



Report of the
**Advisory Council on
Veterans Services**
Sub-Committee on Education

May 2008



Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

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Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

May 20, 2008

The Honorable Timothy P. Murray
Lieutenant Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Lieutenant Governor Murray:

On behalf of the Education Sub-Committee of the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans, Co-Chair Richard Voutour and I are pleased to submit the enclosed report. The report reviews state and federal statutes and programs and provides recommendations related to education entitlements and benefits for veterans pursuing post-secondary education and training in the Commonwealth.

The Sub-Committee met during April and May 2008. Members gathered data, conversed with key stakeholders, and reviewed numerous reports and other documentation. Disparities in the sufficiency and applicability of education benefits pose significant challenges to student veterans. The Sub-Committee concluded that there is a clear need to increase, bring uniformity to and disseminate information on education-related benefits at the state and federal levels and endorses efforts to accomplish these goals.

The following were appointed as Sub-Committee members:

- Frederick W. Clark, Jr., Chair, Board of Higher Education
- Doug Clifford, Adjunct Faculty Member, Bunker Hill Community College
- Richard Gore, Marine Corps League New England Division, Vice Commandant
- John Hogan, Director of Veterans' Services, Town of Mansfield
- Dr. Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Richard Pelosi, United States Navy, Retired Commander
- Dr. Patricia Plummer, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education (Co-Chair)
- Richard Voutour, Director of Veteran Services, Leominster, Massachusetts (Co-Chair)

It is our hope that the Sub-Committee's recommendations will serve to further catalyze the discussion and action needed to support and achieve veteran-friendly education and training policies and opportunities in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Patricia F. Plummer
Commissioner
Mass. Department of Higher Education
Co-Chair

Richard Voutour
Director of Veteran Services
City of Leominster, Massachusetts
Co-Chair

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Executive Summary

On February 11, 2008, Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray formed an Education Sub-Committee for the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services. The sub-committee, co-chaired by Patricia Plummer, Commissioner, Department of Higher Education, and Richard Voutour, Director of Veterans Services, Leominster, Massachusetts, met during April and May 2008.

The Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services established six sub-committees to help inform the administration on how best to assist the 457,482 Massachusetts veterans and their families. Each sub-committee was charged to examine federal and state statutes and programs relating to veterans and delivery of services to veterans in one of the following areas: health care, education, housing, outreach, training, and retraining.

As of FY2008, a total of approximately 3,392 veterans, enrolled in Massachusetts public and private postsecondary institutions, were drawing state and federal education benefits. The Veterans Education Sub-Committee was asked to examine concerns related to the following:

- tuition and fee waivers for all veterans
- standardization of veterans' benefits within the state higher education system
- the Work Bench initiative
- campus veteran representatives

In fulfilling its charge, the Education Sub-committee reviewed data on veterans enrolled in Massachusetts colleges and universities and gathered information on federal and state benefits and services that target student veterans. Although not within its original mandate, the Sub-Committee also considered the needs of K-12 students with deployed military parents.

The Sub-Committee's primary finding is that disparities in the level, applicability of, and information about state and federal tuition benefits cause significant concern to veterans and their advocates and need to be addressed. Report recommendations focus broadly on strategies to mitigate these disparities. Availability of adequate financial benefits that are administered uniformly from institution to institution and accurate information readily available to prospective students will go a long way toward promoting access, retention and success in post-secondary education and training among the Massachusetts veteran population.

Highlights of Report Findings and Conclusions

- Federal Montgomery GI Bill benefits are no longer sufficient to provide the originally intended level of support to student veterans. Benefit levels need to be increased to help today's veterans cover the full cost of post-secondary attendance.
- The structure of the Commonwealth's current financial aid programs for veterans results in more favorable benefits to veterans eligible for the National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver than to those who are eligible for the Categorical Tuition Waiver for Veterans. In the Massachusetts public higher education system, fees can be up to four times higher than tuition. To better serve all student veterans, the Commonwealth's categorical waiver should be broadened to cover all student charges.
- Differential course eligibility for Massachusetts tuition waivers has resulted in considerable confusion among student veterans about educational benefits. Clarification about eligible courses, along with uniform applicability of the waiver among campuses, is needed.
- On the majority of campuses, the certifying official for GI Bill benefits is the singular identifiable point of contact for information and assistance about the range of veterans' benefits. Only two of the 29 public campuses in the Commonwealth devote a full-time staff member to address the needs of student veterans. Veterans would be better served if campuses, especially those with significant veteran enrollments, employed a full-time, dedicated veteran representative trained in the broad range of educational and other benefits for which veteran students may be eligible.
- The Workbench initiative aims to help recently separated veterans obtain educational credit and recognized credentials based on their military training as recommended by the American Council on Education. At the majority of campuses, transfer credits are accepted on a case-by-case basis consistent with institutional policies. Early and informed academic advising will improve veterans' understanding of the institution's degree requirements and facilitate credit transfer.
- Children of deployed parents and their families face unique challenges. The armed forces have developed materials that shed light on these challenges and suggest strategies to address them. The Commonwealth should disseminate these materials to K-12 teachers and administrators to help them better understand and meet the special needs of families with deployed members.

Summary of Report Recommendations

1. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should disseminate information about resources to increase awareness and support among school instructors, administrators, counselors and other stakeholders working with children of deployed parents and their families.
2. Support the passage of current federal legislation to increase the level and duration of GI Bill benefits to reflect today's higher cost for and average time to degree completion.
3. Support legislation to create tuition and fee waivers for veterans that cover both day and night courses.
4. To eliminate confusion and to ensure that the benefit will cover the full cost of education charges at public higher education institutions, revise the applicability of the benefit from 'tuition and fee waivers' to 'education grants for student charges.' These grants should be given directly to the institution as credits. In the meantime, educate veterans and their advisors regarding the applicability of tuition waivers, which cover only state-supported courses taught during the day to full-time students.
5. Eliminate the disparity between the National Guard tuition and fee waiver and the veterans "tuition only" waiver. End the distinction between National Guard and Full Service benefits. Advocate for one classification of veterans that will enable both groups to receive the same benefits that will cover both tuition and fees.
6. Streamline and implement tuition fees and waivers as a total appropriation grant to address inconsistencies in the application of the waiver at the campus level. Advocate for a veterans grant program that would apply to all veteran students, including part-time students or students who attend at night and during weekends. In the meantime, work to standardize waiver applicability for day versus evening courses and provide sources with uniform information that veterans can look to for answers.
7. Advocate for informing veterans of the importance of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine eligibility for student financial aid.
8. Advocate for increased veterans' benefits by emphasizing the long-term benefits of veterans' education on the workforce. When veterans are educated, they are more likely to work in Massachusetts after graduation and less likely to be enrolled in veterans' needs-based programs.
9. Advocate for student veterans to remain eligible for the Commonwealth's Chapter 115 living wage benefits.
10. Include campus presidents in discussions on the Workbench initiative.
11. Support institutional acceptance of credits based on the American Council of Education guidelines and institutional degree standards and credit policies.
12. Support early and comprehensive academic advising for veterans.
13. At institutions enrolling 100 or more veterans, fund a trained, full-time, dedicated representative, able to properly advise the veteran population.
14. Provide access to campus veteran representatives during the evening, as well as during the day.
15. Continue cross-training of veteran services staff at state agencies and postsecondary institutions.

16. Report annually the numbers of student veterans receiving state and federal benefits in the Commonwealth.
17. Disseminate best practices in services to student veterans through annual summits, symposia, and reports.

Introduction

The Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services established six sub-committees to help inform the administration on how best to assist the 457,482 Massachusetts veterans and their families. Each sub-committee was charged to examine federal and state statutes and programs relating to veterans and delivery of services to veterans in one of the following areas: health care, education, housing, outreach, training, and retraining.

