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# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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# NAIMES

National Association of Institutions for Military Education Services

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*“educating our people in uniform”*

JANUARY 24, 2020

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR MILITARY EDUCATION SERVICES  
naimes.org

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## Letter from the NAIMES' President **John Aldrich**

Dear Friends,

In 2019, NAIMES advanced our position of advocating that the Veterans Administration treat all veterans equally when it comes to Post 9/11 education benefits. In doing so, we met with Congressman, Gus Bilirakis, 12th district of Florida, who introduced H.R. 3897 that proposed amending Title 38, U.S. Code. This proposal aimed to increase the monthly housing stipend under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program for individuals who pursue programs of education, solely through online distance learning, on a full-time basis. The bill propounds that veterans, pursuing their education online or in a classroom, will receive the same housing allowance. H.R. 3897 is in the process of scoring by the Congressional Budget Office and NAIMES will continue to advocate for this important initiative. In addition to meeting with Congressman Bilirakis, NAIMES socialized our military housing allowance for online-learners white paper at several ACMES.

NAIMES members are currently developing a position paper on the military tuition assistance cap. Military tuition assistance caps remain at the levels set over 18 years ago, despite increasing institutional financial costs to develop high tech and STEM programs. Another area that we are particularly excited about is our introduction of scholarly work. NAIMES has established a scholarly work committee to launch this new initiative, and we look forward to having this new resource to utilize in our efforts to support servicemembers and veterans.

I am excited for the upcoming year and what it means for servicemembers and veterans as credentialing assistance goes "Big Army," and the Navy unfolds their plans to create their own community college. We are hopeful that military and veteran service organizations, the Congress, and the Veterans Administration will finally treat all veterans equally in regards to their earned education benefits.

In support of veterans, many of our NAIMES members will take part in the Wreaths across America ceremonies throughout the country. We hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

*John P. Aldrich*

John P. Aldrich  
President, NAIMES

## NAIMES' Contact Information

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## NAIMES' Newsletters

The NAIMES' organization publishes a periodic newsletter 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 2019 newsletters are found on the [NAIMES' website](#) or accessed directly at the following links:

[First Edition 2019 NAIMES Newsletter](#)

[Second Edition 2019 NAIMES Newsletter](#)

## Mission, Vision, Principles 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 Principles

- 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: John Aldrich, American Military University

Vice President: Alisha Miller, Thomas Edison State University

Treasurer: David Harvey, Central Michigan University

Secretary: Eric Ryan, University of Phoenix

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

## 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 Nominating Committee is a standing committee of the organization and is charged with soliciting nominations for officer positions for annual elections.

At the 2018 Annual Meeting, the membership changed the By-laws regarding term lengths for the secretary and treasurer positions. These two positions are now two-year terms, standardizing the executive officer positions to two years and biennial elections. No new positions were nominated or elected for 2019.

### Membership Committee Report

NAIMES Membership remained at 22 institutions as no new institutions were added in 2019. The institution mix continues to be a broad representation of higher education with four 2-year institutions, seven 4-year public institutions, eight 4-year private, non-profit institutions and four 4-year private, for-profit institutions. The committee reviewed the membership language in the By-Laws regarding active representation by institutions to remain in good standing. Firm definitions were identified for membership continuation. Language was approved to establish firm criteria for active membership; a tracking mechanism was developed for annual reporting to the Executive Board for consideration of membership dismissal action, when warranted.

Standard operating procedures for evaluating and mentoring new member institutions were reviewed and an annual review of new memberships will occur. The Committee will no longer be responsible to conduct solicitations for new members; future recommendations will come from current members in accordance with NAIMES By-Laws.

### Scholarship Committee Report

The Scholarship Committee is a 10-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 late spring and the application remains open until the end of September. Winners are notified by letter from the Scholarship Committee Chair and the names of the winners are 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. Over those years, NAIMES has awarded 70 scholarships with a total value of \$84,000. 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.

### 2019 NAIMES Student Spotlight Awards

#### **Active-duty undergraduate student (less than 60 hours) Award: David L. Fry**

David is currently in the Marine Corps with recently being accepted in the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP). He is attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill pursuing a degree in Computer Science due to the recent creation of a new occupational field known as Cyber Security within the Marine Corps as a Cyber Security Officer. David enjoys spending time with his family and enjoys woodworking and outdoor activities.

#### **Active-duty undergraduate student (60 or more hours) Award: Katelyn Field**

Katelyn is in the Air Force as a weather craftsman and attends Bellevue University obtaining a degree in Health Science. Katelyn is interested in exercise physiology and the science behind yoga benefits. Her goal is to become a physical therapist and works diligently with that one goal in mind. Katelyn's outside interests include spending time in the gym and taking part in outdoor activities such as hiking or kayaking. Katelyn also volunteers for a non-profit that provides resource and financial aid in the effort to end veteran suicides.

#### **Active-duty graduate student Award: Michael A. Williams**

Michael is an active duty soldier in the Army with the Medical Brigade as an Operations Sergeant. Michael is pursuing his Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration at Columbia College. He feels the military has been the catalyst that set his educational journey in motion. Michael's goal is to complete the program, retire from the military and use his experience and education to find and help others that have faced the same kind of challenges. In his spare time, Michael enjoys weightlifting, golf and travel.

#### **Student Veteran Award: Dianne L. Reed**

Dianne, this year's Navy veteran recipient, is obtaining her degree in Homeland Security with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Her goal is to work in a local emergency management agency and help her community prepare for and manage emergencies as well as lessen the impact by increasing resiliency in individuals, businesses, first responders, and government agencies. Dianne feels her Army training taught her to adapt to changing situations and to remain calm and levelheaded. In her spare time, Dianne enjoys camping and hiking and her goal is to visit every national park in the United States, so far visiting 28. Dianne also loves animals and watching them in their natural habitats, especially birds.

