



State Council of
Higher Education for Virginia

Developing a Virginia Higher Education Military Friendly Policy

Presentation to the Governor's Commission on
Higher Education Reform, Innovation and
Investment

December 16, 2011



McDonnell Administration Priorities

Executive Order 9 : “Governor’s Commission on Higher Education Reform, Innovation, and Investment”:

- Charged with “making Virginia a national leader in providing higher education opportunities to military personnel and veterans”.

Executive Order 29: “Serving Virginia’s Veterans”:

- Directed all state agencies to identify new, expanded, or customized services that meet the educational, health care, and social service needs of Virginia’s veterans.



SCHEV Activities

- Discussed potential actions with Terrie Suit, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security.
- Participated in the Virginia Wounded Warriors Program Conference at VMI in August 2011.
- Created draft document: “Elements of a Virginia Higher Education Military-Friendly Policy”.
- Received and incorporated feedback from IPAC.
- Convened ad hoc committee of military education representatives to discuss proposed policies.



SCHEV Activities

Military Education Webpage on SCHEV Site

<http://www.schev.edu/MilitaryEducation.asp>

- Financial benefits for active duty military members, family of active duty members, and veterans and their families.
- Institutional Separation and Reinstatement Policies
- Links to GI Bill information, Virginia Department of Veterans Services, Virginia Wounded Warriors Program, etc.



Elements of a Virginia Higher Education Military -Friendly Policy

With input from the public institutions of higher education, SCHEV identified certain policies that should be adopted by institutions to make them more military-friendly. A draft policy document lists the following important elements:

- **Vision**
 - Identified as the most important element of campus military friendliness.
 - Institutional leadership should articulate an intention to provide quality services to military related students and engage the students in conversation to receive their input on what services are needed on that particular campus.



Elements of a Virginia Higher Education Military -Friendly Policy

- **Analysis**
 - Establish accurate count and demographic breakdown.
 - Utilize a task force, advisory council, etc. to conduct a survey of student needs.
- **Organization**
 - Establish an office or entity dedicated to assisting military-related students.
- **Assessment**
 - Monitor and track enrollment and success.



Elements of a Virginia Higher Education Military -Friendly Policy

- **Credit Transfer**
 - Policies should be as military-friendly as possible.
 - Policies should be clear, consistent, and transparent.
- **Orientation**
 - Special program for newly enrolled military-related students should be offered.
- **Support of Student Organizations**
 - Provide assistance in organizing and/or advising.



Elements of a Virginia Higher Education Military -Friendly Policy

- **Electronic and print resources**
 - Web page with easily accessible information, as well as printed material.
- **Faculty and Staff Awareness**
 - Incorporate information on military-related students into routine training programs.
 - Recruit veteran and reservist faculty to provide informal advising or mentoring.
 - Personnel should be fully trained in relevant regulations and policies, especially with regard to transfer credit and domicile.



SCHEV Recommendations

- **Commission endorsement of the Virginia Higher Education Military-Friendly Policy.**
- **Establishment of Military Education Committee**
 - Membership would consist of personnel at public institutions responsible for administering programs and policies relevant to military-related students.
 - Potential tasks:
 - Create a work group to standardize transfer of military education and experience to academic credit.
 - Provide a forum for institutions to advise each other and share best practices.
 - Review and monitor institutional compliance with military-friendly policies.