

BOARD OF REGENTS UNIFORM POLICY ON
GOVERNOR'S MILITARY & VETERAN FRIENDLY CAMPUSES

I. INTRODUCTION

Public policy concerning education support services for military personnel dates back to 1944, when the United States Congress enacted the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (or the G.I. Bill) to provide a range of benefits for returning World War II veterans. The Post-9/11 Education Assistance Act of 2008 expanded veterans' benefits by providing full funding for attendance at in-state public colleges and universities.

Subsequent to the enactment of the federal G.I. Bill, states established their own military veterans' benefits statutes to support active service members, veterans, and their families in transitioning to enrollment in postsecondary education institutions.

Currently, two Louisiana statutes specifically address postsecondary education opportunities for persons serving in the military:

- (1) R.S. 17:3138.5—the Governor's Military and Veteran Friendly Campus Statute—provides a "formal recognition by the governor... to create a supportive environment for military veterans." This statute was fashioned after the national Military Friendly® program.¹
- (2) R.S. 17:3165.2—Louisiana's Military Articulation Credit Statute—provides a framework for transferring military education, training, or experience into postsecondary academic credits.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

R.S. 17:3138.5 and R.S. 17:3165.2 were enacted pursuant to Acts 232 and 233 of the 2015 Regular Session, respectively. Several substantive amendments to both statutes were enacted pursuant to Act 429 of the 2021 Regular Session (*See Part III.*).

Act 429 of the 2021 Regular Session extends voluntary participation in the Governor's Military Friendly Campus program under R.S. 17:3138.5 to *non-public* Louisiana postsecondary education institutions, including the colleges and universities that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (LAICU).

Act 53 of the 2023 Regular Session authorizes the Board of Regents to establish additional tiers of recognition for institutions designated as Governor's Military Friendly Campuses, to extend the duration of the designation, and to provide for reporting requirements.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Regents Uniform Policy on Governor's Military and Veteran Friendly Campuses is implemented by the Board of Regents (BOR) pursuant to the mandate articulated in R.S.

17:3138.5 that the BOR "shall establish a process for a postsecondary institution to be designated as a Governor's Military and Veterans Friendly Campus;" and, pursuant to the BOR's authority under the 1974 Louisiana Constitution, to enact policies in furtherance of the Board's Master Plan goals.

¹ The national Military Friendly® program is the longest-running, most comprehensive review of college university investments in serving military and veteran students.

A. Initial Application

To be eligible to receive the Military Friendly designation, an institution must address the following items, *at a minimum*:

- (1) Public postsecondary education institutions shall adopt and fully implement the military articulation and transfer process as provided in R.S. 17:3165. 2. For non-public postsecondary education institutions, adopt and fully implement a military friendly articulation and transfer process that aligns with nationally recognized standards for evaluating educational experiences in the United States Armed Forces.
- (2) Each institution shall certify that they will assist veterans of the United States Armed Forces and their spouses and dependents in pursuing their educational goals by providing expedited transcript analysis, prior learning assessment, portfolio analysis, advising, and testing.
- (3) Upon disclosure of military status on the application of enrollment or at the request of an entering student who is a veteran, spouse, or dependent of a veteran, each public postsecondary education institution shall evaluate any transcript of any credit earned from a regionally accredited postsecondary institution, or military education, training, or experience provided that the credit aligns with the course and program requirements of the receiving institution.

Additionally, the following requirements for initial application were developed pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) and each public postsecondary education system:

- (4) Each system will ensure that each participating campus will provide a designated space appropriate for a campus veteran center that is easily accessible for veterans and which facilitates the purpose and goals of that campus' veteran center, to include an on-campus site supervisor, computer and phone service, and private meeting space in which the LaVetCorps² staff member may meet with student veterans.
- (5) Each participating campus shall pay a site fee so that each participating campus may contribute a modest amount towards the travel, training and management of the LaVetCorps Navigators³ working to make Veteran Resource Centers successful.

² LaVetCorps is a cooperative program between the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs and AmeriCorps. The mission of LaVetCorps is to empower veterans' families and campus communities to help veterans returning from active military service to successfully transition home to college and their local community.

³ The Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs provides one LDVA-trained and -employed LaVetCorps service member, a LaVetCorps Navigator, to serve the campus for ten months each academic year. The LaVetCorps Navigator is under contract to serve 30 hours per week, which may take place outside of regular office hours, including evenings, weekends, and holidays, in providing services to veteran students. Service can include but are not limited to community service projects and interaction with local veteran service organizations. Navigators provide referrals to student veterans and their families for services not available on campus to an array of LDVA veterans assistance services and programs, including but not limited to claims, Military Family Assistance Fund, Honor Medal Program, Veteran Homes, Veteran Cemeteries, VAC office counselors and military service organizations. *LaVetCorps members do not supplant or replace any campus employee.*

- (6) Each system will encourage its campus administration and staff to consider insight from LDVA and the LaVetCorps Navigators in long-term strategic planning related to student veterans, including veteran cultural competencies as a part of campus staff orientation and training, and continue engaging with LDVA and community veteran service organizations so that together each participating campus and LDVA will assist Louisiana communities in becoming more aware of the specific challenges veterans face coming back home and the great benefits and unique leadership skills that veterans bring to the heart of a community.

