

Partners for Veteran Supportive Campuses



Office of the
Governor



Washington National Guard



Washington State
Department of Veterans
Affairs



Higher Education
Coordinating Board



State Board for Community
and Technical Colleges



Washington State
Workforce Training
And Education
Coordinating Board

Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating
Board



Independent Colleges of
Washington

Council of Presidents

Washington Association of Community and
Technical Colleges

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 define a new partnership on behalf of Washington's Governor between the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the Washington National Guard, Higher Education Coordinating Board, 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 higher education and training programs, these MOU Partners seek to:

- ✓ Increase awareness of veteran's 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 higher education and training
- ✓ Ensure staff and veterans have access to services through WDVA and its federal and local partners

Statements of Intent

WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD

As the representative of the state's Citizen Soldiers, the Washington National Guard enters into this Memorandum of Understanding with the intent to use all applicable assets of 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 and their dependents to continue their education;
- Referring Soldiers 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.

These activities are expected to lead to increased Soldier enrollment in post secondary education and increased use of Washington Department of Veterans Affairs and VA resources.

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 myriad of benefits and programs that could assist them as they pursue their educational goals. Through this MOU, WDVA plans to serve more veterans and their families through referrals from Washington's training programs and higher education institutions.

Specifically, WDVA commits to the following:

- Provide veteran focused training at the request of higher 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 higher 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.

WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will work with the 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-friendly campuses that increase the opportunity for veterans' academic success.

We will work with 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 HECB'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.

The HECB/SAA will encourage Veterans' Certifying Officials at each school to obtain consent to release veteran contact information to the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs so that individuals may be made aware of all services and opportunities available to them as veterans.

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES (SBCTC) AND WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES (WACTC)

In support of veterans pursuit of higher education the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, in collaboration with the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges, will:

- Continue to work with the Legislature, workforce and higher education community to develop statewide policies to ensure higher 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 ladders, 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.

- Ensure the campus community is aware of the benefits associated with the new Post 9/11 GI Bill and to encourage colleges to actively find ways to connect returning veterans with the services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure they have all the support they need to be successful in their pursuit of higher education.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) will work with stakeholders in the workforce development system to implement strategies in the state strategic plan for workforce development, *High Skills, High Wages: 2008 - 2018*.

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:

- Creating and maintaining 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 a special information targeted to veterans.
- Shortening time for veterans to receive a credential or degree through:
 - Expanding credit for prior learning.
 - Developing more articulation and transfer agreements.
 - Developing more bridge programs.
 - Developing more applied bachelors degrees.
 - Developing better crosswalks.
 - Developing online tools.
- Improving services for veteran job seekers by promoting seamlessness in workforce development services such as those provided at WorkSource Centers and through affiliates.

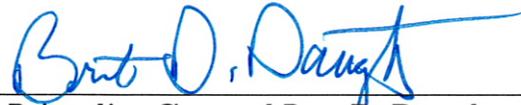
In accordance with state and federal laws, the Workforce Board acts as one of two state approving agencies that approve postsecondary education and training programs for veterans. The Workforce Board commits to approving programs in a timely fashion to ensure expanded program choice for veterans in accordance with the Post 9-11 GI Bill.

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

September 10, 2009



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor



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The Assistant Adjutant General -
Army



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