

Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses



Office of the
Governor



Washington State Department of
Veterans Affairs



Washington Student
Achievement Council



State Board for Community and
Technical Colleges



Washington State
Workforce Training
And Education
Coordinating Board

Workforce Training and Education
Coordinating Board



Washington National Guard

Purpose Statement

Washington State has welcomed home thousands of military personnel who deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations in support of the Global War on Terror. Through their service, this force of volunteer men and women have earned many entitlements; yet all too often these veterans transition home and in their desire to return to civilian life, quickly lose sight of the available services.

In an effort to reach more veterans and their families, the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs has developed partnerships with many state, federal, county, and local agencies. These partnerships ensure that when a veteran accesses another agency, they are referred to WDVA for a review of their individual needs, potential benefits and assistance in obtaining benefits and care.

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to strengthen our partnership on behalf of Washington's Governor between the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the Washington National Guard, Washington Student Achievement Council, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. By providing information and assistance to our state's institutions of post-secondary education and training programs, these MOU Partners seek to:

- ✓ Increase awareness of veterans' programs on and off campus
- ✓ Provide staff members with a core set of veteran cultural competencies
- ✓ Encourage campuses to implement best practices and policies designed to foster social support, acceptance, a welcoming environment, and a setting that meaningfully acknowledges the contributions of our veterans
- ✓ Encourage veterans to use GI Bill benefits
- ✓ Help veterans succeed in post-secondary education and training
- ✓ Ensure staff and veterans have access to services through WDVA and its federal and local partners
- ✓ Encourage the exchange of information between participating organizations to support veteran success

STATEWIDE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since the original Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses MOU was signed in 2009, Washington State through its Legislature, Governor's Office, State Agencies and Post-Secondary Education Institutions, has made significant accomplishments in serving veterans by receiving grant funding and updating laws. The MOU signers are grateful for the interest of the Washington State Legislature in addressing these important issues. Below is a summary of accomplishments:

- Creation of the Nation's first **VetCorps Program** to serve as on-campus mentors and navigators helping veterans achieve their post-secondary education goals.
 - ✓ 2009-2011 a grant of \$416,000 meant 32 VetCorps members received a monthly stipend and educational scholarship to serve other veterans as on-campus mentors helping veterans succeed in post-secondary education.
 - ✓ 2012-2014 the grant was renewed for \$650,000 and meant 50 VetCorps members could be deployed across Washington State.
 - ✓ VetCorps has also assisted in the creation of over 25 veteran rooms or spaces at colleges.
- **Military resident tuition bill:** allows veterans to pay in-state tuition rates as long as they move to or declare an intent to move to Washington State after separating from the military. *SB 5318, C183 L14*
- **Academic credit for military students bill:** requires colleges to have a policy in place by December 31, 2015 to award credit based on military training. *SSB 5969, C 186 L 14*
- **Early course registration for veterans bill:** requires institutions of higher education that offer an early course registration period for any segment of the student population to also offer early registration to students who are eligible veterans or National Guard members. *HB 1109, C67 L13*
- **Military member make-up classes bill:** requires institutions of higher education to provide make-up classes, exams, or other make-up events to National Guard members or other military reservists called to active duty or training for 30 days or less without prejudice to the final course grade or evaluation. *SB 5343, C271 L13*
- **In-state tuition for Oregon military member bill:** provides that a student who resides in Washington and is on active military duty stationed in one of the nine Oregon border counties is included in the definition of "resident student" and eligible to pay in-state tuition rates. Spouses and dependents of active military members stationed in one of the border counties and living in Washington are also eligible for in-state tuition rates as long as the spouse or dependent also resides in Washington. *HB 2973, C183 L10*

PARTNERS FOR VETERAN SUPPORTIVE CAMPUSES

Individual post-secondary institutions have the opportunity to participate in this MOU by applying for the Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses Certificate. This certificate is offered to any post-secondary education or training institution operating in Washington State as long as the institution is approved by a Washington State Approving Authority to accept GI Bill benefits.