## **Military Spouse Student Award: Nicole Nguyen Bier**

Nicole, says being married to an active duty service member is one of the most difficult personal, academic, and professional challenges. Nicole plans to graduate with a PhD in Aviation and has worked on this program for the past 6+ years and is currently a student with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Nicole believes that education is a gateway to opportunity and freedom. She believes her greatest academic accomplishment is helping other military spouses recognize their academic and professional value outside of supporting their service member and taking care of the children. Nicole's outside interests include cooking, drawing, music and visiting museums and learning American history.

## **Policy and Issues Committee Report**

The NAIMES Policy and Issues Committee, chaired by the Immediate Past President, reviews current and emerging issues and events on behalf of the membership and makes recommendations of policy statements and White Papers. The policy landscape within both the DoD and the VA throughout 2019 continued to be subject to federal government fiscal pressures, evolving educational constraints among the services, stagnate tuition assistance levels when compared to inflation and the rising cost of higher education, differing interpretations of new VA legislation, and an updated DoD MOU. As a result, the Policy and Issues Committee remained involved in active discussions regarding this landscape with both NAIMES membership and key stakeholders, and ultimately accomplished the following actions in 2019.

### Summary of 2019 Work

- Finalized a White Paper on NAIMES position to level Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) payments for recipient of Post 9/11 GI Bill across all learning modalities
  - Monitoring Congressman Bilirakis' bill Introduced 17 July 2019
- Drafted a NAIMES White Paper on raising the Tuition Assistance cap to keep up with inflation and the rising costs of higher education
- In discussions with DOD Voluntary Education Acting Director, Dr. Jonathan Woods, to seek guidance in preparation for input to pending updates to the Department of Defense Instruction governing the DoD MOU
- Met with Dr. Jonathan Woods at the annual NAIMES meeting on 19 September 2019. Topics Included:
  - During the DOD renewal process, some Academic Institutions (inside and outside of NAIMES) experienced concern with the perceived last-minute nature of their DoD MOU renewals, and the accompanying messaging to service members from ESOs. The NAIMES membership asked Dr. Woods if it would be possible to get better messaging out to services so they know if institutions are working on their DoD renewals (or in the process of their renewal) to prevent some of the issues and concern among students?
  - Army University and possibility of Navy creating a Navy Community College and the lack of communication and transparency regarding both
  - The current TA cap, which has not changed for many years. Does DoD perceive any changes to tuition assistance and caps per credit hour? Example is that DOD and VA want STEM/engineering programs, which are expensive for institutions to create and manage

- Navy issue brought up with Florida ACME RE: Southeast Navy region base access. Member institutions shared concerns and discussed next steps for resolution
- The future of civilian institutions on military installations
- The Army's credentialing efforts on Fort Hood as they relate to the larger DoD credentialing strategy

#### Priority Issues for 2020

- Finalize NAIMES' white paper "*The Case for Raising Military Tuition Assistance for STEM Programs*" and submit to the DoD and/or submit comment as such when the new DoDI is available on the public register for comment
- Develop outreach strategies to advocate for equal MHA (e.g. connect with American Legion and other strong VSOs with lobbying success)
- Restoration of Navy Tuition Assistance for all ranks
- Monitor service branch educational construct and how academic institutions can be productive partners (e.g. Army U, and Navy CC)
- 90/10 calculations changing how veterans are categorized
- Monitor California SAA's status and DVA's ability to manage that function for the state of CA
- Determine what types of changes and action in the DoD's Voluntary Education space should be documented and explore establishing an archival methodology

#### Annual Report Committee Report

The purpose of the Annual Report Committee is to collect information on actions and activities accomplished by the NAIMES Organization over the past calendar year. The Report includes a year in review by the President, committee reports, information on NAIMES membership and the quarterly newsletters. The first annual report was accomplished for 2017; all annual reports are available on the [NAIMES website under Publications](#).

#### Strategic Plan Committee Report

The Strategic Plan Committee lost the majority of its members through 2018 and 2019. Four new members were appointed and began reviewing the NAIMES' Strategic Plan from 2017. Initial review resulted in an agreement that the strategic goals set forth in 2017 will remain the same with the exception of Strategic Priority 3 - Strategic Partnerships. The Strategic Partnerships Committee was dissolved in 2018; however, committee members propose a restructured, narrowed focus for consideration. The committee members proposed reinitiating this priority for 2020 at the 2019 Annual Meeting. Committee members will review and update the four strategic priorities for presentation at CCME in March 2020. Once adopted, the plan will be available on the NAIMES' website.

#### Promotional Materials Committee Report

The Promotional Materials Committee did not have as many tasks in 2019 as it did as a newly appointed committee in 2018. In 2019, the committee created and printed new business cards for the newly elected Board members for their use and distribution. The committee also updated the NAIMES' PowerPoint with relevant information and the new Board members for

presentation use at ACME meetings and other conferences. The committee will be reviewing the NAIMES' brochure in the coming months to refresh the content, look, and print additional copies for distribution likely at the CCME 2020 Professional Development Symposium in Philadelphia, PA.

## Conclusion

Advocating for servicemembers and veterans is an ongoing process, an endeavor that NAIMES members take very seriously. We will continue to expand our efforts in support of this important group of adult learners, and we look forward to your continued support and collaboration in the coming year.