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# 2021 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 27, 2022

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR MILITARY EDUCATION SERVICES  
naimes.org

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## Letter from the NAIMES President

Colleagues,

2021 has been another year of challenges and adversity to overcome, riding the coattails of the world essentially closing down in 2020; we are now continuing to deal with this pandemic on a daily basis and experiencing the “new normal” all around us. I pray that you all have been able to stay safe and healthy during these times.

As our communities slowly started to open back up this year, so too have the activities within the military and veteran education space. Military installation education offices have welcomed staff and students back and college campuses are slowly re-opening their doors to face-to-face courses. In addition, there has been much activity in policy, regulation and procedure, as institutions have been navigating the sunset of GoArmyEd and challenges with the launch of ArmyIgnitED, as well as the new VA benefit requirements set forth in the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, and the movement of the Navy’s Voluntary Education Region Advisors (RAs) to the Virtual Education Center (VEC).

NAIMES has been busy during this year, as well, as we finalized a white paper on the Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) disparity for online learners and have been working to circulate that opinion throughout our networks. NAIMES gained the support of our MHA White Paper from several additional member institutions of the Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) and posted comments to the Veterans’ Advisory Committee on Education prior to their October meeting. We are hopeful that we will see a recommendation to the VA and to Congress in the near future that eliminates MHA disparity and treats all veterans equally in their benefits, whether they choose to take courses online or in-person.

The NAIMES’ Scholarly Research Committee has been busy preparing for our first-ever research project. NAIMES is currently partnering with researchers at the University of Louisville to study enrollment patterns of students pre and post-COVID in the hope to identify if the rate of MHA received may have an impact on a student’s enrollment behavior. This research has been IRB approved and will soon begin the data collection phase. This research and data could potentially provide the information needed to assist policymakers in determining if MHA should indeed be revised based on student enrollment behavior. We may also see trends from this research that can help answer other questions about student behavior as it relates to military and veteran education benefits.

I hope that you enjoy the NAIMES Annual Report as we recap our important initiatives and accomplishments from 2021, as well as sharing information and keeping a pulse on policies and issues in the military and veteran education community.

Thank you for the continued collaboration and support!

Alisha Miller

## 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 2021 Newsletter can be found on the NAIMES website or accessed directly at the following link:

[December 2021 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 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 professional 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 toward 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: Alisha Miller, Thomas Edison State University

Vice President: Keith Hauk, University of Maryland Global Campus

Treasurer: Jennifer Ehrlich, Park University

Secretary: Eric Ryan, University of Phoenix

Immediate Past President: John Aldrich, American Public University System

## NAIMES Institution Members

### **2-Year Public Institutions:**

Central Texas College

Coastline College\*

Pikes Peak Community College

### **4-Year Public Institutions:**

Central Michigan University

Thomas Edison State University

Troy University

University of Alaska System\*

University of Maryland Global Campus

University of Oklahoma

University of Arkansas Grantham

### **Private Non-Profit Institutions:**

UMass Global

Campbell University

Columbia College

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Park University

Saint Leo University

Southwestern College

Wayland Baptist University\*

Webster University

### **Private For-Profit Institutions:**

American Public University System

Capella University

University of Phoenix

\*Minority-Serving Institution (MSI)

## Committee Reports

### Nominations and Elections Committee Report

The six-member Nominations and Elections Committee is a standing committee of the organization and is charged with soliciting nominations for officer positions and conducting bi-annual elections.

For the 2021 year, there are no open positions on the board therefore the committee did not meet nor hold an election.

### Membership Committee Report

NAIMES Membership remained at 22 institutions as no new institutions were added in 2021. The institution mix continues to be a broad representation of higher education with three 2-year institutions, six 4-year public institutions, nine 4-year private, non-profit institutions and four 4-year private, for-profit institutions. NAIMES also has three Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs).

The Committee conducted the annual review of current membership in accordance with the NAIMES By-Laws and provided the assessment to the President for review and consideration.

The NAIMES membership status on Brandman University was reviewed following the alignment with the University of Massachusetts and renaming UMass Global. The committee recommended Brandman University remain on NAIMES as UMass Global. NAIMES membership voted in accordance with the recommendation.

