



## *Maryland College Consortium for Student*

### *Veterans Commission*

December 14, 2021

The Honorable Larry Hogan, Governor of Maryland  
The State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Dena Allen-Few**  
Acting Chairperson

The Honorable Bill Ferguson, President  
Senate of Maryland  
The State House, H-107  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Josiah Guthland**  
Vice Chairperson

**Kristin Byerly**  
Secretary

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker  
Maryland House of Delegates  
The State House, H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Irnande Altema**

**Cathryn Camp**

**Wanda Colon-Canales**

RE: Report of the Maryland College Collaboration for Student Veterans Commission (MCCSVC) required by State Government Article § 9-946 (5) MSAR #: 10921

**Matthew Fraling III**

Dear Governor Hogan, President Ferguson and Speaker Jones,

**Dr. Jennifer Frank**

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2021 Annual Report for the MCCSVC. The 2021 report includes all requirements stated in sections §9-946 (5) of the State Government Article.

**Shannon Hardester**

**Clarissa Lang**

**Dr. Derrick Little**

Sincerely,

**Kathleen Schorr**

**Dr. M. Antonio Silas**

Dena Allen-Few  
Acting Chair, MCCSVC

**Denise Nooe – Designee**  
for MDVA Secretary

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)

# 2021 Annual Report

Maryland College Consortium for Student Veterans  
Commission

Author: Kristin Byerly, Secretary & Commissioner,  
Maryland College Consortium for Student Veterans  
Commission

December 14, 2021

**PURPOSE:**

Senate Bill 606, passed by the 2016 Maryland General Assembly, establishes the Commission's purpose. It is to ensure the educational success of returning veterans, including their recruitment, successful transition into higher education and eventual graduation. The Commission accomplishes this by facilitating the sharing of best practices, and potential adjustment of policies and procedures, among the institutions of higher education and state agencies regarding academic programs and support services designed for returning veterans. Commissioners, representing institutions of higher education in the state, address the following issues: awareness of veteran reintegration challenges; communication and coordination of available veteran services at the institution, state and federal level – including financial aid and GI Bill support services, mental health services and the use of career and transition services, at the education institution, to facilitate post-educational employment.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

For 2021, the Commission consists of the following appointed members and guests.

- Chair: Danielle Dabrowski | Frostburg State University (FSU) **Resigned July 2021**
- Interim Chair: Dena Allen-Few | Towson University (TU) **Effective July 2021**
- Vice-Chair: Dena Allen-Few | Towson University (TU)
- Secretary: Kristin Byerly | University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)
- MDVA Secretary Designee: Denise Nooe | Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
- Appointed Commissioners:
  - Cathryn Camp | Prince Georges Community College (PGCC)
  - Matthew B. Fraling III | Coppin State University (CSU)
  - Dr. Antonio Silas | University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)
  - Wanda Colon-Canales | Washington Adventist University (WAU)
  - Kat Schorr | Anne Arundel Community College (AACC)
  - Josiah Guthland | University of Baltimore (UB)
  - Clarissa Lang | Frostburg State University (FSU)
  - Shannon Hardester | Salisbury University (SU)
  - Derrick Little | Community College Baltimore County (CCBC)
  - Imande Altema | Maryland Independent Colleges & Universities (MICU)
- Guests
  - Tracey Jamison | University System of Maryland (USM)
  - Everette D. Jackson, Jr. | Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
  - Jerry Isaac | Bowie State University (BSU)
  - Josiah Guthland | University of Baltimore (UB)
  - Jason Franklin | Montgomery College (MC)
  - Bradley Dennis | Washington Adventist University (WAU)
  - Curtis Roberts | Washington Adventist University (WAU)
  - Alfred Taylor | Washington Adventist University (WAU)
  - Elizabeth A. Atherton | McDaniel College (McDaniel)
  - David Reese | UM - College Park (UMD)
  - Brittany Henderson | Baltimore City Community College (BCCC)
  - Avonelle Colbert | Baltimore City Community College (BCCC)
  - Laura Keller | Notre Dame (NDM)
  - Pam Hawley | University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)
  - Melissa Smith | Howard County Community College (HCCC)
  - Katie Piper | Howard County Community College (HCCC)

- Issac Templeton | Prince George's County Community College (PGCC)
- Arthur Toole | Prince George's County Community College (PGCC)
- Rebecca Gerken | University of MD College Park (UMD)
- Alex Getachew | University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)

**QUARTERLY MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS.** In accordance with the legislation establishing its existence, the Commission meets four times per year. Meeting locations rotate between the various institutions represented on the Commission.

1. January 28, 2021 | Frostburg State University | Host: Danielle Dabrowski
2. April 22, 2021 | University of Maryland Global Campus | Host: Kristin Byerly
3. July 27, 2021 | Towson University | Host: Dena Allen-Few
4. November 21, 2021 | University of Baltimore | Host:

**MINUTES AND SIGNIFICANT HIGHLIGHTS FROM COMMISSION MEETINGS.**

**1st QUARTER MEETING**

**Location: Frostburg University – Virtual**

**Date: January 28, 2021**

The Maryland College Collaboration for Student Veterans Commission (MCCSVC) conducted its first quarter meeting for the calendar year 2021 on January 28, 2021 via Zoom due to the current COVID –19 Pandemic. The MCCSVC Chairperson convened the meeting at 10:02 am. There were 17 members in attendance with 3 guest speakers.

