
2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR MILITARY EDUCATION SERVICES
naimes.org

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Letter from the NAIMES' President **Kelly Wilmeth**

It was my great honor to assume the role of the NAIMES' President in September 2016. In this role, I plan to help NAIMES achieve its vision of advocating for and influencing decisions that affect policy, legislation, and practices that safeguard the academic success of military-affiliated students. Throughout 2017, the NAIMES' organization, comprised of 22 member academic institutions, dedicated itself to excellence and advocacy for military and veteran students, to increasing its visibility, and to strengthening its relevancy within the military and veteran-student community. We live in an age of numerous competing organizations striving to foster a community where military-affiliated students are able to make informed choices that lead to accessible and affordable educational opportunities and secure gainful employment upon degree completion. NAIMES is one of these competing organizations, and risks losing visibility and relevancy if we do not remain proactive in our advocacy efforts. Thus, our major focus in 2017 has been to collaborate with similar-minded organizations, establish multiple communication channels across several local, state, and federal agencies that are involved in the education of our service members, veterans and their families, and serve as an advocate for these students. NAIMES understands that strength in numbers in a collaborative and collegial environment provides the best chance of student success.

NAIMES has several accomplishments to report from 2017. First, through the NAIMES' partnership with MBS Direct, we awarded five scholarships, each valued at \$1,200. The January 2017 scholarship recipients included students from Columbia College, Park University, University of Oklahoma, and University of Maryland University College. This is the 12th consecutive year that NAIMES has awarded scholarships to students through this program.

At the NAIMES' Annual Meeting in September 2016, we committed to increasing awareness of our organization through transparency and communication. As such, we published Volume 2 of the NAIMES' Newsletter in 2017. In each of the quarterly issues, NAIMES highlighted scholarship opportunities for students, shared best practices among educational institutions, disseminated relevant information from various local, state, federal and non-profit organizations involved in military and veteran-student education and employment, and celebrated with students as they earned their college degrees. In March, NAIMES also held its second annual Round Table discussion at the Council of College and Military Educators' (CCME) Professional Development Symposium in Atlanta, GA. During this session, we introduced a draft of our first-ever Strategic Plan and secured input from dozens of CCME members to incorporate into the final document to ensure that NAIMES

focuses on strategic goals that serve the entire military and veteran community of academic institutions and students.

A third accomplishment was laying the foundation to secure strategic partnerships with key organizations that share the NAIMES' mission and values. In addition to strengthening our continued partnership with MBS Direct and CCME, NAIMES' members attended several state ACME (Advisory Councils on Military Education) conferences and meetings to offer our support in assisting these volunteer organizations to achieve their goals and fulfill their missions. In addition, an ACME President attended every NAIMES' bi-monthly "Coffee Chat" in 2017 to provide updates on specific state ACME initiatives, progress towards goals, and future plans. NAIMES also developed a close working relationship with NAVPA (National Association of Veterans' Programs Administrators) to ensure that we as an organization have access to the most accurate and relevant information affecting veterans and their families as they pursue their college education.

In these final days of 2017, the NAIMES' membership voted to adopt our inaugural Strategic Plan to guide our direction for the near and far future by defining and refining our vision and mission statements, identifying our core beliefs and associated practices, and identifying several strategic priorities and associated organizational objectives. We will expand our suite of communication tools to advocate on behalf of military and veteran students, continue to amplify our non-profit resources through the establishment of more strategic partnerships, and strengthen our presence among key decision makers on Capitol Hill, within higher education and among employers. We will convene key stakeholders through our bi-monthly meetings and Annual Meeting to share knowledge and foster unity and collective action. We look to expand our support of military-affiliated students by promoting the voice of local organizations on issues important to service-members, veterans and their families. Collaborating through transparency and mutual respect, enhancing student satisfaction throughout their educational journey, identifying best practices, positively impacting policy that makes sense for our target audience, and maintaining diversity in our membership base will always be the underlying goals of our daily operations.

I believe that our vision reflects the deep-seated commitment of NAIMES to military-affiliated student academic success, and our mission, beliefs and practices are indicative of what we are capable of becoming as a membership organization. My goal as president is to keep us loyal to our vision and mission. Thank you for the hope you provide to our military-affiliated students as they strive to fulfill their dreams. I cannot wait to see what we will achieve together in the coming year.