The process for adding new members to NAIMES was reviewed and updated to include the creation of a Candidate Information Form. The Form will be populated by any new candidates under consideration for membership in NAIMES.

The Committee conducted a review of the make-up of the current NAIMES membership and provided recommendations for the consideration of adding new members. The recommendations examined the following areas: 2-year Public, 4-year Public, Private Nonprofit, Private for Profit, Vocational/Technical, HBCUs, MSIs and top TA and GI Bill Benefit recipient institutions. The discussion of adding new members to NAIMES is ongoing.

### Scholarship Committee Report

The Scholarship Committee is a 6-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 typically 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 also posted on the NAIMES website. The winners are invited to the Annual CCME Professional Development Symposium to be recognized and 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 Student Spotlight Award provides five scholarships annually to recognize and celebrate the academic achievements of our nation's military-affiliated students. Beginning in 2020, the [Veterans United Foundation](#) became our new scholarship sponsor, and NAIMES is fortunate to be partnered with this great organization. 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.

### [2020 NAIMES Student Spotlight Awards](#)

#### **Active-duty undergraduate student (less than 60 hours) Award: [Tevin \(Rachel\) Senter](#)**

Tevin is currently serving in the U.S. Navy as an Information Systems Technician. He is currently a freshman attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Aeronautics. Tevin is hoping to utilize the degree either by being a Flight Officer, through one of the Navy's Officer programs or as a commercial pilot. In his free time, Tevin loves to be outdoors or playing musical instruments.

#### **Active-duty undergraduate student (60 or more hours) Award: [Brett Cook](#)**

Brett is currently attending Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Logistics and Supply Chain Management. Brett is a Staff Sergeant in the U.S. Army serving as a Transportation Management Coordinator. In his free time, Brett enjoys working out, reading books, gardening and cooking new recipes.

#### **Active-duty graduate student Award: [Timothy Torres](#)**

Timothy is an active-duty Warrant Officer in the Army as an Assistant Army Attaché responsible for developing strategic relationships to collect, develop, and analyze information used by policymakers shaping U.S. foreign policy. Timothy is currently attending Georgetown University pursuing a Master of Arts in International Business and Policy. Mr. Torres says as he continues to grow professionally and personally, has made the transition to lifelong learner and without military educational programs and opportunities, would not be in his current position.

#### **Student Veteran Award: [Saveene Brown](#)**

Saveene is this year's Army veteran recipient and is pursuing a degree in Information Technology focusing on cyber security from the University of Phoenix. He currently works for the Department of Veterans Affairs and enjoys helping fellow veterans with their medical needs. Saveene is thankful for the military, finding much needed discipline working in various



departments which gave him numerous life skills to apply to everyday civilian life. Mr. Brown in his free time loves to work out and play basketball.

### **Military Spouse Student Award: Rebecca Popplewell**

An Air Force spouse, Rebecca is stationed in Germany with her husband and two children. She has found her true path to social work which will make use of all her passion and skills. Rebecca is pursuing a bachelor's degree with University of Maryland to hope to work with teens who are experiencing trauma and/or substance abuse issues. Rebecca's long-term goal is to operate a drama therapy center for troubled adolescents.

### **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 on policy statements and White Papers. The following are issues that impacted institutions serving DOD & VA students during 2021 and will continue into 2022:

#### **Administration:**

Negotiated Rulemakings (NegReg): On May 24, the Education Department announced more than a dozen issues for negotiated rulemaking and held public hearings on June 21-24. The Department has started two of them. A third and possible fourth NegReg are expected that will result in final rules promulgated before November 1, 2022 that would take effect July 1, 2023:

- Borrower Defense To Repayment (BDTR): Negotiators have held three sessions to date. The discussion so far has centered around forgiving as many student loans as possible by broadening the definition of misrepresentation, saying that intent to deceive by the institution is not necessarily needed for a claim, lowering the standards of proof, removing an institution's appeals process, and making it easier for group claims. When student loans are forgiven, it falls on the Department and school to determine how much the school would be responsible for.
- 90/10: The Department held public hearings on October 26-27 to start this NegReg. There will be three NegReg sessions over three months in early 2022 in time to have a final rule promulgated before November 1<sup>st</sup>. At the hearings, there were calls to include not only all federal dollars but state funds as well to be included in the 90 of 90/10.
- Future NegRegs in 2022: Of the remaining dozen issues announced, there has been much discussion regarding NegRegs in Gainful Employment, Student Metrics, Financial Liability by Company Executives & Board Members, Program Participation Agreement Review/Reform, and Change of Control beyond For-Profit Conversions.