Commissioner Danielle Dabrowski - Chair, Frostburg State University (FSU)  
Commissioner Dena Allen-Few – Vice Chair, Towson University (TU)  
Commissioner Kristin Byerly - Secretary, University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC)  
Commissioner Dr. Antonio Silas, University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)  
Commissioner Kat Schorr, Anne Arundel Community College (AACC)  
Denise Nooe, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA)  
Everett D. Jackson, Jr. Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)  
Tracey Jamison – University System of Maryland (USM)  
Kat Schorr, Anne Arundel Community College (AACC)  
Jerry Isaac, Bowie State University (BSU)  
Elizabeth A. Atherton, McDaniel College  
Jason Franklin, Montgomery College (MC)  
Katie Flynn, Maryland Independent College and University Association, (MICUA)  
Josiah Guthland, University of Baltimore, (UBALT)  
Cliff Taylor, University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)  
Dr. Darnell Wiggins, University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)  
Alfred Taylor, Washington Adventist University (WAU)

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Artie Lee Travis, Vice President for Student Affairs, Frostburg State University (FSU)

Dr. Jeff L Graham, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Frostburg State University (FSU)  
Dr. Jan Del Signore, Vice Chancellor, Keiser University, National Assoc of Veteran Program Administrators (NAVPA)

OPENING REMARKS: Welcome from Dr. Artie Lee Travis and Dr. Jeff Graham (FSU)

ORDER of BUSINESS:

**1. Welcome from FSU:**

- a. Dr Artie Travis, VP Student Affairs and Dr. Jeff Graham, Assoc VP Student Affairs

**2. Guest Speaker**

- a. Dr. Jan Del Signore, Vice Chancellor, Keiser University (NAVPA National association of Veteran Program Administrators)

- i. Legislative updates to include changes to 85/15 reporting
- ii. Danielle is current treasurer of NAVPA
- iii. What NAVPA is working on in 2020 and what's to come in 2021 – voice of advocacy
- iv. Terms used/definitions:
  - 1. HVAC – House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
  - 2. SVAC – Senate Veterans Affairs Committee
- v. NAVPA Membership of 370 Higher Ed, across 45 states, 497,919 members
  - 1. 3 levels of participation: Institutional, Auxiliary and Associate memberships

- b. TOP 5 PRIORITY ISSUES: (See attached Power Point for additional Info)

- i. **Priority Issue #1: Rounding Out**

- 1. Issue: Announced that the VA was eliminating the ability for additional class in final term only.
    - 2. SCO handbook states rounding out will be phased out August of 2021
    - 3. Recommendation: NAVPA recommends continued support of rounding out.

- ii. **Priority Issue #2: 2020 Chapter 31 Title 38 US Code – Chapter 31 and Tungsten**

- 1. Issue: VR&E program transitioned to fully electronic authorization and invoicing. Multiple technical issues. Issues for disabled veterans, training was not sufficient.
    - 2. Recommendation: NAVPA requests a call to action to include a staffed helpline instead of email and more training for SCO and Case Managers

- iii. **Priority Issue #3: HR 4625 Protect the GI Bill Act Verification of Enrollment for purposed of receipt of Post 9/11 Educational Assistance Benefits**

- 1. Issue: Requirement of all students to submit verification of enrollment on monthly basis.
    - 2. Recommendation: Use valuable resources, such as NAVPA, as a resource in determining should this be implemented and if so how to do so effectively.
      - a. UPDATE: Incorporated in to P.L. 116-315 (see attached fact sheet)

- iv. **Priority Issue #4: GI Bill Comparison Tool Complaint System**
  - 1. Issue: Institution of higher learning receive unvetted/unwarranted complaints against them as part of the DVA GI bill feedback which is posted indefinitely
  - 2. Recommendation: VA create partnership with NAVPA to understand and address potential impact from erroneous/outdated information.
  - 3. VA partner has updated that complaints will be for 2 years when rectified (not verified)
- v. **Priority #5: Public Law 115-48; Section 306**
  - 1. Issue: VACOE does not have representation from the practitioner level SCO or Veterans administrator – only senior leadership.
  - 2. Recommendation: Establish a seat or creation of a subcommittee comprised of campus delegates working directly with student veterans
- c. **ISSUES & LEGISLATIVE AGENDA AFTER COVID 19**
  - i. NAVPA working with SVA to respond to legislative
  - ii. NAVPA supported
    - 1. Senate Bill S. 3503 - Public Law 116-128 - COVID relief
    - 2. House Bill HR 6322 p Public law 116-140 - COVID extension of benefits until Dec 2021
    - 3. House Bill H.R. 7111 – Training and housing/job placements - Some became law 116-315
    - 4. Supported other bills and is pleased with nation’s leadership in response to COVID-19 crisis impact on the veteran population
  - iii. **EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE: After COVID 19**
    - 1. Collected data and shared responses with Congress
      - a. NAVPA Rounding out – did UMGC participate in Survey
      - b. COVID 19 summer semester
      - c. SCO school questions to VA response to COVID 19
      - d. NAVPA Conference Q&A
      - e. 85-15 Change and Effect
  - iv. **Education Committee Update Measuring Learning Outcomes with Pre-Post test stats.**
    - 1. Majority of schools are moving to online through fall
    - 2. Rounding out while hospitals for health care are waiting for hospitals to open
    - 3. Questions fall in 4 general areas
      - a. Compliance surveys
      - b. Eligibility/benefits
      - c. Certification Processes
      - d. VA debts
    - 4. See attached Power Point for graphs
  - v. **ISSUES and CONCERNS**
    - 1. 85/15 – schools need a balance where 85% can be GI Bill recipients where 15 cannot. There are schools with less than 35%

