

Higher Education Veterans Assistance Offices on Campus

*Report to the Legislature
January 15, 2009*



By Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program Steering Committee

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2008 Minnesota Statutes

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*

**Report by the Higher Education Steering Committee on
Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Higher Education Veterans Program
January 15, 2009**

This is a progress report to the Minnesota Legislature from the Higher Education Steering Committee on the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Higher Education Veterans Assistance Programs for the time period January 1 to December 31, 2008.

2008 Brief Highlight of Activities:

The Higher Education Veterans Programs Campus Coordinators assisted higher education campuses in serving 5,288 individuals (unduplicated count). This represents a 67% increase in the number of individuals served at campus centers when compared to 2007.

The Higher Education Program increased their presence on four additional campuses in 2008. The four new Veterans Resource Centers brings the total number of centers to 57 since July 2006. Campus Coordinators assisted an additional eight campuses with increasing the size of their currently existing centers or expanding the services offered through their centers.

The Higher Education Veterans Programs served as a partner at all MN Army National Guard Reintegration Program sessions and conducted a significant number of campus training sessions.

The Higher Education Veterans Programs Call Center, **MyMilitaryEducation.org**, also experienced continued growth. By the end of 2008, an average of 1,750 individual contacts were occurring each month with a total of 20,000 contacts in 2008. In addition, over 30,000 total contacts have occurred since the establishment of the Call Center in May 2007.

Background:

The 2006 Legislature allocated \$600,000 for FY 2007 to the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs for the creation of the Higher Education Veterans Assistance Programs to serve the needs of students who are veterans at Minnesota's higher education institutions. The Legislature also established a program "sunset" date of June 30, 2011, or when the number of veterans receiving benefits drops below 4,000. The 2007 Legislature added an additional \$450,000 to expand services in fiscal year 2008.

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 (U of M), Private Colleges and Universities, Office of Higher Education (OHE), Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), and the County Veterans Service Officers Association, implemented the Higher Education Veterans Assistance Programs in July 2006.

The MDVA contracts with Central Lakes College, Brainerd for the services of Donald Pfeffer, M.A., to serve as Director of the Higher Education Veterans Programs.

The legislation specified that the following activities be carried out:

I. Program. *The Commissioner of Veterans Affairs shall provided 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:

To carry out the intent of the legislation, the steering committee developed the following objectives:

1. To have college and university campuses assume “ownership” activities necessary to serve veterans and family members. Specifically, this included, but was not limited to, the following:
 - Review policies and procedures (particularly in the areas of credit transfer, tuition and fee payment and admissions).
Outcome: All MnSCU and U of M campuses have accomplished this objective
 - Implement Fee Deferral policy.
Outcome: All MnSCU and U of M campuses have accomplished this objective
 - Identify a key person on campus to provide leadership and organization for veterans services.
Outcome: All MnSCU and U of M campuses have accomplished this objective
 - Create a campus veterans resource center.
Outcome: 57 Campus Veterans Resource Centers have been established out of a potential of 140 Minnesota institutions of higher learning
 - Provide space, equipment, and supplies and seek funding for staffing (campus and federal work-study funds, volunteers and donations).
Outcome: All institutions that provide Campus Veterans Resource Centers have accomplished this task.
 - Provide training for higher education employees regarding the issues of reintegration for military members and their families.
Outcome: Twenty-five MnSCU campuses and the Minneapolis campus of the U of M have provided specific veteran reintegration training for staff and faculty. Other campuses have scheduled training for 2009.

The Director and Coordinators provide staff training and assist campuses with developing the application for federal work-study funding. They also help campuses identify other sources to staffing. As of December 2007, the following are the **weekly** hours of service provided at Campus Veterans Resource Centers:

452 hours of Regional Coordinator time
401 hours of federal work-study time

114 hours of campus funded work-study time
101 hours of campus hired employee time
32 hours of campus volunteer time
9 hours of community volunteer time

2. To maximize service to all college and university campuses in Minnesota, the Steering Committee divided the state into six geographically balanced regions and placed campus representatives at a host campus in these regions. The intent of the Steering Committee was for the coordinators assigned to these regions to assist other higher education campuses within the region to develop veterans programming. The following activities occurred to meet this objective:

