



MONTANA
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

MUS Veteran Student Support

Scott Lemmon

Director of Admissions and Enrollment Strategy

OCHE



Overview & Future Discussion

- Breadth of support needed
- Everchanging landscape
- Evolution of VA Benefits
- Staff working in multiple roles across the MUS
- Unique challenges
- BOR policy review/Continued support
- Importance of student veterans on campus
- Complex system of SCO's working together



John Stankowiak

Montana State Approving Agency (SAA)

Department of Labor and Industry



Introduction

Montana State Approving Agency (SAA)

- **Assigned to Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)**
- **Contracted by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**
- **General Duties and Responsibilities:**
 - State approving authority for all schools and training establishments with GI Bill® approved education and training programs
 - Oversight and supervision
 - Protect and safeguard GI Bill benefits
 - Outreach and liaison
 - Collaborate with School Certifying Officials (SCOs), VA, employers, and other state government agencies



GI Bill Overview

- **Traditionally, military veterans receive 36 months of GI Bill benefits**
- **GI Bill benefits can be used for:**
 - **Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs)**
 - **Non-College Degree (NCD) schools**
 - **Apprenticeships/On-the-Job (OJT) training programs**
 - **Vocational Flight Training**
- **More than 50% of individuals with GI Bill use their benefits at an IHL**
- **GI Bill covers tuition and fees at all public IHLs**
- **GI Bill students also receive a book stipend and monthly allowance**

**New legislation requires all GI Bill students to be charged in-state tuition, with a few exceptions.*

***Only fees that are mandatory for all students are authorized to be paid by the GI Bill.*

****Amount of benefits awarded to veteran and eligibility benefit percentage are determined by length of military service.*



Student Veteran Data -Montana State University & University of Montana-

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021 - 2022		
	<u>Montana State University</u>	<u>University of Montana</u>
Total # of Students	16,841	10,106
# of GI Bill Students	672	567
Student Veteran Percentage	3.9%	5.6%
\$\$ paid by VA for GI Bill students	\$3,279,857	\$2,217,867

**Number of students, percentage, and total amount of GI Bill funds received by institutions are believed to be more than what is shown above. Approximately 30% of GI Bill students are paid directly by VA and then responsible for paying the institution. Even though these students are indeed GI Bill students, institutions typically do not record payments from these students as part of the total amount received from VA.*

***Data acquired from VA's GI Bill Comparison Tool and the MUS Dashboard.*



Student Veteran Data -MUS Colleges & Universities-

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021 - 2022	
	<u>MUS Colleges & Universities</u>
Total # of Students	42,331
# of GI Bill Students	1,999
Student Veteran Percentage	4.7%
\$\$ paid by VA for GI Bill students	\$7,062,383

**Includes three community colleges (Dawson, Flathead Valley, and Miles).
**Data compiled from VA's GI Bill Comparison Tool and the MUS Dashboard.*



SAA & OCHE

- **Intersecting policies, procedures, and objectives**
- **State level collaboration and information sharing**
- **Shared common goal of helping student veterans and veteran representatives at MUS schools**
- **Monthly coalition meetings – SAA, OCHE, & IHLs**



SAA & School Certifying Officials (SCOs)

- **SCOs are the liaisons between GI Bill students and VA**
- **Per VA policy, IHLs approved for the GI Bill are required to conduct re-approvals with the SAA at least every two years**
- **Re-Approvals are mandated to ensure any new requirements found in applicable laws and policies are being incorporated in catalog and/or implemented into institutional policies**
- **Re-Approval process also includes updating the list of programs offered by an institution (degree & certificate)**



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Joe Schumacher

Director of Veteran Services

Montana State University Bozeman

20 years of serving Post 9/11 Veterans in the MUS.

- Brand new benefit available to veterans and dependents in Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill[®]
- Life in the military could not continue: deployments, injuries, burnout.
- Student veterans seeking accommodations due to service-connected injuries.
- Serving large numbers of non-traditional aged students with families and complex finances.
- Navigating retention issues.



Serving student veterans today in Montana.

- Fewer deployments, fewer combat veterans, fewer “visible scars of war”.
- Demand for mental health resources continues to climb.
- Transition anxiety.
- Single enlistments, younger student veterans.
- Fewer families, dependents using transferred benefits growing rapidly.
- The Marine Corps loves Montana!
- More National Guard students: MUS tuition waiver.



Preparing to serve student veterans in the future.

- Ever-changing VA landscape.
- Increasing numbers of dependents using transferred benefits.
- Challenge of serving veterans as we move further away from conflict towards a time of peace: veterans transition to the MUS every semester.
- Not forgetting the lessons learned Post 9/11.
- One day we will once again be serving another wave of combat veterans, being better prepared this time around. Lessons learned from Vietnam and Post 9/11.





Discussion