



## Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

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## MASSACHUSETTS STUDENT VETERANS ENCOURAGE FELLOW VETS TO “GO PUBLIC!” AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES, STATE UNIVERSITIES & UMASS

*House Speaker DeLeo, Veterans Services Secretary Coleman Nee, Higher Education Commissioner Richard Freeland to Address Prospective Students*

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Boston, MA – November 2, 2012 The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education today announced that Massachusetts community colleges, state universities and UMass campuses will host a dedicated *GO PUBLIC!* event for prospective students who are military veterans on **Thursday, November 8 at 6 p.m.** at Bunker Hill Community College.

The *GO PUBLIC!* program is part of a statewide series of events to promote the academic excellence and value of public higher education. This November event will feature three student veterans who will share their personal experiences in making the transition from military service to college life, and marks the first time that the entire public higher education system has united in a single, coordinated effort to promote its programs and opportunities directly through veteran-to-veteran information sharing.

The program will be hosted by House Speaker **Robert A. DeLeo** (D-Winthrop). Veterans Services Secretary **Coleman Nee** and Higher Education Commission **Richard Freeland** will also address students during the program.

"On behalf of the House of Representatives, I am proud to help let our veterans know about the educational opportunities that exist within our system of public higher education," House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop) said. "We have worked hard to make sure that our veterans services are the best in the nation and made important investments in our community colleges, state universities and UMass campuses. We want to make sure that, like the members of the Greatest Generation who took advantage of the GI Bill, our current veterans obtain the skills and schooling they need to thrive when they return from serving our country."

"Massachusetts is proud to lead the nation in serving our veterans," said Secretary Nee. "As the new Post-9/11 GI Bill has taken effect, we have seen an explosion in our student veterans' population. Peer-to-peer interactions and veteran support organizations are critical to ensuring that these men and women perform as successfully in our classrooms as they did in protecting our nation."

“Our outreach effort has two goals,” said Commissioner Freeland. “We want to make sure that every returning military veteran knows about the outstanding programs and opportunities that await them at our campuses, and we also want them to know that the cost of their education will be fully covered at a public college or university. Massachusetts veterans should not have to go into debt and risk their financial futures in order to earn educational credentials, having already served their country.”

Fifty-eight percent of Massachusetts veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill currently choose to attend a community college, state university or UMass campus (see attached file for detailed enrollment information). Among them are the three students who will address prospective student veterans at the November 8<sup>th</sup> event:

**Matthew Hobert**, *Bunker Hill Community College*: Hobert, a native of Brighton, MA, is a U.S. Marine reservist majoring in business at BHCC. He served on active duty in the USMC from 2005 to 2011, including seven months in Afghanistan. As a participant in BHCC’s *Learn and Earn* internship program Matt was placed at State Street Bank, where he analyzed large and small investor web behavior during market fluctuations. Working through State Street’s Corporate Development & Global Relationship Management Department, Matt presented his findings to top bank officials.

Part of Matt’s adjustment from combat to campus has involved learning to accept civilian complaints about seemingly trivial concerns. “It’s the little things,” he says. “Like, I was just eating, sleeping and drinking sand and you’re complaining about *what?*”

**Daniel Leenhouts**, *Framingham State University*: Leenhouts, a 26 year-old native of Franklin, MA, was a U.S. Marine Corps assistant convoy commander in Iraq who helped lead the transport of gear being moved out of the country. Now a business administration major at Framingham State University, he has been granted junior status because of credits earned for relevant military service.

“It’s quite a change going from having a leadership role with young people right out of high school to sitting alongside them in a college classroom,” he observes. “But Framingham State has been great. The school goes above and beyond to make sure veterans are taken care of.”

**Lindsey Fairweather**, *UMass Boston*: Fairweather, 29, is a native of Kingston, MA and one of very few women to serve in the U.S. Army’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Returning from Baqubah, Iraq in 2011 after serving as personnel manager of the 225<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion, she enrolled at UMB to pursue a graduate degree in human services. Having overseen the welfare of 900 soldiers in combat, she understands the challenges that veterans face as they pursue educational and career opportunities.

“It’s such a change of pace and stress level,” she explains. “If you go 100 miles an hour for so long and then you slow down (to the pace of civilian life), you are constantly thinking, ‘I should be doing something.’ It can create a lot of anxiety.”

Also attending the November 8 *GO PUBLIC!* event at Bunker Hill Community College are admissions and veterans’ benefits staff to provide information to prospective students. The event is free and open to all U.S. military personnel and family members.

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*Bunker Hill Community College is located at 250 New Rutherford Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02129 and is conveniently located at the MBTA Rapid Transit Orange Line's Community College Station.*

## Veterans Enrollment 2009-2012

**Background:** The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education measures veterans enrolled at Public degree granting institutions in three ways: the number of students who self-identify as being a veteran, referred to as veteran enrollment, the number of categorical and National Guard tuition/fee waivers awarded and the number of students who receive GI Bill payments. These measures should be roughly the same with some variability. The most reliable of these three indicators is veteran enrollment; however, the Department has only collected this metric since 2009. For this reason, the Department uses multiple indicators to measure veteran enrollment.

