

# REPORT OF THE CHANCELLOR'S TASK FORCE FOR A VETERAN-FRIENDLY CAMPUS



## **Task Force Members**

**Fleisher, Carol**, Tri-Chair  
MU Certifying Official for Veterans  
Admissions Office

**Henson, Lee**, Tri-Chair  
Coordinator  
ADA Compliance

**Worthington, Roger L.**, Tri-Chair  
Assistant Deputy Chancellor  
Chancellor's Diversity Initiative

**Alfred, Gregory C.**  
Graduate Assistant  
University Counseling Center

**Brandt, Rebecca L.**  
Associate Director  
Admissions

**Caetano, Gerald**  
President  
Missouri Student Veterans Association

**Elms, Carly**  
Graduate Student  
Educational, School, & Counseling Psychology

**Even, Susan**  
Director  
Student Health Center

**Hathaway, Steve**  
Graduate Student  
Educational, School, & Counseling Psychology

**Housh, David P.**  
Vice Chancellor  
Development

**Husain, Syed Arshad**  
Professor of Psychiatry  
School of Medicine

**Joy, James L.**  
Director  
Parking and Transportation

**Ladehoff, Paul**  
Director  
Campus Mediation Services

**Lucas, Mark L.**  
Director  
Student Life

**Ludwig, Debbie**  
Advisor  
Financial Aid

**Pavlick, Donna L.**  
Assistant Dean  
Law School

**Price, Victor**  
Associate Registrar  
Enrollment Management

**Schneider, Barbara**  
Coordinator  
Admissions

**Shiflett, William J.**  
Director of Gift Planning and Endowments  
Development

**Toler, Paul W.**  
Director  
Business Services

**Touzeau, Karen**  
Assistant Vice Chancellor  
Human Resource Services

**Tulberg Jr, Ellsworth E.**  
Professor of Aerospace Studies  
College of Engineering

**Virkler, Mark R.**  
Professor of Civil & Environmental Engineering  
College of Engineering

**Waigandt, Alex**  
Associate Professor  
Educational, School, & Counseling Psychology

**Wallace, Malcolm K**  
Professor of Military Science  
ROTC

**Walker II, Martin W.**  
Director of Administrative Services  
College of Engineering

**Williams, Jeffrey R.**  
Director of Access and Urban Outreach  
Enrollment Management

**Wilson, Jr, Robert D.**  
Professor of Naval Science  
ROTC

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 22, 2007, Chancellor Brady J. Deaton announced the creation of a Task Force for a Veteran-Friendly Campus to examine issues that affect veterans and other military personnel departing and/or returning to campus as students or employees. The charge of the task force was to examine topics such as financial aid, housing options, credit transfers, departmental advising, work accommodations and the availability of networking, as well as the possibility of a one-stop process for re-enrollment and providing mentors for younger veterans.

The 28-member task force - comprised of faculty, staff, and students, many with some connection to the military – examined the following:

- Recruitment and admission, including outreach to disabled veterans
- State and federal support for postsecondary education for veterans
- Financial assistance at the campus level
- Campus life and climate
- Health and counseling resources
- Activation and return-to-work/school and
- Employment opportunities

The task force determined that a "veteran-friendly" campus should be inclusive, respectful and equitable for veterans, and should recognize that the needs of veterans may be different than the typical incoming freshman or new employee.

The task force also identified several characteristics of a veteran-friendly campus. Such a campus would:

1. Facilitate transition to and from active duty;
2. Recognize and value the service of veterans;
3. Provide a coordinated network of professionals with expertise in addressing the needs of veterans;
4. Actively facilitate networking and social support groups among veterans on campus;
5. Provide leadership in the employment of veterans;
6. Actively assess the climate for veterans on campus;
7. Reach out to the veteran and service member applicant pool of prospective students and employees;
8. Provide customized financial resources for veterans.

The task force has organized its recommendations based on these characteristics, beginning with matters that can be addressed for the most part administratively, without substantial expense. One recommendation is for establishment of a staffed Resource Center for Veterans, which would require either expenditures or shifting of current expenditures, and office space. Implementation of recommendations regarding increases in financial support for veterans would of course require additional external funding.

Recommendations include:

- streamlining processes for transition to and from active duty
- incorporating veteran status into record-keeping
- increasing outreach to employees and students who are veterans
- ensuring that the campus recognizes the contributions of veterans as part of its overall attention to diversity and related constituency issues
- expanding web-based resources for veterans
- customizing advising and registration for veterans
- establishing a Resource Center for Veterans to facilitate support, information-sharing, and advocacy
- expanding support to the Mizzou Student Veterans Association
- providing leadership in the employment of veterans
- reaching out to the veteran and service member applicant pool of prospective students and employees
- actively assessing the climate for veterans on campus
- expanding financial resources for veterans.

## INTRODUCTION

An estimated 1.3 million troops have served in Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom since 2001. According to the Department of Defense, by the end of the current troop surge in July of 2008, there will still be approximately 140,000 troops in Iraq and another 32,000 troops in Afghanistan. These conflicts have been notable for relatively lower percentages of American troop fatalities, and much higher rates of survival of severe battle injuries.

Troop rotations, draw downs, discharges, surges and withdrawals have the effect of activating and deactivating tens of thousands of military personnel every year. Many of these troops are college students when they are called-up or activated into service, and many others will enter college after military discharge. In some cases, active duty service members will be deactivated into the reserves, enter college, but then be called back to active duty. In still other cases, wounded veterans will enter college following brief or prolonged periods of rehabilitation. Many veterans of these conflicts are already at MU, and many more are expected to follow.

In the Fall Semester 2007, there were 250 officially-recorded student-veterans enrolled at MU. Beyond that number, MU has incomplete information at best about the numbers of its faculty and staff who are veterans, and very little information about the number of U.S. military reservists or Missouri National Guard members among students, faculty or staff. Even less is known about the numbers of family members of active duty service members, veterans, and war casualties. All of these individuals may need support and/or special assistance as part of their membership in the MU campus community.

MU has recently been recognized by the U.S. Department of Defense as a Five-Star Employer for support of its employees in the Guard and Reserve, and Chancellor Brady Deaton has determined that much more needs to be done to support veterans, especially student-veterans, at MU. To that end, on August 22, 2007, he announced the creation of the Task Force for a Veteran-Friendly Campus to examine issues that affect veterans and other military personnel departing and/or returning to campus as students or employees. The charge of the task force was to examine topics such as financial aid, housing options, credit transfers, departmental advising, work accommodations and the availability of networking, as well as the possibility of a one-stop process for re-enrollment and providing mentors for younger veterans.

The 28-member task force - comprised of faculty, staff, and students, many with some connection to the military – examined the following:

- Recruitment and admission, including outreach to disabled veterans
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- Financial assistance at the campus level
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- Activation and return-to-work/school and
- Employment opportunities

More information about the task force sub-committees is in the [Appendix](#). This report is the culmination of the work of the task force to date.

### Definition of Veteran-Friendly

In defining a "veteran-friendly" campus, the task force borrowed from the work of the Campus Climate Task Force regarding diversity and inclusion. We believe that a veteran-friendly would be inclusive, respectful and equitable for veterans. Equity in this context means to recognize that the needs of veterans may be different than the typical incoming freshman or new employee.

Although American veterans from World War II and the Korean conflict were typically welcomed home, veterans from the Vietnam conflict sometimes were scorned by opponents of that conflict. Later, veterans for the most part were an almost invisible presence on campuses. Recently, many colleges and universities throughout the country are working to ensure positive campus environments for veterans, and in particular disabled veterans, returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, as evidenced in part by an October 2007 American Council on Education conference about disabled veterans (see [Appendix](#) for more information).

Nevertheless, we were unable to locate a clear and concise definition in the literature about what makes a campus veteran friendly. Having completed our own campus environmental scan, and evaluated the practices of other campuses, we have identified the following criteria for a veteran-friendly campus. A veteran-friendly campus is one which:

1. Facilitates transition to and from active duty;
2. Recognizes and values the service of veterans;
3. Provides a coordinated network of professionals with expertise in addressing the needs of veterans;
4. Actively facilitates networking and social support groups among veterans on campus;
5. Provides leadership in the employment of veterans;
6. Actively assesses the climate for veterans on campus;
7. Reaches out to the veteran and service member applicant pool of prospective students and employees;
8. Provides customized financial resources for veterans.