As of FY2008, approximately 3,392 veterans enrolled in Massachusetts public and private postsecondary institutions, were drawing state and federal education benefits. The Veterans Education Sub-Committee was asked to examine concerns related to the following:

- tuition and fee waivers for all veterans
- standardization of veterans benefits within the state higher education system
- the Workbench initiative
- campus veterans representatives

In fulfilling its charge, the Veterans Education Sub-committee reviewed data on veterans enrolled in Massachusetts colleges and universities and gathered information on federal and state benefits and services that target student veterans. Although not within its original mandate, the Sub-Committee also considered the needs of K-12 students with deployed military parents.

Background: The Veteran Population in the Commonwealth

According to the United States Veterans Administration, the veteran population in the Commonwealth has fluctuated during the past four years with a significant decline projected for 2009.

Massachusetts Total Veteran Population¹

2005	2006	2007	2008	Projected 2009
471,547	457,482	440,900	424,766	409,184

¹ United States Department of Veterans Affairs (n.d). *File IL: VETERANS BY STATE, AGE GROUP, PERIOD, GENDER, 2000-2006*. [Data file]. Available from United States Department of Veterans Affairs Web Site, <http://www1.va.gov/vetdata/>

Currently, nearly half of Massachusetts veterans reside in four of the Commonwealth's fourteen counties: Middlesex, Essex, Worcester and Norfolk.

Breakdown of Veteran Population by County²

Massachusetts County	2005	2006	2007	2008	Projected 2009
Barnstable	28,380	28,030	27,517	26,945	26,349
Berkshire	12,572	12,205	11,789	11,376	10,968
Bristol	41,940	40,929	39,651	38,412	37,223
Dukes	1,520	1,523	1,513	1,492	1,467
Essex	54,259	52,446	50,369	48,347	46,400
Franklin	6,963	6,783	6,554	6,324	6,139
Hampden	39,128	37,945	36,511	35,164	33,869
Hampshire	12,064	11,863	11,587	11,329	11,080
Middlesex	92,936	89,122	84,882	80,737	76,768
Nantucket	795	777	745	711	687
Norfolk	48,126	46,394	44,464	42,602	40,779
Plymouth	41,840	41,213	40,346	39,471	38,616
Suffolk	29,134	27,798	26,312	24,917	23,609
Worcester	61,890	60,454	58,660	56,939	55,230
Total	471,547	457,482	440,900	424,766	409,184

² United States Department of Veterans Affairs (n.d.). File 12L: VetPop2007 County: County-Level Veterans Population by State, 2000-2030, [Data file] Available from United States Department of Veterans Affairs Web Site, <http://www1.va.gov/vetdata/>

Recommendations

K-12 Students with Deployed Military Parents

The military has recognized that children of deployed parents face unique challenges and has developed materials designed to aid teachers, counselors and families of children enrolled in schools in the military system. The Sub-Committee obtained the Elementary School Curriculum for Children of Deployed Parents,³ the Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment,⁴ and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Crisis Management Guide,⁵ developed by the DoDEA Education Directorate and Office of Safety and Security, in collaboration with DynCorp (Safe Schools Program), as a resource for school crisis teams. These documents were forwarded to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) with the suggestion that ESE post on its web site a commissioner's letter about the need to be cognizant of challenges facing children of deployed parents.

Recommendation:

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should disseminate information about resources to increase awareness and support among school instructors, administrators, counselors and other stakeholders working with children of deployed parents and their families.

³ Hardaway, Thomas G., M.D. (2003). *Elementary School Curriculum for Children of Deployed Parents*. (U.S. Department of Defense Report) Available from: <http://www.eu.dodea.edu/ed/webdocs/completecurr.doc>.

⁴ United States Department of Education (n.d.) *Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment*. Available from: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefront.pdf>.

⁵ United States Department of Defense (2007). Department of Defense Education Activity Crisis Management Guide. Retrieved from: <http://www.dodea.edu/instruction/crisis/resources/scmt.htm>.

Current GI Bill Education Benefits and Their Decline 6

The number of veterans in the Commonwealth utilizing the GI Bill was nearly 3,000 in 2007-2008 and has declined since 2005-2006.

Total Number of Veterans Using the GI Bill in Massachusetts⁷

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
3,388	2,933	2,908

Chapter 30 of the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) provides up to 36 months of education benefits to active duty and separated veterans. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Veterans enrolled full-time receive \$1,101 per month. Veterans enrolled less than full-time are eligible for tiered benefits. Benefits are generally payable for ten years following the service member's release from active duty.

Other chapters of the GI Bill provide vocational rehabilitation for service-disabled veterans (Chapter 31); educational assistance for veterans who were on active duty between 1977 and 1985 (Chapter 32); education and training to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition, or who died while on active duty as a result of a service-related condition (Chapter 35); education and training for members of the Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606); and educational assistance for reservists who, after 9/11/01, complete 90 days or more of active duty service in support of contingency operations (Chapter 1607). (Additional information regarding the GI Bill is in Appendix A.)

The GI Bill has not kept pace with the rising cost of education over the years. The original 1944 GI Bill covered the total cost of higher education: tuition, books, fees and even a living allowance to the nearly 8 million veterans who attended, but today's GI Bill only covers 60-70 percent of a four-year public college education, not counting room and board. ⁸

In December 2007, the National Association of State-Approving Agencies (the agencies responsible for oversight of GI-eligible education and training programs in each state) issued recommendations to

- create a Total Force GI Bill by consolidating MGIB Chapters 30, 1606 and 1607 to provide reimbursement based on service in the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserve;

⁶ United States Department of Veterans Affairs. (2008). *Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents*, 2008 Edition Retrieved April 8, 2008 from: <http://www.gibill.va.gov>

⁷ United States Department of Veterans Affairs, *Education Activities Report*. (2005, September to 2008, May) United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Regional Office, Buffalo, NY, unpublished data

⁸ Field, Kelley. (2008) Efforts to Expand G.I. Bill Gain Ground in Congress, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April Edition. Available from: <http://chronicle.com/daily/2008/04/2667n.htm>.

- revise upward monthly payments to cover the current post-secondary education and training costs;
- expand the purpose of the proposed Total Force bill to permit continuous training, re-training, re-licensing and enrollment in skill improvement courses;
- continue the higher rate of educational assistance benefits for apprenticeship and other on-the-job training programs adopted in 2005; and
- give service members who use the GI Bill while serving on active duty the same entitlement as other VA benefit eligible persons. (See Appendix B for additional information.)

As of May 16, 2008, both branches of Congress had approved proposed legislation that would improve benefits for veterans who served post-9/11/01, by providing the cost of attending their state's most-expensive public higher education institution plus a stipend for housing costs. Eligibility for the benefit would continue for fifteen years, instead of ten.

Recommendation:

Support the passage of current federal legislation to increase the level and duration of GI Bill benefits to reflect today's higher cost for and average time to degree completion.

Massachusetts Education Benefits for Veterans

In addition to federal educational benefits, veterans often qualify for state education benefits. The Commonwealth offers two types of education benefits for Massachusetts veterans – a Categorical Tuition Waiver and the Welcome Home Tuition and Fee Waiver for National Guard members. The Categorical Tuition Waiver is applicable to any state-supported course in an undergraduate degree program offered by a public college or university. To be eligible, a veteran must also be a legal resident of Massachusetts and he/she must not be in default of any federal student loans.

Signed into law by former Governor Mitt Romney on Veteran’s Day 2005, the Welcome Home bill provides tuition and fee waivers for active National Guard members attending Massachusetts public institutions of higher education. To be eligible, a veteran must also be a legal resident of Massachusetts and receive a certificate of eligibility from the Massachusetts National Guard Education Office.

Full descriptions of the Categorical and Welcome Home waivers are contained in Appendix B. An individual can utilize only one of these waivers at a time.