Kelly Wilmeth
President, NAIMES

NAIMES' Contact Information

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NAIMES' Newsletters

The NAIMES' organization publishes a quarterly newsletter that is distributed to the military voluntary education community. Key components of the newsletter include a Message from the President, an update from one or more regional ACME (Advisory Council on Military Education) organizations, Spotlight on Best Practices within the Vol-Ed community, special articles from collaborative partner organizations, and updates on scholarship opportunities and awards. The 2017 newsletters can be found on the NAIMES' website or accessed directly:

[First Quarter 2017 NAIMES Newsletter](#)

[Second Quarter 2017 NAIMES Newsletter](#)

[Third Quarter 2017 NAIMES Newsletter](#)

[Fourth Quarter 2017 NAIMES Newsletter](#)

Mission, Vision, Beliefs and Practices

Adopted December 8, 2017

Vision Statement

To advocate for and influence decisions that impact policy, legislation, and practices that safeguard the academic success of military-affiliated students. (Voted upon, SEP 20, 2017)

Mission Statement

NAIMES is an organization dedicated to excellence and advocacy for military-affiliated students. (Voted upon, AUG 17, 2017)

Our Beliefs

- Sharing and advocating for institutional best practices in education.
- A collective voice of reason is more powerful.
- Making a positive difference requires mutual respect and collaboration

Our Practices

- We promote and advocate for best practices by institutions serving military-affiliated students.
- We recognize diversity is an asset essential to accomplishing our mission.
- Membership is comprised of various types of educational institutions.
- We collaborate with colleagues through transparency and mutual respect to build and best ensure student success.

NAIMES' Long-Term Strategic Goals

The NAIMES' Strategic Plan, unanimously adopted on December 8, 2017, identifies the following strategic lines of efforts towards the long-term goals for the organization:

1. Advocate for the military student
2. Be productive and relevant
3. Increase transparency
4. Facilitate a collaborative dialogue with higher education organizations
5. Establish and maintain partnerships across the higher education enterprise

NAIMES' Executive Officers

President: Ms. Kelly Wilmeth, University of Maryland University College

Vice President: John Aldrich, American Military University

Treasurer: Joseph Houghton, Troy University

Secretary: Alisha Miller, Thomas Edison State University

Immediate Past President: Louis Martini, Thomas Edison State University

NAIMES' Institution Members

2-Year Public Institutions:

Central Texas College

Coastline Community College

Pikes Peak Community College

Southwestern College

4-Year Public Institutions:

Central Michigan University

Thomas Edison State University

Troy University

University of Alaska System

University of Maryland University College

University of Oklahoma

Private Non-Profit Institutions:

Brandman University

Campbell University

Columbia College

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Park University

Saint Leo University

Wayland Baptist University

Webster University

Private For-Profit Institutions:

American Military University

Capella University

Grantham University

University of Phoenix

Committee Reports

Nominations and Elections Committee Report

The three-member Committee is a standing committee of the organization and is charged with soliciting nominations for officer positions for annual elections. Currently, the secretary and treasurer positions are one-year terms while the vice-president/president-elect and president positions serve two-year terms.

Nominations are open two months prior to the Annual Meeting. Nominees provide a brief bio and statement of commitment to serve. Two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting the names of nominees, and their bios, are sent out to the general membership. Nominations are also accepted up to the time of the election. Elections are held in the afternoon of the first day of the Annual Meeting.

At the September 20, 2017 Annual Meeting, incumbents, Alisha Miller, Thomas Edison State University, and Joseph Houghton, Troy University, were re-elected as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

Newly elected officers began the term on the second day of the meeting (September 21, 2017).

Membership Committee Report

Currently, there are 22 member institutions that make up the NAIMES' organization. The member institutions represent 4-year public (6); private non-profit (8); private for-profit (4) and 2-year public (4). Representation is from both regional and national accreditation bodies.

Currently, membership is by invitation only and, in the past, the membership committee would meet to review membership makeup once every five years. The NAIMES' President received a number of inquiries regarding membership and at the NAIMES' spring meeting charged the committee with reviewing the current membership makeup as well as the process of adding and subtracting members to insure adequate representation of the makeup of the current military and veteran education market.

The committee met and discussed a number of options and brought them to the full membership at the NAIMES' Annual Meeting in St. Louis in September. After much discussion, it was decided that, for now, the current membership makeup covered all sectors of the bigger makeup of the military and veteran education market. However, due to the ever-changing landscape of military and veteran education, the membership committee would continually monitor that market and, if it was found that a segment was missing, make a recommendation to membership to invite a representative to coffee chats or meetings to ensure all segments were being represented. This is currently being done with representatives from the various ACMEs and associations such as NAVPA.

