

NAIMES

National Association of Institutions for Military Education Services

educating our people in uniform

NAIMES is an organization comprised of institutional members dedicated to the delivery of quality postsecondary education programs to the military community. Through collaborative partnerships with DoD voluntary education leadership, sister organizations and agencies, NAIMES continuously seeks to promote quality degree programs, student support services, and principles of good practice. At its core, NAIMES is committed to the academic success of students within the military community.

From the President

To provide value, you must be relevant!

Members of NAIMES are often asked: What is NAIMES? What does NAIMES do? How does NAIMES differ from CCME? In November, our membership met in San Antonio, Texas, and asked ourselves these same questions. Our mission statement to the left describes fairly accurately what we WANT to be, but how do we get there?

NAIMES member institutions are all members of CCME, but not an actual subset of CCME. CCME is a very large council of schools that provide services to the military and veteran voluntary education community. Annually, CCME hosts an excellent professional development symposium for institutions to network, hear from knowledgeable leaders from the Departments of Defense, Education, Veterans Affairs, etc., and learn about best practices, current and evolving research, and discuss policy and procedures, in over 100 concurrent sessions and roundtable discussions.

NAIMES, on the other hand is a much smaller collaborative body, drawn from a cross-section of schools, public/private, 2-year/4-year, regionally/nationally accredited, and non-profit/for-profit, that advocates for all military and veteran affiliated students on behalf of all schools, not just NAIMES or CCME member institutions. During our meetings, school colors, organizational type, and competition, are all left at the door to provide a true voice for the military/veteran affiliated student, and their institutions they attend, to be heard by the government Departments mentioned above.

During our annual meeting we came up with several initiatives to provide and receive information. This inaugural newsletter is one of those action items. NAIMES provides information through on-going collaboration with schools, not just member institutions, on relevant current innovations within education, such as Competency Based Education; and takes positions on issues of importance, such as the rumored closure of Navy College Offices in the United States. However, one of the most key initiatives is our roundtable that NAIMES will be hosting at the CCME 2016 Professional Development Symposium in February, where we will be gathering best practices and issues for an annual report on the state of military voluntary education from the students' and providers' point of view.

For NAIMES to be the organization that it should be, and to provide the best service to the Military Voluntary Education Community, we need your help. Communication is the key. Please check out the details below for more information on our website, Facebook page, and the roundtable and bring your best practices and issues. We are hoping to see you there.

Members

American Military University
 Brandman University
 Campbell University
 Capella University
 Central Michigan University
 Central Texas College
 Coastline Community College
 Columbia College
 Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Worldwide
 Grantham University
 Park University
 Pike's Peak Community College
 Saint Leo University
 Southwestern College
 Thomas Edison State University
 Troy University
 University of Alaska System
 University of Maryland, University College
 University of Oklahoma
 University of Phoenix
 Wayland Baptist University
 Webster University

Roundtable at CCME

NAIMES will host a round table session at CCME to provide attending colleges and universities an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from other institutions that serve military and veteran students. The interactive session will focus on identifying best practices for providing post-secondary education to the military community, including service members, veterans, DoD civilians and family members in the military community. NAIMES will collect anecdotal data to help develop a NAIMES best-practices report to be shared with the military and educational communities. The session is appropriate for all types of institutions offering educational programs to the military and associated populations. NAIMES hopes to capture multiple perspectives based on a variety of institutions of varying size, academic emphasis, and geography.

ISSUES AFFECTING STUDENTS

NAIMES Opposes closure of Navy College Offices

Last June, Navy Times staff writer Mark D. Faram wrote an article ("Plan would shutter most Navy College Offices in U.S.") detailing Navy plans to close Navy College Offices (NCOs). Mentioned in the story was a quote from Lieutenant Commander Kate Meadows, spokeswoman for Naval Education and Training Command, who said, "All (Program Objective Memorandum 2017) proposals are pre-decisional at this point and no final decisions have been made." Yet, the story persists as we hear from our colleagues at various Navy installations around the country.

This plan would close almost all of the NCOs in the United States by October 2016. While the NAIMES institutions see value in the improvements described, we would like to go on the record to strenuously request that the Navy not move forward with the closure of NCOs and elimination of counselor positions at CONUS Navy installations.

The closing of these NCOs would force Sailors serving at these locations to use only virtual resources for their educational needs. The Navy has stated that this would be aligned with how the colleges interact with our students today, which is partially correct. Colleges do have robust virtual counseling to include self-help tools, email, chat, 24-hour call center, and a host of other tools to help in working with students at a distance. However, most colleges also provide staff at locations where they have programs to help potential students navigate through the process of determining their career interests and selecting the correct program to achieve their career aspirations.

The Navy Virtual Education Center (NVEC) may be able to provide robust services to help sailors, but not having the face-to-face counseling currently provided by Education Service Officers (ESOs) and their staff on Navy installations may provide unintended consequences.

Mission Statement

NAIMES is a member-driven organization which advocates for the military student and partners with the military education community for the betterment of off-duty Voluntary Education programs. As a force for academic quality and continued improvement, and as a military student advocate (to include veterans, family members and DoD Civilians), NAIMES members promote best practices, provide a perspective of a diverse higher learning community, and will take positions that reflect the collective will of the membership.

For one, in a study conducted by Wallace Boston, Phil Ice, and Angela Gibson entitled “Comprehensive Assessment of Student Retention in Online Learning Environments”, they noticed a variance in the drop rates between civilian and military students who had received a final grade of “F”. As they mentioned in their study, “A possible explanation for this variance is the pre-enrollment counseling available to the service member through the ESO assigned to the military base. ESOs approve all tuition assistance payments and may be able to advise students of the rigor required at the colleges they are planning to attend”.