Total Number of Veterans Using the Massachusetts Categorical Tuition Waiver⁹

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
2,183	1,928	1,813

Total Number of Veterans Using the Massachusetts National Guard Tuition & Fee Waiver

2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
615	426	865

Although the waiver available to the National Guard covers tuition and fees, the categorical tuition waiver available to all veterans covers tuition only. Fees, however, are significantly higher than tuition in the public sector, and the categorical waiver does not cover fees.

Moreover, the tuition waiver covers ‘state-supported’ or ‘day’ courses only. Courses offered in the evening, weekends, or through continuing education are not covered. This rule weighs especially heavily on veteran students, many of whom work and find it difficult to fit day courses into their work schedule.

The day/night distinction is complicated by inconsistency in campus-level application of the waiver which further confuses students. Each campus has a Board of Trustees, which, under the law regulates the policies on the campus. Some campuses may provide a partial tuition waiver for evening courses, while others may elect to not allow any waiver.

⁹ Massachusetts Veterans tuition waiver data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, www.mass.edu

A further compounding factor is that veterans are not adequately informed of or do not fully understand the tuition/fee distinctions and/or the day/evening distinctions that impact the value of the waiver. Categorical tuition waiver recipients frequently assume that the entire cost of their education will be covered, when it is not. The day/evening limitation effectively excludes the many veterans who are part-time non-traditional students from receiving the waiver.

Three bills currently under consideration by the Massachusetts Legislature would grant tuition and fee waivers to all veterans enrolled at state and community colleges. Advocates hope that the legislation will pass in time for the FY2010 budget or before the budget cycle via a supplemental amendment.

A “catch 22” found in Massachusetts Chapter 115 law 10, which provides financial assistance to low income veterans and their families, excludes students from receiving benefits. Under Chapter 115 guidelines, veterans in school are considered to have voluntarily left the workforce; therefore, they are ineligible for Chapter 115. Living expenses impact the ability to afford higher education. The value of a tuition waiver is diminished when low income veterans enrolling in postsecondary programs lose this cost-of-living benefit.

Currently, applicability of the state’s veteran tuition and fee waivers is limited to public institutions. Whether or not grants should be available to students attending independent institutions is a question for discussion. At least one independent institution in the Commonwealth, however, has announced an outreach program aimed at encouraging veterans to pursue a college degree. (See press release on Becker College Patriots College Access Program in Appendix C.)

Recommendations:

1. Support legislation to create tuition and fee waiver benefits for veterans that cover both day and night courses.
2. To eliminate confusion and to ensure that the benefit will cover the full cost of education charges at public higher education institutions, revise the applicability of the benefit from ‘tuition and fee waivers’ to ‘education grants for student charges.’ These grants should be given directly to the institution as credits. In the meantime, educate veterans and their advisors regarding the applicability of tuition waivers, which cover only state-supported courses taught during the day to full-time students.
3. Eliminate the disparity between the National Guard tuition and fee waiver and the veterans’ “tuition only” waiver. End the distinction between National Guard and Full Service benefits. Advocate for one classification of veterans that will enable both groups to receive the same benefits that will cover both tuition and fees.
4. Streamline and implement tuition fees and waivers as a total appropriation grant to address inconsistencies in the application of the waiver at the campus-level. Advocate for a grant program that would apply to all veteran students, including part-time students or students who attend in the evening and during weekends. In the meantime, work to standardize waiver

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Massachusetts. *General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 115*. Available from: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-115-toc.htm>

applicability for day versus evening courses and provide sources with uniform information that veterans can look to for answers.

5. Advocate for informing veterans of the importance of completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to determine eligibility for student financial aid.
6. Advocate for increased veterans' benefits by emphasizing the long-term benefits of veterans' education on the workforce. When veterans are educated, they are more likely to work in Massachusetts after graduation and less likely to be enrolled in veterans' need-based programs. A September 2007 Board of Higher Education cost analysis of tuition and fee waiver eligibility for all veterans estimated that:
 - If one percent of veterans took advantage of tuition and fees waivers, the cost would be about \$27 million.
 - If five percent of veterans took advantage, the cost would be about \$133 million.
 - If 14 percent of veterans took advantage, the cost would be about \$375 million.

The study projected that between one percent and five percent of eligible veterans would utilize a waiver that covered tuition and fees.

7. Advocate for student veterans to remain eligible for the Commonwealth's Chapter 115 living wage benefits.

Workbench Initiative

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) initiated Workbench to bring together leaders in higher education, business and workforce development to discuss practical policy and methods for linking programs and services to benefit the Massachusetts workforce. The Workbench pilot in Fall River and New Bedford will target recently separated veterans to help them obtain educational credit and recognized credentials that build on skills, training and experiences attained during their time in the military.

Workbench seeks alignment with higher education to expedite the identification of military training acceptable for transfer to higher education programs and to facilitate fast-track training needed for occupational licensing or certification leading to employment. A similar initiative involving the University of West Florida, Hometown Heroes,¹¹ seeks to link entry into higher education with assistance to veterans who complete a certificate or degree. Through Hometown Heroes, the campus works with its local workforce board to help wounded and eligible disabled military veterans navigate a teacher certification pathway, while simultaneously helping to address local school system teacher needs.

The Workbench pilot plans to identify and resolve barriers to attaining course credit, licensing and certification. According to the DWD, a primary concern is that although the award of credit for military training varies by higher education institution, veterans find that they are unable to easily “shop around” for the best options for acceptance of military training for credit prior to making an enrollment decision. A Veterans Education Sub-Committee survey of public campus practice found that only one out of the eight institutions responding did not accept veterans’ military training as college transfer credit.

Students frustrated with the inability to have their military courses count towards college degree programs started a national organization, Student Veteran of America,¹² to work on the systematic removal of barriers for veterans.

Recommendations:

1. Include campus presidents in discussions on the Workbench initiative.
2. Support institutional acceptance of credits based on the American Council of Education guidelines and institutional degree standards and credit policies.
3. Support early and comprehensive academic advising for veterans.

¹¹ Information about Hometown Heroes Teach is available from: <http://www.uwf.edu/hometownheroesteach/>

¹² Military.com (2008, May). *Student Veterans Form National Coalition*. Message posted on May 12, 2008 to <http://education.military.com/getting-your-degree/veteran/student-veterans-form-national-coalition>

Campus Veteran Representatives

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA) requires postsecondary facilities with one or more students receiving MGIB benefits to identify a certifying official who monitors student eligibility for the program. The USVA provides a small allotment of \$7 per veteran per semester enrolled. In addition to the 114 non-collegiate institutions and the 71 vocational and on the job training programs, there are 120 colleges and universities, including 29 public college and university campuses, approved under the GI Bill. (See Appendix A for a complete list.) Eight of these campuses enroll 100 or more veterans, and two additional campuses enroll more than 90 veterans.

List of Higher Education Institutions with Veteran Enrollment of 90 or greater 13

University of Massachusetts Boston	213
North Shore Community College	183
University of Massachusetts Amherst	175
Northern Essex Community College	160
Quinsigamond Community College	149
Boston University	147
University of Massachusetts Lowell	138
Holyoke Community College	124
Springfield Technical Community College	121
Bridgewater State College	115
Bristol Community College	99
Bunker Hill Community College	92

While campus veteran representatives can play an important role in helping a veteran navigate his or her way through the college experience, of the 120 approved colleges and universities, only two public institutions, Northern Essex Community College and University of Massachusetts Boston, are known to employ a full-time campus veteran representative. (See Appendix C for additional information about veterans services at these two campuses.)

Since the establishment of the Veterans Education Sub-Committee, Department of Higher Education and Department of Veterans Services staff members have begun to collaborate more closely for outreach and training. The Departments have exchanged contact lists and pledged future cross-training and collaboration so that representatives can increase awareness of and refer student veterans to information resources. The Department of Higher Education, for example, invited the Department of Veterans Services to upcoming summer workshops for certifying officials. In return, the Department of Veterans Services invited the Office of Veterans Education to its annual three-day training session in the fall.

