

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Veteran Student Support Services
Summary of Recommendations

A comprehensive Post 9/11 GI Bill was passed by the US Congress in 2008 that will provide a significant increase in funds to support veteran students and their pursuit of a postsecondary degree. The law will take effect in August 2009, and, in a collaborative, inter-sector initiative, the State University System and Florida College System have begun preparations for a large influx of veteran students. University staff members engaged with veteran student services and certification were surveyed to identify programs, services, and staffing that will be needed to respond to these new enrollments. University recommendations are summarized below in the areas of student support services, peer support and transition services, and policy revisions to improve access and transition. The column labeled "Agency Action" identifies the level at which each recommendation might be best implemented.

Area of Need	Recommendations	Agency Action
Improve Student Support Services	1. Establish a One-Stop Veterans Support Center at each postsecondary institution where veteran students may access admissions assistance, academic advising, personal counseling, financial aid assistance, tutoring, certification for benefits, and access to other veteran services. This linkage of services may be achieved in part through online services in those institutions where the various service units are not contiguous.	BOG Resolution & UBOT Policy
	2. Employ sufficient, well-trained staff (preferably OIF/OEF veterans) to administer veteran student services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. One full-time certifying official responsible for veterans education benefit certification per 600 students. (10+ FTE at \$ 55,000 = \$ 550,000) b. Academic advisors who are familiar with veterans' degree progress requirements. c. Adequate staff and technical resources at each regional campus to effectively provide service to veterans enrolled at those locations. (11+ .5 FTE at \$ 55,000 = \$ 302,500) 	University Admin. Legislative or grant funding for positions
	3. Develop and maintain a Web site for veteran support services with accurate and up-to-date information and links to campus and external regional, state, and federal resources. A link to this Web site should also be prominently displayed on the institution's main Web page and designed in such a way as to serve as a transition Web page for the state-	University Admin.

Area of Need	Recommendations	Agency Action
	<p>level Web site that is currently under development.</p> <p>4. Establish an institutional Committee on Veterans Affairs consisting of academic and student services staff and current veteran students. The Committee will be responsible for making recommendations for improving veteran students' services and for evaluating the effectiveness of services that are being provided.</p>	<p>University Admin.</p>
<p>Improve Peer Support and Transition Services</p>	<p>1. Provide a VA-specific information session at orientation programs throughout the year. Develop check-lists/handouts of required paperwork, steps in processes, etc., specifically geared for veteran applicants and students.</p> <p>2. Provide office space and equipment for regional Veterans' Services Officers (VSO) to hold scheduled office hours and individual appointments on campus. This action will provide veteran students with better access to VA benefits and also quicker resolution of any problems with existing VA benefits. This action will also require coordination with external organizations with whom the VSO are employed.</p> <p>3. Establish veteran student associations and organizations on each campus that can provide peer support and a sense of community. These groups might include learning support communities consisting of veteran membership, a veteran student speakers' bureau of students who are willing to speak to classes or organizations, veteran-led mentorship programs, and support mechanisms for dependents of veterans.</p> <p>4. Coordinate with the institutional Career Center, veteran employment counselors at local Workforce Offices, and Employ Florida to provide career services specifically designed to transition veterans (and their spouses) into the workforce.</p> <p>5. Where feasible, establish a local support network for veteran students that includes area college and university veterans' officials, veterans' county service officers, local veterans' organizations, local VA and FDVA representatives, and local veterans' associations.</p>	<p>BOG Resolution & UBOT Policy</p> <p>University Admin.</p> <p>University Admin.</p> <p>University Admin.</p> <p>University Admin.</p>

Area of Need	Recommendations	Agency Action
	6. Network with area military bases and their service-exit programs (such as the Army Career and Alumni Program) to disseminate postsecondary information early to possible student veterans.	University Admin.
<p>Policy Revisions to Improve Access and Transition</p>	<p><u>Admissions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review institution admission policies, procedures, and forms to ensure the early identification of veterans so that they can be directed to the offices and services provided for them. 2. Establish a preferential admission policy for <u>qualified</u> veteran applicants. 3. Review campus policies concerning acceptance of military credit to streamline, if possible. Use the American Counsel on Education <i>ACE Military Guide Online</i> as a recognized acceptable source to determine transfer of credit equivalency. Review competencies established in military foreign language training to determine if veterans with this training may be exempt from the foreign language admissions requirement. 4. Add veterans as a category within the profile admission category of admission regulations. <p><u>Financial aid</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish specific deferment guidelines and policies for veteran students that will not disadvantage them if tuition payment is not received in a timely manner from the VA under the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill. Ensure timely processing of the tuition and other benefits for veterans and their dependents by institution Financial Services offices. 2. Student veteran education benefits (GI Bill) should not be included when calculating need for federal (when possible), state, and institutional financial aid. 3. Maintain accurate and current information on a state-level Web site on federal and state financial aid programs, eligibility, and regulations. [The Office of Student 	<p>BOG Resolution & UBOT Policy</p> <p>UBOT Policy</p> <p>UBOT Policy</p> <p>BOG & UBOT Policy</p> <p>BOG & UBOT Policy</p> <p>Legislature, BOG, & BOT Policy</p> <p>BOG Admin.</p>

