Update from Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor
November 10, 2010

First and foremost, on behalf of Chair Ava L. Parker and the entire Board of Governors, I want to extend a heartfelt salute to all veterans who have served in the U.S. military, particularly as we remember those who died fighting for and protecting the freedoms we enjoy in the United States of America.

Our current and former service members are strong and vital stakeholders in our State University System, a relationship we value and continue to nurture.

We particularly acknowledge the work of Lt. General Robert Milligan, USMC (Ret.), Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), on this auspicious occasion. General Milligan is not only a fellow former member of the Florida Cabinet as CFO, but he has been dutifully serving as the state leader of the DVA since the tragic accident that took the life of Rear Admiral LeRoy Collins, Jr., USNR (Ret.). The 5,000+ students who are receiving veterans educational benefits and are enrolled in our System are no doubt grateful to Gen. Bob Milligan, the late Adm. Collins, and the entire DVA team for their collective advocacy of all service members.

The Board of Governors has spent a good deal of time and attention on veterans' issues and will no doubt continue to include these issues among its priorities. In 2009, a Board committee reviewed recommendations developed by a work group comprised of Board staff, university staff members engaged with veteran student services, and student veterans. The primary recommendation was to establish a One-Stop Student Veterans Support Center at each postsecondary institution. Amid other recommendations for student veteran support was the development of a dedicated Web site. We continue to have these conversations and successes – every university is implementing student veterans support in a tailored way.

Also, I am encouraged that veterans who took advantage of the "Post-9/11 GI Bill" benefits – in just its first year of availability – say they are pleased overall, according to a report just released by the American Council on Education.
According to a recent article in *Academe Today*, a RAND Corporation report, which explored the transition from military service to education, states the Post-9/11 bill is the "most-generous education benefit for veterans since the original GI Bill," post-World War II. While there are some tracking glitches at the federal level that are working themselves out since the launch of this program, more and more service members are achieving their goals of pursuing or returning to higher education.

Benefits from this program passed by Congress in 2008 went into effect August 1, 2009. The program is designed to cover tuition for veterans up to the cost of the most expensive public university in their state of residence. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs pays tuition directly to an institution, as it had done under previous laws. The bill also provides stipends for books and a monthly living stipend paid to the student.

Another benefit under the bill, known as the Yellow Ribbon Program, helps cover the costs of private institutions, matching any financial aid those institutions offer above the basic tuition benefit provided in that state.

More than 500,000 current or former service members have applied for eligibility certification, with about 300,000 enrolling to date on a national level.

Finally, as many of you know, the Board of Governors' staff contact for military issues is Richard Stevens, himself a decorated veteran. I salute Richard and, through him, all of our former and current members of the U.S. Armed Forces – the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard – during this time of remembrance.

On this topic, I leave you with a few words from General Milligan in recognition of the special rapport we are duty-bound to address:

“There are nearly 24 million Veterans living among us, in every state and territory and from every walk of life. Many of the students in our own State University System are the sons, daughters, cousins, or relative of a Veteran or current service member and, increasingly, may be the Veteran themselves. By engaging in discussion with these committed individuals, may we all achieve a better appreciation of the unimaginable sacrifices and challenges that only personal experience can explain – and about which the most eloquent words fail. Our hope is that we will be encouraged to seek and learn from more of these often-unheard stories from those close to the experience of the tales. More than 1.6 million veterans call Florida home. We take this opportunity to honor their service and sacrifice in assuring our American way of life. We also honor the families of our veterans – who through their love, support and sacrifice – also serve our nation. Many of our younger veterans are...”
enrolling in increasing numbers in our state colleges and universities through the new Post-9/11 GI Bill. We welcome them and appreciate their selfless service and sacrifice. On Veterans Day, take time to pause and thank a Veteran.”

- Lt. Gen. Robert F. Milligan, USMC (Ret.)