¹³ United States Department of Veterans Affairs, *Education Activities Report*. (2005, September to 2008, May) United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Regional Office, Buffalo, NY, unpublished data

Cross-training of campus certifying officials, veterans representatives, and veterans service advocates promises to strengthen the capacity for advising and referral among institutions and agencies seeking to increase access to education and training among the state veteran population. Since many student veterans are also first-generation college attendees, strong advising is critical from the application process through to degree completion.

Recommendations:

1. At institutions enrolling 100 or more veterans, fund a trained, full-time, dedicated representative, able to properly advise the veteran population.
2. Provide access to campus veteran representatives during the evening, as well as during the day.
3. Disseminate veteran representative program best practices.
4. Continue cross-training of veteran services staff at state agencies and postsecondary institutions.

Higher Education's Next Assignment: Transitioning Service Members and Veterans from Combat to College

Colleges and universities are seeing an increase in veteran enrollments. These new veterans of recent conflicts and wars face a number of unique challenges that can hinder their college success, such as disability, trauma, and readjustment back to civilian life. Often they are first-generation college students and lack familiarity with higher education. Veterans will need academic and social support if they are to experience academic success. Whereas higher education institutions identify a strong desire to be of assistance, they may lack the experience and knowledge of the challenges facing veterans. 14

In the Commonwealth, several campus presidents are working at the national, state and/or local level on veterans' education issues and have offered to be resources to the Commonwealth. For example:

- Northern Essex Community College President David Hartleb spoke with Department of Veterans Services Undersecretary Coleman Nee at the Veterans Educational Stand Down on April 23, 2008, regarding the agenda of the Education Sub-Committee. President Hartleb will speak with fellow community colleges presidents on the importance of strengthening the campus veteran representative program. Undersecretary Nee offered to host a training session for key college staff.
- Framingham State College President Timothy J. Flanagan plans to attend the American Council on Education conference on returning veterans in June and will share information learned with state college presidents.
- North Shore Community College President Wayne Burton has joined Congressman John Tierney's Veterans Advisory Council, which comprises leaders of the various veterans groups in the North Shore. The Council's goal is the improvement of veterans' services at the federal level. President Burton is also willing to connect with Representative Anthony Verga, who chairs the Massachusetts House Committee on Veterans.
- Bristol Community College President John Sbrega reported that the College is part of the Workbench partnership. President Sbrega is working in collaboration with Department of Veterans Services Secretary Thomas Kelley, Director of Workforce Development David Mackley, University of Dartmouth Chancellor Jean MacCormack, and several other Southcoast regional leaders. Formed to explore ways to integrate returning veterans into the Massachusetts workforce, the partnership emphasizes direct job placement as well as educational training that will lead to job placements. President Sbrega will chair a panel at the upcoming American Council on Education Conference on returning veterans.
- The Board of Higher Education is hosting Sustaining Growth: A Conference on Student Success at Bridgewater State College on Wednesday, June 18, 2008. One of the workshops

¹⁴ Higher Education's Next Assignment: Transitioning Service Members and Veterans from Combat to College . (2008). Proceedings from *Combat to Classroom*. American Council of Education 90th meeting in San Diego, California, retrieved from <http://www.acenet.edu/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=25812>

will outline best practices in serving student veterans, including a discussion on the policies that affect education benefits, the challenges that student veterans face in pursuing higher education and how colleges can promote the success of veterans on campus.

Recommendations

1. Report annually the numbers of student veterans receiving state and federal benefits in the Commonwealth.
2. Disseminate best practices in services to student veterans through annual summits, symposia, and reports.

Sources

1. Commonwealth of Massachusetts. *General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 115*. Available from: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-115-toc.htm>
2. Field, Kelley. (2008). *Efforts to Expand G.I. Bill Gain Ground in Congress*, Chronicle of Higher Education, April Edition, retrieved from: <http://chronicle.com/daily/2008/04/2667n.htm>
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5. United States Department of Education (n.d) *Educator's Guide to the Military Child During Deployment*. Retrieved May 16, 2008, retrieved from: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/homefront/homefront.pdf>
6. United States Department of Defense. (2007). Department of Defense Education Activity Crisis Management Guide. Retrieved from: <http://www.dodea.edu/instruction/crisis/resources/scmt.htm>
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Veterans Education Sub-Committee

Sub-Committee Members

Fred Clark, Chair, Board of Higher Education

Doug Clifford, Adjunct Faculty, Bunker Hill Community College

Richard Gore

John Hogan, Director of Veterans' Services, Town of Mansfield

Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Aundrea Kelley, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Policy, Department of Higher Education

George O'Connor, Director for Veterans Education, Department of Higher Education

Shelley Tinkham, Associate Director for Academic Policy and K-16 Policy, Department of Higher
Education

Appendix A: Federal Veterans Education Benefits and the Role of State Approving Agencies

Federal Programs for Veterans: The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)

Chapter 30

The Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (MGIB) states that active duty members forfeit \$100 per month for 12 months; if they use the benefits, they receive **as of 2007** \$1,101 monthly as a full-time student (tiered at lower rates for less-than-full time) for a maximum of 36 months of education benefits. MGIB benefits may be used up to ten years from the date of last discharge or release from active duty.

Chapter 31

This chapter is a Vocational Rehabilitation program is for service-disabled veterans who require further education to attain suitable and stable employment. This program may provide vocational and other training services and assistance including tutorial assistance, tuition, books, fees, supplies, handling charges, licensing fees and equipment and other training materials necessary.

Chapter 32

The Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) is available if you first entered active duty between January 1, 1977, and June 30, 1985, and you elected to make contributions from your military pay to participate in this education benefit program. Your contributions are matched on a \$2 for \$1 basis by the Government. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses.

Chapter 35

The Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA) provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents of veterans who are permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition or who died while on active duty or as a result of a service-related condition. The program offers up to 45 months of education benefits. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. If you are a spouse, you may take a correspondence course.

Chapter 1606

The Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) program may be available to you if you are a member of the Selected Reserve. The Selected Reserve includes the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve, and the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses.

Chapter 1607

The Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP) is available to all reservists who, after September 11, 2001, complete 90 days or more of active duty service "in support of contingency operations." This benefit provides reservists return from active duty with up to 80 percent of the active duty (Chapter 30) G.I. Bill benefits as long as they remain active participants in the reserves.

**Legislative Priorities for a New GI Bill
Submitted by Charles Rowe, President
December 18, 2007**

- (1) **Consolidate Chapters 30, 1607 and 1607 under Title 38, U.S. Code as a Total Force GI Bill. This Bill would provide MGIB reimbursement rate levels based on an individual's service in the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserve.**
- A. The first tier—similar to the current Montgomery GI Bill, Active Duty (MGIB-AD) 3-year rate—would be provided to all who enlist for active duty. Service entrants would receive 36 months of benefits at the AD Rate.
 - B. The second tier or level would be for all who enlist or re-enlist in the Selected Reserve (SelRes) for 6 years, and this would entitle them to 36 months of benefits at a pro-rata amount of the active duty rate as currently is the case with Chapter 1606 (Initial ratio in 1985 was 47%).
 - C. The third tier would be for members of the SelRes and Inactive Ready Reserve (IR) who are activated for at least 90 days. They would receive one month of benefit for each month of activation, up to a total of 36 months, at the active duty rate. These months of full benefits would replace, month-for-month, any SelRes entitlements at the second tier. The maximum benefit a member of the SelRes could receive under this provision would be the equivalent of 36 months at the active duty rate. (Note: Maximum benefit is without consideration to multiple entitlements.)
 - D. All provisions (e.g. additional contributions), and programs (e.g. accelerated payments, approved test fee reimbursement, etc.) eligible for payment under the current MGIB-AD program would be available under all three levels. [Note: Under this plan DOD would continue to be able to provide Recruitment and Retention incentives such as loan repayment, kickers for “college”, and enlistment bonuses.]
- (2) **Revise rate of monthly payment to cover the cost of education and training.**
- Currently MGI Benefit rates do not reflect the cost of today's higher education and training. Therefore it is NASAA's recommendation that monthly benefit rates be increased commensurate with contemporary education and training costs.
- (3) **Expand the readjustment purpose of the Total Force GI Bill to permit continuous training, retraining, re-licensing and enrollment in skill improvement courses. For example, revise Section 3452 (c) of Title 38, U.S. Code to provide for the use of VA education assistance benefits for enrollment in any unit course or subject, or combination of course or subjects (Title 38 terminology) necessary to obtain, maintain or advance in a profession or vocation.**