The task force has organized its recommendations based on these characteristics, beginning with matters that can be addressed for the most part administratively, without substantial expense. One recommendation is for establishment of a staffed Resource Center for Veterans, which would require either expenditures or shifting of current expenditures, and office space. Implementation of recommendations regarding increases in financial support for veterans would of course require additional external funding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. FACILITATING TRANSITION TO AND FROM ACTIVE DUTY

**Problem:** MU lacks checklists for activated and returning student-veterans.

**Current resources:** None. Activated students often have a short timeline to wrap up personal affairs and report to their units. For those students, a checklist could help them maximize their time and quickly withdraw from MU. Returning students could benefit from a similar checklist.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Texas A&M's Office of Financial Aid provides a reenrollment form, at <http://financialaid.tamu.edu/forms/VeteransReenrollmentForm.pdf>. This form allows veterans to reenroll for financial aid. (NOTE: task force members did some web-based research about practices at other campuses, but these inquiries were far from comprehensive and focused primarily on campuses in the Big 12 and Big Ten - see [Appendix](#).)

**Recommendations:**

- Determine the steps necessary for activated students to expedite withdrawal from MU.
- Determine steps necessary for students to return to MU.
- Ask veterans about their experience being activated and returning to MU to determine usefulness of checklists.
- Determine whether it would be helpful to provide veterans with expedited help in withdrawing and re-enrolling.
- Prepare checklists as needed.

**Coordinating persons and/or offices:** Registrar, Graduate School, Financial Aid, Cashier, Admissions

**Problem:** MU students called to active duty must either withdraw from all their courses or take an incomplete.

**Current Resources:** The MU website for students called to active duty during a term is <http://registrar.missouri.edu/policies/active-military-duty.php>. These procedures were revised in 2007 for students and faculty to align with Missouri law. However, there was another faculty policy change from August 2007 (see [Appendix](#)) that has not been updated on this page as of April 2008. The policy allows a student called to active duty to 1) withdraw from all classes with the option for a full refund of fees, or 2) take a grade of Incomplete in all courses and finish the courses on what seems to be a reasonable schedule or, later, 3) have the Incomplete remain as the final grade along with an explanation about the military service.

**Best practices elsewhere:** The University of Utah and Oregon State University apparently allow students called to active duty to withdraw from some classes and take an Incomplete in others. We suggest MU consider this alternative. See the following websites for more information.

--University of Utah: <http://unews.utah.edu/p/?r=031406-8>

--Oregon State University: <http://oregonstate.edu/registrar/MilitaryCallUp.html>

**Recommendations:**

- Contact the above universities to discuss the effects of their policies on the university and affected students.
- Make a cost-benefit analysis of a policy change at MU.
- Discuss possible courses of action with MU faculty representatives.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Registrar.

**Problem:** It is unclear whether activated students who take incomplete grades get financial support the first semester they return in order to complete those courses. (Note: MU finance charges and late fees do not apply while a student is on military leave.)

**Current Resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendation:**

- Determine whether current MU or federal financial aid policy addresses aid for incomplete grades based on hardships or emergencies

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Financial Aid, Registrar

## **2. RECOGNIZING AND VALUING THE SERVICE OF VETERANS**

**Problem:** MU does not have an effective process to identify all veterans enrolled in its academic programs.

**Current resources:** Veterans are only identified if they are receiving veteran educational benefits.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Ask applicants to self-identify as a veteran on all MU application forms.
- Transfer information obtained to MyZou, and also provide access on MyZou for students to self-identify as veterans at any time during their enrollment at MU (similar to the way they can change their address at any time).
- Assign an MU veterans representative to participate in Summer Welcome and similar events so that applicants and students become aware of the support available to veterans on the MU campus.

**Details:**

A. Revise all MU application forms (undergraduate, graduate, professional, online, evening, etc) to include a standard set of questions regarding the applicant's status as a veteran. Data on each veteran should include demographics (age, gender, race, disability, etc.), military status (e.g. active duty, inactive reserves, veteran, service-connected veteran, dependent of veteran) and whether or not they use educational benefits through the VA (Ch. 31, Ch. 35, GI Bill, etc.). The information would be shared with the Veterans' Services office for further assessment.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Admissions, Graduate School, Deans

B. Modify MyZou to contain the fields identified in Action Step 1 above for information reflecting veteran status. Information collected through the application process should be transferred automatically. Veterans should also have the ability to self-identify on MyZou at any time after the application process and during their enrollment. This information can then be used by appropriate personnel to contact veterans to advise them of services, and for tracking demographic information.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Registrar

C. MU should take every opportunity to reach veterans so that they may become aware of services available on campus. For example, as noted above, an MU veterans' representative should be part of Summer Welcome and similar events.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Student Affairs

**Problem: Mechanisms to identify all of the University employees who are veterans or currently on active duty also need to be improved.**

**Current Resources:** Currently information regarding veteran status is collected on the University Personnel Data Form (PDF). Employees are asked to update this form as their circumstances change. The PDF asks employees to identify themselves as a protected veteran in one of the following three categories:

- Other protected veterans
- Vietnam Era veterans
- Special disabled veterans

These categories are not inclusive of the entire veteran population on campus. Currently we do not use all of the designations included in the PeopleSoft Human Resource Information system to collect information about veterans.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Collect comprehensive information regarding faculty and staff who are veterans or service members, including employees who are currently deployed.
- Make appropriate modifications to the PDF to allow veterans to self-identify for all branches of military service.
- Begin to utilize all of the relevant military categories in the PeopleSoft HRS information system. Additionally include definitions of each of these military categories in the electronic PDF instructions: Active Reserve, Inactive Reserve, Other Protected Veteran, Post-Vietnam Veteran, Pre-Vietnam Veteran, Retired Military, Veteran (VA ineligible), Vietnam and other Protected Veteran, and Vietnam-Era Veteran.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office, Human Resource Services, Division of Information Technology.

**Problem:** There is a lack of adequate information about the issues and concerns unique to the experiences of veterans as students or employees at MU.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Initiate forums, focus groups, interviews, and a survey of veterans at MU including students, faculty, and staff. For students, topics would include housing, academics, financial aid, and other aspects of student life. For faculty and staff, topics would include campus climate, awareness of veterans' benefits, etc. A survey could be created with input from veterans, then reviewed by the IRB, with distribution to follow, and collection/analysis of results thereafter. The survey could include collection of demographic information, military status, school/college, etc. Policy changes could be considered based on survey results. For example, current MU policy on undergraduate housing may be inappropriate for veterans who are older. Residential Life could review the costs and benefits of allowing undergraduate veterans to live off campus, and consider offering individual campus housing exemptions given specific circumstances and maturity level.
- Take appropriate actions based on results and finding.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Student Life, MSVA, and Human Resource Services.

**Problem:** Effective outreach mechanisms to student-veterans are lacking.

**Current resources:** Veterans Services office and MSVA.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

A. Issue a policy statement from the Office of the Chancellor to the effect that MU strives to be a veteran-friendly campus, recognizes the unique status of veterans and the importance of supporting them as students, and requires faculty and staff to familiarize themselves with veterans' benefits and policies pertinent to their official University responsibilities. A draft statement is in the [Appendix](#). Disseminate this statement from the Chancellor's Office to deans, directors, and department heads, and then to all faculty and staff through their departments, as well as through venues such as Mizzou Weekly and MU Info Online. Prepare a professional PowerPoint presentation, with advice from veterans, highlighting some of the issues, concerns, and best practices related to veterans, and disseminate it extensively to members of the University community.

The policy statement would also lay the groundwork for systematic provision of information to faculty and staff about this constituency and about resources available to student-veterans, in order to help ensure that student-veterans will have full access to the resources. (Many task members characterize student-veterans as a "subculture" because their shared experiences and

values are typically far different than those of other students.) For example, all staff in Admissions Office and Financial Aid should be aware that special benefits are available to student-veterans and direct them all to the Veterans Services office. Likewise, campus career services offices should be knowledgeable about the often atypical career development needs and interests of veterans, and about employment preferences such as those provided by government offices and federal contractors.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Office of the Chancellor, Veterans' Services office, MSVA.

B. Create a packet of information for both prospective student-veterans and for the newly-admitted student-veterans. Contact each newly-enrolled student-veteran to provide a welcome to campus and an introduction to campus resources, with periodic follow-up contacts to ensure that each student-veteran's individual circumstances are reviewed and addressed. Create individual folders for each student-veteran documenting needs and tracking both provision of relevant information and progress made. Disseminate information about veterans' benefits and policies through the Maneater and other campus news outlets, special mailings, participation in campus events, etc.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office, with help from the News Bureau and others. In reality, this recommendation and the ones immediately following cannot be effectively implemented without creation of a staffed Resource Center for Veterans on campus (see below).

C. Place information pertaining to veterans in multiple relevant and visible points on the MU website for the purpose of recruiting new students to campus, and identifying and serving those enrolled.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Web Communications, Veterans' Services office.

