new benefits.

Ms. Nelson noted that one proposal VA looked favorably upon is the expansion of the benefit criteria in the accelerated payment program. For reasons of equity, VA would

like to see accelerated payment provisions made available for all types of high cost, short term training.

Admiral Gorman noted that the Naval Reserve has been consistently downsized and some individuals who would like to go into the reserves after their naval service cannot. This means that they are essentially frozen out of their benefit eligibility, if they were on a 2 year contract.

Mr. Norton commented that the Senate has this type of eligibility criteria proposed in the DoD Re-Authorization Act.

Mr. Clark mentioned that one bill proposed ending the \$1,200 pay reduction and another bill suggested returning the \$1,200 to all who have served since 9/11.

Mr. Bombard agreed and said that some of these ideas were mentioned during last week's testimony on education benefits.

Mr. Clark said DoD deferred to VA on this issue, since it would affect VA's budget. DoD is not behind eliminating the \$1,200.00 pay reduction.

Ms. Nelson began briefing the committee on a more recent issue of the National Guard members of the 1-34th BCT and their chapter 30 eligibility. Some servicemen and women in the 1-34th BCT were given orders that stated not to exceed (NTE) 730 days and the rest were given orders that didn't obligate the individuals for two years. The issue is that all the members served the exact same amount of time on active duty but some had qualifying orders (NTE to 730 days) incurring a two-year obligation and some did not. The Army Board for the Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) is accepting 730-days as meeting the 2-year obligation requirement. The ABCMR is in the process of correcting the orders of 2,180 guard/reserve personnel to show that they had a 730-day (2-year) activation period. VA and DoD are working together and a list has been generated by the Guard displaying all those whose records are being corrected.

Admiral Gorman asked if equity for members of the guard and reserve were included in any of the proposed legislation.

Ms. Nelson responded that yes, one bill would allow reservists to be eligible for benefits based on an aggregate amount of active duty service, rather than for consecutive periods only.

Admiral Gorman expressed that the focus should be to take care of our people; currently the lack of aggregation hurts our reserve troops.

Ms. Nelson suggested that if the Committee feels this is an important issue they should consider adding it to their recommendations to the Secretary.

There was discussion of the fact that many reservists are opting to stay in the Selected Reserve rather than going to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), because they will be called up almost immediately if they go to the IRR. Guest Mr. Ron Chamrin, of the American Legion, noted that this has also been his experience and the experience of his colleagues in the Army Reserve. Mr. Chamrin further commented to the committee that those reservists that get deployed for contingency operations such as the Horn of Africa, Iraq or Afghanistan come back from activation to be called up yet again in 2 months.

Mr. Clark added that we should carefully craft the aggregate statement. Mr. Clark addressed and affirmed Admiral Gorman's issue of individuals being called up for another period of service because they were transferred to another unit, so the policy of only activating people once every five years does not play out that way. He stated that now the Army is activating units, not individuals, as was done in Vietnam.

Dr. Cappeto stated that this has been his nephew's experience with activation in Iraq. Mr. Bombard cited the impact of the frequent activations on his peers in the 82nd division at Fort Bragg during Vietnam. He added that when he and others served in the Airborne Unit in Vietnam they did not have any desire to be re-deployed soon.

There was additional discussion about other ideas generated by the Total Force Working Group. Mr. Clark mentioned that one thing that was identified in the Total Force Working Group was a concept of a user fee; it all comes back to dollars.

Ms. DesLauriers agreed, but added that equity is still the most important issue.

Admiral Gorman said that TriCare allows one to sign back up for the benefits, but must pay a penalty to be eligible.

Break 11:10 a.m.

Reconvene 11:20 a.m.

Mr. Bombard presented a special guest, Mr. William Susling, the retired Executive Secretary of the VACOE and Assistant Director of the Education Service. Mr. Bombard commended Mr. Susling for his service to the Committee and presented a plaque for his hard work and dedication to the Committee.

Mr. Susling expressed his gratitude to the VACOE and shared that he served as the Executive Secretary from 1998-2007 and it was the most satisfying part of his work. He thanked the Committee for really wanting to help the members of the Armed Forces.

Break 11:10 a.m.

Reconvene 11:20 a.m.

Dr. Cropsey mentioned that he has been in contact with Dr. Barry Cobb, DANTES Director and VACOE member from 1994 thru 2006. Dr. Cobb has been diagnosed with stomach cancer and Dr. Cropsey asked that members contact him in an effort to lift his spirits and wish him well. The VACOE was saddened by this news and spoke of contacting him directly.

The next agenda item was Dr. Cappeto's discussion of the letter he had drafted to elicit the support of college presidents in securing higher education opportunities for the men and women who serve our country in the Armed Forces. The idea of sending a letter was generated at the last meeting and Dr. Cappeto accepted the task of drafting this correspondence. The Committee envisioned this letter being sent out to college and university presidents under the signature of the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs.