2. VA conducted training October 1, 2020
  - a. VA revoked all with 35%
  - b. All students who had not paid their tuition and fees in full by 15th day of class would be considered supported students and added to the GI bill total.
3. VA conducted training Nov 1, 2020
  - a. 35% exemption reinstated
  - b. Students given to the 30th day to pay tuition and fees in full before adding to the Supported Students column
  - c. Not addressing payment plan situations – VA is considering it a “school loan” when it is not a loan
4. NAVPA Response
  - a. Contact Director Bogue
  - b. Recommend coalition of higher ed organizations create a letter
  - c. SCO handbook updated
  - d. Met with Dep Dir and VA legal in Dec
  - e. Follow up meeting in Feb

\*\* Shared Fact Sheet Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 – PL 116 - 315 - attached to email

### **3. University Updates**

- a. MHA – In Residence Extension
- b. Updates of USM
  - i. USM has done a great job of getting information to people in a timely manner
  - ii. Please be aware of timelines and potential need for quick turn arounds
- c. Updates of individual institutions
  - i. FSU – implemented testing twice a week
    1. Not much on campus regarding bringing students back.
    2. 1 person vs 2 per resident hall
    3. Students are wearing masks
    4. Proactive on keeping faculty and staff safe
    5. Some meeting F2F
    6. Working through hybrid program
    7. Veteran center is still in place and functioning
      - a. Adjusted room to allow for video conferencing as well as restructure layout
    8. Changing mindset
  - ii. UMGC
    1. Brings up lack of participation of students in Zoom sessions
    2. Ideas on how to encourage participation. Recommendation to require cameras
    3. Does not require taking attendance but expectation that veterans will attend hybrids and Zooms that are in place of hybrids through Dec.

- 4. New President, Dr. Gregory Fowler. Came from Southern New Hampshire University
- iii. UMES – Starfish solutions
  - 1. Early warning system
  - 2. Faculty takes attendance

#### **4. Recent MD Pre-filed Legislation (as of 01072021)**

- a. See attachment 3 areas specifically mention student veterans
  - i. HB 156/SB 0283
    - 1. Move to next meeting
  - ii. HB 0406
    - 1. Meant to extend in-state tuition to veteran spouses/children
    - 2. This bill has been withdrawn according to Everette Jackson
  - iii. SB 0040
    - 1. Move to next meeting

#### **5. MHEC Updates**

- a. E. Jackson – Assoc Director Veterans Affairs – MHEC
  - i. Compliance surveys still taking place but will be virtual
  - ii. SAA that can do on-site they are requesting but will allow virtual
  - iii. 2nd quarter surveys will be remote
  - iv. MOVE-IT file sharing system where docs can be sent securely via PDF and secure system.
    - 1. Allowing for some flexibility
  - v. Sent SCO notification of webinars available
    - 1. 2nd 3rd 4th of Feb – they will walk you through their new process
  - vi. Oversight
    - 1. When schools send new catalog, its essentially a reapproval of current as well as initial approval of new programs. You do need to list what programs are still available as well as recording the deleted or added options. Any time an update is made you need to have a WEEMS form 22-1998. Do not just rely on your catalog. Review the 22-1998 first.
    - 2. PL 115-107 – In 2019 Schools were required to have a policy where they do not penalize students for pending VA payments. This is supposed to be published in the next catalog. Schools are not publishing this policy in the next addition add – to catalog. (See attachment to Email for verbiage)
    - 3. Still remote but will be in office periodically (Everett on Fridays) – try to follow up calls with email as Voicemail may take time to receive
    - 4. Email for sign up went out Jan 25th – they will record so that you can review

#### **6. MDVA Update: Denise Nooe**

- a. Jan – April Ethics filing is required. Should have received a link
- b. Commissioners are appointed for 2 years but not removed until replaced.
- c. If Commissioners are going to testify/comment on legislation pending before the Maryland General Assembly, they may do so as representatives of their Institution or as



private citizens. They may not identify themselves as Commissioners on this Committee when testifying.

- d. Grad student Morgan Smith research project on why veteran population is dropping – Please take a few moment to respond to the request.