D. Establish a "Mizzou Veterans Day" once each semester – one on or near Veterans Day and other during the week after spring break. Plan and advertise activities to honor all veterans who are members of the MU community. Examples: a booth or table at Brady Commons, a ceremony honoring veterans, and a recognition dinner.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office, with visible support from the Office of the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

E. Establish relationships with other veterans' organizations such as veterans' services offices on other campuses and the Missouri VA, and area chapters of organizations like the VFW, American Legion, Marine Corps League, ROTC, etc., to enhance networking opportunities and identify ways in which these organizations could be of benefit to MU student-veterans. Invite representatives from these organizations to participate in "Mizzou Veterans Day" each semester. Also invite them to MSVA meetings. Include information about services these organizations can provide in mailings to student-veterans.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office, with extensive help from Student Life.

F. Ensure that the campus recognizes the contributions of veterans as part of its overall attention to diversity and related constituency issues. A positive example was an article on ROTC in the March issue of Mizzou magazine: <http://mizzoumag.missouri.edu/2008-spring/features/rotc/index.php>. The article was also featured on the MU home page. Recognizing student-veterans during commencement exercises, periodically reminding the campus community about the many memorials on campus to veterans (including Memorial Union and Memorial Stadium), periodically recognizing individual faculty and staff who are veterans, as well as students who are veterans or who are currently either on active duty or subject to deployment, and similar activities, would help educate the campus community about the contributions of veterans.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office, with extensive help from Student Life.

### **3. PROVIDING A COORDINATED NETWORK OF PROFESSIONALS WITH EXPERTISE IN ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VETERANS**

**Problem:** The various campus entities that work with student-veterans sometimes do not have a lead person assigned to veterans, and do not network regarding issues affecting student-veterans.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Continue the position in the Office of Cashiers that specializes in handling Montgomery GI Bill funds and related support, working with students who experience delays in GI Bill funding to offer alternative payment arrangements which may include extensions of their tuition bills, etc.
- Fill a similar position there, currently vacant, for a "sponsor billing" representative to receive authorizations, process student account credits, and Bill military unit "sponsors" (such as the Missouri and Federal National Guards, the three campus ROTC programs and VA Vocational Rehabilitation) for payment.
- Assign lead persons for veterans in Cashiers, Financial Aid, Student Life, Residential Life, Office of the Registrar, Student Health Center, Counseling Center and other units as appropriate (Admissions already has a lead person - the Veterans Services office).
- Create a working group consisting of these persons.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Cashiers Office and Veterans' Services office.

**Problem:** Veterans may or may not be eligible for VA benefits for health and mental health services depending on whether they (a) have been determined to have a service-connected disability, or (b) otherwise qualify for VA benefits on the basis of their fiscal circumstances. Campus veterans need readily accessible information regarding the procedures for qualifying for VA benefits, and alternatives for health and mental health services if they do not qualify.

**Current resources:** MU has a variety of health and mental health service units, most of which are student focused, where questions about these issues may arise or originate.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Some other institutions have easily accessible and accurate web-based information about health and mental health services or veterans. For example, see <http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/veterans/utveterans.html>.

**Recommendation:**

- Establish a website with accessible and accurate information about health and mental health benefits and resources for veterans on campus (students, faculty and staff). This website should link to a more comprehensive campus website for veterans. Units with a mission to provide health and mental health services should work together to create this website.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Web Communications, Student Health, Human Resource Services, Veterans Services, Counseling Center Department of Psychiatry

**Problem:** Service providers at various health and mental health units on the MU campus may not have adequate training to serve the needs of campus veterans.

**Current resources:** Unknown.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Some other institutions have staff specializing in health and mental health services to veterans, and/or providing in-service training to adequately equip their staff to provide these services.

**Recommendation:**

- Establish and implement a plan for the preparation of existing health and mental health staff and/or hiring of new staff to serve veterans.
- Where appropriate, referrals should be made to the Truman VA Medical Center or Vets Centers in St. Louis or Kansas City.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Counseling Center, EAP Director, Student Health Services, Department of Psychiatry

**Problem:** Student veterans need to have access to career planning assistance, opportunities to learn about employment benefits available to them as veterans, and opportunities to interact with prospective employers.

**Current resources:** MU Career Center and college/school career services offices.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendation:**

- Familiarize the MU Career Center and college/school career services offices with veterans' employment benefits, priorities for employment with federal agencies and federal contractors, and employers identified by federal and state agencies as particularly supportive of veterans.

- Designate a person in each office to be responsible for developing this information and providing it to veterans.
- If possible, meet with veterans individually to discuss their personal career plans, and offer them the opportunity to develop an individualized career plan.
- Make opportunities available for student-veterans to interact with potential employers, and with veterans both on and off campus who might assist with career guidance.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Career Services Council, Veterans' Services office.

**Problem:** MU's admissions practices and particularly its credit transfer practices might make the institution less attractive to veterans.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Based on what the task force has learned, some other major research universities accept transfer credits for certain military training, or at the very least do not have a blank policy of refusing to accept such credits.

**Recommendations:**

- Ask the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management to convene a working group to study MU's current policies and practices regarding transfer of academic credits for some kinds of military training (for example, high-level emergency medical training or computer-based technology training), and recommend changes as appropriate.
- Plan and implement an alternative "Summer Welcome" for veterans who can't attend the normal summer program due to training or mission requirements.
- Plan and implement long-distance or individualized advising and registration, including discussions about housing, in similar circumstances.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Enrollment Management, Admissions, Student Affairs

**4. ACTIVELY FACILITATING NETWORKING AND SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS AMONG VETERANS ON CAMPUS**

**Problem:** There is no person, office, or location on campus fully dedicated to the needs of veterans, thus making identification, communication and provision of services difficult.

**Current resources:** Carol Fleisher as the VA certifying official is one of the few MU officials tasked with aiding veteran-students, and her official role is only to provide information on educational benefits. She has personally taken on a much larger role, but this is outside of the official University commitment. Others such as Becky Brandt, Associate Director of Admissions, and Cathy Scroggs, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, have also taken leadership roles in providing services to student-veterans. In addition, the Missouri Student Veterans Association (MSVA) was recently established and is maintained by veteran students themselves. It plays a crucial role in bringing veterans together on campus, identifying the needs of these students, and both advocating and working toward solutions to issues which arise.

**Best practices elsewhere:** In the Big Ten and Big 12, the University of Colorado - <http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/va/> - has started a veterans' affairs center. The University

of Minnesota has a one-stop center -

[http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Veterans\\_Certification/Veterans\\_Resource\\_Office.html](http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Veterans_Certification/Veterans_Resource_Office.html) - supplemented by an active state program - <http://www.guardonline.mnscu.edu/>. The University of Michigan seems to be starting something very similar to what we are recommending - [http://www.ur.umich.edu/0708/Jan28\\_08/06.shtml](http://www.ur.umich.edu/0708/Jan28_08/06.shtml). The University of Wisconsin appears to provide financial support to a veterans' organization - <http://vets.studentorg.wisc.edu/>, as also seems to be the case at Texas A&M - <http://tamuveterans.tamu.edu/>.

### **Recommendation:**

- Establish a Resource Center for Veterans. It would be a comfortable place for veteran-students to meet one another, learn about services on campus, express their needs and find information about campus life and the transition to a career. We suggest N132 Memorial Union, a central location with a more mature and quiet atmosphere than other places on campus. The Center would also have a full-time director, with an office for the Veterans Services officer as well. The Center would contain multiple resources pertaining to the veterans. Examples include information about state and federal offices serving veterans, websites pertinent to veteran issues, handouts describing MU veterans' services, and handouts from other relevant organizations. The Center will keep records of all veterans served, their needs, how they learned of the location/services, and services provided to each veteran through a survey prepared by the office staff. The Center would also:
  - Communicate regularly with MU student-veterans, as well as with faculty and staff members who are military veterans.
  - Encourage veterans at MU to self-identify.
  - Survey student-veterans to identify their priorities for campus support, and learn more about what brought them to MU.
  - Help create and support a campus standing committee for veterans.
  - Identify and help strengthen campus resources for veterans such as employment and counseling services.
  - Advocate for veterans on campus.
  - Advise University leadership on policy related to veterans.
  - Serve as liaison with local, state and federal veteran organizations.
  - Enhance visibility and positive recognition of veterans on campus.
  - Help find scholarships and grants for student-veterans.
  - Develop a partnership/mentoring program for student-veterans.
  - Provide financial and other support to the Mizzou Student Veterans Association.
  - Reach out to spouses and family members, especially when student-veterans are deployed.
  - Include people with no military background as part of the support system, to help show that "civilians" also care about veterans and to help build bridges to the civilian world.

Most importantly, the Center would have lead responsibility – with support from the members of this task force – for coordinating implementation of approved task force recommendations.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Veterans' Services office.

