

Wyoming Community College Commission

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State Superintendent Cindy Hill
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Memo

To: Governor Matt Mead, Wyoming State Legislature
From: Amy Brockel
Date: November 5, 2013
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, 2012 through July 1, 2013. 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 appropriated by the 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 biennium.

The biennial standard appropriation for the 2013 biennium was \$1,000,000. An additional \$200,000 was added with an exception request. The exception request was needed because the Community College Commission anticipated continued growth of the program over the biennium. The request was exception request was approved for a total biennial budget of \$1,200,000. Below is a summary of usage from the start of this biennium.

In total this program has assisted 675 Wyoming veterans since the first semester in the fall of 2006 through the summer of 2013. 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 2013 Biennium Usage			
Semester	University of Wyoming	Community Colleges	Total Participants per Semester
Summer 12	26	30	56
Fall 12	79	91	170
Spring 13	69	95	164
Summer 13	22	15	37
Fall 13	-	-	-
Spring 14	-	-	-
TOTAL	196	231	427
Average Tuition & Fees per semester	\$2,029.59	\$947.20	--
Total Reimbursement	\$397,798.85	\$218,802.35	\$616,601.20

Wyoming Community College Commission, July 1, 2013

*The remaining funds will be expended as the colleges and the University of Wyoming turn in certificates for Fall 2013 and Spring 2014. We anticipate the funds for this program will be fully exhausted for the 2013 biennium.