**7. Old Business** - Nothing to address

**8. New Business**

a. Green Zone Trainings

- i. UMGC is revising their program and looking for input from other schools. Any feedback please send to [kristin.byerly@umgc.edu](mailto:kristin.byerly@umgc.edu)
- ii. SU: Salisbury – Self paced online with software that they purchased as continuing education – anyone can take it outside of Salisbury as well – Exceed is the name – Top 10 contest, Plaque in the registrar’s office. Incorporates SU colors – 9 modules – certificate from the copy center. Sticker as well! Has a person in each dept that are SME <https://succeed.salisbury.edu/>
- iii. UMBC: Cliff states was created through a grant that has run out. Not required for staff/students but encouraged. Stickers received. Helps with understanding military with delays for payments etc. Really trying to get staff/faculty to understand. In lieu of training they have been working on an ambassador type program. Veteran gender not broken down just yet but most involvement is coming from female veterans. Programs with Amazon where they can help their veterans to receive food etc. if needed. Retriever Essentials <https://retrieveressentials.umbc.edu/>
- iv. MC: Jason – MC ELITE program in service training for all professors – became part of multi-cultural requirements through HR. Veterans Day celebrations targeted non – veteran students – worked with production team. Originally as a panel but that didn’t work – Jason will share the link. Female vets were about 24% of veteran population. So did some direct marketing – women’s only veterans center. Women started getting more involved. <https://youtu.be/nHzXnLI9KF8>
- v. McDaniel: Betsy Atherton – does not have GZ training – mostly dependents – very small population – National Guard students having to drop because of call ups – has anyone seen this?
- vi. FSU Danielle - Student veteran population about 212 veterans – about 40% are females! Looking at some ideas for addressing this
- vii. AACC: Kat - more dependents and trending on female side so creating some female vet programs.
- viii. TOWSON: Dena Allen-Few 211 veterans but close to 50/50 – female numbers have increased. Changing culture of veteran’s center to be more inclusive (No longer the Bro-Zone) Much more integrated with students that want to participate! 344 dependents using the benefit – they don’t have Green Zone training. COVID – 85% off campus remote learning. Starting some in person classes 2nd week of Feb mostly labs and basic core classes. Mil/Vet center is closed on campus and all been forwarded to virtual mil/vet center Zoom it goes into the M-F 11 am – 4 pm. <https://www.towson.edu/veterans/>

- ix. FSU not impacted by NG activations
  - x. MC – DD214 student not received by student who was responsible for COVID related traumatic situation that they were called up for it. Keep an eye on students!
  - xi. UMBC Cliff – does not really have much in place for students that are activated. Need to work towards a better solution for National Guard, reserve components. Does USM have some kind of overall protection in place for those that are being called up. Shannon had a lot of National Guard called up. SU requests notification and offering a retro active drop or potential incomplete so they do not get charged for courses they may have missed – no penalty. Work with housing/meal plans if those are concerns as well
- b. Conferences – training may or may not help with compliance. Must be confirmed through the VA
- i. NASPA – <https://www.naspa.org/events/naspa-virtual-symposium-on-military-connected-students> Feb 24-26
  - ii. CCME - <https://www.ccmeonline.org/symposium> June 14 - June 17
  - iii. NAIMES - <http://naimes.org/>
  - iv. NAVPA – <https://www.navpa.org/2021-online-conference/> 3rd week in October in Orlando – scheduled to be in person – all female board – They have opted to let memberships carry over

April MCCSVC meeting hosted by UMGC - will be virtual.

Meeting ended: 11:57

### **2nd QUARTER MEETING**

**Location: University of Maryland Global Campus – Virtual**

**Date: April 22, 2021**

In attendance: Kristin Byerly, Danielle Dabrowski, Denise Nooe, Dena Allen-Few, Cliff Taylor, Everette Jackson, Shannon Hardesty, Derrick Little, Jason Marshall, Katie Flynn, Jerry Issac, Pam Holly, Betsy Atherton, Cynthia Cavaliers, Erik Steed, Melissa Smith, Arthur Toole, Josiah Guthland, Clarissa Lang, Beatrice Turpin-Peek, Tracey Jamison

Guests: Nicole DeRamus-Suazo, Asst VP Veteran Programs

#### **ORDER of BUSINESS:**

1. Welcome from UMGC:
  - a. Nicole DeRamus-Suazo, Asst VP Veterans Programs
  - b. What is happening at UMGC, Military and Veteran Appreciation Fair (MVAF), Workshop Wednesdays, Partnerships with UBER and EasterSeals
2. Special guests:
  - a. Jason Marshall - Chair of the Frederick Veterans Service Network
    - i. Program manager Serving Together Western MD, Deployed with Red Cross and prior USMC, Serving Together – One stop shop – Peer navigator helps not just



