

07 - 0553

**REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**  
**HIGHER EDUCATION VETERANS**  
**ASSISTANCE OFFICES ON CAMPUS**

by

**HIGHER EDUCATION VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**STEERING COMMITTEE**

**January 15, 2007**



## 197.585, Minnesota Statutes 2006

### 197.585 HIGHER EDUCATION VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Assistance provided.** The commissioner of veterans affairs shall provide central liaison staff and campus veterans assistance officers to serve the needs of students who are veterans at higher education institutions in Minnesota. Methods of assistance may include, but are not limited to, work-study positions for veterans, and providing information and assistance regarding the availability of state, federal, local, and private resources.

Subd. 2. **Steering committee.** The commissioner of veterans affairs shall chair a higher education veterans assistance program steering committee composed of:

- (1) the adjutant general or the adjutant general's designee;
- (2) a representative of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, designated by the chancellor;
- (3) a representative of the University of Minnesota, appointed by the president of the university;
- (4) a representative of private colleges and universities in Minnesota, appointed by the governor;
- (5) a representative of the Office of Higher Education, appointed by the executive director;
- (6) a representative of county veterans service offices, appointed by the commissioner of veterans affairs; and
- (7) a representative of the Department of Employment and Economic Development, appointed by the commissioner of that department.

The steering committee shall advise the commissioner of veterans affairs regarding the allocation of appropriations for the purposes of this section and shall develop a long-range plan to serve the needs of students at higher education institutions in Minnesota who are veterans.

Subd. 3. **Office space provided.** Each campus of the University of Minnesota and each institution within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system shall provide adequate space for a veterans assistance office to be administered by the commissioner of veterans affairs, and each private college and university in Minnesota is encouraged to provide adequate space for a veterans assistance office to be administered by the commissioner of veterans affairs. The veterans assistance office must provide information and assistance to veterans who are students or family members of students at the school regarding the availability of state, federal, local, and private resources.

Subd. 4. **Report.** Beginning January 15, 2007, and each year thereafter, the steering committee established in subdivision 2 shall report to the chairs of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over veterans affairs policy and finance and higher education policy and finance regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the program established in this section.

Subd. 5. **Expiration.** This section expires at the end of the first fiscal year in which the number of veterans enrolled in Minnesota public institutions of higher education is fewer than 4,000, but no later than June 30, 2011.

**History:** 2006 c 282 art 15 s 3

**Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program  
Steering Committee Report  
January 15, 2007**

The 2006 Legislature allocated \$600,000 in Fiscal Year 2007 to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for the creation of the Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program to serve the needs of students who are veterans at Minnesota's higher education institutions.

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) in consultation with the Adjutant General, and representatives from: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), University of Minnesota, Private Colleges and Universities, Office of Higher Education, Department of Employee and Economic Development, and the County Veterans Service Officers Association, implemented the Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program.

The MDVA contracted with Central Lakes College, Brainerd for the services of Donald Pfeffer, M.A. to serve as Director of the Higher Education Veterans Program. Mr. Pfeffer is a military veteran (active duty Air Force 1971-1975 and retired in 2002 from the MN Air National Guard). He has been a college counselor for approximately twenty years and he established the Central Lakes College Veterans Resource Center in February 2006. In addition, Mr. Pfeffer has served as part of a Reintegration Training Team for Higher Education Institutions.

The legislation specified that the following activities be carried out:

**I. Program.** *"The commissioner of veterans affairs shall provide central liaison staff and campus veterans assistance officers to serve the needs of students who are veterans at higher education institutions in Minnesota. Methods of assistance may include, but are not limited to, work-study positions for veterans, and providing information and assistance regarding the availability of state, federal, local, and private resources".*

**Program Outcomes (July 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006):**

- A. To carry out the intent of the legislature the Steering Committee (see attachment #3) developed the following objectives:
  - 1. To have college and university campuses assume "ownership" of activities necessary to serve veterans and family members. Specifically, this included, but was not limited to, the following:
    - a. Identifying someone on campus to provide leadership and organization;
    - b. Create a "Veterans and Family Friendly Environment" on campus;
    - c. Provide space, equipment, and supplies and seek out funding for staffing (campus and federal work-study funds, volunteers and donations);
    - d. Review their policies and procedures (particularly in the areas of credit transfer, tuition and fee payment and admissions);

- e. Provide training for employees regarding the issues of reintegration for military members and their families;
- f. Create a veterans resource center; and
- g. Provide information about the availability of federal, state, local and private resources to military members and their families.