## 5. PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF VETERANS

**Problem:** University policy on equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination contain wording that is outdated, referring only to “Vietnam-era veterans.” University policy also does not make a specific reference to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USSERA), nor does it mention the prohibition on termination of service persons in the Global War on Terror Act (GWOT).

**Current Resources:** The current policy is in the [Appendix](#). USSERA is the federal law that determines the rights of military personnel when they return from service and prohibits discrimination on the basis of military status.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

### Recommendations:

- Add language to HR policies to include information regarding all laws containing provisions on veterans and service persons employment rights (e.g. USSERA, GWOT).
- Revise the Collected Rules and the HR policies on equal employment opportunity to specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of military service. Make specific reference to the University of Missouri’s statement of support for Guard and Reserves personnel – including statements that:
  - Employment will not be denied because of military service.
  - Job and career opportunities will not be limited or reduced because of military service.
  - Employees will be granted leaves of absence for military service.
  - The University’s commitment to protect the rights of veterans and service persons will be known throughout the organization.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Human Resources, President, Provost, Veterans’ Services office, ESGR personnel.

**Problem:** There is no process in place for educating MU managers regarding veterans’ and service members’ rights to reemployment and other employment rights under USSERA. The University of Missouri was recently honored by the United States Department of Defense, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) for communicating and educating managers regarding the provisions of USSERA. However this was a one-time occurrence, and there is no process for educating managers and supervisors on a regular basis.

**Current Resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

### Recommendation:

- Conduct information sessions including an annual communication to campus human resource personnel, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) and fiscal officers regarding the provisions of USSERA and other veterans’ employment issues. This annual event and communication should occur annually near Veterans Day.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Human Resources, Deans, President, Provost, Staff

**Problem:** MU lacks a centralized source of information on employment-related matters for veterans and service members.

**Current Resources:** Currently information regarding benefits, compensation and leave policies is listed in different places on the MU/UM website and in the human resource policy manual.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Consolidate all information regarding employment for veterans and service members on the Human Resource Services website. Specific information to be included would clarify what specific branches and subunits of the Armed Forces are considered for military leave and specifically what types of duty are considered military service. The goal will be to make it as easy as possible for military personnel to determine if they are covered by University benefit and leave policies. The website will also include information about USSERA, the Employee Assistance Program, equal employment opportunity, and other matters described below. The person designated on campus as the Veterans Services person should become familiar with these policies and function as the liaison between the veteran or service member and the HRS, Benefits and Provost's Offices.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Human Resources, Benefits, Provost's office, Veterans' Services office

**Problem:** MU's benefit plans appear to be in need of review to ensure that they are as military/veteran-friendly as possible.

**Current Resources:** Information on MU's employee military leave policy is at <http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/hr/benefits/military.shtml>. It allows employees on military leave of absence to continue enrollment in any or all of the University benefits programs in which they participate if they continue to make the employee contribution. They can also suspend enrollment and coverage while on military leave until they return. However, MU's medical plan, dental plan, long-term disability plan, and accidental death and dismemberment plan all contain war exclusions. (Note: there is no war exclusion for the life insurance plan or the retirement plan's pre-retirement death benefit.)

**Best practices elsewhere:** Some states require state universities to grant military leaves without loss of pay or benefits. See for example the University of Wisconsin System policy at <http://www.uwsa.edu/hr/benefits/leave/military.htm>. However, the task force does not have any data on how frequently this is done or how much it costs.

**Recommendation:**

- Poll other state university systems to determine their military leave policies and costs.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Faculty and Staff Benefits

**Problem: Veterans and service members lack information about where on campus they can seek assistance in resolving disputes which arise from their military service and employment at MU.**

**Current Resources:** All University employees have access to the Campus Mediation Services as well as formal grievance and dispute resolution procedures. There is no clear communication to veterans making them aware of these dispute resolution options. Additionally, mediators should be trained specifically to identify issues of special concern to veterans and service members.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Create a mechanism to inform veterans of their ability to use the existing Campus Mediation Service.
- Provide training to campus mediators to familiarize them with the needs of veterans and service members.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Campus Mediation Services

## **6. REACHING OUT TO THE VETERAN AND SERVICE MEMBER APPLICANT POOL OF PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES**

**Problem: MU lacks outreach or marketing - web-based or otherwise - designed to recruit veterans.**

**Current resources:** None except for insights gained through Admissions and its designated Veterans Services representative, and anecdotally through faculty, staff, and students.

**Best practices elsewhere:** The results of reviews of Big 12 and Big Ten web-based information in this regard are in the [Appendix](#). Roughly half of these campuses appear to do more than MU. The rest, like MU, appear to have only a designated veteran services representative.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish a web-based single point of contact for veterans inquiring about MU, with a link identified on the MU homepage (this page would also have information for current student-veterans and MU employees who are veterans).
- Add a similar link to the Admissions homepage, and add references to veterans, including photographs etc., to Admissions marketing materials as needed.
- Use MU High School online - <http://cdis.missouri.edu/high-school.aspx> - to reach out to veterans and active duty personnel who may want to complete their high school graduation requirements, by specifically mentioning veterans and service members on the website.
- Reach out to veterans and active duty personnel who have completed high school, but have had no higher education and want to pursue a four-year degree, as well as to those who have earned associate degrees and want to complete BA/BS degrees, primarily by developing Admissions marketing materials specifically for veterans.

- Market Mizzou Online to veterans and active duty military personnel by replicating elements of a Minnesota online program for military personnel: <http://www.guardonline.mnscu.edu/>. Apparently military personnel are strongly encouraged to enroll in online courses and receive tuition assistance while they are on active duty (see, for example, [www.army.com](http://www.army.com) ), so it is likely they will be inquiring about these courses while on active duty and afterwards. Explore the possibility of preliminary admission or something similar for veterans and active duty military personnel who do well in online courses and/or complete a certain number of credit hours online.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** ADA Coordinator and Admissions

**Problem:** MU lacks collaborative relationships with other campuses and military installations that could enhance outreach.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Only the Kansas State website describes such a relationship (with Fort Riley in nearby Junction City). It is likely, though, that some other campuses with broader programs have working relationships with the military, in particular state National Guard offices, to recruit prospective students.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish working relationships with Missouri National Guard officials responsible for advising military personnel about non-military educational opportunities; create a brochure and/similar marketing tools for distribution through the Guard to service members, especially those returning home from deployment. The Guard may also be able to assist in distributing similar information to reserve units for other armed services branches. Working relationships already established through Human Resource Services for employment will be helpful here.
- Establish working relationships with Columbia College and William Woods University. Both schools have substantial presences on many military installations, along with expertise in working with service members and veterans. Two members of the Columbia College Division of Adult Higher Education are former commanders of MU ROTC units. Both provided assistance to the task force and have offered to provide further assistance to MU. Another potential collaboration could involve campus ROTC; some service members could perhaps take courses at Columbia College and also through ROTC here.
- Consider development of articulation agreements with community colleges near installations such as Whiteman Air Force Base, Fort Leonard Wood, and Fort Riley to streamline completion of AA degrees followed by transfer to MU for baccalaureate completion, or completion of baccalaureate degrees at other schools followed by enrollment in an MU graduate or professional school.
- Explore offering post-baccalaureate courses to active duty college graduates at military installations in Missouri and adjacent states. The MBA program might be particularly attractive, for example.

- Establish a working relationship with the Veterans Upward Bound program (<http://www2.ku.edu/~vub/>) to ensure that MU is deriving maximum benefit from the program.
- Expand working relationships and support to the VA hospital in Columbia. These relationships can help build good will, as well as greater understanding on the campus about veterans.
- Ask members of the Mizzou Student Veterans Association to help recruit veterans and active-duty personnel who make inquiries about attending MU.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** ADA Coordinator and Admissions.

**Problem:** MU has not made a specific effort to recruit and admit disabled veterans, or considered what other resources it has or may need to create and maintain a welcoming environment for disabled veterans.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** These were examined on October 11, 2007, when the American Council on Education convened a one-day “Severely Injured Veteran’s Summit” in Denver. Excerpts from the summit report are in the [Appendix](#).