## 5. University Updates

- a. Updates of USM
  - i. Tracey Jamison – Chancellor can make a system wide decision regarding vaccinations, but as of right this second, not required. Meeting with institutions daily but at this time, not required.
- b. Updates of individual institutions
  - i. UMGC – New President – Virtual commencement, veterans lounge which is incorporating WorkShop Wednesdays. Virtual advising - not back on site until first of the year and then phased plan.
  - ii. Towson: Dena Allen-Few – planning virtual orientations, 100% for fall, all staff back May 6<sup>th</sup>, Veterans are back and have been for about a month. Must be vaccinated. Virtual Office is still running. Graduation is week long in the outdoor football stadium – allowing for Spring of 2020 through Spring 2021
  - iii. SU – Shannon – hybrid for staff and SU held vaccination clinics for staff and students. Not mandatory but still have bi-weekly testing. Hoping to be back to somewhat normal. Football stadium graduation over a couple of days. Virtual orientation last two weeks of June and website created for each level, freshman, transfer etc
  - iv. UMBC: Pam Holly - Summer sessions online but fall 2021 primarily on campus (about 80%). Virtual orientation. Spring 2021 commencement will be virtual. Yesterday on HR website, recruiting for a new certifying official
  - v. UMBC: Cliff Taylor, Grad Asst. Sending out cords for veteran graduation being mailed this week. Student veteran group RetrieveVets – trying to run elections. Burned out and having difficulty getting people to participate. Cliff will be
  - vi. Frostburg: Danielle – Orientation is on-site for one day. Students will be on campus Saturdays in May/June. They have some hybrid classes running as well. Vet center has been open and work studies are still on site. It has been helpful. SALUTE and SVA are running. May 4<sup>th</sup> in Cumberland MD still having the event for SALUTE. Danielles team gets the stolls with patch, veterans cord and SALUTE cords. No stance on vaccinations of whether or not you have to have it. Testing twice a week. Union is supportive of vaccinations
  - vii. PGCC – Arthur Toole – Still virtual – return to campus May 24<sup>th</sup> 3 days a week Tue-Thur, potential on site in fall, graduation is virtual
  - viii. Howard CC – Melissa Smith – 80% on site in the fall, commencement is virtual and summer is slowly bringing, social distancing is decreasing and orientation is virtual. SVA struggling virtual
  - ix. Bowie – Jerry In person commencement, planning for in person for fall but virtual in the summer. Social distancing hoping to allow for 6 ft to 3 ft from CDC. Sending cords for commissioning ROTC. Staff is coming back in June full time. Orientation s in August hoping for in person
  - x. UB: Josiah Guthland - New director at Parsons Center and SCO. Will have virtual graduation. Events are requiring special exemptions and they have requested 4. First event will be Memorial Day. Holding event prior to orientation. Fall in-

person twice a week. Offering numerous hybrid options with limited in person. Following Baltimore City COVID restrictions.

- xi. McDaniel: Betsy Atherton Staff returns June 1st. graduation is in person but separating 2020 and 2021. Will be held in May. Orientation was in person last year and will continue. They will be in face to face this fall.
  - xii. CCBC: Derrick Little - virtual commencement and virtual orientation. June 7th everyone is back on campus. Summer students 30% in person 70% online
  - xiii. PGCC: Beatrice Turpin-Peek: Works with Arthur Toole. May 24th faculty and staff return. Trying to re-define learning modalities. Full time on site in fall and vaccines are not mandated. Works with Veterans UpWard Bound. 125 veterans attend annually
  - xiv. Frostburg: Clarissa - back up SCO
6. Old Business
- a. Josiah asked about property tax waiver
7. New Business
- a. VA Changes - effective June 2021
    - i. Student Worker Funding
    - ii. Public Law 116-315 - Section 1018: Requirements for educational institutions participating in the educational assistance programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Proposal to give institution one lump sum and require payments to run through schools to pay students.

3rd quarter meeting: Towson

4th quarter (Oct) meeting UMBC

### **3rd QUARTER MEETING**

**Location: Towson University – Archives Room, Cook Library**

**Date: August 5, 2021**

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

- TOWSON: *Dena Allen-Few, Acting Chair*
- UMGC: *Kristin Byerly, Secretary*
- UB: *Josiah Guthland,*
- MHEC: *Everette Jackson*
- McDaniel College: *Betsy Atherton*
- Federal Executive Board: *Cynthia Gallegos Cavalieri*
- WAU: *Alfred Taylor*
- UMBC: *Pam McInnis Hawley*
- AACC: *Kat Schorr*
- Bowie: *Jerry Isaac*
- FSU: *Danielle Dabrowski, Departing Chair*
- WAU: *Wanda Canales*
- Howard CC: *Melissa Smith*
- FSU: *Clarissa Lang*

- PGCC: Arthur Toole, Isaac Templeton, Charles "Chaz" Rogers  
Tarishia "Tahsa" Graham, S. Forman
- MICUA: Irande Altema
- MC: Jason Franklin
- CCBC: Derrick Little
- MDVA: Denise Nooe

#### GUESTS:

- Dario DiBattista, Director of Military and Veterans Center
- Dr. Vernon Hurte, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Dr. Dan Koster, Psy D, VITAL Program
- Stan Seidel, Commissioner, Maryland Veterans Commission