2. In order to maximize service to all college and university campuses in Minnesota, the Steering Committee sectioned the state into six geographically balanced regions and placed a campus representative at those campuses with a high rate of attendance by veterans, veterans' families and military enrollees. It is the intent of the steering committee that from the six designed office locations the coordinators would be able to assist other higher education campuses within the region. The following activities occurred to meet this objective:

- a. All regional coordinators were recruited, interviewed, hired, trained and in place ready to begin developing services in their respective regions by August 28, 2006 (see attachment # 2).
- b. The coordinators immediately developed their regional offices and began assisting campuses within their regions to meet the objectives stated above.
- c. Each of the six campuses hosting the regional offices provided office space, office equipment, telephone, computer/internet and basic office supplies as an in-kind contribution. The Department of Veterans Affairs provides the coordinators' salary, fringe benefits and travel expenses.
- d. The coordinators did extensive networking with County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), local Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) personnel and other local resources (see attachment # 1).
- e. The Director's office provided leadership, training, support and developed the reporting processes for the regional offices. The Director also provided coordination among MDVA, MnSCU, and University of Minnesota staff for the placement of Regional Coordinators on "host" campuses.

**II. Campus Office Space.** *"Each campus of the University of Minnesota and each institution within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system shall provide adequate space for a veterans assistance office to be administered by the commissioner of veterans affairs, and each private college and university in Minnesota is encouraged to provide adequate space".*

## **Campus Office Space Outcomes (July 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006):**

- A. Prior to the start of the Higher Education Veterans Program, five colleges or universities already had resource centers in place to assist veterans (see attachment # 2).
- B. The Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program placed twenty-three additional resource centers on MnSCU, University of Minnesota and Private College campuses by December 31, 2006. Other campuses are currently in the process of identifying space for the location of a veterans assistance office/center on their campus (see attachment 2). For each new center the campus will provide the necessary office equipment, supplies and electronic communication.
- C. The coordinators assisted campuses with the planning and establishing of the veterans resource centers. Due to the travel time involved for each coordinator, the campuses have assumed responsibility for the development and operation of the center since the office exists to serve the students of that campus.
- D. The coordinators provide staff training, information about services for veterans and they assist the campuses with developing the application for federal work-study funding. They also helped campuses identify other sources of staffing. In addition, they were available to assist individual students with information and services via electronic communication whenever needed.
- E. From the start of the program to December 31, 2006, one thousand six hundred seventy-nine individuals (unduplicated count) have been served by the six regional areas.

The following is a breakdown of these individuals by "Status" category (see attachment 1 for additional information):

### **1. Veterans Status**

- 46% Veterans (at least 180 days Title 10 Active Duty)**
- 16% Current Military (Non-veteran)**
- 8% Former Military (Non-veteran)**
- 8% Family of Military**
- 22% Other, or did not declare status**

### **2. Student Status**

- 62% Current student**
- 32% Non-student**
- 5% Prospective student**
- 1% Former student**

## Summary

The Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program has been extremely successful during the first six months of operation based on the number of campus veterans centers established and the number of military members and their families receiving services. This has occurred due to the strong leadership demonstrated by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and outstanding assistance from Minnesota State Colleges and University system and the University of Minnesota.

The early success of the program is a result of the dedicated work of the regional coordinators. The current coordinators work hard to ensure they serve the campuses that request their help. Often times, the distance between campuses requires long traveling distances, in spite of that, they carry out their duties and have successfully met the intent of the legislation.

The campuses where offices are currently located are increasingly asked for more "on campus" time from the coordinators. With the return of almost 3,000 combat veterans over the next several months, the demand for time will increase. It is the goal of the Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program Steering Committee that by the end of the third year of operation, all Minnesota College and University campuses will be serving military members and their families as the result of the planning and development provided by campus representatives.

The current generation of veterans and their families will continue to need services long after the initial thirty, sixty, and ninety day interval reintegration programs. This program will serve as a continuous, stable point of referral and assistance for those veterans and their families. Experience demonstrates it may take months before an individual who experienced life-altering events, like combat, begins talking about those encounters.

Campus Veterans Center Coordinators are learning that one reason a veteran will stop in is for "support". It is imperative that a non-threatening location for veterans, and their families, exist in our communities so they may connect with one another and receive psychological support. College and university campuses are ideal locations for this to occur.