Dr. Cappeto shared the proposed letter with the VACOE and began discussing its content. See Attachment B

Dr. Cappeto discussed the qualities that veterans bring to the college environment, qualities that an 18 year old student doesn't have. There was discussion about the fact that the SAT scores of students who are not recent high school graduates may be lower. In addition, their high school grade point averages may not be reflective of their anticipated performance at the college or university level. These factors may disadvantage veterans if they are the only criteria considered by admissions panels.

Dr. Cappeto noted that there are approximately 3000 colleges in America. Twenty-one hundred of these institutions have admissions standards, while the remaining 800 tend to be community colleges. The proposed letter should be addressed to the presidents of the 2100 institutions with admissions standards; Dr. Cappeto would not advocate sending the letter to the community colleges. If addressed to the institutions' presidents, the letter would theoretically be disseminated down to the directors of admissions and other relevant individuals. If the Committee deems it appropriate the letter could also promote the idea that colleges offer scholarships.

Mr. Rubin suggested that he doesn't feel that money is the issue, and that the letter should focus on getting veterans to apply and not add any reference to the scholarships.

Dr. Cropsey agreed and suggested that perhaps other incentives could be referenced.

Dr. Snead noted that the letter should highlight some of the personality traits possessed by veterans which would make them attractive contributors to the campus learning environment.

Admiral Gorman commented that the military is one of the few places in the economy which trains leaders and that businesses and business schools frequently train managers.

Col. Norton expressed his support for the letter. He said that it could be very powerful. He felt that the, "I encourage you to consider veterans...." message should be the focus of this cabinet level correspondence.

Dr. Snead also asked who would be the signing party within the VA.

Ms. Nelson said that it would have to be approved by the VA General Counsel, before it goes before the Secretary for signature.

Mr. Blair commented that perhaps a title of sorts or a catch phrase within the letter should be added; something like, "Vets First." He inquired if there was a marketing approach or division that could enhance strength of the letter.

Ms. Nelson replied that she was not aware of a marketing division within the VA.

Admiral Gorman commented that this is a great idea and that the squeaky wheels get the grease; this letter could go along way to influence the higher learning institutions.

Dr. Cropsey suggested that a parallel letter from the American Council on Education could also have a positive impact.

Mr. Bombard added that perhaps the Department of Labor (DoL) or Department of Education (DoE) could also support this VA effort in some way.

Ms. Nelson suggested that the Committee provide within their recommendations examples of how this letter could help overall.

Dr. Cropsey suggested perhaps this would drive the private foundations to develop their own advertisement ideas, TV adds, etc. to increase veteran attendance in higher education.

Lunch 12:15 p.m.

Afternoon session reconvenes at 1:30 p.m.

Ms. Lutz was scheduled to present to the Committee on Licensing and Certification programs (L&C). See Attachment C

Ms. Lutz provided background information on her former role as a member of the Professional Certification and Licensure Committee (PCLAC), a previous VA advisory

committee which has now sunsetted. She then began her presentation which explored the potential role of the VACOE in advising on L&C issues.

Ms. Lutz noted that licensure requirements vary greatly from one state to another. She then shared the VA's L&C data, which Keith Wilson shared at a recent congressional hearing.

Col. Norton inquired if the VA's data reflected how many of the individuals taking certification tests were currently on active duty. Mr. Garner noted that the VA does not currently have this data.

Ms. Lutz said that there is licensure training and supplemental training.

Mr. Blair asked her to further explain what was meant by supplemental training.

Ms. Lutz explained that re-certification activities would be one example. It could be for IT.

Ms. Lutz went on to explain that there are differences between certificates and certification. Certificate programs are like National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) while the American National Standard Institute actually fulfills the role for accreditation. Ms. Lutz emphasized that state licensing requirement standards often vary from state to state. As an example, you need a license for almost everything in California.

Dr. Cropsey mentioned that the way it should be looked at is that driver's licenses are not nationally standardized.

Ms. Lutz added that truck driving does have standard regulations on a national level, but individual states have more defined regulations. The American Legion did a health care licensure study some years ago; other organizations had hoped that the VA would be the de facto accreditation body for this field.

Ms. Nelson added that State Approving Agencies (SAA) determine if the statutory requirements are met to approve education programs.

Ms. Lutz noted that PCLAC recommended that credentialing organizations perform periodic reviews to ensure continued compliance

Mr. Norton asked if there were any details of the types of certifications individuals typically endeavor to get and if earning certifications drive soldiers to leave the service.

Dr. Cropsey replied that the certifications help support the mission of the armed forces.

Ms. Lutz added that the certifications could be a recruiting incentive.

Dr. Cropsey commended Ms. Lutz on all her work on the Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL); the Army finds it an invaluable tool.

Col. Norton asked about whether active duty members have a penalty for taking a certification test while on active duty. Ms. Nelson stated that they do not and that reimbursement for certification tests is the same for both active duty members and veterans.

