This newsletter was created for the intent of keeping you informed of the Military and VA Communities. This newsletter is also a tool to communicate events and resources both at OSU and the community at large. The opinions and viewpoints expressed in the articles are not those of the Oregon State University Veterans Advisor Office or its counterparts.

I want to encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues. Anyone who is interested in receiving this newsletter on a continuous basis can sign up at [http://lists.oregonstate.edu/](http://lists.oregonstate.edu/). The name of the newsletter is “VetsNews”.

**NAVPA Conference Updates:**

I attended the Annual National Association of Veteran Program Administrators (NAVPA) conference the week of October 8, 2012 through October 12, 2012. I want to use this newsletter to update you on information provided by several presenters during the conference.

**Basic Veterans Administration Workshop – Presenters VA Chief Education Liaison Officers (CELO) Linda McAllister (Atlanta Regional Processing Office (RPO)), Michele Mendola (Buffalo RPO), Marie George (St. Louis RPO), and Michael Marks (Muskogee RPO):**

- For Compliance Audits, all four of the CELOs (Michael Marks is our CELO) are working with the individual Education Liaison Representatives (ELR) to allow schools to submit their catalogs during audits electronically. *(Cathy and Angie are currently working with our ELR to see if we can make this happen.)* This change could save schools a couple of hundred dollars in mailing and printing expenses annually.

- Veterans Administration is currently working on a new system called “Long Term Solution” (LTS) to fast track Chapter 33 GI Bill payments by automating the process. Here are some of the features of LTS.
  - Certifications that are classified as “simple” (no remarks) will be processed using LTS. All others will be processed through the normal process.
  - Payments will not be released prior to 14 days before a term starts.
  - Certifications will not be processed more than 6 months in advance.
  - Award letters will be sent from a centralized office in Philadelphia.

- **Public Law 111-377 Chapter 33 GI Bill change clarifications:**
  - If a veteran irrevocably relinquishes one GI Bill chapter (e.g. 30, 1606 or 1607) for Chapter 33 Post 9-11 GI Bill and the relinquished GI Bill had a kicker the veteran relinquishes the kicker as well. This was not clearly explained in the law or the VA’s website and has caused significant confusion, overpayments and grief amongst veterans.
  - Study abroad clarifications:
    - There was confusion created by the School Certifying Official (SCO) handbook. Study abroad courses are treated like any other courses. If required as part of a degree program or can be used as an elective and is approved course tuition and fees can be covered. However, the following are not considered fees:
      - Airplane Ticket
      - Room and Board
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- Food.
  - Increase in the amount of reporting fees from $7 to $12 and from $11 to $15.
    - There were several questions around the use of the reporting fees. The final answer on the reporting fees were as follows
      - Per the Public Law 111-377 Section 204 “Any reporting fees paid to an educational institution or joint apprenticeship training committee after the date of the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2011 shall be utilized by such institution or committee solely for the making of certifications.”
      - The VA further offered that “making of certifications” could extend to attendance at conferences, trainings, purchase of equipment, etc. The VA was clear that this money was to be separate of the schools general budget.
  - Transfer of the Post 9-11 GI Bill.
    - Divorcee can use the benefits after a divorce unless the transferee reverses the transfer.
    - If a veteran has gone through the full authentication process of E-Benefits, he or she will be able to see GI Bill payment information with that program. *(Please note that we will have an e-benefits guru providing training during the Veterans Week Events).*

Post 9-11/ VA Updates – Presenters Mr. Curtis L. Coy, VA Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity, and MG Robert M. Worley II USAF (Ret.), Director, VA Education Service Veterans Benefit

- Post 9-11 GI Bill was launched August 2009. Mr. Coy provided the following impressive stats since launching of the Post 9-11 GI Bill.
  - 23.4 Billion dollars in funds have been distributed to veterans and schools.
  - 800,000 veterans have used the Post 9-11 GI Bill.
  - Since the changes in 2011 to expand to apprenticeships and On the Job Trainings (OJT) 7,200 veterans have signed up for a non-degree seeking program.
  - The starting class of 2009 had an 88% return rate in 2010 and 58% return rate in 2011.
  - The starting class of 2010 had a 78% return rate in 2011.
- Mr. Coy did advise the group that in spite of various media articles indicating a much lower percentage return or graduation rate, true statistics will take years to calculate. Mr. Coy also provided the following VA statistics as well.
  - Compliance Surveys Stats: *(Please note the VA is required to survey schools annually whose student population exceeds 300 veterans. All others are surveyed every three years)*
    - 2009 1100 completed nationally
    - 2010 4300 completed nationally (mostly of for profit schools)
  - Vocational Rehabilitation Stats *(Some of these stats were repeated by Gerald Bacon, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VRE) Assistant Director during his brief on Vet Success Program).*
    - The VA launched a pilot project called “Vet Success on Campus”. The concept is to place an experience and Master Degree educated VRE Counselor on College campus to help veterans navigate VA Education benefits with special emphasis on enrollment into the Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation program.
In 2009 they started with three schools in Florida
In 2010 they expanded to seven schools nationally
In 2012 they expanded to 32 schools to include Portland State University.
In 2013 they hope to expand to 52 schools nationally.