- As of January 1, 2008, twelve regional coordinators were in place serving six regions of Minnesota. (see attachment # 1).
- Each of the twelve campuses that host regional offices provide space, office equipment, telephone, computer/internet and basic office supplies as an in-kind contribution. The Higher Education Veterans Program provides the Campus Coordinator's salary, fringe, and travel expenses. The program also provides any specialized equipment or supplies the offices need.
 - * The 12 Host Campuses and Director' office locations include:
 - University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
 - Minnesota State University, Moorhead
 - Minnesota State University, Mankato
 - St. Cloud State University
 - Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall
 - Alexandria Technical College
 - Anoka Ramsey Community College, Coon Rapids
 - Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount
 - Lake Superior Community College, Duluth
 - NE Higher Education District, Hibbing Community College
 - Northland Community and Technical College, Thief River Falls
 - Rochester Community and Technical College
 - Central Lakes College, Brainerd Campus
- The Campus Coordinators conducted extensive networking with campus officials, County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO), local Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) personnel, as well as other state and local resources (see attachment # 2).

Along with the Higher Education Veterans Program Director, Campus Coordinators have served as part of the Higher Education Reintegration team for the MN Army National Guard. With other community providers, the program conducted the following "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" Reintegration Activities:

12 Pre-deployment Information sessions
6 Family Reintegration Academies
8 Monthly Individual Reintegration Training (MIRT) Events

7 Days of Initial Reintegration Activities at De-Mobilization Sites
9 Days of 30 Day Reintegration Activities

The Higher Education Veterans Program Director's office provided leadership, training, support, and reporting processes for the regional offices. In addition, the director provides coordination with MDVA, MnSCU, Office of the Chancellor, DEED, CVSOs, OHE and U of M staff. The director also conducted training for campuses and community groups. In 2008, eight training sessions were conducted.

From January to December 2008, 5,288 individuals were provided information and assistance at Veterans Resource Centers. **This is an increase of 67% more individuals being served in 2008 than in 2007.** The following is a status breakdown of those individuals.

a. Veterans Status

- 63% Veterans (at least 180 days Title 10 Active Duty)
- 12% Current military (Non-veteran)
- 7% Family of military
- 2% Former military (Non-veteran)
- 16% Other, or did not declare status

b. Student Status

- 70% Current Student
- 12% Prospective Student
- 17% Other, or did not declare status
- >1% Former Student

In order to more effectively provide information and assistance regarding the availability of local, state, federal, and private resources, the Higher Education Veteran Program continued to operate a call center in cooperation with Minnesota Online. The call center, named **MyMilitaryEducation.org**, has had over 30,000 contacts from individuals since it was established in 2007. In calendar 2008, 20,000 contacts occurred with an average of over 1,750 each month.

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:

From August 2006 to December 2006, twenty-eight centers were developed. From January 1 to December 31, 2007, 25 new Campus Veterans Resource Centers were developed. From January 1 to December 31, 2008, four additional Centers were created for a total of 57 Veterans Resource Centers now in operation (see attachment 2 for a listing of all centers). Eight existing Veterans Resource Centers were expanded or had increased programming during the past year. As we go forward into 2009, other campuses are in the process of identifying space for the location of campus Veterans Resource Centers.

Year End Summary

The Higher Education Veterans Program has been extremely successful during calendar year 2008 as documented by the number of established Campuses Veterans Centers, the 67% increase in the number of military members and their families served, and the increased usage of **MyMilitaryEducation.org**. This has occurred because of the strong leadership of MDVA and assistance provided by the MnSCU, Office of the Chancellor.

The success of the program has primarily resulted from the dedicated work of the campus coordinators. Higher education campuses continue to ask for more “on campus” time from the coordinators. Additional campuses could have established Veterans Centers if there were additional coordinator time to assist them. It is estimated the need for services will continue to grow as demonstrated by the 67% increase in the number of individuals served in 2008. As veterans and their families expand their usage of veterans benefits, Minnesota colleges and universities need to continue to be prepared to meet the demand for services for veterans. This is particularly important as significant improvements and expansion of benefits occurs as the result of the implementation of the new Federal GI Bill, Chapter 33, on August 1, 2009. The state of Minnesota needs to be prepared to serve the individuals that will demand educational services as the result of the new GI Bill.