In today's society the concept of lifelong learning has risen to a new level of importance. Very few occupations or professions remain static; there is the constant requirement for workers to upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to remain competitive. The current educational earned benefit programs for veterans and other eligible persons generally require the VA

beneficiary to be enrolled in a full-scale program of education; i.e. one that leads to a traditional degree, diploma or certificate. Although recent legislation provides more flexibility, there is still the need to permit even greater use of benefits for enrollment in short-term learning experience that will help a veteran to maintain a level of expertise commensurate with the ongoing demands of their chosen occupation or profession. A key phrase that expressed the intent of this recommendation already is embedded in law – education and training that qualifies the eligible person “to enter into, maintain or advance in employment in a predetermined and identified vocation or profession.”

As stated, the law already provides for limited use of benefits for course(s) “to fulfill requirements for the attainment of a license or certificate...in a high technology occupation.” The specific example expands the provision to all professions and vocations/occupations; recognizes that a single unit course or subject may be all that a veteran needs to obtain, maintain, or advance in a profession or vocation; and, provides for the use of benefits while enrolled in a subject or a combination of subjects without requiring a connection to a license or certificate.

(4) Recommendation – Continue the rate of educational assistance benefits currently in place for veterans enrolled in Apprenticeship and other On-the-Job Training Programs.

The law was changed, effective October 1, 2005, to increase the rate of benefits received by veterans and other eligible persons who are enrolled in apprenticeship and OJT programs. The rate is now 85% of the full time institutional rate for the first six months, 65% for the second six months of training and then 45% for the third and any succeeding period of time. This increase is for a limited period of time—it expires on September 30, 2007. It is too early to know for sure, but early indications are that the increases have had a positive effect on the ability of veterans to use this way of gaining knowledge and skills for the occupations or professions of their choice. In combination with extensive outreach activities, there has been a 39.9% increase in the number of approved and active training establishments from 1997 to 2003, and a 53.8% increase in the number of program approval actions at job training establishments from 1997 to 2005. We anticipate continual growth in the use of job training programs.

(5) Recommendation – Revise the method by which entitlement is charged to service members who use their GI Bill while serving on active duty so that the charge is the same as that applied to all other VA benefit eligible persons.

Service members who use their GI Bill while serving on active duty should not be penalized for doing so. Current law reduces the service members’ entitlement one month for each month of enrollment in relation to rate of pursuit (full time, ¾ time, etc.) **regardless of the amount of benefits received.** We believe that this practice is totally unfair and unjustifiable.

State Approving Agencies – A Brief Summary

The State-Approving Agency (SAA) was created shortly after the inception of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill of Rights, to assist the federal government in preventing waste, fraud and abuse and to insure the creditability of the learning experiences in which veterans engage. The assignment of this responsibility is constitutionally based on the fact that states have responsibility for the education of their citizenry. Thus, State-Approving Agencies work in concert with the Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of the Congress and the President to achieve these objectives.

SAA make major contributions the success of the various GI Bills in many ways.

These contributions far exceed the proportionate amount of funds received by the Agencies when compared to the amount of benefits provided to veterans and other GI Bill eligible persons. The contributions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Determinations regarding the quality and integrity of a broad range of learning experiences (institutional; job training, flight, correspondence, etc);
- Work with employers to develop and enroll veterans in job training programs;
- Assessments of tests for professional and occupational licensing and certification;
- Training of VA Certifying Officials at educational institutions and job training establishments;
- Briefings during transition assistance programs, military retirement seminars, mailings to recently discharged veterans and Selective Reserve personnel, and other outreach activities to increase utilization of the GI Bill
- Advice and guidance directly to veterans and other GI Bill eligible persons and indirectly through educators, trainers and others who counsel veterans;
- Advocacy for veterans at state and local levels;
- Assistance to the federal government in eliminating waste, fraud and abuse; and
- Provision of insight to the VA and Congress on changes necessary to make the GI Bill more relevant and responsive.

Massachusetts State-Approving Agency Activities

Compliance activities in accordance with Title 38 of the GI Bill

- Review and Approve Educational and Training Programs
- Maintain Approved Program Inventory
- Train Educational Organizations and Certifying Officials
- Advocate on behalf of all Veterans Benefits

Outreach

- Prepare and Disseminate Benefits Information using Multiple Media Formats
- Host Certifying Officials Training Conferences
- Advertise on Public Transit
- Provide Outreach Materials to Discharge Vets, VFW, American Legion, Military Spouse and Family Organizations
- Liaison with multiple Veterans Organizations and Agencies
- Attend and Address Special Events related to Veterans Interests
- Promote use of Educational Benefit through Career Centers
- Provide Web-based Information to Veterans and Institutions

Coordination with State Veterans Benefits

- Combine Outreach Initiatives to Include All Certifying Official Training
- Include Overview of State Benefits in All Certifying Official Training
- Advise Veterans and Eligible Dependents of State Programs that may be applicable to Them
- Follow Massachusetts Legislation Regarding Veterans Education
- Direct Veterans Who Are Not Eligible for Federal Benefits To Appropriate State Benefits

List of Current Outreach Partners

- Massachusetts One Stop Career Centers (40 locations throughout Massachusetts)
- Veterans Upward Bound
- Local Veterans Agents throughout Massachusetts
- Department of Veterans' Services
- Department of Workforce Development
- Massachusetts Vet Centers (7 locations throughout Massachusetts)
- Disabled American Veterans

- “The Route 9 Veterans Forum Cable Access Show” (seen in over 60 communities throughout Massachusetts)
- Massachusetts Veterans, Inc.
- School Certifying Officials (located at every GI-Bill-approved institution in Massachusetts)
- Transition Services Management Office, United States Army

FY09 Outreach Goals

1. Creation of a CD/DVD for Veterans containing federal and state education and employment benefit information
2. Update current website to include the following
 - Comprehensive FAQ page
 - Links to other benefit sites
 - Links to forms & applications for veteran and certifying officials
 - Calendar section for conferences, job fairs, college open houses, veteran benefit fairs, etc.
3. Creation of promotional materials about veteran education benefits
 - Signs at local ballparks
 - Signs/flyers in local restaurants, supermarkets, community centers, post offices and Department of Motor Vehicles
 - Advertisements in local and community papers
 - Public service announcements with local broadcast media
4. Expand partnerships with various veterans’ and related organizations, including:
 - Fire, Police and Corrections departments to promote On-the-Job Training program/benefits
 - Apprenticeship Offices to assist in promoting Apprenticeship program/benefits
 - Massachusetts Military bases and Recruiting Centers
 - Shelters, Libraries, VA Hospitals and other veteran centers
 - Veteran Organizations: VFW, ITAM, DAV, American Legion

For more information contact:

**Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
State Approving Agency
<http://www.mass.edu/veterans>**

MGIB Approved Institutions and Programs

Institutions of Higher Learning

American International College	Harvard University
Amherst College	Hebrew College
Andover Newton Theological School	Hellenic College
Anna Maria College	Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology
Art Institute of Boston at Lesley College	Holyoke Community College
Assumption College	ITT Technical Institute
Atlantic Union College	Labouré College
Babson College	Lasell College
Bay Path College	Lesley University
Bay State College	Longly School of Music
Becker College	Marian Court College
Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology	Massachusetts Bay Community College
Bentley College	Massachusetts College of Art
Berklee College of Music	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Berkshire Community College	Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences
Blessed John XXIII National Seminary	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Boston Architectural College	Massachusetts School of Law
Boston Baptist College	Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology
Boston College	Massasoit Community College
Boston Conservatory of Music	Merrimack College
Boston Graduate School of Psychology	Middlesex Community College
Boston University	Montserrat College of Art
Brandeis University	Mount Holyoke College
Bridgewater State College	Mount Ida College
Bristol Community College	Mount Wachusett Community College
Bunker Hill Community College	National Graduate School
Cambridge College	New England College of Finance
Cape Cod Community College	New England College of Optometry
Clark University	New England Conservatory of Music
College of Our Lady of the Elms	New England Institute of Art, Inc
College of the Holy Cross	New England School of Acupuncture
Curry College	Newbury College
Dean College	Nichols College
Eastern Nazarene College	North Shore Community College
Emerson College	Northeastern University
Emmanuel College	Northern Essex Community College
Endicott College	Park University
Episcopal Divinity School	Pine Manor College
Fine Mortuary School	Quincy College
Fisher College	Quinsigamond Community College
Fitchburg State College	Regis College
Framingham State College	Roxbury Community College
Gibbs College of Boston, Inc	Saint John's Seminary
Gordon College	Salem State College
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary	
Greenfield Community College	
Hampshire College	

Salem State College Graduate & Continuing Ed
School of the Museum of Fine Arts
Simmons College
Simon's Rock College of the Bard
Smith College
Southern New England School of Law
Springfield College
Springfield Technical Community College
Stonehill College
Suffolk University
Suffolk University Law School
Tufts University
University of Massachusetts Amherst
University of Massachusetts Boston
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

University of Massachusetts Lowell
University of Massachusetts Medical School
University of Massachusetts Stockbridge School
University of Phoenix
Webster University
Wellesley College
Wentworth Institute of Technology
Western New England College
Westfield State College
Wheaton College
Wheelock College
Williams College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Worcester State College

Non-Collegiate Institutions

Bancroft School of Massage
Bay State Medical Center
Bay State School of Technology
Beth Israel Hospital
Blaine Hair and Beauty School
Boston City Hospital
Boston Medical Center
Branford Hall
Brigham and Women's Hospital
Brockton Hospital School of Nursing
Butera School of Art
Cambridge City Hospital
Cambridge School of Culinary Arts
Career Institute of American International College
Cape Cod Electrical School
Caritas Norwood EMT
Catherine E. Hinds Institute of Esthetics
Center for Digital Imaging at Boston University
Checkmate Forensic Services
Children's Hospital
Computer Training Specialists
Connecticut School of Broadcasting
Corporate Training Center
Cosmix International School of Hair & Nail Design
Cortiva Institute - Muscular Therapy Institute
Debonaire Academy of Beauty Culture
DiGrigoli School of Cosmetology
EMS Academy, LLC.

Educational Resource Group
Electrology Institute of N.E., Inc.
Elizabeth Grady School of Esthetics
EMC Corporation
Emergency Medical Teaching Services
Empire Beauty Schools
EMS Training Associates
Everest Institute
Framingham Union Hospital
Furniture Institute of Massachusetts
Future Media Concepts
Hair in Motion Academy
Hallmark Institute of Photography
Health Care Training Services, Inc.
Health Training Center
Henri's School Hair Design
Infrared Training Center
Innovative Computer Courses
Institute for Emergency Medical Education
Institute for Environmental Education
International Institute of Culinary Arts
International Masonry Institute
Jolie Hair and Beauty Academy
Kaplan Testing Center
LA Newton School of Beauty Culture
Labaron Hairdressing Academy
Lahey Clinic
Lawrence Memorial Hospital
Leicester EMS Services
Lincoln Technical Institute
Lotus Software

Martin Electrical & Technical School
Massachusetts Career Development
Institute
Massachusetts General Hospital
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Massachusetts School of Barbering
Massachusetts School of Information
Technology
Massachusetts Soldiers Home
Massachusetts Systems Contractors
Association, Inc.
Medical Professional Institute
Millennium Training Institute, Inc.
National Association of Radio and
Telecommunications Engineers (NARTE)
National Fire Protection Association
National Evaluation Systems
New England School of Whole Health
New England Center for Esthetic Education
New England Center for Cosmetology
Education
New England Fuel Institute
New England Maritime
New England Medical Center
New England School of Architectural
Woodworking
New England School of Photography
New Horizons Computer Learning Center
North Bennet Street School
Northeast Emergency Medical Services
Northeast Maritime Institute

Old Colony Trade and Technical School
Parker Professional Driving School, Inc.
Peterson School
People Forever Computer Training Center
Pinnacle Training Corporation
Porter & Chester Institute
Radio Electronic Television Schools (RETS)
RITOP Mobile Electrics Installation School
Rob Roy Beauty Sciences Academy
Safety Program Consultants
Salter School
Seniornet Learning Center
Skills Career Education Center
Skin Care Physicians
Software Council Fellowship Program, Inc
Solidago School of Massage & Holistic
Health
South Coast Fire Safety
Southeastern Technical Institute
Spa Tech Institute
Steri Educational Services
Sullivan and Cogliano Training Centers, Inc
Technology Learning Center
Training Unlimited Inc.
Tri-State CDL Training Center
United Tractor Trailer School
University of Massachusetts Memorial
Medical Center
Universal Technical Institute (UTI)
Veterans Northeast Outreach Center
WYO Tech

High Schools and Vocational Schools

Andover High School
Assabet Valley Regional Technical School
BMC Durfee High School
Bartlett High School
Barnstable High School
Beverly High School
Bishop Feehan High School
Blue Hills Regional Technical School
Boston College High School
Boston Latin School
Bourne High School
Braintree High School
Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
Coyle and Cassidy High School
Dedham High School
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School
Diman Reg. Vocational High School

Diman Reg. School of Practical Nursing
Governor Dummer Academy
Greater Lowell Regional Vocational
Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational
Groton-Dunstable Regional High School
Hopkinton Junior Senior High School
Landmark School
Lynnfield High School
McCann Technical School
Mill Pond High School
Minnechaug Regional High School
Minuteman Regional Vocational
Montachusett Regional Vocational
Newburyport High School
Northampton Aeronautics
North Andover High School
Oakmont Regional High School
Quincy High School

Reading Memorial High School
Shawsheen Valley Regional Vocational
School
South Shore Vocational
Southeastern Regional Voc Technical H.S.
Tahanto Regional High School
Tri-County Regional Vocational

Triton Regional High School
Upper Cape Cod Regional Vocational
Wareham Community Adult Education
Wellesley High School
Weymouth Vocational
Worcester Academy
Worcester Vocational

On the Job Training Programs

Boston Fire Department
Boston Police Academy
Chelsea Fire Academy
Gould Construction Institute
Lowell Municipal Police Academy
MBTA Police Academy
Massachusetts Firefighting Academy
Massachusetts State Police Academy
Taunton Police Academy
Reading Police Academy
Springfield Police Academy
Foxboro Police Academy

Plymouth Police Academy
Boylston Police Academy
Foxboro Police Academy
New Bedford Police Academy
Shane Associates
Springfield Fire Department

Flight Schools

Charis Air Corporation
Executive Flyers Aviation
Hanscom Aero Club
Northampton Aeronautics

Appendix B: Massachusetts Veterans Education Benefits

Massachusetts National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver Program

Eligible Institution:

An institution within the system of public institutions of higher education as identified in Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Eligible Program:

An undergraduate or graduate degree program offered by an eligible institution.