Second, without the ESO and staff on each installation, who will provide educational counseling to Navy personnel in the Transition GPS program? OPNAVINST 1900.2B paragraph 6i.(4) identifies the Navy College Office as a primary resource to facilitate that training for those sailors who choose to participate in the two-day education track as detailed in a NAVADMIN from the Chief of Naval Operations (DTG 092023Z NOV 12).

Third, without a Navy College Office to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and to manage educational institutions operating on the installation, what’s the fate of those schools currently teaching programs on Navy installations? As Mark Faram mentioned in his article, “If the Navy pulls the trigger, sailors will be forced at most U.S. bases to go online for their off-duty education needs”. Indeed, based on an email (Subject: Pre Decisional Closure of Stateside Navy College) from the Navy to Academic Institutions in December, if this proposal is implemented, “Based on current operational guidelines, Academic Institutions (AI) offering on-base college courses would not be allowed to operate on board Naval Installations without NCO or other federal government oversight”.

NAIMES institutions respectfully request that the Navy reverse course on the direction this decision appears to be headed, which would further downsize the already depleted Navy educational counseling staff. They have served faithfully for more than 40 years to provide outstanding and essential services to sailors in the pursuit of voluntary education.

Best Practices on Competency Based Education

NAIMES is sponsoring a working group for best practices in Competency Based Education, specifically how it relates to military and veteran voluntary education. The working group is co-chaired by Brandman University and Capella University and is actively seeking additional schools to work through this ground-breaking realm of continuing adult education. Volunteer institutions do not have to be NAIMES or CCME members, but they must be signatories to the Department of Defense Memorandum of Understanding (DoD MOU).

The DoD MOU allows for authorization of military tuition assistance (TA) “for courses provided by educational institutions awarded degrees based on competency,” provided they meet several criteria, including the conversion of competency rates to semester or quarter credits, the translation of “pass/fail”

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grades to traditional grades, and the provision of a breakdown of course equivalencies for service members.

While this seemingly opens up competency-based programs and direct assessment models for TA use, there remain a number of challenges for schools offering these types of degrees that make TA use problematic. Competency-based courses are often self-paced, limiting the ability of the institution to indicate firm end dates. In order to offer maximum value, some competency-based programs charge tuition on flat-rate subscription models rather than tying tuition to course pursuit. In general terms, these programs are deliberately non-traditional, making translation to standard terminology outside of the MOU's stated requirements difficult for institutions.

This limits access to service members desiring to leverage TA funding for competency based or direct assessment programs. This is disappointing, as this delivery method seems to uniquely support service members. By allowing students to apply existing knowledge to their degree pursuit, competency based and direct assessment programs provide a more direct pathway to degree completion, minimizing both time and tuition charges. Some military students have recognized the value of these programs and are using approved VA education benefits or federal financial aid programs due to the lack of availability of TA. By extending TA to competency based and direct assessment programs as approved by the DoD MOU, we are allowing military students to choose the funding options that best suit their career, educational, and financial needs.

The aim of this working group will be to review the structure of competency based and direct assessment programs offered or being developed by MOU partner schools. The group will attempt to translate these structures to determine recommendations for DoD approval that align the processes of the schools, the needs of the service member, and the requirements of the DoD. The working group will then seek to connect with DoD partners to develop a review and approval process that extends TA access to military students pursuing competency based and direct assessment programs that meet these requirements.

For more information contact John Hayes at John.Hayes@capella.edu or Mala Sharma at nsharma@brandman.edu.

NAIMES/MBS Student Spotlight Award

A tradition of recognizing scholarly achievement of military students.

2015 Theme

"What education means to me."

2015 Winners

- *United States Navy
Petty Officer
Adam Boulanger*
- *United States
Air Force
Technical Sergeant
Jake Williams*
- *United States
Air Force
First Lieutenant
Dylan Willis*
- *Military Spouse
**Marina
Papayanki***

Congratulations to the recipients and we wish you the very best in your future academic pursuits!

The Student Spotlight Awards are made possible through the generous support of MBS Direct.

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NAIMES Website

Please visit our website at www.naimes.org. This and future newsletters can be found there, as well as other information on the organization. In the future, we will be expanding it to include relevant white papers, research, and other appropriate items to serve the military/veteran education community. We welcome your feedback and ideas on anything else you would like to see made available. Please feel free to contact Randy at rdoerneman@ou.edu.

NAIMES is on Facebook

Announcing the renewed effort to energize the NAIMES Facebook page! Currently there are only 17 members of this page and as the voice of the educational institutions on behalf of students, it should be much larger. Let's do all we can to increase the membership of the page so we can then ensure we have more quality posts full of vital information to pass on. Just type in NAIMES into the search box and you'll see the page. The new administrator, Dan Roby from AMU, will ensure you are approved within a day. If you have any inputs or ideas on making the page more beneficial for all, please feel free to contact Dan at droby@apus.edu.

NAIMES Membership

The NAIMES Membership Committee will meet in January to conduct its periodic review of the NAIMES membership. With the goal of ensuring that NAIMES membership represents the full spectrum of institutions of higher education that have provision

of educational opportunities to the military community as a primary element of their missions, the Membership Committee will analyze current membership to determine whether revisions to that membership would enhance the ability of the organization to fully represent colleges and universities that serve military populations. Considerations will include institutional levels (e.g., community colleges and universities offering various levels of undergraduate and graduate degree programs), size of the institution, missions, categories (public, private, non-profit, for-profit), programmatic offerings, and military populations served. The committee will also review provisions of the existing bylaws relative to the Membership Committee for currency and relevancy. Recommendations of the committee will be presented to the entire membership during the NAIMES meeting held in conjunction with the Council of College and Military Educators in February.



NAIMES – We're on the Web!
www.naimes.org