Attachment # 1

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

Director's Office: **Donald Pfeffer, Director Higher Education Veterans Programs**
Host Campus: Central Lakes College
501 West College Drive
Brainerd, MN 56401
E-mail: dpfeffer@clcmn.edu
Office: 218-855-8148

Northwest Region: **Dave Bellefeuille**
Host Campus: Minnesota State University, Moorhead
1104 7th Ave South/Box 27
Moorhead, MN 56563
E-mail: belldave@mnstate.edu
Office: 218-477-2080

Laura Farris
Host Campus: Northland Community and Technical College
1101 Hwy One East
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
E-mail: laura.farris@northlandcollege.edu
Office: 218-683-8550

Northwest Region Campus Veterans Centers

University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota - Crookston Campus

MnSCU Universities:

Bemidji State University, Bemidji

Minnesota State University, Moorhead

MnSCU Colleges:

Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Moorhead

Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Detroit Lakes

Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Fergus Falls

Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Wadena

Northland Community and Technical College, Thief River Falls

Northland Community and Technical College, East Grand Forks

Northwestern Technical College, Bemidji

Private Colleges and Universities

Concordia College, Moorhead

Northeast Region: **Jodi Kiminski, Regional Coordinator**
Host Campus: Lake Superior College
2101 Trinity Road
Duluth, MN 55811
E-mail: j.kiminski@lsc.edu
Office: 218-733-7604

Wesley Judkins
Host Campus: Hibbing Community College
1515 E. 25th Street
Hibbing, MN 55746
E-mail: wesleyjudkins@hibbing.edu
Office: 218-262-6739

Northeast Region Campus Veterans Centers

University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota, Duluth
MnSCU Colleges
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Cloquet
Hibbing Community College, Hibbing
Itaska Community College, Grand Rapids
Lake Superior College, Duluth
Mesabi Range Community and Technical College, Eveleth
Vermillion Community College, Ely
Private Colleges and Universities
College of St. Scholastica, Duluth and other locations

Central Region: **Charles Egerstrom, Coordinator**
Host Campus: Alexandria Technical College
1601 Jefferson St
Alexandria, MN 56308mnva@alextech.edu
E-mail: cegerstrom@mdva.state.mn.us
Office: 320-762-4467

James McAuley
Host Campus: St. Cloud State University
720 4th Ave South
St. Cloud, MN 56301
E-mail: mnva@stcloudstate.edu
Office: 320-308-2185

Central Region Campus Veterans Centers

University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota – Morris Campus
MnSCU Universities

St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud
MnSCU Colleges
Alexandria Technical College, Alexandria
Central Lakes College, Brainerd
Ridgewater Community College, Willmar
Ridgewater Community College, Hutchinson
St. Cloud Technical College, St. Cloud
Private Colleges and Universities
College of St. Benedict/St. Johns, St. Joseph

Metro Region:

Katherine Bachman, Coordinator
Host Campus: Dakota County Technical College
1300 145th Street East
Rosemount, MN 55068
Email: katherine.bachman@dctc.edu
kbachman@mdva.state.mn.us
Office: 651-423-8274

Duane Bauer II, Coordinator
Host Campus: University of Minnesota
One Stop Student Services
200 Fraser Hall
106 Pleasant Str. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0422
Email: bauer333@umn.edu
dbauer@mdva.state.mn.us
Office: 612-625-7620

Raymond Bohn, Coordinator
Host Campus: Anoka Ramsey Community College
11200 Mississippi Blvd NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Email: Ray.Bohn@anokaramsey.edu
rbohn@mdva.state.mn.us
Office: 763-433-1415

Metro Region Campus Veterans Centers

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
MnSCU Universities:
Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis
MnSCU Colleges:
Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Cambridge
Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Coon Rapids
Century Community College, White Bear Lake
Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount
Inver Hills Community College, Inver Hills