Eligible Student:

An active member of the Massachusetts Army or Air National Guard who is in good standing and meets the following criteria:

- a) is accepted for admission to, or is enrolled, full- or part-time in a Massachusetts public institution of higher education, as defined above
- b) is eligible to receive and has been issued a Certificate of Eligibility by the Military Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts applicable for any portion of the academic year
- c) has not exceeded the 130-semester credit hours maximum, or the equivalent quarter hours or clock hours, when combined with Certificates of Eligibility issued prior to September 1, 2006
- d) maintains satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution

Maintenance of Eligibility:

It is the responsibility of each National Guard member to maintain his/her eligibility for educational assistance during the life of each Certificate of Eligibility. The member is also responsible for providing the Certificate of Eligibility to the proper official at the institution, as designated, and in a timely manner to facilitate awarding of the waivers. It is the responsibility of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Military Division to inform the institution of the status of any member of the National Guard who has failed to maintain good standing or has terminated his/her service. Upon receipt of this information, the institution must determine if the award may be canceled for that academic term or for such future terms to follow.

Award Value:

Subject to a special appropriation for this program, the value of the award under this program shall be equal to the amount of tuition and mandatory fees, as defined by each institution, charged to the student. The total number of credits for which tuition and fees are waived may not exceed the number of credits for which the student is eligible, as indicated and based on the Certificate of Eligibility. The institution must maintain and record the number of credits for which tuition and fees have been waived for each student to avoid overpayment.

Award Procedure:

Upon presentation of a valid Certificate of Eligibility (certificate must bear a raised seal), the institution will credit the student's account for the value of tuition and fees charged. The institution shall present to the Board of Higher Education, or its designated agency, an invoice for reimbursement of all tuition and fees waived under this program at the conclusion of each academic semester. The invoice must be accompanied by a roster which provides the relevant information for each recipient to include, name, educational level, number of credits, and amount of tuition and fees waived.

Reports:

Each institution shall maintain a record of tuition and fees waived under this program and provide a written report to the Board of Higher Education each semester, upon request. The terms of the report shall be specified by the Board of Higher Education and shall include the name of each participating National Guard member, the number of credits charged and the amount of each award. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Military Division shall be responsible for maintaining a log of all eligible

National Guard members and providing a written report detailing the number certificates issued bi-annually.

Participation Agreements

All institutions must file a State Financial Aid Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the State Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Audit Requirements

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver awarded under the terms of The Welcome Home Bill.
- b) The Chancellor shall require each campus to furnish annually to the Board of Higher Education a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the National Guard Tuition and Fee Waiver Program. The Office of Student Financial Assistance will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall at all times be open to inspection, review and audit by the Chancellor, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.

Massachusetts Categorical Tuition Waiver

The Categorical Tuition Waivers are a component of the Single Tuition Waiver Program and have the same purpose of maintaining access to the Commonwealth's public colleges and universities. The Categorical Tuition Waivers are designed to provide financial support to individuals who might not have the opportunity to achieve higher education, without such assistance.

Eligible Student:

To be eligible for a *Categorical Tuition Waiver*, a student must:

- Be a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for at least one year prior to the opening of the academic year.
- Be a United States citizen or eligible noncitizen.
- Be in compliance with applicable Selective Service Registration laws.
- Not be in default of any federal or state loan or owe a refund on any previously received financial aid.
- A member of an eligible category as defined below:
 - **Veteran:** As provided in M.G.L. Chapter 4, Section 7(43) including: Spanish War, World War I, World War II, Korean, Vietnam, Lebanese peace keeping force, Grenada rescue mission, the Panamanian intervention force, or the Persian Gulf.

For purposes of tuition waivers, the term "veteran" shall also include any individual who served in the army, navy, marine corps, coast guard or air force of the United States for not less than ninety days at least one of which was served in the theatre of operation for the Somalian mission known as "Operation Restore Hope" and whose last discharge or release was under honorable conditions.

- **Native American:** As certified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- **Senior Citizen:** Persons over the age of 60.
- **Armed Forces:** An active member of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force or Coast Guard) stationed and residing in Massachusetts.
- **Clients of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission or Commission for the Blind:** As certified by the respective commission.

If it deems necessary, the institution, consistent with its mission and subject to the Board of Higher Education's approval as of September 1, 1991, may establish additional waivers for specific categories of students.

- In accordance with institutional requirements, each student must present documentation of categorical waiver eligibility to the appropriate college officials.
- Enroll in at least three undergraduate credits per semester in state supported undergraduate degree or certificate program.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress in accordance with federal and institutional standards.

Eligible Institution:

An institution within the system of public institutions of higher education Section 5 of Chapter 15A of the General Laws.

Award Amounts:

Individual student awards for an award period may not exceed the actual campus tuition charges for the award period.

If the student is the recipient of need-based student financial aid resources and categorical tuition waiver awards, the combination of resources in the student's financial aid package may not exceed the student's demonstrated financial aid need.

If the student is the recipient of both a need based tuition waiver and a categorical waiver, the total value of both waivers may not exceed the total cost of tuition.

Students qualifying for a Categorical Tuition Waiver may be granted full tuition waivers consistent with the institution's policies.

Campus fees are not included in the waivers. Institutions may, but are not required to, waive specific fees for participants in various categorical waivers. If fees are waived, the campus should publicize the fees waived.

Application Process

Contact the financial aid office at the institution you are attending or plan to attend for application requirements or deadlines. You can also call the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance at (617) 727-9420 to obtain more information.

Massachusetts Public Service Grant

The *Massachusetts Public Service Grant Program* was established in recognition of the hardship that a family experiences upon the loss of a parent and or spouse who is killed or missing in the line of public service duty in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This grant program was established to provide educational opportunity to the remaining family members. The Public Service Grant Program is the only scholarship program not based on demonstrated financial need, but rather entitlement.

Eligible Student:

To be eligible for a *Massachusetts Public Service Grant*, a student must:

- Be a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for one year prior to the start of the academic year for which the scholarship is granted.
- Be a United States citizen or eligible non citizen.
- Be enrolled full time (at least 12 credits or its equivalent) in an eligible institution.
- Not have received a prior bachelors degree or its equivalent.
- Be in compliance with Selective Service Registration Requirements.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional and Federal standards.
- Be able to provide the necessary documentation to evidence one of the following conditions:
 - Child or widowed spouse of a Massachusetts Police Officer, Firefighter or Corrections Officer who was killed or died from injuries received while performing his or her duties. This shall also include authorized training duty.
 - Child of a Prisoner of War Military Service Person Missing in Action in Southeast Asia whose war time service was credited to the Commonwealth and whose service was between February 1, 1955 and the termination of the Vietnam campaign.
 - Child of a Veteran whose service was credited to the Commonwealth and who was killed in action or died as a result of such service.

Eligible Institution:

An eligible institution is defined as a public or independent college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and is authorized by the Commonwealth to offer undergraduate degree programs.

Award Amounts:

For a student attending a Massachusetts public college or university, the award shall be equal to the cost of the institution's full time annual tuition charges.

For a student attending a Massachusetts Independent College or University, the award shall be equal to the full time annual tuition charge at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst not to exceed \$2,500 per academic year.

Application Process

All students applying for consideration for a *Public Service Grant* must complete the following:

- *Public Service Grant Application* from the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).
 - [First Time Applicant Public Service Grant Application](#) (PDF: 99K)
 - [First Time Applicant Public Service Grant Application](#) (DOC: 42K)
- Provide the necessary documentation as stated on the application.
- Return the application and documentation to OSFA by the deadline.

