

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

Contact:

September 20, 2013

Expanding Opportunities for Veterans as Illinois College Students

*Illinois Board of Higher Education joins forces with
Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs
to support college success and completion for veterans*

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Springfield – Veterans are being welcomed home and invited to enroll at Illinois colleges and universities as college students with the mission of completing their college degrees in record numbers. The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) will learn more about the challenges and opportunities veterans are experiencing on Illinois' college campuses from high ranking officials from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA), Director Erica Borggren and Assistant Director Rodrigo Garcia, at its meeting on October 1, being held at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Both Illinois natives and highly decorated war veterans, Borggren and Garcia will describe how financial, academic, and social supports are essential for military men and women returning to civilian life as college students.

“Ensuring successful journeys – from combat to college and from college to career – for today’s veterans depends upon strong partnerships between state agencies and colleges and universities,” stated Lindsay Anderson, Chair of the IBHE. “Illinois is committed to improving educational opportunities for Illinois veterans. Recently, Governor Quinn signed into law SB 2229 that extends National Guard tuition waivers and HB 2353, which allows students using their GI Bill of Rights benefits to be billed for tuition as in-state students. I am pleased to welcome Director Borggren and Assistant Director Garcia to our meeting to present important information on programs and services already in place to provide a superior learning environment for Illinois student veterans and service members. We will also discuss how IBHE and IDVA partnering together, along with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), are assisting veterans to become knowledgeable about the programs and services being offered by our colleges and universities to improve student success and increase graduations.”

According to the “Annual Report on the Programs and Services related to the Higher Education Veterans Services Act,” Illinois’ community colleges enrolled almost 15,000 veterans and Illinois’ public universities enrolled over 5,400 veterans in 2012. The Act requires all community colleges and public universities to designate employees on their campuses as coordinators of veterans student services. During 2012, counseling and assistance to veterans and active duty military personal valued at \$7.9 million were provided by Illinois’ public colleges and universities, and, nearly \$33 million worth of financial aid was provided to veterans through the Illinois Veterans Grant Program.

All four state agencies, IBHE, IDVA, ICCB, and ISAC, have hosted a number of training events for student veterans’ coordinators with more planned collaborations in the future.

The IBHE will meet Tuesday, October 1, 2013, at 1 p.m. at the University of Illinois at Chicago Student Center East, 750 South Halstead Street, Chicago.

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