FTC Notice to For-Profits: On October 6<sup>th</sup>, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) put 70 for-profit higher education institutions on notice that the agency is cracking down on any false promises they make about their graduates' job and earnings prospects and other outcomes and will hit violators with significant financial penalties.

Education Department Enforcement Office Established: On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Education Department established an enforcement office to identify risks proactively and aggressively to students and taxpayers. It established four major divisions: (a) investigations, (b) borrower defense, (c) administrative actions, and (d) resolutions. It will report to the federal student aid (FSA) chief operating officer and will coordinate with other federal and state partners. In particular, FSA stated plans to work closely with the FTC.

Other Key Issues: We anticipate more activity on the following issues:

- advertising, marketing, and recruiting limitations
- reviewing/revising the incentive compensation rules
- adding metrics to the college scorecard & college navigator
- developing a more extensive complaint tracking system not only at Education, but also at Defense and the VA, highlighting complaints on government websites.

## **Congress**

90/10 & 85/15: With a 3-year extension to 2023 of the implementations of the new 90/10 law that includes TA & VA (and likely more) funds in the 90, the Congress has been trying to tighten the standard even further to 85/15. The House passed H.R.4502 – Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations for the Education Department on July 29th by a partisan vote of 219-208 that changed 90/10 to 85/15. Work is currently being done on a senate version.

Instructional Spending: Congress is considering a percentage of tuition (and sometimes revenue) for instructional spending for all institutions of higher education.

## **Military Services**

Army: In February 2021, GoArmyEd was sunset as the Army's Tuition Assistance system. [ArmyIgnitED](#) was launched, but unfortunately, not without delays in going live, and issues with processing TA requests, degree plans and invoicing. Much has improved with ArmyIgnitED since its launch, however, both students and institutions are still working through some kinks and account and system errors.

Navy: In late 2021, the Navy eliminated the Regional Advisors (RAs) that oversaw geographic regions of military installations and the processing of institution base access, as well as education events and fairs. This change in oversight brought forth some issues for institutions needing to access the installations to service their students. The Navy now has [Fleet Engagement Teams](#) to support academic institutions and Sailors on installations.

In September 2021, [NAVADMIN 214/21](#) was released, which made significant changes to Sailors tuition assistance eligibility and use.

## VA

In 2021, [the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020](#), also known as the Protect the GI Bill Act, was signed into law. The Act contains landmark GI Bill legislation and the following key provisions:

- Requires risk-based reviews of schools.
- Strengthens the ban on deceptive and misleading advertising
- Restores VA education benefits to students whose school closed or was disapproved
- Stops GI Bill to college programs that are not approved for and participating in Title IV at the Education Department
- Protects students from VA debt collection for overpaid tuition
- Requires clear information to prospective students about the true costs and estimated loan debts, graduation and job placement rates, and acceptance of transfer credit; ensures students approve of enrollment in a course and are not automatically enrolled; requires schools to provide federal student loans prior to institutional loans, accommodate short absences due to service, stop same-day recruitment, stop more than 3 unsolicited recruiting contacts, and provide a point of contact for VA students; prohibits incentive compensation
- Sunsets the Montgomery GI Bill, which is less generous than the Post-9/11 GI Bill, in 2030
- Extends in-state tuition at public colleges to veterans, regardless of their residency and date of separation from the military
- Extends COVID-19 emergency relief authority
- Extends GI Bill to servicemembers on active duty pursuing a program of education on more than a half-time basis
- Includes foster children as dependents eligible for GI Bill
- Expands the Fry Scholarship to children of certain deceased servicemembers
- Expands STEM funding for health care training and stops counting STEM funding against the 48-month cap on veterans' education benefits
- Extends work-study to veterans working in Congressional offices
- Removes the 12-year cap on Veteran Readiness & Employment ("Voc Rehab")
- Extends Yellow Ribbon to overseas programs