To renew the grant each year, contact the Office of Student Financial Assistance for a renewal application for the *Public Service Program*, or download the current *Massachusetts Public Service Grant Program Renewal Application* renewal application.

- [Public Service Grant Program Renewal Application](#) (PDF: 90K)
- [Public Service Grant Program Renewal Application](#) (DOC: 39K)

Be advised that the *Massachusetts Public Service Grant* is not automatically renewable. You must reapply each year to receive consideration for the Public Service Grant.

May 1st deadline applies to new applicants only.

Appendix C: Specialized Veterans Education Programs

Becker College

Becker College Comes to the Aid of Veterans

Published on Monday, April 28, 2008

College-bound veterans are calling for increased services and funds and a renewal of the intent and spirit of the GI Bill for the twenty-first century. In response to the needs expressed by groups like Student Veterans of America, and advocates like OperationVets.com, Becker College is proud to announce the launch of the Patriots College Access Programs (PCAP), a financial and academic assistance program established to serve American military veterans.

“Through this program, we expect that Active Duty veterans who enroll at Becker College will be able to do so without having to take out loans to meet the cost of full-time tuition and fees,” said President Ken Zirkle. The Patriots College Access Program will add an institutional grant of \$5,000 to the maximum state and federal aid a veteran currently receives; in addition, each full-time student veteran will receive a laptop computer and a stipend to help cover the cost of books.

“The sacrifices and dedication of our military veterans warrants our highest respect and utmost appreciation from all Americans. For Becker College, this is simply the right thing to do,” said Zirkle. Our veterans should be free to choose the college experience that is right for them and not be limited to a choice based solely on what GI benefits will cover. As the number of veterans enrolled at Becker grows, we will explore additional services that will enhance the experience and success of these individuals.”

Another element of PCAP that will be extremely valuable to veterans is the opportunity to receive college credit for applicable military experience. Becker will extend its

“Portfolio” program to include student veterans, a program that evaluates professional and life experience for potential college credit, which previously was only available as a bridge for working adults enrolled in accelerated degree programs. Military veterans and personnel already receive academic credit for specialized military training, based on American Council on Education guidelines.

Commenting on the new program, Congressman James McGovern said, “I’m so proud that Becker College is taking such a leadership role in providing educational opportunities to our returning veterans. I hope that the PCAP program will serve as a model for other colleges and universities – not just in Massachusetts, but around the country. The men and women serving in our armed forces deserve more than just our gratitude – they deserve every opportunity to achieve the American Dream.”

Senators John Kerry and Edward Kennedy also added their endorsements. “Becker College has its priorities straight,” said Senator Kerry. “After putting their lives on the line for our country, every veteran deserves the opportunity to get a quality and affordable education. Becker is putting that dream within reach for those who deserve it most. I applaud the College for its sense of patriotism and I hope the program serves as a model for other colleges and universities across the nation.”

Senator Kennedy added, "Becker College deserves credit for its pioneering new initiative to give financial aid to returning veterans. With college costs escalating, we have a responsibility to do more to help these brave men and women who have sacrificed so much in their service to our country. I'm hopeful that Congress will act quickly to do its part to make college more affordable for them."

"This program is an important step in increasing choice by giving veterans access to private colleges; I hope this will serve as a model for other institutions" said John Powers, northeast regional director of Student Veterans of America and outspoken veterans' advocate. "Many veterans are ending tours of duty to find their choices are limited because they cannot pay rising tuitions." Powers has published the Veterans Resource Guide, and operates the website, www.operationvets.com.

"As a veteran, I am very pleased to see a program like this set up," said Gary W. Clark, a student at Becker. "The Becker staff has been very helpful with any problems I have had, whether it be in admissions or financial aid, and this program just shows how Becker is committed to helping veterans and going that extra mile."

Veterans who have paid fully into the GI Bill program (Chapter 30 Active Duty GI Bill) receive up to \$1101.00 per month toward education expenses. Massachusetts GIs receive an additional \$800. While PCAP is targeted primarily for Active Duty veterans, the program also includes additional provisions for Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606) and Reserve Educational Assistance Program (Ch. 1607).

For more information contact:

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Northern Essex Community College

N. Essex hosting day for veterans

April 20, 2008

Local veterans interested in preparing for a new career are invited to Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill on Wednesday to learn about educational benefits.

It's the college's second annual V-E-T-S Educational Stand-Down.

While all veterans are welcome, the target audience is military personnel from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Families of soldiers currently serving also are invited.

The event aims to help people navigate the educational system and gain access to resources and services.

"We learned from local veteran services directors that many local veterans are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan without a clear understanding of the educational benefits they are entitled to," said Ellen Grondine, the college's dean of law, education, and social professions, who is coordinating the event. "Northern Essex has a long history of educating veterans and we wanted to be sure they know we are eager to help them."

Grondine added that families of active duty personnel are encouraged to attend. "We want to help veterans start the transition early," she said.

At the event, college support staff, veterans' agents, and military personnel will answer questions. Visitors can learn about federal, state, and military funding sources; how military experience may translate into college credits; and about options such as online courses. Certificate and associate degree programs in areas such as healthcare, criminal justice, and human services also will be discussed.

The event begins at 6 p.m. in the Technology Center on the college's Haverhill campus. Call 978-738-7453.

WENDY KILLEEN

Northern Essex Community College Best Practices

Northern Essex Community College (NECC) is very proactive in reaching out to the veteran community. The college has taken a number of steps that other campuses could model.

- NECC has a full-time veteran's representative on campus. This representative has evening hours during the week so that she can assist those non-traditional students who cannot schedule appointments during normal working hours.
- A member of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services' SAVE Program (Statewide Advocacy for Veterans Empowerment) team has two prescheduled days per month at NECC. The college has offered the team space to meet with veterans who schedule appointments through the campus veteran representative.
- NECC recently held its second annual V-E-T-S Educational Stand-down. This program is designed to bring veterans and family members from the veteran community together and make college staff and service organizations available to answer questions about personal or educational benefits.
- NECC has profiled veterans in the campus newspaper who are attending the college. These stories highlight the positive influence education has had on the veterans/students.
- NECC is starting a veterans club on the campus. The club will allow veterans to come together and become involved with the college community and the community at large.

University of Massachusetts Boston
Veterans Upward Bound Program



The Veterans Upward Bound Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston provides a unique opportunity for men and women veterans of all ages to gain access to information about college and career awareness, acquire the academic skills required for entry into higher education and/or to acquire the equivalent of a high school diploma. Services are offered continuously with various workshops, self-paced computer tutorials, individualized tutoring and classroom – based instruction.

Mission

- To promote the development, improvement and extension of opportunities to any eligible veteran for his/her development to its fullest potential through: a) Needs assessment, identification and resolution and b) Seeking of the best educational services through community and school organizations from a local to national level.
- To challenge all staff to improve veterans' educational opportunities and services through knowledge sharing while upholding a high standard of service.
- To actively pursue partnerships with individuals, organizations and communities that share similar goals.
- To encourage research and publication of topics related to veterans education.

Services

- Services are offered through four Pathways:
Pathway One – College and Career Awareness
Pathway Two – GED Preparation
Pathway Three – Self-Paced Skill Development
Pathway Four – Sixteen Week Classroom Instruction

- Academic instruction in: Math, English, Writing, Basic Computer Skills, Laboratory Science, Study Skills and other subjects necessary for success in education beyond the high school level.
- Instruction designed to prepare participants for careers in fields that their peers are underrepresented in.
- Academic advice and assistance.
- Tutorial assistance.
- College and financial aid application assistance.
- Exposure to cultural events, academic programs, and other educational activities that have not been otherwise experienced.
- Activities designed to acquaint veterans participating in the program with the range of career options available to them.
- Assistance in securing veteran services from other locally available resources.
- Free use of some University facilities, while participating in the Veterans Upward Bound Program.