Area of Need	Recommendations	Agency Action
	<p>Financial Assistance already does this, so it should be possible just to establish links from state-level and university veterans' Web sites.]</p> <p><u>Residency</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the residency requirement in order to waive the required 12-month physical presence and basis of claim, or allow last duty station and/or Home of Record (if within last 12 months) to qualify separated military and dependents for in-state residency. 2. Permit veterans who elect Florida upon discharge/separation to be automatically considered Florida residents for tuition purposes. <p><u>Other Programs/Policies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a statewide Internet portal/channel for Florida veterans, with participation by all Florida universities. 2. Provide state funding that will allow state universities to participate in the Yellow Ribbon program at the graduate level. This funding must be in the form of funded 50% tuition and fee waivers or a state grant program. 3. Each institution should consider the merit of pursuing acceptance into the Service Members Opportunity Colleges (SOC) network of degree programs for each of the military branches; SOCNAV (also the Navy College Distance Learning Partnership - NCDLP), SOCMAR, SOCCOAST, SOCAD, SOCGuard, & ConAP. This action would solidify universities' credibility with prospective military students and provide a much easier application and enrollment process by becoming part of their individual network systems. Participation in these programs also provides an avenue to access military bases for program delivery (must be in these for an MOU to be used to teach on-base courses). http://www.soc.aascu.org/ 4. Add veteran status indicator to existing Florida Department of Education and Board 	<p>Legislature</p> <p>Legislature</p> <p>BOG Admin. & Univ. Admin.</p> <p>Legislature</p> <p>UBOT Policy</p> <p>BOG and</p>

Area of Need	Recommendations	Agency Action
	of Governors student databases to collect and evaluate data on veterans to better understand and support our veteran student population.	University Admin.

Primary University Representatives on the Veteran Student Support Services Project Team*

State University	Veterans Certifying Official (Name & Title)	Administrative Reporting Structure / Location
Florida A & M University	Allene Morgan, Senior Registrar Officer	Registrar's Office under the VP of Student Affairs
Florida Atlantic University	Jason Morgenthal, VA Representative	Student Financial Aid Office under Academic Affairs
Florida Gulf Coast University	Susan Byers, Interim Registrar Guerline Maxime-Gratien, Registration Assistant	Office of the Registrar under the Office of the Provost/ Academic Affairs
Florida International University	Michael Pischner, Assistant Registrar	Office of the Registrar under the VP for Enrollment Management
Florida State University	Cheryl Goodson, VA Coordinator, Information and System Initiatives	Office of Admissions and Registrar under Academic Affairs
New College of Florida	Kathy Allen, Registrar	Office of the Registrar under the Provost's Office
University of Central Florida	Dennis Dulniak, Registrar James Middlekauff, Asst. Registrar, Veteran Services	Registrar's Office under the Division of Student Development & Enrollment Services

University of Florida	John Gebhardt, Coordinator, Office for Veteran Affairs	Office of the Registrar under the Student Affairs Office
University of North Florida	Jim Owen, Director RuVenia Tolen, Certifying Official	One-Stop Student Services Center
University of South Florida	Meredith Nickles, Coordinator of Veteran Affairs	Veterans Services Office in Counseling Center under Student Affairs
University of West Florida	Terry Genton, VA Coordinator, Veterans Service Office	Registrar's Office under Dean of Students

* Many other university staff contributed their efforts to the project, as well. Veteran students were also surveyed at UNF and USF.

I:\ASA\Working\02 - Ensuring Access, Articulation, and Persistence\Veterans\SUS Data Request 09\SUMMMARY_SUS_Veteran_Student_Support Services_Recommendations_final 3.doc