

## Report for Discussion for TCCVS Higher Ed Committing Meeting on 12/8/15

### TCCVS Subcommittee on Communicating Statewide Higher Education Issues: Report for discussion

**Goal Identified by TCCVS:** Improve communication of veteran and military-related issues in higher education to key leadership and organizations in Texas. The need for improved communication was a key finding in the September 2010 State Auditor's Office Report (11-004) on veterans services in higher education.

**Strategies:** Develop strategies for various needs, including: ongoing communication of veteran-related issues in higher education; topical and single issue communications; coordination of efforts involving multiple entities, issues, and audiences; establishment of overall statewide direction through designated communications position at TVC.

**Target audiences:** Texas IHLs; Legislature; State Agencies; Regional, County and Local Governments; Veteran Support Organizations; Media; Veteran-related Conferences (WAVES, TACVPO, CCME, etc.); Public. Veterans and Servicemembers could be considered for some issues, but this communications plan is primarily directed at the audiences that provide service and support to the veterans.

**Methods and Tools:** Expanded and up-dated contact lists; existent IHL communications resources; existent forums such as CPUPC, TACC, ICUT and A&M System Listserv; targeted email; IHL and agency websites; social media; public media outlets; veteran-related conference presentations; direct contacts. Increased budgetary funding by relevant institutions, including state agencies, to promote programs and create awareness of pertinent issues through advertising, PSAs and other means.

**Data Collection:** Digital repository and information exchanges for IHLs to share best practices, programs, resources, relevant public data, funding resources in public and private sectors including foundations; and other information. Continued and expanded use of Texas A&M System Military and Veteran Support Network Listserv as real-time information sharing.

**Standards:** The TVC should implement the Excellence program for state IHLs as a fundamental benchmark for identifying and communicating service and support of veteran-related needs.

**Major Issues to be communicated:** [\*These are suggestions. Issues should be identified and ranked by the TCCVS.\*] Credits for Service (CCH and ACE protocol); Adequate funding and resources for supporting vets at universities; Importance of top-level support; Health-related support; Family support; Increased identification of campus veterans and military-affiliated in order to extend services as needed; Statewide standards such as Best Practices or TVC Excellence program to be affirmed by Legislature; Statewide expansion of student veterans needs assessments (such as developed by Texas State) for each campus; Protection against predatory practices including surveys and "best" listings; Innovative supportive services for student veterans.

**Current Communications Status:** Many veteran-related issues pertaining to higher education are virtually unknown to the key audiences identified above, and in many cases to student veterans and military-related students themselves. This lack of awareness can inhibit progress on program and support development at every level. Often, simple communication of awareness of issues and needs can result in positive outcomes, such as higher degrees of collaboration among key stakeholders.

**Recommendations:** As a statewide mission, the importance of communication on behalf of veterans and servicemembers involved in higher education requires both coordination among IHLs and relevant interests, and also consistent guidance from an organization with statewide mission. The TVC should create a new staff position dedicated to guiding and coordinating communication of higher education issues. This position would be charged with implementing the recommendations of this committee. It can either seek additional funding in the TVC budget or utilize existent personnel and resources, as the TVC may seem appropriate.

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