To qualify a school has to have 800 plus student veterans. Every school that meets this student population will receive a letter of invite. It is the individual school’s decision to participate. If a school participates, the VA wants to enter in agreement with them for free office space for the VRE Counselor.

- VA Home Loan Stats:
  - The VA’s 20 Millionth home loan will be signed in 2012.
  - Over the last 15 quarters, foreclosure rates of veterans are the lowest of all the reporting groups.

- Unemployment and Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) Stats:
  - On average the current unemployment of veterans nationally is one to two percent lower than the national average.
  - Of the 800,000 unemployed veterans 1 in 4 qualifies for VRAP.
  - 63,000 veterans have applied for VRAP. 50,000 veterans have received a Certificate of Eligibility and pursuing education.

- Claims for Service-Connected Disability Benefits
  - On average 5% of Vietnam Veterans filed claims for service-connected disability with the average claim consisting of 3 to 4 conditions.
  - On average 50% of OIF/OEF Veterans file claims for service-connected disability with the average claim consisting of 13 to 14 conditions.

Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding (DOD-MOU) – Presenter Carolyn Baker, Chief of DOD Voluntary Education Programs

- The new DOD-MOU is coming. (There was no date of when the new MOU will be released. However, we were advised it would be given to the NAVPA leadership prior to launching on the DOD’s website. I have checked several times over the last two weeks on the NAVPA Listserv and with their leadership up to today and have not seen or heard anything as of yet). Carolyn was able to provide us the following information.
  - There will be two versions coming. Here is information on version 2.0 due to come out anytime:
    - No new requirements will be in this version.
    - Schools will have the right to sign as a Service Member Opportunity College (SOC) or as a Non-Service Member Opportunity College (Non-SOC). For more information on SOC visit the following website, http://www.soc.aascu.org/
      - Oregon State University currently is an SOC school.
    - The DOD took out the identification clauses within the original MOU (DOD 1322.25).
    - Once the new DOD is published on the Federal Registry, schools who did not sign DOD 1322.25 will have 60 days to sign the new one or not be eligible for Tuition Assistance Payments.
  - The third versions will incorporate the “Principles of Excellence” put forth by President Obama’s Executive Order 13607 on April 27, 2012.
I attended other briefings and trainings that resulted in random information that pertained primarily to our VA Certifying Officials, Cathy and Angie. However, there were a few comments or quotes that are interesting to note.

- Carolyn Baker advised us that the Departments of Education, Veterans Administration, Consumer Protection, and Defense will work together to establish the Principles of Excellence Complaint System.
- Jeffery Bacon – Wyakin Warriors Foundation educated us on various different types of veterans. He introduced us to a new classification, “Non-combat Veteran with a Traumatic (not Military Sexual Trauma Related) experience.
- Tim Wheeler, Assistant Director of Operations Policies and Procedures for Overpayments/Debts/Refunds for the VA Debt Management Center provided the following statistics:
  o The Debt Management Center has 51 operators handling 2300 phone calls daily.
  o The Debt Management Center only collects debts. Disputes of debts by schools are to be handled by the RPOs. Oregon State University’s RPO is the Muskogee VA Regional Office.
- Michael Marks CELO for Muskogee Oklahoma let us know a new VA Compliance Specialist; Mr. Bobby Clayton was hired for the Portland VA Regional Office.