**Recommendations:**

- Adopt as many of this report’s recommendations regarding recruitment and admission of veterans generally, because doing so will benefit disabled veterans as well.
- Review the attached ACT report, and adopt as many of its recommendations, with emphasis on the “Severely Injured Guiding Tool for Colleges and Universities,” as possible.
- Create recruiting materials specifically for disabled veterans. These materials would showcase disability-related campus assets, including the Office of Disability Services, the Assessment and Counseling Clinic, the Adaptive Computing Technology Center, accessible facilities including Residential Life facilities, MU Recreation Center resources including wheelchair basketball, counseling resources, a nearby VA hospital, Rusk Rehabilitation Center, etc.
- Coordinate with City of Columbia to provide recruitment information for disabled veterans, including information about accessible housing and transportation, healthcare, etc. These veterans in particular may need information about social service organizations in the area, as well as about jobs and career opportunities.
- In developing campus mentoring for these veterans, include the availability of spouse-to-spouse mentoring through the spouses of other veterans.
- Consider adopting something similar to the University of Idaho’s “Operation Education” - <http://www.uihome.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=91757>. A mix of public and private funds helps this program deliver nearly comprehensive financial support and resources to disabled veterans and their families.
- Explore potential sources of scholarships. Some identified in the ACE report:
  - Sentinels of Freedom: <http://www.sentinelsoffreedom.org>
  - Students in Free Enterprise: <http://www.sife.org>
  - Freedom Alliance: <http://freedomalliance.org/scholarships.htm>
  - USA Cares: <http://www.usacares.us/>

- Involve the Office of Disability Services and the Adaptive Computing Technology Center in planning for support to disabled student-veterans. They will probably both have prominent roles in supporting them when they arrive on campus.
- Facilitate coordination between Student Health Center and other medical facilities the student-veteran may be using, along with VA vocational rehabilitation.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** ADA Coordinator, Disability Services, Admissions, Financial Aid.

**Problem:** MU lacks an information handbook to inform prospective student-veterans about campus life.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendation:**

- Upon completion of the above-described survey and implementation activities, or with MSVA and other veterans on campus to develop a veteran-specific handbook for all prospective students who are veterans or service members.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Student Life, with assistance from Admissions, Residential Life, MSVA, Registrar, Financial Aid, Cashier, and deans.

**Problem:** MU lacks structured outreach and support to veterans who might be interested in employment opportunities at MU, and to incumbent or newly-hired employees who are veterans, including disabled veterans.

**Current resources:** None.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Work with the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Development on identifying and implementing outreach and other strategies to increase the pool of qualified applicants for employment at MU who are veterans, including disabled veterans, and to provide necessary supports to applicants.
- Develop relationships with existing Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) offices at Missouri's military installations.
- Develop relationships with entities like TecAccess that may be able to help both with recruitment and job accommodations for disabled veterans.
- Identify specific contact persons.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office, MU Outreach, Human Resources, Marketing

## 7. ACTIVELY ASSESSING THE CLIMATE FOR VETERANS ON CAMPUS

**Problem:** MU does not have a formal process to assess climate for veterans.

**Current resources:** Veterans' Services Office in Admissions.

**Best practices elsewhere:** Unknown.

**Recommendations:**

- Establish a standing campus committee on veterans' affairs.
- Include veterans as a constituency within the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative.
- Assign climate assessment as one of the responsibilities of the Resource Center for Veterans.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Chancellor's Diversity Initiative

## 8. PROVIDING CUSTOMIZED FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR VETERANS

**Problem:** Presently MU is often not considered a veteran-friendly campus regarding financial aid in comparison to some of our competitors. For examples, please see:

- <http://www.afoats.af.mil/AFROTC/EnlistedComm/Enlistedfriendly.asp>
- <http://www.mba.com/mba/FindYourProgram/EvaluateSchools/ResearchCurriculumServicesEnvironment/militaryfriendlyschools.htm>

**Current resources:** MU has recently initiated administrative changes in the way it addresses financial challenges experienced by veterans in the areas of sponsor billing, calls to active duty, etc. These changes include:

- Late payment fees charged to ROTC students: Earlier, if a student had a credit posted to the student account from a promise to pay from a sponsor or agency, it was not considered to satisfy the minimum payment requirement for that billing period. This has been changed to allow a sponsor credit to satisfy the minimum payment within the billing period that it is posted.
- Late payment and finance fees charged to tuition assistance students: National Guard tuition assistance students receive a promise to pay from the State for base educational fees and from the federal government for other related enrollment fees. However, governmental application processes create an almost unreasonable turnaround time for students. Further, the promise to pay from the federal government may take a month or two after notification of approval from the state. In recognition of this, MU no longer assesses finance charges and late fees on students receiving National Guard tuition assistance for the time they are enrolled at the University and remain eligible and active in the program. Once MU receives notice of the benefit, late fees and finance charges are not assessed. The student is reviewed for continued participation in the program each

semester. If a student is not enrolled or not receiving the tuition assistance benefit in a given semester, his/her account returns to accruing late fees and finance charges.

- Students called to active duty: These students may now work with the Registrar's Office and their academic units to decide whether to take an incomplete or withdraw completely. If the student withdraws, MU will simply reduce all fees to zero for the current semester and waive any associated finance charges. If there are other charges that may become past due while the soldier is away, MU follows the same steps as described immediately below for past due students.
- Past due students called to active duty: Upon learning that a student has been called to active duty, MU requests a copy of his/her orders. Once this is received, accrual of finance charges and late fees is suspended until 30 days past the last date of active duty. During this time period, bills continue to be produced but collections procedures are suspended. If a student has already been placed with the collection agency, the University asks the agency to suspend collections until 30 days after active duty ends. If the student was placed with the collection agency after active duty began, but before notice was received, the account is recalled.

**Best practices elsewhere regarding financial aid:**

Program	University	Estimated Cost for MU
<p><b>In-State Tuition/Fee Privilege</b></p> <p>Who Qualifies:</p> <p>Military personnel, their spouses and other dependents who are stationed at a military installation within the state.</p>	<p>University of Missouri</p> <p>University of Kansas*</p> <p>*Also includes those that serve in the National Guard or Reserve unit within the state.</p>	<p>The exact cost to implement this program for all veterans is unknown. However, the undergraduate non-resident fee is \$355.20 per credit hour. 36 credit hours annually is a \$12,787 cost. The graduate non-resident fee is \$453.90 per credit hour. 27 credit hours annually is a \$12,255 cost.</p>
<p><b>Scholarship Programs</b></p> <p>Who Qualifies:</p> <p>“Severely Wounded” (60% disability compensation rating through Dept. of Veterans Affairs) &amp; their spouses enrolled ½ time or full-time earning an undergraduate degree (Post 9/11)</p> <p>Residents who also qualify for disability compensation through the Dept. of Veterans Affairs</p> <p>Disabled veterans &amp; their spouses seeking undergraduate, graduate, or law degree w/ preference given to residents</p> <p>Children and/or spouses of veterans of specific conflicts and/or MIA/POW</p> <p>Veterans and children of specific conflicts Veterans w/honorable discharge</p>	<p>University of Nebraska-Omaha (No limit on the number of students – available funds are spread across all who are eligible)</p> <p>Texas A&amp;M University (Awarded to 20-25 students)</p> <p>University of Idaho</p> <p>University of Illinois-Urbana University of Kentucky University of Colorado-Boulder University of Iowa</p> <p>University of Colorado-Boulder</p>	<p>Programs are paid for through endowment funds collected specifically for the programs listed.</p> <p>Cost to MU is estimated to be \$0</p>
<p><b>Tuition Waiver</b></p> <p>Who Qualifies:</p> <p>Children of veterans from specific conflicts</p>	<p>University of Kentucky</p>	<p>The exact cost to implement this program is unknown. However, at a rate of \$235 per credit hour. 36 credit hours annually is an \$8,460 cost.</p>

\*NOTE: Many public universities throughout the country have similar programs that are not required and/or included in state legislation for veterans’ tuition assistance. We have focused on Midwestern state universities, specifically the flagship universities of each of the following states reviewed: Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Texas, Wisconsin Tennessee, and Nebraska. The following is a an approximate breakdown of MU veterans by type/chapter of the GI Bill: Ch. 30 - 13 on active duty, Ch. 30 - 101 not on active duty, Ch. 1606 - 65 National Guard members, Ch.1607 - 46 National Guard members currently deployed, Ch.35 - 50 dependents of totally disabled veterans.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide all veterans with residency. This option would replicate the Kansas (listed above – institutional decision), Illinois and North Carolina (not listed – state mandated and funded) programs which allow all veterans to obtain residency upon admission. This would help Missouri compare much more favorably to other similar institutions and especially those in neighboring states. It is anticipated that this would include less than 100 students in total.
- Create an endowed scholarship program for veterans. The number of scholarships would depend upon the size of the endowment (e.g. Texas A&M offers 20-25 scholarships). The target population would be those veterans eligible for veterans’ educational benefits excepting those who are Chapter 35. Scholarship qualifications could vary, perhaps based on status as a disabled veteran or service in specific conflicts, or could treat all applicants equally. However, the award should be tiered based on the financial need of the student as determined by Financial Aid. (There is additional discussion of this recommendation below.)