<b>Table 1: Veteran Enrollment (Self- Reported) at MA Public Institutions by Segment</b>		<b>Fall 2009</b>	<b>Fall 2010</b>	<b>Fall 2011</b>
<b>University of Massachusetts</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	526	463	602
	<b>Graduate</b>	194	168	199
	<b>Total</b>	720	631	801
<b>State Universities</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	169	681	771
	<b>Graduate</b>	34	90	92
	<b>Total</b>	203	771	863
<b>Community Colleges</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	774	2,154	2,388
	<b>Graduate (Not Applicable)</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a
	<b>Total</b>	774	2,154	2,388
<b>All Public Campuses Total</b>	<b>Undergraduate</b>	1,469	3,298	3,761
	<b>Graduate</b>	228	258	291
	<b>Total</b>	1,697	3,556	4,052

Source: Department of Higher Education, reporting was optional in 2009.

The veteran population above reflects the number of students who self identify as being a veteran during the the fall semester of each year when enrolling in any credit bearing degree or certificate program at public degree granting institutions. Campuses do not report spring enrollment to the Department.

The Department began collecting veteran enrollment from campuses in 2009. With all new data elements, the initial year of reporting is not required in order to allow for testing of the data collection. Consequently, veteran enrollment may be underreported in 2009. The increase in growth of veteran enrollment in 2010 and 2011 should not be interpreted as real growth but rather improved data collection.

<b>Table 2: Veteran Enrollment Measured by Students Using State Benefits</b>		<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
<b>Categorical Tuition Waiver</b>	<b>University of Massachusetts</b>	1,183	801	769
	<b>State Universities</b>	581	644	804
	<b>Community Colleges</b>	1,728	1,963	2,017
	<b>Total</b>	3,492	3,408	3,590
<b>National Guard Tuition &amp; Fee Waiver</b>	<b>All public campuses ( Disaggregated data not available)</b>	714	614	NA
<b>Total using both benefits</b>	<b>All Public Campuses</b>	4,206	4,022	NA

Source: HEIRS (2012 National Guard Data not currently available)

# Veterans Enrollment 2009-2012

The categorical waiver, also known as the Veterans tuition waiver and the National Guard tuition and fee waiver reflect the number of resident veterans and guardsmen and woman who have been awarded tuition and/or fee waivers at the public institutions. This award information is reported by the individual campus CFO's on a fiscal year basis. Some of these students also qualify for the GI Bill. Please note that final 2011-2012 data is not yet available.

Table 3: Veteran Enrollment Measured by Students Using Federal GI Bill Benefits (All Chapters)	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
<b>University of Massachusetts</b>	<b>1,088</b>	<b>1,257</b>	<b>1,175</b>
<b>State Universities</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>1,034</b>
<b>Community Colleges</b>	<b>2,241</b>	<b>2,679</b>	<b>2,785</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,051</b>	<b>4,834</b>	<b>4,994</b>

Source: U.S Department of Veterans Affairs

The GI Bill population data is reported via a monthly payment report produced by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reflecting the number of beneficiaries that receive payment. The number of students who qualify for the GI Bill is larger than the number of veterans who identified themselves during enrollment. This is because veterans are able to transfer the Post 9/11 GI Bill benefit to children and spouses, and some students are collecting on behalf of disabled or deceased veterans. Hence, not all beneficiaries of the GI Bill are veterans. Veterans who self identify may not qualify or choose to draw either state or federal benefits and may or may not be counted in the GI Bill, Categorical Waiver, or National Guard Tuition Fee Waiver population.

## Analysis

Regardless of the method used to measure veteran enrollment, there appears to be a growing number of veterans who are enrolling on the public campuses, confirming what campuses have been reporting anecdotally. The data collected reflects a 14% increase in students identifying themselves as veterans from 2010 to 2011, a slight 5% increase in veterans applying for the state categorical tuition waiver and a 3% increase in GI Bill benefits being paid over the same period.

The Department feels this significant increase is partially due to the implementation of the Post-9/11GI Bill, which has provided an improved student benefit and increased public awareness of veterans' entitlements.

For further information, please contact George O'Connor, Director for Veterans Education, at goconnor@bhe.mass.edu or 617-391-6085

**ATTENTION VETERANS:**

Thinking about

**COLLEGE?**

Questions about college costs?

Wondering if a community college,  
state university or UMass campus  
is the right place for you?



Join **MA House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo**  
Veteran Students & Counselors from UMass,  
State Universities & Community Colleges

*Learn about academic & athletic programs,  
financial aid, job training, dorm life and more!*

Thursday, November 8, 2012  
6–7:30 p.m.

**Bunker Hill Community College**  
250 New Rutherford Avenue  
Boston (Charlestown), MA  
Ⓣ Community College—Orange Line

More info at [www.mass.edu/gopublic](http://www.mass.edu/gopublic)



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