

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission
A-107 Conference Room, 4141 North S. Herrera Way, Phoenix, AZ 85012
Thursday – November 4, 2010

MINUTES

Call to Order –The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chairman Gary Fredricks.

Present

Advisory Commissioners

Gary Fredricks, Chairman
Terrie Gent, Vice Chair
George Cushing
Lionel Sanchez
Phil Hanson
Jeffrey Olson

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Joey Strickland, Director(stopped in shortly 11:50a.m)
Mike Klier, Assistant Deputy Director (left at 11:30a.m.)
Lee Sevy, Education Approval Administrator (left at 12:20p.m)
Katherine Harding, Exec. Asst. to Director

Absent

Lori Kiefer
Dave Tolliver
Ken Yamanouchi

Guests

Matt Randle, Chairman of Disabled Veteran Reintegration & Education Project
Dan Standage, Coordinator for Disabled Veteran Reintegration & Education Project
Gene van den Bosch, CEO/President, ArmedZilla/Arizona Veteran's Education Foundation
Doug Brown, Chairman, ArmedZilla/Arizona Veteran's Education Foundation
Jennifer Allen, Auditor/Auditor General's Office
Monica Cabrera, VA Regional office, PIO (left at 11:00 a.m.)

After the Pledge of Allegiance, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and published.

Communications: There was no official communication received or sent out by the Commission.

Agency Report

Mike Klier provided the agency report on behalf of ADVS Director, Joey Strickland who was unable to attend the meeting because of conflicting appointment with the Governor's Chief of Staff. Mr. Klier:

- Provided an aerial hard copy update of the Tucson Home
- Indicated it is now time for a cemetery grant to expand the Sierra Vista facility.
 - Expansion completion forecasted 2017
 - Columbarium completion forecasted for 2014
 - Four gardens – Erosion is a problem & concern. Issue with roads

- Focus is to cover all needs and stay in line with National Cemetery Association regulations and guidelines.
- Window Rock Veterans Benefits Counselor (VBC) training with Chapter Volunteers was a success
- Casa Grande –full time coverage of the office is planned.
- Sierra Vista – looking into office space for a VBC office separate from the cemetery.
- Military Installation fund – DEMA (Dept. of Military Affairs – or commonly called the Arizona National Guard) assumed responsibility.
- The Freedom license plate will also be offered to motorcycle owners. Estimating January/February as the kick-off dates.
 - There are 137 different license plates reported in Arizona

Chairman stated that they are in preparation for a more in depth discussion regarding budget.

- Department briefing meeting held October 22nd at National Cemetery in Cave Creek was to determine Federal plans for expansion.
- Land in the northwest Section will be needed 3-5 years
- Federal Government normally has a 5 year planning cycle.

Education Issues/Resolve

Terrie Gent invited veteran students from U of A to brief the Advisory Commission meeting. Chairman Fredericks also invited ArmedZilla, a 501(c)3 organization that presented their project to the Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV). Arizona Department of Veterans' Services provides financial support to this group to help veterans reentering school after deployment.

1. U of A Program

Introduction of Matt Randle & Dan Standage, Coordinator for Disabled Veteran Reintegration/Veterans that attend U of A. Explained the steps they have taken to provide a Veteran Education model.

Mr. Randle, Medic in USMC from 1998-2003 gave a background on how they began. President Shelton, U of A agrees that it is extremely important to provide educational support to veterans.

Mr. Randle is a Senior at the U of A and will earn his degree in May. He has experienced the obstacles of being a veteran in the college atmosphere, along with colleague Dan Standage. Mr. Standage, a Marine for 10 years, helps disabled veterans reintegrate into civilian life at school. He worked with Mr. Lee Sevy, Arizona Department of Veterans' Services Education Administrator, the state's approving authority for using veterans' benefits for post-secondary education.