Certificates are provided by WDVA and signed by the WDVA Director and president or director of the post-secondary education or training institution. Certificates must be renewed every two years and may be provided to branch or satellite campus locations.

In order for a post-secondary education institution to be eligible for the Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses Certificate, the institution president or director must submit an application including examples of how the campus meets the 8 Keys to Success.

The 8 Keys to Success on campus are:

1. Create a culture of trust and connectedness across the campus community to promote well-being and success for veterans.
2. Ensure consistent and sustained support from campus leadership.
3. Implement an early alert system to ensure all veterans receive academic, career, and financial advice before challenges become overwhelming.
4. Coordinate and centralize campus efforts for all veterans, together with the creation of a designated space (even if limited in size).
5. Collaborate with local communities and organizations, including government agencies, to align and coordinate various services for veterans.
6. Utilize a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information on veterans, including demographics, retention and degree completion.
7. Provide comprehensive professional development for faculty and staff on issues and challenges unique to veterans.
8. Develop systems that ensure sustainability of effective practices for veterans.

In addition, all post-secondary institutions are encouraged to participate in the Principles of Excellence program. The Principles of Excellence are guidelines for educational institutions receiving funding from the Federal VA and are included in President Obama's April 27, 2012 Executive Order - Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members.

Educational institutions participating in the Principles of Excellence program agree to the following guidelines:

- Provide students with a personalized form covering the total cost of an education program.
- Provide educational plans for all military and Veteran education beneficiaries.
- End fraudulent and aggressive recruiting techniques and misrepresentations.
- Accommodate Servicemembers and Reservists absent due to service requirements.
- Designate a point of contact to provide academic and financial advice.
- Ensure accreditation of all new programs prior to enrolling students.
- Align institutional refund policies with those under Title IV, which governs the administration of federal student financial aid programs.

A school that wishes to be recognized as a Principles of Excellence school on the GI Bill Website should contact the Federal VA at principles.excellence@va.gov, stating their intention to comply with the Principles of Excellence.

Statements of Intent

WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD

As the representative of the state's Citizen Soldiers and Airmen, the Washington National Guard enters into this Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington Guard to promote state and federal education benefits available to all our young men and women along with their eligible dependents.

Activities will include but not be limited to the following:

- Education and family counselors encouraging Soldiers, Airmen and their dependents to continue their education;
- Referring Soldiers and Airmen to the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Coordinating information sharing meetings with other agencies and institutions; and
- Posting education and Washington Department of Veterans Affairs contact information in National Guard Armories around the state.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs is committed to connecting veterans and their families with benefits earned through military service.

In many cases, veterans and their families are unaware of the many benefits and programs that could assist them as they pursue their educational goals. Through this MOU, WDVA will serve veterans and their families through referrals from Washington's training programs and post-secondary education institutions.

Specifically, WDVA commits to the following:

- Provide veteran focused training at the request of post-secondary education institutions;
- Share a Best Practices Guide with all MOU participants and foster an environment where the Guide can be periodically updated and refined;
- Provide timely assistance to all veterans referred by post-secondary education staff/ administrators/counselors, and ensure that appropriate referrals to all available benefits and services are accomplished in a timely manner;
- Offer crisis, emergent care, and suicide prevention access information for local and regional providers/services; and
- Update the WDVA website with the Best Practices Guide and links to the website for each organization signing the MOU.
- In collaboration with institutions, provide localized support by way of WDVA staff, contractors and or Vet Corps members.
- Provide individual post-secondary education institutions with the opportunity to apply for the Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses Certificate.

WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL

The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) will work with the Legislature, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Council of Presidents, Independent Colleges of Washington, and other approved educational providers to develop veteran-supportive policies and campuses that increase the opportunity for veterans' academic success.