Hennepin Technical College, Brooklyn Park
Minneapolis Community and Technical College
Normandale Community College, Bloomington
North Hennepin Community College, Brooklyn Park
North Hennepin Community College, Eden Prairie
Pine Technical College, Pine City
St. Paul College

Private Colleges and Universities

University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis
University of St. Thomas, St. Paul

Southwest Region: Patricia Arnold, Coordinator

Host Campus: SW Minnesota State University, Marshall

1501 State Street-Room SS 132

Marshall, MN 56258

E-mail: parnoldpa@southwestmsu.edu

Office: 507-537-7213

Southwest Region Campus Veterans Centers

MnSCU Universities

Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall

MnSCU Colleges

Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Canby

Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Granite Falls

Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Jackson

Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Pipestone

Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Worthington

Private Colleges and Universities

Martin Luther College, New Ulm

Southeast Region David Schrader

Host Campus: Minnesota State University, Mankato

192 Centennial Student Union

Mankato, MN 56001

E-mail: david.schrader@mnsu.edu

Office: 507-389-5726 Office

Joshua Howe

Host Campus: Rochester Community and Technical College

851 30th Ave. S.E.

Rochester, MN 55904

E-mail: Joshua.howe@roch.edu

Office: 507-529-6142

Southeast Region Campus Veterans Centers

MnSCU Universities:

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Winona State University, Winona

MnSCU Colleges

South Central College, North Mankato

South Central College, Faribault

Southeast Technical College, Winona

Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester

Attachment #2
Veterans Resource Centers Development, Utilization, Referral & Staffing
January to December 31, 2008

Establishment of Veterans Resource Centers

<u>53</u>	<i>Number of previously established Veterans Resource Centers (Jan 1 to Dec 31, 07)</i>
<u>4</u>	<i>Number of Veterans Resource Centers newly established (Jan 1 to Dec 31, 08)</i>
<u>57</u>	<i>Total Veterans Resource Centers (Attach #1 for a listing of locations by Region)</i>
<u>5</u>	<i>Number of Existing Campuses Veterans Centers Increasing Space or Programming</i>

Utilization of Veterans Resource Center

5288 *Total First Time Visitors (Unduplicated)*

Veteran Status

<u>63%</u>	<i>Veteran (180+ days active duty)</i>
<u>12%</u>	<i>Current Military (non veteran)</i>
<u>7%</u>	<i>Family of Military</i>
<u>2%</u>	<i>Former Military (non veteran)</i>
<u>16%</u>	<i>Other or Did Not Declare Status</i>

Student Status

<u>70%</u>	<i>Current Student</i>
<u>12%</u>	<i>Prospective Student</i>
<u>1%</u>	<i>Former Student</i>
<u>17%</u>	<i>Other</i>

Top Four Purposes for Visit

- 1. Veterans Education Funding*
- 2. Connecting with Other Veterans*
- 3. College/University Tuition, Fees and Instructional Issues*
- 4. Medical/Health/Personnel*

Number of Persons Referred To:

<u>1959</u>	<i>Internal Campus Resource</i>
<u>572</u>	<i>External Community Resource</i>
<u>1199</u>	<i>County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO)</i>
<u>360</u>	<i>Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED Vet Reps)</i>
<u>147</u>	<i>Other</i>

Staffing (Average Weekly Hours/ Percent of Weekly Hours)

<u>452 / 39%</u>	<i>Regional Coordinator time</i>
<u>401 / 35%</u>	<i>Federal work study student time</i>
<u>114 / 10%</u>	<i>Campus work study student time</i>

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 12th Street
Veterans Service Building
St. Paul, MN 55155-2079
651-296-2345
Clark.Dyrud@state.mn.us

Department of Military Affairs

- Capt. Jess Ulrick
20 West 12th Street
Veterans Service Building
St. Paul, MN 55155-2079
651-282-4590
jess.ulrick@mn.ngb.army.mil
- 1st Lt. Christopher Kline (alternate)
651-268-8189
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

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

Attachment # 3 (continued)

Private Colleges and Universities

- 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

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

Department of Employment and Economic Development

- Jim Finley, Special Project Manger
1st National Bank Bldg
332 Minnesota Street, #E200
St Paul, MN 55101
651-259-7557
jim.finley@state.mn.us