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Financial Aid

**Problem:** Currently the State of Missouri has no veteran tuition relief policy (although at the time of this report, SB 830 the “Missouri Returning Heroes Education Act” is awaiting the signature of the Governor: see <http://www.senate.mo.gov/08info/pdf-bill/tat/SB830.pdf>). The lack of a tuition relief policy sends a negative message to veterans that the state does not value their service.

**Current Resources:** none.

**Best practices elsewhere:** A survey of other Midwestern states revealed the following:

<u>State</u>	<u>Veteran Tuition Assistance</u>
Kansas	yes
Illinois	yes
Kentucky	yes
Wisconsin	yes
Nebraska	yes
Colorado	yes
Oklahoma	no
Iowa	no
Arkansas	no
Texas	yes

**Recommendation:**

In order to keep pace with other states, and to allow the University of Missouri to remain competitive, the System should continue to lobby the legislature to fund tuition relief.

Note: A task force sub-committee drafted a detailed proposal for an MU tuition relief policy that could be implemented with external funding. The proposal is in the [Appendix](#) as well.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Veterans' Services office

**Problem:** MU needs to improve efforts to help student-veterans identify opportunities for financial assistance other than what MU or the State of Missouri offers.

**Current resources:**

- Department of Veterans Affairs: [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) (main source of all veterans benefits)
- Military.com: [www.military.com](http://www.military.com) (financial and other information for all military affiliations including programs at all levels, e.g. state, federal, branch of service)
- MilitaryScholar: [www.militaryscholar.org](http://www.militaryscholar.org) (scholarships for children of military personnel)
- GOVBenefits.gov: [http://www.govbenefits.gov/govbenefits\\_en.portal](http://www.govbenefits.gov/govbenefits_en.portal) (sources of government financial assistance programs that are not necessarily specific to education, but that can provide assistance in other areas of life)
- MilitaryHOMEFRONT: [http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF\\_DETAIL\\_1?section\\_id=20.40.500.150.0.0.0.0.0.0&current\\_id=20.40.500.150.500.60.0.0.0](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.40.500.150.0.0.0.0.0.0&current_id=20.40.500.150.500.60.0.0.0) (scholarships for all military affiliations)

The task force has obtained copies of applications to each of these organizations, and has also provided copies to the Admissions Office and the Office of Financial Aid for sharing with current and prospective students.

**Best practices elsewhere:** The University of Maryland appears to have a strong initiative in this regard: <http://www.financialaid.umd.edu/Scholarships/veterans.html>

**Recommendations:**

- Ensure that student-veterans have access to as much financial aid and scholarship information as possible.
- Review financial aid websites on other campuses, including the University of Maryland site, and obtain any veteran-specific information. Post this information on an MU website specifically for veterans.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Admissions and Financial Aid

**Problem:** MU does not have a general scholarship fund specifically for veterans. Funding from sources such as alumni, friends of MU, corporations, foundations, associations, and organizations would be required.

**Current resources:** No funds currently available. Development officers, staff, and marketing personnel are currently available. Foundation and corporation staff members are available to provide recommendations for funding sources.

**Best practices elsewhere:** The only Big 12 or Big Ten school website we found identifying a campus-based scholarship program for veterans was at Texas A&M: <http://scholarships.tamu.edu/display.asp?mainkey=1048&Section=&disp=22&pop=22>.

**Recommendation:**

- Explore feasibility of establishing an endowed scholarship fund for veterans.
- Contact other universities regarding their methods of recruiting/requesting scholarship fund for veterans.
- Estimate cost of establishing, starting up, maintaining, and growing an endowed scholarship fund for MU veterans.
- If creating a fund is feasible, request assistance from alumni, friends of MU, corporations, foundations, associations and organizations in developing a veterans' scholarship fund.

**Coordinating person and/or office:** Vice Chancellor for Development, Alumni Affairs, Chancellor, Admissions, Financial Aid, MU Marketing, Development

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A:

### Subcommittees of the Task Force (Task Force tri-chair representative is in parenthesis)

**Recruitment and Admission:** Recruitment of veterans and service members to MU - possible collaboration with other campuses (e.g. Columbia College and Webster University) and military installations (e.g. engineering and chemical schools at Ft. Leonard Wood) - possible modifications of current admission policies and procedures to make them more veteran-friendly - military training credit transfer options - marketing through the campus website.

Chair: Jeffrey Williams - Marty Walker, Becky Brandt, and Victor Price (Henson).

**Financial Assistance:** Current programs (scope of programs used and adequacy of resources) - programs in other states - additional options - legislative recommendations as needed.

Chair: Debbie Ludwig - LTC Wallace, Paul Toler, and Carly Elms (Fleisher).

**Campus Life Issues/Campus Climate:** Participation in campus life - housing on and off campus - family support - recreation - whether additional support for MSVA is needed. The committee will use surveys and focus groups to gather information.

Chair: Mark Lucas - Greg Alfred, Col. Tulberg, Mark Virkler, and Gerald Caetano (Worthington).

**Health and Counseling Issues:** programs at other campuses - current health and counseling resources - recommendations for enhancements as needed.

Chair: Arshad Husain – Greg Alfred, and Student Health Rep (Worthington).

**Networking and Career Planning:** Options for improving communication among veterans and service members, ROTC students, retired military personnel employed by MU as faculty and staff, and entities like the state and local chapters of the Military Officers Association of America - opportunities for mentoring and networking with prospective employers, especially those who are federal contractors - access to career planning assistance.

Chair: Gerald Caetano - Barbara Schneider, Alex Waigandt, and Mark Lucas (Fleisher).

**Activation and Return-To Work/School:** Review of current MU practices and development of recommendations for improvements as needed. The committee would review how MU handles breaks in enrollment and employment, as well as readmission and reemployment. The committee would compare our practices with those at some other institutions.

Chair: Mark Virkler - Col. Tulberg, Paul Toler, and Victor Price (Fleisher).

**Employment Issues:** Liaison with incumbent faculty staff members who are veterans or service members - options for recruiting veterans as employees and other employment issues.

Chair: Karen Touzeau - CAPT. Wilson, Alex Waigandt, and Jim Joy (Henson).

**Disabled Veterans:** explore ways to make MU as attractive and accessible as possible to these veterans.

Chair: Donna Pavlick - Jim Joy, Arshad Husain, and Steve Hathaway (Henson).

**Development:** Explore ways to attract more funding for scholarships and other resources.

Chair: David Housh - Karen Touzeau, Steve Hathaway, and CAPT. Wilson (Worthington).

**Legislative:** Monitoring of federal and state legislation affecting veterans enrolled in postsecondary institutions or considering enrollment - legislative outreach and advice on legislative advocacy.

Chair: Marty Walker – LTC Wallace, Donna Pavlick, and Carly Elms (Worthington).

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## APPENDIX B

### ACE Summit: Summary

#### **Severely Injured Guiding Tool for Colleges and Universities**

##### ***Understanding the Individual Veteran Profile***

- *Recognize that the academic community is a “whole new world” to a veteran (culture, operations, etc.)*
- *Look at the environment from which the veteran came (mission-centered)*
- *Consider the extra-institutional evaluation of academic credits in his/her education portfolio*
- *Provide flexibility to support the veteran (each has unique needs, background)*
- *Consider the veteran’s role as a learner (part-time, full-time, distance)*

##### ***Developing Community Resources and Knowledge***

*Identify and know the:*

- *Local Veteran Upward Bound (VUB) offices*
- *State Veteran Affairs Offices*
- *Veteran Centers*
- *Military Organizations*
- *Other associations in the area*
- *Industry or business in the area (partnerships, internships, legal assistance, financial planners, CPA firms)*
- *Mental Health Organizations*
- *Economic Development Boards / Agencies*

##### ***Identifying a Champion***

- *Consider a prior veteran, family member, or an individual with the passion and commitment to support a veteran*
  - *Student, faculty members, administrators*
  - *Needs to build trust and respect with the veteran*
- *Someone willing to develop a team of support for the veteran / spouse:*
  - *Consider a peer support contact (potential ROTC programs; spouse to spouse)*
  - *Make a departmental connection to the discipline; the veteran’s academic home*
  - *Contact the disabled student services department*
  - *Know the Veterans Affairs representative on campus and in the community*
  - *Align admissions and financial aid representatives*
- *Ability to be flexible and to persevere with an individual*
  - *Example: A veteran may have a start goal and date, but could be delayed due to surgery, military obligations, concerns, second thoughts*
- *Willingness to provide guidance with the “chaos of college” and to assist in bridging the gap from the military mission-oriented structure to the academic environment*
- *Serve as a resource (study skills, tutor support services, VA issues, enrollment challenges)*

## Draft (v.1)

### Severely Injured Guiding Tool for Colleges and Universities

#### Understanding the Individual Veteran Profile

- Recognize that the academic community is a “whole new world” to a veteran (culture, operations, etc.)
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- Economic Development Boards / Agencies

#### Identifying a Champion

- Consider a prior veteran, family member, or an individual with the passion and commitment to support a veteran
  - Student, faculty members, administrators
  - Needs to build trust and respect with the veteran
- Someone willing to develop a team of support for the veteran / spouse:
  - Consider a peer support contact (potential ROTC programs; spouse to spouse)
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  - Contact the disabled student services department
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  - Example: A veteran may have a start goal and date, but could be delayed due to surgery, military obligations, concerns, second thoughts
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**American Council on Education**

***Severely Injured Military Veterans: Fulfilling Their Dream***

**Project Report**

**September 26, 2007**

*Severely Injured Military Veterans: Fulfilling Their Dream* is a project of the American Council on Education funded through the generous donations of private contributors. The program is intended to ensure that our nation's heroes receive the full support of the higher education community as they make the transition from the battlefield to finding a path to pursue their own hopes and dreams and those of their families. Launched on April 2, 2007, program staff have assisted more than 150 service members as they seek to align their long-term goals with postsecondary programs of study. The program has gotten off to a tremendous start as nearly fifty service members have enrolled in or been accepted into the college of their choice with a similar number expected to do the same before the end of the year.