Additionally, the following requirements for initial application were developed based on best practice recommendations from the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA), participating campus administrators, including site supervisors, and LaVetCorps Navigators:

- (7) Each participating campus shall provide the LaVetCorps Navigator with actionable means of contacting veteran students.
 - a. Gratis Letter – Best practice recommendation is for each campus to complete a Gratis Letter with their assigned LaVetCorps Navigator to facilitate successful communication with veteran students. (*See Appendix A*)
- (8) Each participating campus shall provide the LaVetCorps Navigator with appropriate introductions/access to faculty and staff willing to work with the veteran center to promote military awareness on campus.
- (9) Each participating campus, per the original application to the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) and subsequent contract with the LDVA to participate in the LaVetCorps program, agrees to provide space appropriate to the development and successful operation of a student veteran center.
 - a. Best practice recommendation is to prohibit tables in open hallways, shared office space, and remote or hard-to-locate spaces that are not conducive to the confidential nature of veteran-to-veteran peer mentoring or that hinder or prevent access of veteran students seeking and receiving services offered by LaVetCorps Navigators.

B. Renewal Application

The Military Friendly Campus designation has a two-year renewal cycle, with annual data reporting. Each institution shall submit its renewal application and data submission to the BOR in accordance with the timelines established by the Board. The data submission shall, at a minimum, contain all of the following information from the previous year as it relates to veterans:

1. The number granted application fee waivers.
2. The number who attended the specialized orientation program and a description of the orientation program.
3. The number who participated in the priority class registration.

4. The number who benefitted from the military articulation and transfer process as provided in R.S. 17:3165.2.
5. The number of credit hours accepted through the transfer process.
6. A list of the courses credited through the transfer process.
7. The completion rates of veterans, their spouses, and their children.

For purposes of the Uniform Policy on Governor's Military and Veteran's Friendly Campuses, the BOR reserves the right to amend the renewal application requirements with prior notice to the systems and institutions.

⁴R.S. 13:5364 "Veteran" means a former or current member of the United States Armed Forces or organized militia of the several states and territories, including but not limited to a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, Air National Guard, Reserves, State Guard, or a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service, Environmental Science Services Administration, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or its predecessor, the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey

C. Tiers

The Board of Regents establishes additional tiers of distinction to recognize higher levels of excellence and service demonstrated by institutions currently designated as Governor's Military and Veteran Friendly Campuses. These tiers reflect an institution's commitment to their Veteran and Military students and their spouses/dependents and exist in addition to the requirements for designation as a Friendly Campus.

The levels of excellence that make up the structure of the tiers will consist of Bronze, Silver, and Gold in ascending order of status. The campus designation will be decided based on which of the following veteran services the campus provides:

Tier Criteria
A Veteran's Center with programming (required for Silver and Gold status)
Ongoing veteran-veteran support, such as a Buddy system, Veteran peer mentor program, or Veteran Organization
Dedicated Financial Aid and Advising services trained to specifically serve veterans and service members
Counseling support specifically designed for veteran students
Specifically designed degree pathways that recognize military experience and training
Providing flexible course-taking formats and degree structures that conform with veteran and active service member life obligations
An additional graduation event for veteran students

For Gold Status, a campus must provide all the tier criteria.

For Silver Status, a campus must have a Veteran's Center and must provide an additional 3 of the tier criteria.

For Bronze Status, a campus must provide at least 2 of the tier criteria.

The BOR will add the Tier Criteria to the bi-annual renewal process. Institutions that wish to be considered for these distinctions can submit information regarding the additional tiered criteria they meet.

Appendix A

September 22, 2020

INSERT NAME
INSERT STREET ADDRESS
INSERT CITY, STATE AND ZIP

Dear INSERT NAME,

It is my pleasure to confirm our offer of employment to you as a_____. In this position you will report directly to_____of the Department of_____. The start date will be_____and the end date will be_____. We have agreed that your appointment will be on a gratis basis. This offer letter does not constitute a contract.

This offer is contingent on campus administration and LSU system approval. If you accept this offer, please sign, date, and return one copy of this letter.

Sincerely,

Name
Title
Department

APPROVALS:

Larry Clark
Chancellor
Safety

Bill Wolfe
Associate VC for HR, Purchasing and

I accept the offer as stated above. I understand this offer is contingent on an approval by the LSU System and any other terms of employment not included in this document are not binding.

Signature

Date

Last four digits of SSN