#### ORDER of BUSINESS:

##### 1. Commission Introductions:

##### 2. Speakers:

- Dario DiBattista: Welcome and IT briefing
- Dr. Vernon Hurte: Welcome to Towson University
- Thank you and welcome. Appreciate being part of the COVID co-hort and the hard work that you are doing. Created virtual offices, emergency grants for student veterans. Thank you to Dario and Dena for their work on making a difficult transition a smooth process.
- Dr. Dan Koster, Psy. D. Resiliency and Care for Student Veterans –Staff Clinical Psychologist with Veterans Affairs. "Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership" (VITAL). National program with 30-40 states participating. Different universities create MOU's. He will host an office time at Towson and CCBC. Purpose: support veteran's integration to Academic accommodations, consultation outreach for colleges. Works with counseling center staff, If there is a veteran in stress where can they go? Dr. Dan will meet the students on campus and offer the same services they would receive downtown. Additional Info:
  - Step 1: Is the student eligible for VA Care?
  - Vet Centers - free lifetime care for combat Vets and or MST survivors
  - 1-877-WAR-VETS - 24/7 confidential call center
    - Coaching Info Care - Someone will talk you through how to appropriately talk to the vet that needs help?
  - Veterans Service Officers (VSO) specialists on VA benefits. If someone wants to challenge current benefits, call this group.
  - VCL - Veterans Crisis Line - 24/7 crisis resource - 1-800-273-8255
- Questions -
  - How can we get pamphlets? Is there a digital version? **Dena will send out**
  - Can we have the PP? **Yes**
  - Can you speak at Workshop Wed at UMGC? - Kristin will reach out
  - How does this work with Cohen Clinic?
    - Working with Easterseals and VOD (video on demand) so if VITAL cannot help, COHEN may be able to. *And Cohen will help with any veteran despite discharge status*

- Do you take appts or can you take walk-ins?
  - **He is a one person operation so appts help but if there will try and help walk ins**

### 3. Announce departure of Danielle Dabrowski

- Vice Chair and Chair for the last couple of years she has taken another position with Frostburg
- Discuss transition and future elections
  - Elections usually held in January
  - Dena is acting Vice Chair
  - Kristin is Secretary
  - We are giving a 30 day notice for anyone that would like to stand up for the position.
  - Dena is interested in the chair seat which would leave the vice-chair seat open
- **Open now and closes Sept 5**
- **Will hold elections at the next meeting in October**

### 4. MDVA Updates: Denise Nooe

- Fiscal year ended June 30th with high numbers in outreach and brought over 30 mil back.
- Thank you, Dr Dan for the link to the full time veteran specialists - that goes to MDVA office for follow through
- Just finished interviews - Women veterans inclusion position added to MDVA to ensure needs are met. They should have someone on board by Sept. There has been an intern doing research to pass information on.

### 5. Chair Report: Dena Allen-Few:

- **VA EDI Event** happening in Baltimore -VA economic development initiative Sept 23-25. Includes hiring fair (40 employers) benefits fair, trying to have on site benefit assessment.
  - Current plan is to be in person at Baltimore
  - "I am still Standing Inc" 424 S. Pulaski Street. Monitoring pandemic concerns with potential switch to hybrid or remote

### 6. MHEC Updates: Everett Jackson: [everetted.jackson@maryland.gov](mailto:everetted.jackson@maryland.gov)

- Veterans Affairs unit of MHEC - works closely with SCO's for maintaining VA approval and helps with compliance surveys
- Wrapping up 4th quarter - if you have not received one you should be ok with this year. October starts next year
- 85/15 - Many questions and no answers. Plan is to train in Sept and roll out new requirements October 1st. Continue to follow current process until October then follow new guidance.
- MHEC gets the same training as the SCO's but usually only the day prior and cannot always respond to questions dealing with the VA
- Isakson and Roe - 3 year requirement no longer a requirement. As of August 1 this should be utilized in regard to residency.
- Section 1018 - Principal of Excellence and FA shopping sheet that VA is requiring for institution to supply. **Waivers are allowed for additional time, please ensure that you have requested the waiver.** Dept of Ed shopping sheet does not meet VA 1018 - working on consolidating.

- Requesting more info for catalog submissions
  - New programs
  - Update of older programs
  - Schools are required to update SAA with any new publication being issued. If you are one year in submission must submit annually but no more than 2 years without a submission.
  - New catalog must be within 4 months of catalog expiring
  - Cannot accept link to online catalog - must be a "hard copy" without being able to allow for changes.
  - Potential repercussions if you do not submit the catalog
  - Application needs to include training types
  - Ex what does practical training mean etc.
- **Everette at MHEC will set up training to assist in completion of the application**
  - ELR news - Use ELR Maryland inbox

**7. School Updates/Discussion: Isakson and Roe: Did schools request the waiver for 1018? How are you handling dual certification for students?**

- *UB* - Josiah: They only certify a few weeks before start of class. Working with Marketing and all people on board who need to help with the financial sheet.
- *PGCC* - Arthur Toole: Rules for dual certification and shopping sheet should be ready in next 60 days and already complying with in-state tuition
- *Towson*: 1018 - shopping sheet - asked for waiver, 1005 - in state tuition - residency office is working with USM system to comply, Dual certification - started the process.
- *Howard CC* - 1018 - asked for waiver. Working on streamlining dual certification process
- *UMGC* - 1018 - asked for waiver
- *WAW* - 1018 - Applied for waiver and fully compliant with dual cert and in state tuition rate
- *McDaniel* - 1018 submitted the waiver, Dual certification - have been doing this all along, Using Dept of Ed sheet. Concern regarding bills to students.
- *UMGC* - 1018 - applied for waiver, hiring additional staff for dual certification requirement. Re-iterated that financial sheet does not meet Dept Ed requirements.
- *UMBC* - Pam: Applied for waiver and they have been scheduled an audit around the personalized shopping sheet.
- Group Discussions:
  - How are schools handling student notification?
    - People Soft question - regarding overdue balance. Use the indicator to not get multiple emails. Dena offered that they are sending out a "do not worry" email.
  - Are there any samples of shopping sheets that can be used for review? **Dena will try and share what she comes up with.**
  - If a school is not in compliance, then the GI Bill Comparison Tool can list you as not in compliance. MHEC does not have an ELR now and is reaching out to other states. VA has stated they would work with schools
  - What is the response time for the waivers? **Dena stated 90 days**