Col. Norton stated that L&C and flight training's identical reimbursement rates for both veterans and active duty servicemembers could be the basis for an argument for why full-time educational payment should be paid at the same rate for active duty members as for veterans.

Mr. Blair asked if DoL and DoE offer anything like this.

Ms. Lutz replied that there has been discussion, but nothing has been developed yet from either agency. The Professional Certification and Licensure Committee (PCLAC) had made recommendations to the Secretary that a change to the regulations could improve L&C delivery.

Ms. Nelson added that it would be faster to make a change through legislation, than through regulations.

Ms. DesLauriers asked if the L&C exams are approved or if the school is subject to an approval process.

Mr. Bombard replied that a given exam is approved.

Ms. Lutz suggested that perhaps the Committee would be interested in looking at recommendations 1 and 5 from the last PCLAC report dated April 10, 2007 and incorporating them within the VACOE recommendations from this meeting.

Break 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Bombard introduced Allison Jones, Assistant Vice Chancellor of California State University and Bucky Peterson, Special Assistant to the Chancellor of the State of California State University. See Attachment C

Mr. Peterson noted that California leads the nation in the number of veterans with 2.2 million. He further noted that OIF and OEF veterans' unemployment rates are somewhere between 10% and 17%.

Ex-Officio Ron Drach, DoL Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs questioned the accuracy of the data referenced and noted that it may not be a clear representation of only OIF and OEF veterans, but of the overall veterans' unemployment rate.

Mr. Jones highlighted Governor Schwarzenegger's efforts to improve outreach to veterans on public California college campuses. Mr. Jones suggested that California has the lowest cost of higher education in the country.

Mr. Peterson added that approximately 20,000 students obtain a degree while approximately 40,000 used the benefit in the state of California.

Mr. Jones spoke of the need to increase outreach efforts to veterans. He noted the importance of reaching all branches of service on all campuses and remaining involved until they complete their schooling. The California State University (CSU) system's admission personnel attend the TAP briefings. In addition, the CSU system has mandated that their admissions and financial aid personnel attend training on the MGIB benefits. Mr. Jones has also provided training to ensure that these CSU personnel can clearly understand the needs of the soldiers who are interested in attending college. The military has given feedback to the CSU system and said if you want to bolster the enrollment of military personnel, then bring the campus to us. This has led to the CSU system offering courses on base.

Mr. Sweeney asked about the California veteran population participation in private colleges.

Mr. Peterson said about 6,000 veterans are in private colleges.

Mr. Rubin inquired as to why the efforts for outreach don't include private colleges.

Mr. Jones said that public dollars have been used in this capacity since 1960; therefore we must focus on public schools.

Mr. Jones spoke of the accomplishments of California efforts. Thus far, a few of the actions California has undertaken have been to establish a statewide website, initiate and enhance websites at each campus, participate in "Hire a Hero" and "Hire a Vet" Initiatives, and review credit transferability procedures.

Admiral Gorman asked if the colleges are involved with the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) briefings.

Mr. Peterson expressed concerns with the current TAP process. He would like to see kiosks on bases with transition counselors stationed there. He emphasized that the soldiers want to see a connection between jobs and training. California wants to enhance their outreach in this manner; they may develop electronic kiosks and put them

in different locations on the military base to better inform soldiers of training opportunities. He noted that they have identified approximately 260 possible sites for kiosks.

He reiterated that he does not believe the information resources are readily accessible on the bases.

Mr. Blair suggested that perhaps California should look at deployment sites.

Dr. Cropsey suggested that support centers are on bases; he inquired if the CSU system had investigated the use of the "One-Stops" or family service centers as a site for their outreach efforts.

Mr. Peterson and Mr. Jones noted that there is now a veterans support team on every CSU campus. Mr. Peterson further discussed the next steps in the "Troops to College" program.

Mr. Jones stated that the Chancellor of the CSU system would like to pursue more active partnerships with VA, to include placing an academic advisor at hospitals for severely wounded veterans.

Mr. Jones added that another area of focus for the CSU system is reviewing military training and experience with ACE guidelines for awarding academic credit. CSU has had discussions with the University of Maryland about their procedures for military credit transfer. CSU is looking at developing an alternative admission pathway for veterans.

Dr. Kime expressed concern that the Servicemember Opportunity Colleges (SOC) has already articulated how military training can be applied for academic credit.

Admiral Gorman asked if we had previously discussed advocating with colleges for more flexibility in awarding credit for training completed while in service. He cited the example of Avionics in the Navy. Avionics is a 65 week course and its requirements are just shy of the requirements for an Associate's degree. This generated extensive discussion about issues surrounding flexibility in awarding credit.

Discussions between the VACOE, Mr. Jones and Mr. Peterson continued until Mr. Bombard called the meeting to adjourn at 4:05 p.m.

Friday, October 26, 2007

Reconvene 9:00 a.m.

