UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Building a Stronger State of Minds℠

Veterans Support Services at Institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education

Veterans Reintegration Taskforce, October 19, 2012

Institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) are committed to serving veterans and helping them succeed in achieving their post-secondary educational goals. USHE institutions have designated staff to assist veterans in their transition to a post-secondary program of study. These staff members are dedicated to helping veterans succeed in college through a variety of support services such as:

- Certification of VA educational benefits
- Enrollment in post-secondary programs
- Assisting veterans to complete the VA educational application
- Referral and contact information for community veterans support services
- Deferment of tuition until veteran educational funds are available
- Assisting with application for financial aid and helping to resolve financial aid issues
- Coordinating with academic officials for program enrollment, entry requirements, etc.
- Advocating for veterans with campus entities and personnel
- Coordinating with non-academic support services to assist veterans in college persistence

Assisting veterans to attain their post-secondary educational goals is an important element in support of the Utah Governor's goal to have 66% of Utah's adult workforce possess a college certificate or degree by the year 2020, a goal shared by the State Board of Regents and all USHE institutions. Most USHE Institutions are members of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC), a national consortium of approximately 1900 members who are dedicated to helping veterans complete college. As members, these institutions are committed to the following SOC criteria:

1. **Reasonable Transfer of Credit:** Avoid excessive loss of previously earned credit and avoid course work duplication

2. **Reduced Academic Residency:** Limit residency requirements to no more than 25% of the total credits required for a degree and do not require a final year or semester in residence (may require 30% for undergraduate degrees offered 100% online)

3. **Credit for Military Training and Experience:** Recognize and use ACE *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services* in evaluating and awarding academic credit for military training and experience

4. **Credit for Nationally-Recognized Testing Programs:** Award credit for successful completion of at least one nationally-recognized testing program such as College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), DSST Examinations, Excelsior College Examinations (ECE)

Utah System of Higher Education institutions are partnering with the Department of Workforce Services' new Accelerated Credentialing to Employment (ACE) initiative for veterans. This initiative is designed to accelerate workforce preparation and provide support mechanisms to secure productive employment.