## Summary of 2021 Work:

- Submitted military housing allowance white paper for public comment to the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education and distributed to our networks
- Proposed edits to and received approval for ArmyIgnitED Soldier SOU for institution FERPA Regulation compliance
- Tuition Assistance Cap white paper was tabled for 2021; it is schedule to be reintroduced in 2022
- Submitted a nomination for the NAIMES President to the Negotiated Rulemaking Institutional and Programmatic Eligibility Committee

## 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, a summary of the NAIMES Annual Meeting and 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 decided that there needs to be a comprehensive review and revision of the 2017 Strategic Plan to adopt in 2022. Since the current Strategic Plan was adopted in 2017 an extensive review will ensure that all sections are current and still align with the NAIMES' Vision and Mission statements. To this effort, the committee has established a timeline for the next year to break the Strategic Plan into segments, addressing each section at a time, to update and revise. To ensure that we are fully collaborative in these efforts developed a survey will be sent to each member to complete on our current SP. This will help best update the Strategic Plan with collectiveness while addressing current state of military education and updating to current practices. The committee will meet monthly and update members for review and comments before revisions are applied. The final plan will be unveiled at the NAIMES Annual Meeting in 2022.

## Communications Committee Report

In 2021, the NAIMES membership voted to create a new Communications Committee encompassing the Promotional Materials Committee, the NAIMES Newsletter Committee, and social media. Under the new committee, our first priority toward the goal of standardizing our organization's communications and increasing our social media presence was to reestablish the NAIMES Gmail email accounts for all Board positions. This allowed us to create accounts directly affiliated with the organization and move away from the need to use individual institutional email accounts for the organization's correspondence. Upon doing so, the NAIMES newsletter was transferred and recreated using the Mailchimp platform. In December 2021, Volume 6, Issue 1 was published. This year the NAIMES PowerPoint was also updated and was presented at the 2021 VA ACME Annual Conference.

## Scholarly Research Committee Report

The Research Committee worked with external researchers Drs. Megan Pifer, Jeff Sun and Heather Turner from the University of Louisville. After an initial approach of data sharing proved impractical, the group revised their approach and proposed a specific research project based on the change in the MHA rate for online classes implemented due to Covid. In a series of extended meetings, the research project was designed to examine specific research questions, focusing on whether receiving a lower MHA affects student enrollments – how many classes taken, and the modality of instruction.

The study will compare 3 groups: students getting VA benefits; other military-affiliated students (e.g., receiving TA benefits); and non-military students. We plan to compare enrollment patterns in the fall of 2019 (prior to Covid) with those in the fall of 2020, after the housing differential for OL courses was eliminated. Comparing fall enrollments in 2 consecutive years' controls for term differences, while comparing against two different groups controls for the

effects of Covid itself. If the housing differential caused students to take more courses in seated campuses than online, that should show a different pattern for VA students than others, in fall of 2019 vs. 2020.

The researchers wrote and passed an IRB based on a process in which NAIMES members collect and anonymize archival data, the research committee integrates the data sets, and then will password-protect the anonymized data set and share it with the researchers. The researchers will conduct the data analysis.

The research committee worked for several months to identify the exact data needed, and created a data dictionary and samples of each item. We reviewed the request internally, iterating the plans at each step. The committee then shared the plans with all NAIMES members at the annual meeting in Washington. The committee drafted two letters for NAIMES members to use: 1) to request approval from university administration to provide archival information for the study; and 2) to request that Institutional Research personnel complete the request to provide the data set. These letters were circulated among NAIMES members for final comments and revisions. The committee is in position to begin collecting data in the spring of 2022.

## Annual Meeting Recap

NAIMES' membership held its 2021 Annual Meeting on October 14th and 15th in Washington, D.C., returning to an in-person meeting. We added virtual attendance capability for those institutions unable to make the trip which enabled full participation from all 22 member institutions. Topics ranged from those relevant to the Department of Defense (DoD) Voluntary Education Program (VOLED) to the Department of Veterans Affairs to our own strategic initiatives as an organization. The President opened our Annual Meeting reflecting on what NAIMES accomplished in the past year:

- CCME virtual Professional Development Symposium 2021

- Newsletter

- Annual Report

- TA White Paper

- Post 9/11 Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) White Paper

- Renewed sponsorship for our Student Spotlight Award Scholarship

- Presentation from Our Community Salutes

- ArmyIgnitED SOU Consent

- IRB approval and progress toward first scholarly research study

Many of these items are ongoing. NAIMES will continue to monitor and engage with policymakers to encourage meaningful progress.