**8. Stan Seidel – Maryland Veterans Commissioners**

- VRRAP - <https://benefits.va.gov/GIBILL/docs/vrrap-high-demand-occupation-list.pdf>



- Program for veterans laid off due to covid - Do they meet criteria? Trying to get information out to Veterans about this program
- Is this more for vocational? Predominantly but more in line with community colleges, not applicable to graduate level
- UMGC had one inquiry at the graduate level
- Only a few schools approved in MD

**9. School Fall Updates:**

- **Towson:** back with full vaccinations. Study shows students prefer flexibility of class platforms.
- **UMGC** - Offices closed through Dec. Hired a consulting company to determine what back to work will look like. Veterans lounge is in question. Required but location may shift. Student response is mixed. They like flexibility but adult learners feel in person improves discussion.
- **UB:** UG/Grad lots of Zoom - hybrid. Masks required while in the building
- **AACC** is still primarily virtual for fall term, about 20% staff time on campus. Not requiring vaccinations but did just announce masking required even for vaccinated individuals. Classes start on Aug. 30.
- **Washington Adventist** will be in person classes and few programs for adult students offer options in hybrid or online. Requires fully vaccinated
- **CCBC**, all staff reported to campus on Monday, August 2nd. Classes are 60% in-person and 40% online.
- **Frostburg:** Everyone is coming back to work on campus next week...we are face to face....All staff required to be in Compliance with Vaccinations/Exemptions by August 16th, 2021
- **MICUA** - Iranda: Variety across campuses. Masks may be required.
- **UMBC** - about 80 percent classes in person, 20 online. Staff began returning July 6 with offices reopening in person on August 9. While all staff will be back on campus, we are being flexible in hybrid work arrangements with some days on campus and some at home. Vaccination or approved exemption required. Masks currently required in buildings.

**10. New Business:**

- The Central Maryland Veterans Collaborative's August Meeting will include an interactive panel highlighting EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES within the military and veteran community.
  - Kat Schorr asked about Serving Together
  - UMGC participates
  - Jason Marshall from Serving Together spoke last quarter and at Frostburg
  - <https://servingtogetherproject.org/collaboratives/central-md-veterans-collaborative/>

Meeting Ended Approximately 12:00 pm

**4th QUARTER MEETING**

**Location: University of Maryland Baltimore County – Virtual**

**Date: November 2, 2021**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Alexander Getachew, Chloe Terrell, Kristin Byerly, Denise Nooe, Dena Allen-Few, Arthur Toole, Betsy Atherton, Melissa Smith, Pamela Hawley, Rickiea Cohen, Josiah Guthland, Shannon Hardester, Imande Altema, Rebecca Gerkin, Derrick Little, Tracey Jamison, Jennifer Ann Riggs, Wanda Colon-Canales, Melissa Smith, Delegate Pat Young, Jerry Issac, Alfred Taylor

**ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

**ELECTIONS**

- Need quorum of 11 commissioners so need minimum of 6 - Quorum is present - Email Denis Nooe your response -
- Positions available: Secretary and Vice Chair
  - Secretary: Kristin Byerly - Approved
  - Vice Chair: Josiah Guthland - Approved
- Chair position postponed until first of the year - Dena Allen-Few will be acting Chair in the interim
- Very easy to be a commissioner - please have the president of the university sign an appointment letter. The attendance is growing but in order to vote, need to be a commissioner - we currently have 11.

**UPDATES:**

MHEC – If anyone has questions specifically for MHEC, please have them contact Everette D. Jackson, Jr. and he will follow up with them as soon as possible.

- The Maryland ELR position is still vacant. SCO's are asked to continue to use the General Maryland ELR Email ([ELR-Maryland.VAVBABUF.RO.EDU@va.gov](mailto:ELR-Maryland.VAVBABUF.RO.EDU@va.gov)). You should also send your 85/15 reports to this inbox. The ELR inbox and approval work is being assigned to various ELRs at this time from other states.
- The VA has contracted with a third party to assist in the completion of Compliance Surveys. In addition to the SAA, and VA, your compliance survey may be conducted by this third party.
- If your institution has not submitted a catalog application with your 2021-2022 academic catalog, please do so as soon as possible. The MD SAA will begin notifying institutions early next week that are out of compliance.
- Institutions still have the option to submit their catalog submission applications through our online portal or submit the physical application via email. The link to the online portal and the application are available on our website at [https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions\\_training/Pages/acadaff/veteransbenefits/index.aspx](https://mhec.maryland.gov/institutions_training/Pages/acadaff/veteransbenefits/index.aspx)
- The SAA no longer requires that you send a hard copy of your catalog to our office. We ask that you send a pdf copy with your application. The VA now requires your catalogs are uploaded to their online database, which requires a pdf version to be submitted. The SAA can not accept electronic catalogs that are on your website. A pdf version of that catalog must be made available.
- If there are changes in your SCO staff or contact information, please alert the SAA in addition to sending an updated 22-8794 to the ELR.
- QUESTION: Melissa Smith: Is the 4 months deadline still valid?
  - Shannon Hardester - States 4 months after the start of the catalog year
  - Recommend following up with Everett or general email?