The program begins while the service member is recovering at one of three military hospitals: Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, MD; Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC; and Brooke Army Hospital in San Antonio, TX. Service members are introduced to our academic advisors and begin the process of developing individualized educational plans. Educational goals range from completing high school to pursuing graduate and post-graduate studies. Participants include first-time students, first-generation students, and returning students. Selected programs include high school equivalency and certificate programs, two-year degrees, and baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

Veterans are often reluctant to ask for help whether it be in terms of academics or orientation to the campus culture. Through this program, we have matched every veteran with volunteer mentors who provide sources of information, encouragement, and advocacy. Many of our mentors are students, faculty, or administrators who are veterans themselves. Others are family members of veterans or those who are compelled to serving those who serve.

The program is well on its way to providing readily accessible assistance to severely injured veterans and their family members in order to assure that our nation's heroes can continue toward their dream of going to college. The program is delivering a well-informed academic advisory service and individualized support to the veterans and their families as they begin to align career goals with educational attainment. Working in partnership with other organizations, we are filling the void that is created when the service member is released from active duty and begins the transition from the battlefield to the classroom.

## APPENDIX C

### Information/resources on Big XII Web sites:

The only school we found with a link on the homepage for veterans ("military and families") is Kansas State - <http://www.k-state.edu/militaryandfamilies/programsandbenefits/>. Texas A&M's homepage currently has a link to an article - <http://dmc-news.tamu.edu/templates/?a=5796&z=15> - about its business school joining a consortium - [http://sunews.syr.edu/story\\_details.cfm?id=4782](http://sunews.syr.edu/story_details.cfm?id=4782) - to support veterans with disabilities. TAMU also has a Veterans Association - <http://tamuveterans.tamu.edu/>, and offers scholarships to veterans - <http://scholarships.tamu.edu/display.asp?mainkey=1048&Section=&disp=22&pop=22>.

Colorado has established an Office of Veterans Affairs - <http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/va/> - to supplement its Veterans Services Office. Texas has a page describing an extensive counseling program for veterans - <http://www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/veterans/utveterans.html>. KU, in addition to its veterans services office, has a federally-funded Veterans Upward Bound program, one of 44 nationwide - <http://www2.ku.edu/~vub/>. This is a federal TRIO program. According to the website the program serves veterans in the Kansas City metropolitan area on both sides of the state line. Its objectives are to help veterans get general education degrees and succeed in college as well

Comparatively little information was available - generally only information about a veterans services representative (these individuals are approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to certify students as eligible for education benefits) and links to VA sites - on the Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Baylor, Nebraska, and Iowa State Web sites; MU's site is also in this category.

### Information/resources on Big Ten Web sites:

IL features the state's Illinois Veterans Programs - <http://www.osfa.uiuc.edu/aid/veterans/programs.html> - which offer extensive state aid. The main site for veterans at OSU - <http://hr.osu.edu/vet/index.aspx> - is in the Office of Human Resources and appears to combine employment and student services. The office schedules a monthly "veterans lunch" open to all. On the Penn State admissions page, there is a link - <http://www.equity.psu.edu/veterans/> - to an "Office of Veterans Programs," but it seems to be essentially only a veterans services office except that the office does have veteran outreach counselors. UW-M has a veterans page - <http://www.admissions.wisc.edu/veterans.php> - on its admissions site, a veterans services office, and a "Vets For Vets" student organization - <http://vets.studentorg.wisc.edu/>. MN has a "onestop" site - [http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Veterans\\_Certification/Veterans\\_Resource\\_Office.html](http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Veterans_Certification/Veterans_Resource_Office.html), and a "Veterans Transition Center" - <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/vtc/vtc/>, and a monthly newsletter - [http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Veterans\\_Certification/Veterans\\_Connection\\_Newsletter.html](http://www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Registration/Veterans_Certification/Veterans_Connection_Newsletter.html). The State of Minnesota also has a very active online program for military personnel - <http://www.guardonline.mnscu.edu/>. MI has just launched an "Initiative to expand student veteran services" - [http://www.ur.umich.edu/0708/Jan28\\_08/06.shtml](http://www.ur.umich.edu/0708/Jan28_08/06.shtml), with many of the goals similar to ones recommended for MU. The other Big Ten campuses - NW, IN, IA, MSU, and P - have only veterans services offices.

The information in the two paragraphs immediately above was obtained by going to each school's site and searching for "veterans". However, of these 22 Web sites, only Kansas State mentioned veterans on its home page (although TAMU has an article about disabled veterans on its homepage at the moment), and only two - Kansas State and Penn State - mentioned veterans on their admission pages, according to the subcommittee member who reviewed these sites. Therefore, at least as to Web-based advertising and marketing, little if any is being done by these institutions to recruit or even acknowledge veterans.

## APPENDIX D

### Faculty Handbook: Credits and Grades

#### Article VII

- C. Incomplete work (grade of I). (As amended Oct 21, 2004; Effective Fall Semester 2005)  
Whenever a student cannot be assigned a grade at the end of a course in which he/she has been enrolled because his/her work is for good reason incomplete, the instructor will postpone the grade of the student, reporting to the Registrar the fact that such student's grade is I. An I grade may be assigned only when (1) the completed portion of the student's work in the course is of passing quality, and (2) there is such evidence of hardship as to make it unjust to hold the student to the time limits previously fixed for the completion of his/her work.

Each department of the schools and colleges will maintain a card file record of I grades recorded in courses of that department. (Exemption: research courses and problems courses related to research assignments numbered 4950-4959 or 4995). This record, on a specially designated card completed by the instructor at the time the I grade is awarded, will include:

1. The name of the student;
2. The course number, title, and semester hours of credit;
3. Semester and year of enrollment;
4. The signature of the instructor;
5. A brief statement of the reason for delaying the grade;
6. An adequate guide for the removal of the I grade (with a suggested final grade in the event of the departure or extended absence of the instructor from the campus).

A copy of the card will accompany the grade report to the University Registrar's Office, which will in turn notify the appropriate dean. An undergraduate student who receives an "I" grade must complete the course requirements either (1) within one year from the date it was recorded (unless the course is numbered 4950-4959 or 4995), or (2) before the date of graduation (whichever comes first). When an incomplete is satisfactorily resolved, the faculty member responsible for the grade change will notify the Registrar of the revised grade. Otherwise, the Registrar will remove the "I" and record a grade of "F" in classes graded A-F or a grade of "U" in classes graded S/U. Any student planning to graduate with an unresolved "I" grade should be aware that translation to an "F" could drop the GPA below the requirements for graduation. As with any academic deficiency, the low GPA would delay the student's graduation until all requirements for graduation are met.

**Students called to Active Military Duty will be exempted from the one-year automated changes of I to F grades for the term of deployment and the year prior to deployment. In accordance with State statute, students may complete work upon their return from duty or may choose to maintain the I grade. Therefore, I grades for students called to Active Military Duty will remain listed as "I" until a change of grade is submitted by the faculty member, or indefinitely, if so desired by the student.**

E. ....

Unassigned grades for undergraduate students: As amended May 19, 2005; effective Fall Semester 2005. In situations when there is a failure to record a grade on the official grade sheet, the Registrar will record a NR (not reported) and send a written notification of this

action to the faculty member and relevant department chair. The faculty member is responsible for submitting a corrected entry. After 12 months NR will change to an F. Any student planning to graduate with an unresolved “NR” grade should be aware that translation to an “F” could drop the GPA below the requirements for graduation. As with any academic deficiency, the low GPA would delay the student’s graduation until all requirements for graduation are met. **Students called to Active Military Duty will be exempted from the one-year automated changes of NR to F grades for the term of deployment and the year prior to deployment. In accordance with State statute, students may choose to maintain the NR grade. Therefore, NR grades for students called to Active Military Duty will remain listed as “NR” until a change of grade is submitted by the faculty member, or indefinitely, if so desired by the student.**

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## APPENDIX E

Draft policy statement for Chancellor:

Last August I announced establishment of a campus task force to explore ways we could make MU a more welcoming for America's veterans and service members. The task force has given me a detailed report and recommendations. We are beginning implementation as we can consistent with the resources we have available.