The Higher Education Veterans Program looks forward to continuing to serve our veterans and their families. An excellent partnership among higher education campuses, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and community service agencies has developed a united plan for the young men and women returning to school. It is an exciting opportunity for all involved to pool their resources and talents to serve those who "served their country".

Attachment #1  
Statewide Report  
Veterans Resource Centers  
Development, Utilization, Visit "Purpose", Referral and Staffing  
August 14 to December 31, 2006

Establishment of Veterans Resource Centers

5    *Number of previously established veterans resource centers (prior to July 1, 06)*

23    *Number of veterans resource centers newly established (after July 1, 06)*

*Locations: See attachment #2 for a listing of locations by region*

Utilization of Veterans Resource Center

361    *Average # first time visitors each month (unduplicated)*

531    *Average # monthly visitors (unduplicated)*

1679    *Total visitors to date (unduplicated)*

Veteran Status

46%    *Veteran (180+ days active duty)*

16%    *Current military (non-veteran)*

8%    *Former military (non-veteran)*

8%    *Family of military*

22%    *Other or did not declare status*

Student Status

62%    *Current student*

32%    *Non-student*

5%    *Prospective student*

1%    *Former student*

Purpose of visit

Total 5866 Service Contacts (Duplicated Count)

32%    *Conversation*

26%    *Food/Beverage (as part of "open house" or planning or discussion activities)*

17%    *Veterans funding (GI Bill, 1606/1607, federal tuition assistance, state reimbursement)*

6%    *Other funding (higher education financial aid, scholarships, emergency funds, etc)*

6%    *Medical/health/personal*

5%    *College/University and instructional issues*

3%    *Tuition and fees*

1%    *Books and supplies*

1%    *Community issues*

3%    *Other (or not specified)*



## Attachment #1 (continued)

### Referral

#### Number of Persons (Unduplicated) Referred To:

320 Internal campus resource  
251 External community resource  
210 County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO)  
183 Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED Vet Reps)  
50 Other

### Staffing

5 Federal work- study students  
4 Campus work- study students  
7-9 Campus volunteers  
4 Community volunteer  
7 Regional coordinators  
1 Service Agency (MN Family Assistance Center)  
1-2 Other

Attachment # 2

**Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Higher Education Veterans Program  
Director's Office and Regional Coordinators**

**Director's Office:**     **Donald Pfeffer, Director**  
Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program  
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Central Lakes College  
501 West College Drive  
Brainerd, MN 56401  
218-855-8148 Office  
218-330-5970 Cell  
[dpfeffer@clcmn.edu](mailto:dpfeffer@clcmn.edu)

**Northwest Region:**     **Dave Bellefeuille, Regional Coordinator**  
Host Campus: Minnesota State University, Moorhead  
1104 7<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
Moorhead, MN 56563  
218-477-2080 Office  
218-329-6040 Cell  
[belldave@mnstate.edu](mailto:belldave@mnstate.edu)

**Northwest Region Campus Veterans Centers**

**Previously Established:**

None

**Newly Established:**

Minnesota State University, Moorhead with common location with  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Moorhead  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Detroit Lakes  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Wadena  
Bemidji State University, Bemidji with common location with  
Northwestern Technical College, Bemidji  
Northland Community and Technical College, East Grand Forks  
Concordia College, Moorhead

## Attachment # 2 (continued)

**Northeast Region:**    **Jodi Kiminski, Regional Coordinator**  
Host Campus: Lake Superior College  
2101 Trinity Road  
Duluth, MN 55811  
218-279-2660 Office  
218-260-6558 Cell  
[j.kiminski@lsc.edu](mailto:j.kiminski@lsc.edu)

### **Northeast Region Campus Veterans Centers**

Previously Established:

University of Minnesota, Duluth

Newly Established:

Lake Superior College, Duluth

Pending Completion:

Hibbing Community College, Hibbing

College of St. Scholastica, Duluth

**Central Region:**    **James McAuley, Regional Coordinator**  
Host Campus: St. Cloud State University  
720 4<sup>th</sup> Ave South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301  
320-308-2185 Office  
320-493-8153 Cell  
[mnva@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:mnva@stcloudstate.edu)

### **Central Region Campus Veterans Centers**

Previously Established:

Central Lakes College, Brainerd

Newly Established:

St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud

Alexandria Technical College, Alexandria

Pine Technical College, Pine City

St. Cloud Technical College, St. Cloud

## Attachment # 2 (continued)

### **Metro Region:**

**David Schrader, Regional Coordinator**

Host Campus: University Of Minnesota  
One Stop Student Services Center  
200 Fraser Hall  
106 Pleasant Street SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0422  
612-625-7620 Office  
612-625-3002 Fax  
651-285-8555 Cell  
[schr0381@umn.edu](mailto:schr0381@umn.edu)

### **Metro Region Campus Veterans Centers**

Previously Established:

Minneapolis Community and Technical College  
Comfort for Courage, University of Minnesota

Newly Established:

One-Stop Service Center, University of Minnesota  
Inver Hills Community College, Inver Hills

Pending Completion:

Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Coon Rapids and Cambridge  
Century Community College, White Bear Lake  
Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis  
Normandale Community College, Bloomington  
North Hennepin Community College

### **Southwest Region:**

**Patricia Arnold, Regional Coordinator**

Host Campus: Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall  
1501 State Street  
Marshall, MN 56258  
507-537-7213 Office  
507-537-7145 Fax  
507-401-0104 Cell  
[arnoldpa@southwestmsu.edu](mailto:arnoldpa@southwestmsu.edu)

### **Southwest Region Campus Veterans Centers**

Previously Established:

None

Newly Established:

Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall  
Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Worthington  
Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Jackson  
Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Pipestone  
Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Granite Falls  
Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Canby  
Martin Luther College, New Ulm

Pending Completion:

University of Minnesota, Morris

**Attachment # 2 (continued)**

**Southeast Region:**    **Regional Coordinators: Eric Christensen and Angelina Wiger**  
Host Campus: Minnesota State University, Mankato  
242 Centennial Student Union  
Mankato, MN 56001

Eric Christensen (PT)

507-389-5726

507-779-9446

[Eric.d.christensen@us.army.mil](mailto:Eric.d.christensen@us.army.mil)

Angelina Wiger (PT)

651-335-6776

507-779-9375

[angelina55109@yahoo.com](mailto:angelina55109@yahoo.com)

**Southeast Region Campus Veterans Centers**

Previously Established:

Winona State University, Winona

Newly Established:

Minnesota State University, Mankato

South Central College, North Mankato

South Central College, Faribault

## Attachment #3

### Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Higher Education Veterans Program Steering Committee Members

- **Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs**
  - Commissioner Clark Dyrud, Chair  
20 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Veterans Service Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2079  
651-296-2345  
[Clark.Dyrud@state.mn.us](mailto:Clark.Dyrud@state.mn.us)
  
- **Department of Military Affairs**
  - Capt. Jess Ulrick  
20 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
Veterans Service Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2079  
651-282-4590  
[jess.ulrick@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:jess.ulrick@mn.ngb.army.mil)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Christopher Kline (alternate)  
651-268-8189  
[Christopher.p.kline@mn.ngb.army.mil](mailto:Christopher.p.kline@mn.ngb.army.mil)
  
- **Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**
  - Doctor Steve Frantz, System Director for Student Life  
Wells Fargo Place  
30 East 7th St, Suite 350  
St Paul, MN 55101  
651-296-0672  
[steve.frantz@so.mnscu.edu](mailto:steve.frantz@so.mnscu.edu)
  
- **University of Minnesota**
  - Mary Koskan, Departmental Director  
One Stop Student Services Center  
259 FraserH  
106 Pleasant St SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-625-0160  
[m-kosk@umn.edu](mailto:m-kosk@umn.edu)

### Attachment # 3 (continued)

- **Private Colleges and Universities**
  - Mike Wilhelmi (position currently vacant)
- **Office of Higher Education**
  - Tim Medd,  
1450 Energy Park Dr, Suite 350  
St Paul, MN 55108-5227  
651-642-0527  
[timothy.m.medd@state.mn.us](mailto:timothy.m.medd@state.mn.us)
- **County Veteran Service Officer**
  - Brad Lindsay, Olmsted County  
Government Center  
151 4th St SE  
Rochester, MN 55904-3711  
507-285-8205  
[lindsay.brad@co.olmsted.mn.us](mailto:lindsay.brad@co.olmsted.mn.us)
- **Department of Employment and Economic Development**
  - Jim Warnest,  
1st National Bank Bldg  
332 Minnesota Street, #E200  
St Paul, MN 55101  
651-296-1194  
[jim.warnest@state.mn.us](mailto:jim.warnest@state.mn.us)