#### NAVPA conference conversations

- Schools are still waiting for clarity on VA stance of 85/15. A lot of talk and a lot of interpretation but just waiting for clarification or changes.
- Payment plans do they require approval as stated. Shannon reached out to
- AVECO - SCO - Conference on the 17th and can register on the website - free for members \$50 for non-members [https://whova.com/web/aveco\\_202111/](https://whova.com/web/aveco_202111/)
  - Same person for 85/15 that was at NAVPA

#### UNIVERSITY UPDATES:

##### University of MD BALTIMORE

- Open 4 days a week
- Coordinator will allow 3/3 with Director and Coordinator
- Spring 5 days a week
- At least 1 F2F
- Josiah stricter guidelines for face to face than even VA
- Spring 20% in business to 45% in other depts
- This semester 9%-18%
- Trying to clarify with students making sure veterans understand Zoom is no longer an option

##### TOWSON - Dena

- Back since beginning of August
- All must be vaccinated or exceptions

##### UMBC

- 70% are in person or hybrid
- 30% online
- Administrative - given the mandate to come back in Fall 2021 Offices need to be open but within that they have flexibility to create telecommuting agreements. Spacing challenges - was able to put in to place a rotating schedule. 3 days a week 1 week and 2 days a week. Flexibility hope to continue - Conversation to consider - spacing - exchange for tele-commute, you may need to tele share office space.

##### UMGC:

- Majority still teleworking. Largo in hibernation. Some sites require face to face and facing challenges with getting staff to want to work
- Is anyone experiencing difficulty with staff returning? Most schools are making hybrid available

##### WAU

- October 2nd all systems were down and lost access to student records - recently received notification for compliance survey. Can you ask for an extension due to the challenge of what

happened with their records. Govt authorities are still investigating. Can they ask for an extension?

- UMBC Pamela had to ask once in 2018 - recommend getting counsel involved
- TU Dena - had an extension request and they were very flexible - Approach Everette and request he assist
- HCCC Melissa - requested an extension with the VA and was able to get with justifiable reasoning.
- 80% of the classes are in person - understanding traditional is not the same
- This semester open for flex hours

#### HOWARD CC

- On campus 30% for Spring -staff on case by case telework 1-5 up to dept to create the options all staff on site

#### BOWIE

- Options high-flex - in class or online at the same time. 20 classes like this/60 by spring - Staff needs to ensure office is covered. Unit has been open since July and problem is getting students there. Some traffic but not even a fraction of what it used to be - looking for ways to get them in. Attendance is supposed to be taken.

#### UMBC

- Use same technology with hyperflex and students choose online or in person and they choose but how does that work for Veterans?

#### SALISBURY

- High Flex should be identified as distance learning unless student has actually shown up for class and signs an attendance form and then have to go back and re-certify

#### QUESTIONS Regarding Flex Classes:

- Will VA pay for flex classes? Yes, if people are online some and in class on specific days but how is it monitored?
- Some classes take attendance and others do not. How do we confirm this?
- Arthur Toole - How are these classes being designated?
- UMB - Josiah Guthland - Law classes like this during COVID restrictions but spring its impossible to track for veteran students so need to have a section open to everyone and require attendance. So one class with 2 sections 1 is required attendance in person and 1 is online despite same class.

What are some ideas to get students back and engaged? Fully staffed on campus with no options to telework.

SALISBURY - in person events are up and running

MICU - School campus and operations.

- 13 different institutions - everyone is back in school.
- Hybrid Flex model - is it generally for students in isolation/quarantine?
- Staffing - there are some staffing shortages for a number of reasons. Remote work has not been the leading factor. She has been able to visit the campuses and able to see some positive student activity.

**GUEST SPEAKER:**

Delegate Pat Young is joining us today (Former Dir of Veteran Services at Towson) - He helped with the creation of this commission

- How this group came together: Recommit to bring resources available to veteran's students. Always a VA certifying official but not a support/outreach role that is so important.
- TU created first Veterans Office then UMD created one 6 months later
- Governor O'Malley and Lt Governor Brown created an MOU between colleges and universities
- What is our purpose? - a forum for us to collaborate and find common challenges for veteran students and are there any recommendations for changes that may need to take place at the state level. If any student populations would like to attend any of the events let Delegate Young know. He is chair of the Veterans Caucus

**MDVA Denise**

- 7 Commissioners online so we are officially confirmed.
- Thank you to all and we will include a template in the minutes. Denise sent template to all participants separately

**MEETINGS for 2022**

- 1st Quarter: Salisbury via Zoom in January/February
- 2nd Quarter: University of Baltimore (April time frame) - Venue TBD
- 3rd Quarter: UMGC - Venue TBD (July time frame)
- 4th Quarter: WAU (Wanda states Tentative and October/November time frame) - Venue TBD

**Meeting ended 12:00 PM**