Mr. Bombard opened the second day of the meeting by asking Dr. Snead to brief the members on the current efforts of SOC.

Dr. Snead began by stating that Daryl Levine of the National Association of Students Personnel Administrators (NASPA) was working in partnership with SOC to develop a survey that would identify what services and programs are available to servicemembers. SOC is working with NASPA and the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators (NAVPA). NASPA would generate the survey which will collect data that could be used in a database and create a repository of services available to members on college campuses. The groups found that there are three to four areas in some institutions that provide special services, like orientation for soldiers and student lounges for servicemembers and veterans.

Mr. Blair asked if this survey would address the concerns presented by Dr. Doug Hermann at the VACOE's May 2007 meeting.

Dr. Snead said that this survey was not intended to include that type of information.

Mr. Blair asked if there would be a comment block where additional information could be added.

Ms. DesLauriers commented that perhaps a focus group could meet this requirement. Mr. Levine of NASPA and Ms. DesLauriers would work on creating a focus group.

Dr. Snead clarified that the survey being developed was for the student services personnel on campus and not for the students themselves.

Ms. Nelson asked if they would be able to gauge the veteran's student population through the survey.

Ms. Lutz asked if this would be a one-time survey or a recurring endeavor.

Dr. Snead relayed that the assorted groups are currently in the development stages with this survey and that the American Counsel on Education and American Veterans (AMVETS), Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) will work with SOC on this. The long-term goal is to establish a survey that could possibly be issued annually.

Mr. Sweeney asked how many schools would be surveyed.

Dr. Snead stated that they intend to distribute the survey to all schools, approximately 3,000 or more institutions. The intent is to create a database that the schools could update independently by identifying changes to the services they provide to the servicemembers.

Dr. Cappeto added that NASPA is a great organization.

Mr. Bombard moved the meeting agenda to another subject and invited Keith Wilson, Director of Education Service, to address issues not previously discussed.

Mr. Wilson provided the Committee with additional information regarding pending legislation. Mr. Wilson also mentioned that in fiscal year 2007 the overall usage rate was 70.2% and an average of 17 months of entitlement were used by beneficiaries.

Mr. Wilson also mentioned that VA provided education benefits to approximately 523,000 participants in fiscal year 2007; this is the highest level of participants ever. Almost 3 billion dollars in benefits were paid in fiscal year 2007.

Mr. Sweeney asked if these increases can be attributed to the fact that servicemember disability ratings have increased causing dependents to use the benefit. He also inquired if there was regional data available on benefit usage and payments.

Mr. Wilson suggested that VA is reluctant to focus on regional trends in this area. He noted that VA has reduced the claims pending rate and improved timeliness from 46 days to 25 days to complete processing of a claim, on average.

Mr. Rubin asked if this positive reduction was due to additional staffing or technological improvements.

Mr. Wilson replied that both factors have contributed to the improvements. He noted that contracting out call services for a period and hiring new claims examiners played a significant role in the reduction.

Admiral Gorman inquired about the electronic signature capabilities of the VA.

Mr. Wilson informed the Committee that VA wants to move all of its administrations to electronic signatures simultaneously and that Education Service is waiting for the protocol specifications from VA before moving forward. If electronic signature capabilities were implemented, claims processing time could possibly be reduce by 2 or 3 days. Electronic signatures may be a reality in VA in about 18 months.

Mr. Wilson mentioned that Education Service has made the decision to establish a permanent call center in the Muskogee Regional Processing Office (RPO). None of the call center functions will change and centralizing calls will improve the overall productivity of the RPOs, allowing them to process more claims.

He further stated that VA has a Web Automated Verification Enrollment (WAVE) System which allows students to independently verify their enrollment without calling the RPO.

Dr. Cropsey noted that he and other associates visited the Atlanta RPO and saw first - hand the large number of calls received calls. He noted that the RPO staff was excited about getting WAVE and the call center off the ground.

Ms. DesLauriers asked for clarification as to whether the WAVE system was only available to those who have enrolled or if it could be used to verify eligibility.

Mr. Wilson replied that the system was only for enrollment verifications by previously paid recipients and could not be used to verify an individual's eligibility for education benefits. VA also has an online initial application system, Veterans' Online Application System (VONAPP).

Mr. Rubin commented that online application could be promoted by highlighting the fact that these claims could be processed more rapidly.

Mr. Wilson mentioned that although an initial application can be made through VONAPP, VA must still receive a signature from the beneficiary. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) still requires a signature and VA will probably never completely phase out paper applications.

Ms. DesLauriers noted that if electronic signatures were used this would drive on-line applications; as conditions currently exist, the incentive to use the electronic applications is minimal.

Break 9:50 a.m.

Mr. Wilson provided the Committee with additional information regarding the 1- 34th Minnesota National Guard and noted that the affected individuals' orders will be adjusted.

