

Wyoming Community College Commission

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State Superintendent Cindy Hill
Executive Director
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Memo

To: Governor Matt Mead, Wyoming State Legislature
From: Amy Brockel
Date: 10/24/2012
Re: Overseas Combat Veterans, Surviving Spouses and Orphans Education Benefit
Annual Report as per Wyoming Statute 19-14-106 (e)—Revised

OVERVIEW:

As a result of the 2006 legislative session, Wyoming Statute 19-14-106 was expanded to allow for 10 semesters of free tuition and fees for overseas combat veterans, surviving spouses and orphans. The Community College Commission was tasked to implement the benefit and reimburse the University and the community colleges. During the 2007 legislative session, the statute was amended to include reimbursement for Vietnam veterans.

The following is a report of the program's usage at the University of Wyoming and Wyoming's seven community colleges from June 30, 2011 through July 1, 2012. Also included are the Vietnam era veterans (Aug 5, 1964 to May 7, 1975) for which UW and the colleges were reimbursed starting the spring semester of 2007.

House Bill No. 76 (2006 Sessions Laws) contained an original appropriation of \$200,000, which was not sufficient to provide educational benefits for the full 2007-2008 biennium. There was a supplemental budget appropriation of \$200,000 added to fund the program through June 30, 2008. The funding still was not adequate to cover the requests from the eight institutions and additional funding had to be supplemented at the end of the biennium to cover the Spring 2008 semester. \$169,000 was added to the OCV budget from another program to fully cover the requests. The appropriation for the 2009-2010 biennium was \$800,000 with a 5 percent budget cut applied to the program. That brought the available funding to \$760,000 which was not adequate to fully fund the program. The program was supplemented by \$172,046. The supplemental funding came from the projected surplus that was in the health insurance fund for the colleges.

The Community College Commission submitted a biennial budget request for \$760,000 and an exception request of \$240,000 to meet the anticipated growth in the program in the 2011-2012 biennium. Both requests were approved by the Governor and legislature, bringing the total funding for the 2011-2012 biennium to \$1,000,000. The use of the 2011-2012 biennium funds began with the summer 2010 semester and continued through the spring 2012 semester. It was projected that with the requests from the seven community colleges and the University of Wyoming the program would again face a shortfall of funds to finish out the biennium. Permission was sought from the Budget Division and denied by the Governor's office to transfer \$250,000 from the surplus health insurance to cover the

previously projected deficit in this program. The necessary \$250,000 was ultimately transferred from the University of Wyoming's Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) budget to fully fund the program through the 2011-2012 biennium.

In total this program has assisted 613 Wyoming veterans since the first semester in the fall of 2006. This includes the Vietnam era veterans as well as the Overseas Combat Veterans recipients.

SUMMARY:

Vietnam Veteran & Overseas Combat Veteran, Surviving Spouse or Orphan Tuition Reimbursement Program			
Semester	University of Wyoming	Community Colleges	Total Participants per Semester
Summer 10	24	33	57
Fall 11	111	116	227
Spring 11	107	146	253
Summer 11	21	40	61
Fall 11	81	117	198
Spring 12	86	101	187
TOTAL	430	553	983
Average Tuition & Fees per semester	\$1,724.32	\$913.26	--
Total Reimbursement	\$741,456.68	\$505,035.51	\$1,246,492.19 *

Wyoming Community College Commission, July 1, 2012

*The remaining funds were expended as the colleges and the University of Wyoming turned in certificates after the cutoff date for this report. Therefore the funds for this program have been fully exhausted for the 2011 biennium.