Mr. Standage, being highly involved for 2.5 years, U of A offered him a job. Dr. Shelton met Terrie Gent at George Town Conference. Dr. Shelton committed to be the most veteran friendly. He was publicly called out on this statement by a veteran who stated that they can not get into his school. Mr. Randle & Mr. Standage were the first two

student veterans to attend the Transition Services Meeting with U of A Administration. From start to finish, they were the catalysts for the meeting. U of A Management did not know that there were concerns for veterans having challenges with learning. They quickly learned that they needed a veteran student to represent veterans. Now as students are seated at table and treated as V.I.P. and their needs and wishes are voiced and deemed important. School administration needs to be aware that veterans are not typical students. Mr. Randle & Mr. Standage were recognized as the Student Veteran Organization of the Year. The model overview was presented as a Power Point Presentation. They emphasized that the Student Veteran is at the center of the model as the driver for needed services. When the student veteran is not at the center, the student veteran leaves school.

G.I. Bill Certified/Benefits Education/Work Study Supervisor Model helps veterans volunteer with work study under benefit. Vicechair Gent asked if the Work Study can be held other locations such as VA Hospital and Veteran Centers. Answer was yes, the Work Study can work anywhere as long it meets the 25 hours per week at \$7.25 an hour.

The model was shared with Congressman Raul Grijalva and was designed to be replicable. Mr. Randle & Mr. Standage are actively trying to inform veterans that it is the system that is broken and not the veteran. Mr. Randle & Mr. Standage wanted to ask faculty at colleges to be trained on how to find and assist veterans who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress.

Their priorities are listed below:

- I. Priority Registration** - Priority Registration is so that veterans can get their required classes ahead of civilian students.
- II. Diversity** - The only diversity mentioned on most campuses is for ethnicity and women – not veterans.
- III. Transition Courses** - To obtain college credit for training received in military service.
- IV. Club Members** - Student Veteran Alumni forming a Veteran Wildcat Alumni for comradeship and support.
- V. Tillman Partnership** - One of eight partners nationwide this is by invitation only to cover expenses of earning a degree in AZ.
- VI. Resource Office** - Opted by student veterans to be an veteran-only domain that will provide specific resources and recreation in addition to a study area. Twenty-two percent of active duty service members are female veterans and they want their support system to be supportive of both male and female vets. The number of veterans continues to grow in visits from five a day initially and they expect to a thousand a day in the near future.
- VII. Support Groups** - With forty thousand students on campus this is overwhelming for veterans. The VA is now recognizing the need to establish Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) on campuses. Their goal is to get routine doctor visits available on campus so that, the veteran is not missing out on class.

2. ArmedZilla (now Arizona Veteran Education Foundation)

Introduction of Gene van den Bosch, CEO of ArmedZilla announced that they were changing their name officially at the end of the day to Arizona Veteran Education Foundation. They are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and are fairly new. They are a group of Arizona veterans and non-veterans who are patriotic Americans intent upon helping veterans.

This pilot program will provide each school with an on-line portal to allow student veterans to identify their branch of service and uses jargon to help them identify ways to obtain college credit for their military experience for a degree program and to help them obtain jobs. Northern Arizona University Chandler, Brookline, Phoenix, Pima maybe Grand Canyon would come on board in the fall. ArmedZilla AZ Veteran Education Foundation's goal is to be self-sustaining and asked the Advisory Commission for their support.

Specific support requested from the Commission regarding student veterans:

Dan Standage suggested that getting a veteran on the Arizona Board of Regents would be of great help. Vice Chair Gent will research the method for appointing members to the AZ board of Regents and report back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Jeffrey Olsen suggested that the VA should extend the G.I. Bill to 60 months

Vice Chair Gent suggested a visit to local college campuses would be of value to see what veteran-specific assistance is needed.

Commissioner Phil Hanson advised that Glendale Community College program was not mentioned, and they are hosting a Glendale Honors Veterans Event on November 10, 2010.

Commissioner Lionel Sanchez gave an update that the Town Hall Meeting is set for March 2011. Col. Strickland and Lionel met with David Nez. The Commission has complete support of the Town Hall Meeting in Chinle. The VSO Tanyia Dulline will be there to assist and provide documents. Commissioners can drive up on the 9th and meet on the 10th of November. Best Western will provide lodging.

The Commission can discuss the closed and open recommendations from the Veterans Task Force and the Veterans Research Council next month.

Chairman Fredricks adjourned the meeting at 12:15 P.M. The next meeting will be held December 9, 2010.