Day one of our Annual Meeting was action-packed with discussions around:

- Deployment of MHA white paper

- Roundtable with Dr. Jonathan Woods (Associate Director VOLED OASD Readiness)

- Roundtable with Dr. Pamela Raymer (Associate Director ACCESS)

- Roundtable with Mr. James Johnson, (VOLED Service Chief, Navy)

- Action items for scholarly research study

Members discussed the dissemination of the newly minted MHA white paper to best engage with the current discussions by policymakers on the topic. This remains a critical issue for NAIMES in support of meaningful policy decisions that help student veterans. The decision was made, with the support of additional CCME member institutions, to submit the white paper as a public comment to the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Education during their October 2021 meeting.

In discussions with our guests from VOLED covered a wide variety of topics that were informative and helped to strengthen the flow of information between the NAIMES members and those leading the VOLED effort. To close the discussion Dr. Woods summed up his thoughts by saying his default conception of how we approach our job is "what's best for our students and our stakeholders, and what's the balance and the mix that is the right answer for all of our stakeholders". Dr. Raymer and Mr. Johnson both shared helpful insights and took comments from member institutions regarding their respective Services and how they intersect with the work of our diverse institutions. As always, our guests were engaging, informative, and receptive during the discussions and our NAIMES members walked away with powerful insights to help us contribute meaningful effort to the benefit of the VOLED student community.

Additionally, the scholarly research committee presented an in-depth review of the current research study of the MHA differential between online and in-person learners. The focus was the part each member institution can play in contributing anonymized data. We left with some clear action items and a sense that our work together would add empirical data and analysis to the most relevant discussions surrounding how we support our Post 9/11 GI Bill recipient student veterans.

On day two of the meeting, each committee reported on their key work for the year past and the new year ahead. Two highlights were from the Membership Committee and the Strategic Plan Committee. Both committees, under a new Chair, have taken on projects to lead our organization forward in a time where many changes in the higher ed community are underway. First, our Membership Committee developed a method for evaluating member institutions that merge with other institutions. This is becoming a more common practice in the space recently and the committee's work allows us to make objective decisions about the status of these institutions' membership while remaining in alignment with our bylaws. Secondly, the Strategic

Plan Committee has taken on the ambitious task of carefully evaluating each part of our current strategic plan for its alignment with the future goals and intentions of the NAIMES organization. This work will help steer our organization for years to come.

This year's Annual Meeting solidified for all NAIMES' member institutions the importance of our work. We look forward to the year ahead where, with strengthened resolve, we will continue to add thought leadership to the VOLED landscape. Open dialogue, collaboration, and student focus will be the cornerstones of our efforts as we work together to affect positive change which sets students up for long-term success.

## The Way Ahead

As we look forward to 2022, we know that we have a lot of work ahead of us. NAIMES continues to strive to be an organization dedicated to excellence and advocacy for military-affiliated students. The revision of our Strategic Plan in 2022 will help us examine our progress on the goals that we set forth several years ago, and identify new opportunities to continue our mission and vision. We are excited to be forging ahead with initiatives that show our relevance as an organization that truly does advocate for and support the military student community. These initiatives include our scholarly research, white paper development and dissemination and continuing to build relationships and communication with the DoD and organizations that support the same community.

In early 2022, NAIMES will host a roundtable discussion at the CCME Annual Professional Development Symposium in San Antonio, Texas around the topic of defining quality post-secondary education. We are eager to hear the perspectives on this hot topic from our peers and colleagues and to assist the Services with how to measure and assess this difficult topic.

Please reach out to us with ideas, questions or issues that we can work together on and support each other on to be the very best institutions and organizations we can to support the educational goals of servicemembers, veterans and their families. Here's to a productive and healthy 2022!