Additional discussion was completed on the removal of a member institution. It was decided that if a member institution failed to participate in meetings and coffee chats that this would be grounds for removal. Failure to maintain DOD MOU participation would also be grounds for removal.

Scholarship Committee Report

The Scholarship Committee is a 5-7 member committee from NAIMES' membership institutions responsible for the process and procedures associated with the application, selection and awarding of the annual Student Spotlight Awards. The committee develops the application questions, uses an agreed upon rubric for objective scoring, makes the final selections and announces the winners. The scholarship applications are posted on the NAIMES' website in the late spring and the application remains open until the end of September. Winners are notified by letter from the Scholarship Committee Chair by the end of January; names of the winners are also posted on the NAIMES' website. The winners are invited to the spring CCME symposium to receive their award. Applicants can be from any DOD MOU institution; eligibility is not restricted to NAIMES' member institutions.

Established in 2005 and first awarded in 2006, the NAIMES and MBS Direct program awards five Student Spotlight Awards annually to recognize and celebrate the academic achievements of our nation's military-affiliated students. The award categories include active-duty undergraduate students who have earned less than 60 semester hours; active-duty undergraduate students who have earned more than 60 hours; active-duty graduate students, military spouses and veterans.

2017 NAIMES Student Spotlight Awards

Active-duty undergraduate student (less than 60 hours) Award: Ryan Farr

Ryan is a first year Psychology major at Columbia College and serving in the Navy. Ryan stated in his essay that he is confident that higher education and complementary skills will benefit him both personally and professionally.

Active-duty undergraduate student (60 or more hours) Award: Lyndsay Pires

Lyndsay, a native of South Carolina, is serving in Hawaii in the U.S. Marine Corps as an Aviation Operations Specialist. Currently a Criminal Justice major at Park University, Lyndsay strongly believes that both in and out of the military, education is the key to success.

Active-duty graduate student Award: Jared T. Williams

Jared is pursuing his Master's Degree in International Relations from the University of Oklahoma while serving in the U.S. Air Force. Jared believes that "higher education clearly has a place in an organization seeking to remain relevant and ahead of its competition".

Military Spouse Student Award: Felissa Hawkins

Felissa, recipient of the military spouse scholarship award, is a native of El Salvador who did not begin to learn English until the age of 13. Felissa is currently a junior at the University of Maryland University College.

Student Veteran Award: Ashley Jenkins

Ashley, this year's veteran recipient stated, "I never planned on joining the military. I never planned to go to college." Today, she is the proud holder of an undergraduate degree, and enrolled as a graduate student pursuing a master's degree in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma.

[Policy and Issues Committee Report](#)

The NAIMES' Policy and Issues Committee monitored and worked on a number of issues this year affecting institutions working in the military and veteran educational arena. Below is a list of those areas:

- The Forever GI Bill (H.R. 3218)
 - 101 – Medical care for reservists that are wounded. This will now count toward eligibility.
 - Purple Heart recipients – anyone after 9/11/2001 will get the Post 9/11 GI Bill automatically. This is effective 8/1/2018.
 - Fry scholarship is now part of Yellow Ribbon program, effective 8/1/2018.
 - Inclusion of active duty members into Yellow Ribbon program, effective 8/1/2022.
 - Tiers – currently reservist 90 days – 6 months = 40%. Now they will get 50%. 6 months – 1 year will get 60%; effective 8/1/2020.
 - Fixed the REAP issue and now all of these veterans will receive 9/11 benefits.
 - Institutions must now use the zip code of where most of the courses are being taken instead of where courses are being certified from. Online is still 50% of national average of E5 with dependents.
 - Getting rid of Post 9/11 GI Bill delimiting date for anyone separating after January 1, 2013. Previous delimiting date was 15 years.
 - Charges to entitlement – cost of exam used to be charged an entire month of benefit. Now will be charged by day for cost of exam.
 - Restoration of entitlement for veteran affected by sudden school closure – anyone after 2015 will get 100% of entitlement back for all courses, taken at the school that closed, that do not transfer.
 - STEM scholarship – veteran will get an additional 9 months for STEM programs, effective 8/1/2019.