Upcoming Events:

November 9, 2012 thru November 17, 2012 - Veterans Day Weeklong Celebration:

- **Friday, November 9, 2012 – AFROTC Veterans Day Events**
  o 11:00 to 12:00 in the MU Quad. Keynote Speaker, Lt Col Andrew Poorman (USAF)
  o Reception to follow in MU 109.
  o 24-HOUR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL.
  o 12-HOUR POW/MIA FLAG WALK.
- **Saturday, November 10, 2012 – Albany Veterans Day Parade**
  o Parade Starts at 11:00 a.m. More information can be found at [http://www.cityofalbany.net/visitors/events/veterans-day-parade](http://www.cityofalbany.net/visitors/events/veterans-day-parade)
- **Saturday, November 10, 2012 – Timberline Park Veteran Memorial Service:**
  o 8:30 to 9:30 at the Timberline Park Veterans Memorial in Albany, Oregon State University
  o Color Guard provided by OSU ROTC
  o Keynote Speaker, Gus L. Bedwell Army Veteran.
- **Saturday, November 10, 2012 – Springfield, Oregon Veteran Stand Down**
  o 8:00 to 4:00 in the Springfield, Oregon National Guard Armory.
  o ASOSU Veterans Taskforce Director, Julie Stewart will represent OSU at this event.
- **Monday, November 12, 2012 – Women Veteran Panel – “Women at War; Fighting for Their Country and Recognition”**
  o 3:00 to 5:00 in the MU Main Lounge with a light reception from 5:00 to 6:00 in the MU – Veterans Lounge.
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- **Wednesday, November 14, 2012 – VA Outreach, 12:00 to 4:00 in the MU Vets Lounge**
  - 12:00 to 4:00 in the Memorial Union Veterans Lounge
  - Three OSU Students, Skott Swanson and Jaya Lapham will be providing one on one sessions and enrollment into the VA's EBenefts and MyHealtheVet programs.
  - Lt. Akili King will be educating student veterans on the American Corporate Partners – Mentoring Program.

- **Thursday, November 15, 2012 – Showing of “The Invisible War”**
  - 5:30 to 8:30 in the MU East International Forum
  - Several providers to include the Oregon Department of Veterans Administration, Counseling and Psychological Services, ASOSU Veterans Task Force Director, OSU Women Center, Office of Student Affairs have come together to host a showing of “The Invisible War”. From Oscar®- and Emmy®-nominated filmmaker Kirby Dick (This Film Is Not Yet Rated; Twist of Faith) comes The Invisible War, a groundbreaking investigative documentary about one of America's most shameful and best kept secrets: the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military.

- **Saturday, November 17, 2012 – Oregon State Football game dedicated to veterans.**
  - Game Attenders will be encouraged to participate in a Memorial Union Walk which consist of the following:
    - Video history of the Allworth Room,
    - Flowers and cards located in the Allworth Room, Veterans Lounge and next to the Memorial Union Veterans Memorial to be placed by the memorial in honor of those who have fallen,
    - Light refreshments in the Veterans Lounge,
    - Display of the new Veterans Home in Lebanon named in honor of Mr. Edward Allworth in the MU Main Lounge, and
    - A TV for viewing of the game in the Vets Lounge.
  - Athletics is working on several events prior to and during the game, which include:
    - Presentation of the colors by the ROTC,
    - Performance by the Navy Marching Band,
    - Honoring a veteran during halftime,
    - Supporting the return of the Salem Vet Center Van,
    - Discounted tickets for Veterans and their family.

*Please note several items are being worked out to include posters and advertising for this week. More information will follow in the coming weeks.*

October 26, 2012 – Student Media presents Major General Buchanan.
See attached flyer for more information.

**Veteran Resources:**

Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Blog:
[www.oregondva.com](http://www.oregondva.com)

Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs launched a new online media to help expand the reach of Oregon veteran benefit information in the form of a blog. To ensure they are maximizing the opportunity to engage users, they chose to incorporate all veteran benefit information on this blog including:
• The disability claims process
• Contact information for the veteran service offices across the state
• Accessing healthcare
• Medical Center, CBOC and Vet Center locations
• Veteran Transportation
• Common veteran trauma education
• Long term care options
• Dependent and Survivor benefits
• Burial benefits
• Education options
• Home loan information
• Taxation deferrals and exemptions
• Employment resources and preference
• Auto, adaptive and clothing allowances
• ID’s, DMV license plates, medals and records
• Homelessness resources
• Veterans courts information

OSU Veterans on Facebook
http://www.facebook.com/VeteransAtOregonStateUniversity.

OSU Veterans Website:
http://oregonstate.edu/veterans/home/

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs Website:
http://www.oregon.gov/odva/Pages/index.aspx

Oregon Department of Employment Veteran Representatives:
http://www.oregon.gov/EMPLOY/Pages/index.aspx

OSU Veterans and Family Student Association Facebook page:
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-and-Family-Student-Association/25373662133527

Thank you and have a great day.

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