



**MINNESOTA STATE**  
Board of Trustees

**AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

**NAME:** Outreach and Engagement Committee

**DATE:** October 16, 2024

**TITLE:** Minnesota State's Commitment to Veterans, Service Members, and their Families

Action

Review and Discussion

*This item is required by policy*

**PRESENTERS**

Noelle Hawton, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer

Gina Sobania, Director of Military, Veteran, and Adult Learner Services

**PURPOSE**

The Outreach and Engagement Committee will explore how Minnesota State delivers comprehensive services and support to Veterans, Servicemembers, and their families. Committee members will gain valuable insight into the efforts to connect with prospective students at Minnesota Army National Guard reintegration events.

Minnesota State is widely recognized as a national leader in supporting Veteran and Service Member students, serving as a model for other colleges, universities, and higher education systems across the country. Its practices set a benchmark for effectively addressing the needs of Veterans, Service Members, and their families, ensuring they receive the academic, personal, and financial resources and support necessary for success.

Minnesota State colleges and universities offers specialized resources such as dedicated campus staff, military-friendly policies, financial aid assistance, and academic advising designed specifically for Veterans and Service Members.

Additionally, committee members will learn about the ways in which the system office supports its colleges and universities, providing essential resources to enhance their capacity to serve Veterans, Service Members, and their families.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Minnesota State's Support for Veterans and Service Members: Key Milestones and Initiatives.

### **Partnership with the Minnesota National Guard**

- A collaborative partnership with the Minnesota National Guard was established in January 2003 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- In July 2003, "Guard Online" was launched to assist and support National Guard Soldiers in pursuing their education.

### **Active Role in Reintegration Events for the Minnesota National Guard**

- Minnesota State plays a pivotal role in providing guidance and support to Soldiers and their families through all phases of their deployment cycle:
  - **Pre-Deployment:** Resources and support for Soldiers and their families before they leave for their deployment.
  - **During Deployment:** Ongoing assistance, particularly for families while their Soldiers are deployed.
  - **Demobilization:** Support for Soldiers during their return to the United States (demobilization), often conducted in Texas.
  - **Post-Deployment:** Continued engagement and support for Soldiers and their families after their return home from deployment.
- Minnesota is the only state that sends civilians to demobilization events to engage with Soldiers before they return to Minnesota.

### **Employment Resource Team (ERT)**

- A specialized eleven-member team focused on assisting Soldiers with employment, education, and transition support.
  - In March 2012, the team traveled to Kuwait to support Soldiers who were dealing with an unemployment rate of nearly 19%.
  - Minnesota State provided workshops on Goal Setting and Higher Education to help Soldiers transition back home.

### **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)**

- Since 2008, Minnesota State has been dedicated to awarding credits for military courses and occupations (jobs).
- Faculty employ the recommendations from the American Council on Education (ACE) to translate military courses and occupations into college credits.

### **Support for System Colleges and Universities**

- Guidance on meeting **Department of Defense requirements** and compliance with **US Veterans Affairs** policies.
- Addresses **Student-Veteran concerns** and helps with reviewing and interpreting **military transcripts** for academic credit.

### **State-Level Partnerships**

- **Education:** Partners and collaborates with the Minnesota National Guard - Education

Office, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs -Higher Education Veterans Program, and Minnesota State.

- **Employment:** Partners with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) - Veterans Employment Representatives, Minnesota National Guard – Family Programs, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs – Education, Minneapolis VA Health Care System - Vocational Rehabilitation, and Minnesota State.

#### **Provide Training and Technical Assistance Nationwide**

- Minnesota State has provided training to more than 25 states and over 100 colleges across the country.
- In-person training has been conducted in Michigan, Tennessee, Iowa, Kansas, Rhode Island, and North Dakota.
- Currently partnering and collaborating with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education for ongoing training efforts.

#### **Partnership with the American Council on Education (ACE)**

- Minnesota State was selected to participate in the pilot of the Modernized ACE Military Guide, helping demonstrate proof of concept to the Department of Defense.
- Developed a strategic data partnership with the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), recognizing Minnesota State's leadership in awarding credit for military courses and occupations to college credit.

#### **Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Organizations**

- Eighteen colleges, universities, and the system office have been designated as Beyond the Yellow Ribbon organizations.