We will work with the Legislature and campuses to disseminate and share best practices for serving veterans effectively, including but not limited to:

- Training for faculty and staff to make them aware of the mindset and unique needs of veterans returning from combat zones;
- "Safe zones" for veterans such as a veterans' club or association;
- Student orientations specifically for veterans;
- Veterans service recognition events;
- Evaluation of college and statewide policies and procedures that create barriers to a veteran's success; and
- Empowerment for those working directly with veterans to provide services designed to promote the educational achievement of veterans.

The WASC's State Approving Agency for Veterans' Education and Training will provide training in the proper certification methods for Veterans' Certifying Officials on each campus to ensure prompt receipt of benefits and reduce the risk of financial liability to their schools. Outreach briefings to eligible persons describing educational and training benefits will also be developed to encourage the use of GI Bill benefits.

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES (SBCTC)

In support of veterans pursuit of post-secondary education the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges will:

- Continue to work with the Legislature, workforce and higher education community to develop statewide policies to ensure postsecondary education is seamless for all students, including returning veterans. (This may include, but is not limited to, issues such as transfer, credit for prior experience, career pathways, support services, etc.)
- Promote veteran-friendly campuses by utilizing the existing two-year college council and commission structure to disseminate and share best practices for serving veterans effectively.
- Deliver programs in alignment with the community and technical college goals identified in the 2014 High Skills High Wages Report, with continued attention to identified industry skills gaps and local workforce needs.
- Promote veteran supportive campuses by utilizing the existing two-year college council and commission structure to disseminate and share best practices for serving veterans and their families effectively.

- Ensure the campus community is aware of the benefits associated with the Post 9/11 GI Bill and encourage colleges to actively find ways to connect returning veterans with services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure they have all the support needed to be successful in their pursuit of post-secondary education.
- Shorten time for veterans to receive a credential or degree:
 1. Continue the process of awarding credit for prior learning;
 2. Develop additional articulation and transfer agreements;
 3. Develop and bridge additional military pathway programs;
 4. Develop additional applied bachelor's degrees; and
 5. Enhance online access resources.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) will work with the stakeholders in the workforce development system to implement strategies in the state strategic plan for workforce development, High Skills, High Wages: 2012-2022.

There are strategies in this plan that pertain to better access and success for veterans in postsecondary education and training and improving transitions to civilian work for veterans. They include:

- Washington's Career Bridge (www.careerbridge.wa.gov); an online tool for exploring careers, searching for programs in Washington, and providing consumer reporting information on earnings and employment outcomes for each program. This website includes special information specifically for veterans.
- Improving services for veteran job seekers by promoting seamlessness in workforce development services such as those provided at WorkSource Centers and through affiliates.

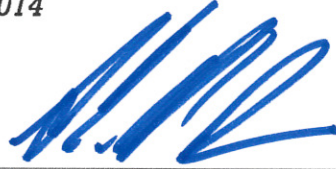
In accordance with state and federal laws, the Workforce Board is a State Approving Agency that approves postsecondary education and training programs for veterans. The Workforce Board commits to approving programs in a timely fashion to ensure expanded program choice for veterans in accordance with the Post 9-11 GI Bill. The Workforce Board also monitors these schools to ensure that veterans are provided a quality education and receive their benefits as expeditiously as possible. Additionally, the Workforce Board works to approve new programs of study that a veteran wishes to pursue.

The undersigned agree to make every effort to ensure veterans and their families have the support needed to be successful on Washington campuses.

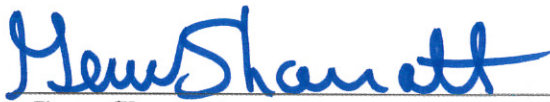
November 21, 2014



Jay Inslee
Governor



Lourdes E. Alvarado-Ramos
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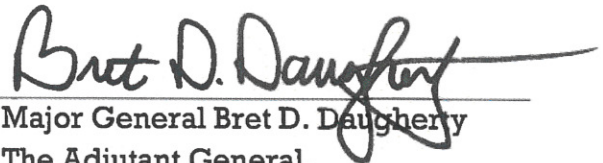
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