Mr. Wilson then updated the committee on the status of the Committee's recommendation that VA develop a grant initiative to provide additional assistance to universities' veterans affairs offices. Mr. Wilson mentioned that it appears that VA's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) has no responsibility or authority to fund the initiative. This means that Education Service would need to develop a funding request for such a proposal through the normal budget process. Mr. Wilson cited the Florida Outreach initiative that was proposed by the FBCI as a comparable example. This endeavor, though not successful, required Education Service support. Mr. Wilson noted that justification through the budget process and funding for fiscal year 2009 would be problematic right now for Education Service. He further stated that though this is unfortunate and likely disappointing to the Committee, but that it is reality.

Mr. Bombard commented that the Committee presumed that FBCI would take the lead on this and that Education Service would not be responsible directly.

Ms. Nelson noted her concerns that the difficulties and issues affecting the previous faith-based initiative would be repeated in this endeavor.

Ms. DesLauriers stated that one of the benefits that the Committee initially foresaw with such an undertaking was that private dollars could be infused into the system, ultimately benefiting veterans. She also noted that it is a shame that this concept would not work right now, as college and university veterans affairs' offices are currently struggling.

Mr. Wilson replied that it is unlikely that VA or OMB would support this proposal.

Ms. DesLauriers stated VA should support those who support them (i.e. the college and university veterans affairs' offices).

Mr. Wilson commented that some would argue that the Department of Education does not provide funding to schools, but attendance is still strong and financial aid offices still perform the necessary actions.

Mr. Bombard suggested that the Committee table this idea and move to developing its' recommendations.

Some members agreed that excluding chapter 1606 from any re-codification of the title 10 education benefits could be a positive alternative, if the Total Force Working group concept was not fully accepted.

Mr. Norton reiterated his concern that excluding chapter 1606 would remove the opportunity for reservists to gain portability. Secretary Gates' new DoD policy is that a reservist will be called up once every five years, although most, like those with the Minnesota National Guard, would do a minimum of two years active duty service and some will do three years of service.

Mr. Bombard agreed that that is a problem.

Mr. Clark noted that moving chapter 1606 would make it a readjustment benefit, rather than a recruitment tool, as it was intended to be.

Mr. Sweeney added that the challenge is to influence legislation this year on this matter.

Mr. Bombard asked Mr. Wilson for his opinion of this idea.

Mr. Wilson replied that his feelings about this concept are mixed, and that he is more focused on pending legislation.

Dr. Kime agreed with Mr. Clark and stated that it seems to make sense to keep chapter 1606 within title 10 and place it under DoD Tuition Assistance (TA), thereby preserving DoD's role in force management.

Mr. Bombard suggested that the Committee recommend leaving chapter 1606 in title 10 and moving chapter 1607 into chapter 30.

Ms. Nelson added that this is a good idea, as long as this would mean the REAP eligible reservists would use the chapter 30 eligibility criteria and the chapter 1607 eligibility criteria would be abolished.

All members agreed.

It was agreed that the Committee's second recommendation would be that Dr. Cappeto's letter should be presented for the Secretary's signature. The portion of the letter referencing scholarships will be omitted prior to sending the letter forward.

Ms. DesLauriers added that there should be a recommendation to increase the reporting fees paid to educational institutions.

Ms. Nelson reminded the Committee that it appears that they had agreed to also recommend changes to tuition and fees and that entitlement charges be calculated using the same method currently used for charging entitlement for Tuition Assistance Top-up, correspondence training and flight training for servicemembers using the MGIB for college or technical training.

The committee also discussed including a recommendation from PCLAC regarding the oversight of L&C programs and how it is done by the SAA's.

Mr. Bombard asked if Mr. Wilson would discuss the On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeship timeliness matter.

Mr. Wilson told the Committee that a working group has been formed to develop ideas to improve this process. Currently, OJT and apprenticeship claims are processed outside of the Benefits Delivery System, also known as out of system processing. This has caused a problem, because we have no way to monitor these claims. We are doing better overall, but there is still work to do. The end result will be a new payment system for OJT and the other out of system claims.

Mr. Wilson added that there is positive news regarding Education Service's funding for technological enhancements. As a result of VA's IT reorganization, this money is now locked in the IT business line and will be used to fulfill and improve Education Service systems.

Mr. Bombard opened the floor to new Committee business.

Mr. Norton informed the Committee that officers at the O-1 and O-2 levels, from 2nd Lieutenant to Captain, are leaving the military because of the stresses it has placed on their family life. Army is now offering tuition assistance as a reenlistment incentive to retain these servicemembers; currently ROTC participants and Service Academy graduates are not eligible for MGIB. Mr. Norton noted that it would be great if through

force management and reenlistment they could be eligible for chapter 30. This would require a change in the current law.

Mr. Clark added that participation in the student loan repayment program also makes individuals ineligible for MGIB. He suggested that perhaps these individuals should be included in any proposal to change the law.

Admiral Gorman mentioned that there is a surplus of O-1s, O-2s, and O-3s right now.