- Schools will need to do annual reports to congress on student progress by 1 March each year.
 - Work study program renewed through 2022.
 - CH 35 – DEA – will get \$200 more per month, effective 10/1/2018. New users will only get 36 months of entitlement vs. 45 months previously, effective 8/1/2018. Current users will be grandfathered in the program.
 - Compliance survey schedule changed – now every 2 years if you have more than 20 VA students.
 - VA reporting fee was increased. Max pay will be \$16 per student for advance pay, \$14 for regular pay. Effective 8/1/2018. Schools that have 100 or more vets must maintain these funds in a separate account that is trackable and use funds for VA programs. Will be looked at during compliance surveys. Can be used to send staff to conferences.
 - Training for School Certifying Official now required every year. Section 304 of act outlines specifics.
 - VACOE – committee able to immediately make changes and put into effect.
 - Vet Success has been funded (94 schools), not expanded to more schools.
 - Housing will be reduced by 1% for 5 years.
- DOD Compliance Program – What is the status of the first round? Original target dates not met.
- USCG has adjusted TA Policy to only cover 3 courses per year instead of 16 credits.
- Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) contract has been taken over by IBM.
- Army University is in the process of working with a selection of institutions to evaluate Army training and provide a pathway to a degree(s) by attainment of E5.
- Navy has done away with Distance Learning side of the Navy College Program for Afloat College Education contract. This will now be part of the traditional TA program and is open to any institution with self-contained courses. Internet cannot be required to take these courses.
- All Navy College Offices are closed as of October 2017. NAIMES is questioning if any studies have been completed or are planned to be done on the impact on sailors using the TA system or student success.
- Reviving the SOC White Paper on Graduation Rates “Educational Attainment”.
- Should DOD or VA be using IPEDS data to measure graduation rates, etc.? Service members do not fit into the first time/full time category so are considered failures. Institutions primarily serving this population would not rank as high but provide better services to the student. Is this policy in the best interest of the student? Should an alternative system be developed to track student success which includes active duty as well as GI Bill users?

[Strategic Plan Committee Report](#)

The Strategic Plan Committee was actively engaged throughout the year developing the first NAIMES' Strategic Plan. This monumental task resulted in an agreed upon plan adopted by the NAIMES' membership on December 8, 2017. The plan includes mission, vision, beliefs, SWOT analysis and strategic priorities. The plan will lead the organization through 2018 and beyond with a vision to advocate for and influence decisions that impact policy, legislation, and practices that safeguard the academic success of military-affiliated students. A copy of the NAIMES' Strategic Plan is available on the NAIMES' website.

[New Committees Added in 2017](#)

At the 2017 NAIMES' annual meeting, two new committees were formed and charged with beginning activities in 2018.

[Promotional Materials Committee](#)

An ad hoc committee of four members tasked with promoting and increasing awareness of NAIMES and its mission through the Voluntary Education Community. Early goals are to increase membership attendance at national and regional conferences, including ACMEs; establish a FAQ page on the NAIMES' website; and maintain the NAIMES' PowerPoint presentation for use by members.

[Strategic Partnerships Committee](#)

An ad hoc committee of four members tasked with developing and nurturing partnerships with other national and regional organizations that support the Voluntary Education Community. These strategic partners include, but are not limited to, CCME, DoD, NAVPA, state and regional ACMEs, and student veteran organizations.

[Conclusion](#)

The NAIMES' Executive Board extends its sincere thanks to the representatives of the 22 NAIMES' member institutions for their time, commitment, and dedication to our organization's vision and mission. Each of you has volunteered countless hours to committee work and several strategic priorities that will improve the educational experience of military-affiliated students and enhance their success. NAIMES would also like to recognize and thank the many partners who have helped us over the past year. MBS Direct's financial contribution to the NAIMES' Spotlight Awards is invaluable for the continued annual award of student scholarships. The NAVPA Organization has provided NAIMES with subject matter expertise on current legislation that affects veteran students and their benefits. This information has allowed NAIMES to assist in the distribution of accurate information to a wide veteran-affiliated audience to allow them to make informed decisions regarding their education. The CCME Board's ACME Liaison has worked very closely with NAIMES to raise awareness of the many ACMEs across the United States and spotlight their fundraising efforts for student scholarships, lobbying efforts to raise legislative awareness of military-affiliated educational issues within their respective states, and partnerships with local Veterans Service Providers. Finally, we

extend our thanks to DoD for their continued support of the Voluntary Education Program and their willingness to listen to feedback from NAIMES and other educational institutions on ways to improve existing processes and procedures that impact military-affiliated students as they pursue their educational goals. Through collaborative and collegial partnerships across local, state and federal levels, all of us together are making a difference.