It is my intention to ensure that this campus is in fact "veteran-friendly" for our returning military personnel, whether they are students or employees. We do not need to agree about what our military forces are assigned to do, but I hope we can agree that the men and women who have carried out these assignments on behalf of our government deserve recognition and appreciation for their service, and for their sacrifices.

Student-veterans in particular often have life experiences far different from that of the typical undergraduate. They have a unique status. I am asking campus leaders at all levels to offer these men and women - especially those who served in Afghanistan and Iraq - your understanding and support. We will periodically be sending information updates about veterans benefits, programs, and related materials to campus leadership, and expect that this information will help all of us do the best we can to support these student-veterans.

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## APPENDIX F

University Missouri Board of Curators Section 320.010 Equal Employment Opportunity Program contains the following language:

*“Equal Opportunity is and shall be provided for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, **or status as a Vietnam era veteran.** This policy shall not be interpreted in such a manner as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or military organizations associated with the Armed Forces of the United States of America.”*

This reference to only Vietnam era veterans is also included in HR 102 Equal Opportunity Program which states:

*“Equal opportunity shall be provided for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, and **status as Vietnam era veteran.** This policy shall not be interpreted in such a manner as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or military organizations associated with the Armed Forces of the United States of America. The University will adhere to the Federal requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 with all of its amendments, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246, Equal Pay Act of 1963, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975, Executive Order 11141, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Immigration Reform and Control Act, the Vietnam Era Veterans Act of 1974, and other applicable State and Federal laws.”*

## APPENDIX G

The link below is to the Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed version of SB830. It limits tuition to \$50 per credit hour for combat veterans since 9-11, undergraduate only, and requires that all federal, state and military aid be applied first. Then if there is more than \$50 in tuition costs per credit hour, it is to be waived. Amounts waived each year are reviewed as part of the appropriations process, with the opportunity, although not a guarantee, that the waiver amounts would be reimbursed. Veterans are only eligible within 10 years of discharge, and they must maintain a 2.5 GPA to continue the waiver.

<http://www.senate.mo.gov/08info/pdf-bill/tat/SB830.pdf>

Another military bill, HB2062, includes several military provisions. It has passed the House and is poised for Senate consideration in the final week. This bill includes a section that would provide, subject to appropriation, up to 25 tuition grants to survivors (spouses or children) of those killed in combat since 9-11. Here is a link to the perfected version of that bill:

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/biltxt/perf/HB2062P.HTM>

APPENDIX H

SECOND REGULAR SESSION  
[TRULY AGREED TO AND FINALLY PASSED]  
HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

# SENATE BILL NO. 830

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2008

3061L.05T

## AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to combat veterans.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:*

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, 2 to be known as section 173.900, to read as follows:

**173.900. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Missouri  
2 Returning Heroes' Education Act".**

**3 2. For the purpose of this section, the term "combat veteran" shall  
4 mean a person who served in armed combat in the military after September  
5 11, 2001, and to whom the following criteria shall apply:**

**6 (1) The veteran was a Missouri resident when first entering the  
7 military; and**

**8 (2) The veteran was discharged from military service under  
9 honorable conditions.**

**10 3. All public institutions of higher education that receive any state  
11 funds appropriated by the general assembly shall limit the amount of tuition  
12 such institutions charge to combat veterans to fifty dollars per credit hour,  
13 as long as the veteran achieves and maintains a cumulative grade point  
14 average of at least two and one-half on a four point scale, or its  
15 equivalent. The tuition limitation shall only be applicable if the combat  
16 veteran is enrolled in a program leading to a certificate, or an associate or  
17 baccalaureate degree. The period during which a combat veteran is eligible  
18 for a tuition limitation under this section shall expire at the end of the ten-  
19 year period beginning on the date of such veteran's last discharge from  
20 service.**

**21 4. The coordinating board for higher education shall ensure that all  
22 applicable institutions of higher education in this state comply with the  
HCS SCS SB 830 2**

**23 provisions of this section and may promulgate rules for the efficient  
24 implementation of this section.**

**25 5. If a combat veteran is eligible to receive financial assistance under  
26 any other federal or state student aid program, public or private, the full  
27 amount of such aid shall be reported to the board by the institution and the  
28 veteran. The tuition limitation under this section shall be provided after all  
29 other federal and state aid for which the veteran is eligible has been applied,  
30 and no combat veteran shall receive more than the actual cost of attendance  
31 when the limitation is combined with other aid made available to such  
32 veteran.**

**33 6. Each institution may report to the board the amount of tuition  
34 waived in the previous fiscal year under the provisions of this act. This  
35 information may be included in each institution's request for appropriations  
36 to the board for the following year. The board may include this information  
37 in its appropriations recommendations to the governor and the general  
38 assembly. The general assembly may reimburse institutions for the cost of  
39 the waiver for the previous year as part of the operating budget. Nothing**

40 in this subsection shall be construed to deny a combat veteran a tuition  
41 limitation if the general assembly does not appropriate money for  
42 reimbursement to an institution.  
43 7. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in section  
44 536.010, RSMo, that is created under the authority delegated in this section  
45 shall become effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of the  
46 provisions of chapter 536, RSMo, and, if applicable, section 536.028,  
47 RSMo. This section and chapter 536, RSMo, are nonseverable and if any of  
48 the powers vested with the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536, RSMo,  
49 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are  
50 subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking authority  
51 and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28, 2008, shall be invalid and  
52 void.

T

## APPENDIX I

Establish a tuition (excluding fees) relief policy based on a point system -Veterans Point System (VPS) - so all eligible veterans receive some tuition relief. Adoption of the VPS would keep cost of implementation to an affordable amount for the campus, honor those who sacrificed the most, and set a standard for other Missouri public institutions. The State of Missouri is also considering veterans' tuition relief legislation, and if passed it would supersede any campus plan. However, currently all legislation that has been proposed has failed to contain funding (see below for proposed legislation). The following is the proposed campus veteran tuition relief policy:

“All Missouri Veterans\* who have been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces, to include Missouri National and Air National Guard (must have served at least 120 days on active duty in a Title 10 USC activation<sup>o</sup>), and meet admission requirements, will have their educational fees waived (depending upon Veterans Point Standing (VPS)♦ at MU as long they are making satisfactory academic progress toward an undergraduate degree. Application for admission to MU must be made within five years from discharge and are valid for six years from that date.”

\*The term Missouri Veteran applies to a person who resided in Missouri prior to entry into the Armed Forces and lists their home of record on their DD214 as Missouri at time of discharge.

Explanation of Veteran Point System (VPS): The VPS consists of a base point amount for being a veteran another for serving in a hostile fire area another for any personal decorations for combat valor and an amount for being a Missouri resident. This total could be matched to a discount rate for tuition at Mizzou. (Proof of additional points other than the basic “veteran points” (honorably discharge DD214) would be the responsibility of the applicant.) This could be from 100% tuition relief to 50% for a basic veteran. The VPS would enable all qualified veterans to receive some tuition relief.

- Title 10 USC is used by the federal government as opposed to the state, and the activated member comes under the applicable active duty branch.
- Service member must provide proper documentation to substantiate VPS standing at time of registration.

Tuition relief scale: Each veteran would receive 50 points, Combat related awards 10, Hostile fire 20, and Missouri resident 10.

Example:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Points</u>
Veteran	Veteran	50
	Purple Heart	10
	Hostile Fire Area	20
	Mo. Resident	<u>10##</u>
	Total	90
	<u>Points</u>	<u>Tuition</u>
	90 =	90% reduction in tuition

The VPS could be offered to non-residents, and after they become residents they would receive additional points for residency.

Such an initiative would recognize veterans for their service as well as attract out-of-state veterans and encourage veterans that did not sign up for the Montgomery GI Bill to pursue an undergraduate degree at the University of Missouri. Veterans would be considered for tuition for five years after honorable discharge from service. Effective date of this program would be on date of approval and so remain until revoked.

The exact cost to implement this program is unknown; however, based on the known number of undergraduate veterans (100 which includes National Guard personnel that have been activated by Title 10 USC) that would qualify times twelve credit hours (full time student) which costs \$235 per hour would equate to \$282,000 per semester or \$564,000 per year (this campus only).