Mr. Norton and Mr. Clark replied that this is correct and that these servicemembers are eligible for the Blue to Green Program, an initiative to shift officers from the Air Force and Navy over to the Army.

The Committee's discussion then turned to eligibility requirements, specifically the \$1,200 pay reduction.

Dr. Cropsey asked if the enlisted servicemembers must pay the \$1,200 up-front.

Mr. Clark replied that this was correct. Enlisted persons must pay the \$1,200 through payroll deductions of \$100 per month for the first 12 months of service. Mr. Clark suggested that servicemembers be given the option to buy in to the MGIB at the end of their enlistment, rather than at the beginning. He stated that it is unfair to force them to make a choice at the beginning of their contract.

Dr. Snead commented that this may still not be appealing enough to enhance recruitment.

Mr. Norton noted that perhaps the deal could be sweetened if transferability were added with the deal of reenlistment. Reenlistment is a career decision that involves the entire family.

It was decided by the Committee to not discuss proposed locations for the next meeting since Committee member appointments are currently pending. Decisions on the next meeting will be postponed until the new members have been appointed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Attachment A

Veterans Advisory Committee on Education
*810 Vermont Avenue,
Washington, DC*

October 25 and 26, 2007

Special Attendees

October 25, 2007

PVA – Washington, DC

Allison Jones	Chancellor for California State University
Bucky Peterson	Asst. Chancellor for California State University
Ron Drach	Ex-Officio, DOL/VETS
George Parker	Asst. DOL/VETS
Ron Chamrin	American Legion
William Susling	Retired Asst. Director Education Service

Draft

Dear College President (mail merged by name):

I am writing to enlist your support in securing higher education opportunities for the men and women who serve our country in the armed forces.

Many military personnel apply to college following their discharge. When they apply to your institution, I encourage you to consider their interest carefully, both in recognition of their service and because of their qualifications as students and citizens. The military does an excellent job of educating service personnel in areas as diverse as computer science, information technology, communication arts, the sciences, logistics, engineering, transportation, aeronautics, accounting, and business management. Each veteran brings a slightly different set of educational experiences to college. What they have in common are well-developed intellectual skills in areas such as problem solving, analytical and quantitative reasoning, and communication that are transferable to higher education.

Veterans are typically older and more mature than traditional students. A high proportion are male and racially diverse. Most benefit from financial aid provided by the GI Bill.

Please consider how enrolling veterans can help meet your institutional goals, just as providing enrollment opportunities for veterans can recognize their service to our country. I would never suggest that colleges admit applicants who are unqualified. But I do ask that you weigh veterans' armed forces education, their life experiences, maturity, and service to America as qualities that make them distinct and highly desirable members of your college community. Some veterans may apply with grades that are lower than those of the applicants you normally admit. Some who have not recently used the skills that are assessed by the ACT and SAT may present scores that do not reflect their educational potential. I encourage your institution to consider each veteran's application individually, giving due consideration to life experience.

A number of colleges and universities have established veterans' scholarships that supplement the support provided by the GI Bill. Marymount Manhattan College, Embry Riddle University, Dartmouth College, and Lafayette College are among the schools that have recently implemented such programs. The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to promote the scholarships that are available to enlisted personnel and veterans. If your college or university has such a program, please let us know by emailing us at [\(Email Address\)](#), and we will include your scholarship in our promotions.

On behalf of almost 24 million veterans, and another 100,000 service members who will be discharged this year, thank you for your efforts to assist those who have served our country and now wish to advance their lives by attending college.

Sincerely,

Secretary of VA

Exploring the Role of VACOE in Advising on Licensure and Certification

October 25, 2007

Presented by Lisa Lutz

Today's Presentation

- Background on Credentialing**

- GI Bill Payment of Certification and Licensure Exam Fees**

- Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee (PCLAC)**

- Overview of Accomplishments**

- Unfinished Business**

- VACOE's Role**

What is credentialing?

■ Credentialing is the process of earning official recognition for meeting professional and/or technical standards in your occupational area.

Licensure

■ *Who grants licenses?* Federal, state or local governmental agencies.

■ *Why?* To set professional standards, ensure safety and quality of work, such as medical licenses for doctors. Laws and regulations define licensing standards.

■ *Are they voluntary?* No, licenses are typically mandatory.

Certification

■ *Who grants certifications?* Non-governmental agencies—typically associations, and companies.

■ *Why?* To set professional standards for qualifications, such as a certification for a crane operator, or a Novell Network Certified Engineer. These standards are not defined by laws or regulations.

■ *Are they voluntary?* Usually, although state licensure boards and employers may require certification.

Are certifications and certificates the same thing?

■ No, certifications and certificates are not the same thing.

■ Unlike a certification, certificates are:

Issued after an individual attends or participates in a particular meeting or course.

Educationally focused as opposed to occupationally focused.

