

**BOARD OF GOVERNORS
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
Student Affairs Committee
June 18, 2009**

SUBJECT: Veteran Student Support Services Project

PROPOSED COUNCIL ACTION

For Information and Review

AUTHORITY FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Section 7(d), Article IX, Florida Constitution

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On May 12, 2009, Governor Crist held a press conference to launch a statewide initiative to raise awareness of the new Post 9/11 G.I. Bill and the need for Florida colleges and universities to provide educational and career resources that will meet the increasing demand brought on by the new federal assistance. The Board of Governors, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Florida College System, and Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida have partnered to launch a new Web site to guide veteran students to programs and services available at Florida's postsecondary institutions.

In preparation for the statewide initiative, the Board of Governors' Student Affairs and Campus Life Committee on March 26, 2009 reviewed recommendations for providing student veteran support services that were developed by a workgroup consisting of BOG 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 where student veterans can access admissions assistance, academic advising, personal counseling, financial aid assistance, tutoring, certification for benefits, and other veteran services. It was determined that this linkage of services can be achieved in part through online services in those institutions where the various service units are not contiguous. Adding to the challenge is the need to provide adequate student support services to students attending branch campuses. Other recommendations for student veterans' support included a Web site dedicated to student veterans, veterans' educational benefits information at orientations, and support for student veterans' organizations on campus.

Information collected by the veterans' workgroup also revealed that each SUS institution is organized differently when it comes to providing student support services. Some have a centralized location where the majority of services are provided, others have offices that are located in separate locations around campus, and several universities have invested heavily in providing student services online. For these reasons it is unreasonable to expect that every university can address the needs of veterans in the same way.

To promote an optimum level of student veterans' support services throughout the State University System, the Student Affairs and Campus Life Committee directed staff to work with the universities to determine how each institution could best implement, where practical, the services recommended by the veterans' workgroup. To accomplish this, Board staff conducted a final survey of the state universities to identify how each of the institutions can best implement the recommendations of the student veterans' support services workgroup. The survey identifies the current level of service as measured against the veterans' workgroup recommendations and any commitment on the part of each institution to increase such services to a higher level. Associated costs for programs and services to achieve the commitment level are also identified. A summary of the survey results is provided for review.

Supporting Documentation Included: University Survey Summary Document

Facilitators/Presenters: Richard Stevens and Jon Rogers