Are not always based on formal job/practice analysis or role delineation study

May not be assessment based

**What kinds of requirements
can credentials have?**

**■ Credentialing boards determine the requirements for licensure and certification.
Typically they require some combination of:**

Education

Training

Work or professional experience

Examinations

■ For some credentials, boards may have requirements related to:

Residency

How recently the training or experience took place

Periodic renewal (typically every one to three years)

Continuing education requirements or reexamination requirements associated
with renewal

Why is credentialing important for service members and veterans?

■ In service:

Civilian credentialing can contribute to personal and professional career development.

To what extent do civilian credentials apply to service members and veterans?

■ The Army and Navy have studied applicability of credentials to their military occupations:

Army

■ 95% of enlisted MOSs have applicable civilian credentials

■ 93% of active duty Soldiers serve in these MOSs.

Navy (analysis to date)

■ 98% of Navy enlisted ratings have applicable civilian credentials

■ 99.5% of active duty Sailors serve in these ratings.

What costs are associated with credentialing?

■ There are two primary costs associated with credentialing:

Credentialing board fees. May include:

■ Application fees

■ Exam fees

■ Membership Fees

■Renewal Fees

Supplemental training, which may be needed to qualify for the credential

Key Factors Related to Credentialing

■Proliferation of certifications in past decade

Thousands now offered

Many “competing” certifications

No systematic studies of which certifications are sought by employers

Makes it difficult to determine which one to pursue

Key Factors Related to Credentialing (cont'd)

■No widely used accreditation process for certification organizations or programs

ANSI and NOCA are only national accreditors

They have reviewed less than ¼ of certifications

Makes it difficult to ascertain the quality of certifications

■State licensing requirements for some occupations often vary from state to state

Makes it difficult for service members to prepare prior to separation

GI Bill Payment of Credentialing Exam Fees

■P.L. 106-419 (2002) authorized payment of licensure and certification exam fees

Up to \$2,000 per test

No limit to the number of tests that can be reimbursed (except maximum GI Bill entitlement)

Fees for re-testing and renewing licenses or certifications are also covered

Registration fees, preparation guides and processing fees are not reimbursed.

■P.L. 109-163 (2006) extended benefit to mobilized members of Guard and Reserve

Additional Legislative Requirements of P.L. 106-419

■Specifies requirements for approval of licensing and certification tests

Allows VA to provide SAAs with approval authority

Specifies Test Requirements

Specifies Credentialing Organization Requirements

Additional Legislative Requirements of P.L. 106-419 (cont'd)

■Established the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee (PCLAC):

Created to advise Secretary of VA on approval requirements and other matters

Made up of seven individuals with L&C expertise plus ex officio members from Departments of Labor and Defense

Set termination date of 12/31/06

Significance of Legislation and VA Implementation

First time legislation has attempted to quantify and define the quality of certification and licensure programs

VA now has the structure/network in place to monitor certification/licensure with regard to:

Costs

Occupational Sectors

Use by service members and veterans

PCLAC Membership

Sandra Winborne, PhD, Chairwoman, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

Michael Clark, National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies

Wade Delk, National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA)

William G. Harris, PhD, Association of Test Publishers

Lisa Lutz, Solutions for Information Design, LLC

■ Donna Mooney, Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation (CLEAR)

■ Roy Swift, Director of Personnel Certification, American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

Key PCLAC Activities

■ Requested legal reviews of legislative language to clarify intent

■ Defined and clarified legislative/regulatory language

■ Provided recommendations for design/ development of VA's L&C database

■ Provided recommendations for improving the quality of SAA approval process

□ Reviewed application used by SAAs

□ Developed toolkit on L&C for use in training SAA staff

PCLAC Final Recommendations

■ Add a component of licensure and certification to quality assurance process.

■ Due to the increase of credentialing agencies and the decrease in the number of veterans utilizing the benefit, immediately improve current outreach activities.

■ VA should strengthen partnerships with other federal agencies with credentialing organizations and their accrediting bodies, as well as other experts in the field of certification and licensure.

PCLAC Final Recommendations (cont'd)

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4. Reconstitute the Committee [i.e., PCLAC] under the VA.
5. Develop a policy to mandate that credentialing organizations perform a periodic review of licensure and certification programs to ensure continued compliance with the DVA approval criteria.
6. Recommend legislation that would expand the GI Bill benefit to include payment for tutorial assistance needed to pass licensing and certification exams.

Recommendations for VACOE Role

- Follow-up on status of implementation of PCLAC recommendations
- Receive continued reports from VA staff on L&C benefit usage and outreach activities
- Monitor related legislation
- Make recommendations to Secretary, as necessary, on implementation of benefit program

Attachment D

Purpose

- To provide an overview of California's educational opportunity partnership initiative – Troops to College - for active duty and veterans

Background: California Demographics

- California leads nation in number of veterans

-2.2 million (9.2%) of 24 million nationally

•11% of active duty in U.S. Armed Forces are from California

-170,000 of 1.45 million

•12% of active duty are stationed in California

-175,000 of 1.45 million

•20,000 active Air Force and Army National Guard stationed in California

Background: Veterans and Service Members Profile

•High school graduates

•25.3 = average age

•84% male and 16% female

•Demonstrated leadership

•OIF/OEF veteran unemployment rate somewhere between 10% & 17% (US Dept of Labor)

•96% of exiting veterans enrolled in Montgomery GI Bill

-US Department of Veterans Affairs statistics indicate that roughly 70% ever utilize benefits; Military.com estimates that fewer than 50% actually use benefits toward a completion of a degree

Background: California Public Colleges and Universities Profile

•California Community Colleges:

-109 campuses

-2.5 million students

-Provides educational, vocational, and transfer programs

-The largest college system in the world. Nearly 55% of CSU grads and 28% of UC grads begin their college education at a community college

•California State University (CSU):

-23 campuses

-417,000 students

-Largest and most diverse four year institution in the nation

-Low cost, accessible, affordable education

•University of California (UC):

-10 campuses

-209,000 students

-California's research and doctoral granting institution

Vision

▪Troops to College announced by Governor Schwarzenegger March 2006

▪Goal - California will become the nation's model and leader in providing educational opportunities and assistance to active duty military and veterans

–Increase enrollment of active duty and veterans at California's public colleges and universities

–Provide increased instructional opportunities to men and women on active duty, the National Guard, and the Reserves

–Bottom line: Provide more qualified men and women to the California workforce

Mission

▪The California Community Colleges, CSU and UC will –

–Provide outreach programs

–Provide academic advising

–Provide financial aid advising

–Provide on-base classes

Provide distance education

▪Colleges and universities will partner with military branches and California Departments of Veterans Affairs, Education, and Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Implementation

▪Initially Five Task Force Committees Established

–Communications, Marketing, and Website Task Force

–Active Duty and Veteran’s Outreach Task Force

–Admission and Financial Aid Task Force

–Partnership Task Force

–Best Practices Task Force

Changes to Implementation

▪Secretary of Education’s office given the lead on May 16, 2007 by Cabinet Secretary

▪Education and Jobs

▪Serving the wounded

▪Establishing a statewide website

▪Initiating and enhancing websites at each campus & System

▪Participating in Hire a Hero, Hire a Vet Initiatives

- **Participating in Transition Assistance Program (TAP)**
- **Increasing membership in Service members Opportunity College (SOC)**
- **Reviewing credit transferability procedures and criteria with an “eye” towards “advantaging the veteran”**
- **Identified contacts at each military base and college campuses**
- **Implementing on-base college and university outreach programs**
- **Developing “Regional Centers” consisting of military bases and campuses to provide services**
- **Developed campus Veterans Support Teams to assist “soldiers” to transition to becoming students**
- **Identified best practices among campuses and bases that can be implemented at all campuses & bases**
- **Transition programs (Boots to Books)**
- **Veterans Affairs Specialists**
- **Regional Partnership Development**
- **On Base campuses and advisors**

Troops to College - Next Steps

- **Expand partnership with Veterans Affairs, education and labor in order to offer efficient services and support**

“One Stops”

Synchronizing Licensing, Credentialing and Certification with GI Bill course approval process

Expand regional partnerships and advertising and promotion – “Road Show” and “Roll Out”

▪Partner with Balboa and American Council on Education to advise and counsel wounded veterans

▪Expand consistent use of ACE Guide in the evaluation of military training for academic credit

▪Complete statewide veterans’ website

Troops to College - Next Steps

▪Expand student veterans organizations; Enhance Veteran Support Teams

▪Expand distance learning program

▪Develop the California GI Bill

Support national legislation to provide enhanced comprehensive GI Bill

How Can US Veterans Affairs Help

▪Synchronize efforts between US Labor and US Vets Affairs (Jobs and Education)

▪Eliminate GI Bills’ Delimitating factor (10 year time limit)

▪Support increasing role of Veterans Support Teams (\$50 per vet student)

•In Coordination with ACE support academic advisor at major military and VA hospitals (Bethesda Model) for seriously injured

•Encourage national policy re GI Bill education late payments

How Can US Veterans Affairs Help

•Exempt GI Bill benefits from inclusion as a financial resource in all student financial aid calculations

•Establish standard for passing of GI Bill benefits from service-member to family member (standard varies by service)

•Reward veteran friendly (SOC) campuses (fund veteran program administrators)

•Support to the 21st Century Total Force GI Bill

CCC Overview

CSU Overview

California's numbers for the previous 3 fiscal years

•Fiscal Year	LOCATION/BENEFIT	MGIB-AD	RANK
•FY2006	CALIFORNIA Education	33956	1
•FY2005	CALIFORNIA Education	34645	1
•FY2004	CALIFORNIA Education	35734	1

