

Testimony on March 13, 2013 1:30 p.m.

Senate Committee on Education

House Bill 2181

Chairman Steve Abrams, Vice Chairman Tom Arpke, ranking minority member Anthony Hensley, and Committee members

Thank You for allowing the Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars, VFW, to testify today in strong support of HB 2181.

I am Brad Stauffer the Dept of Kansas Veterans of Foreign Wars Representative for the Kansas Veterans Claims Assistance Advisory Board. I am also a retired Army Sergeant Major with a total of 38 years of service in the United States Army and the Kansas Army National Guard. The last eight years I was assigned as the State Schools manager and Operations Sergeant Major.

I know on other House bills that I testified for, many questions were asked "How do we determine what military education acquired by distance learning can be accredited, and who does it." I will attempt to answer that for you.

Distant learning in the military is twofold.

1. On line college courses for college degrees or trade school certifications.

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2. On line or distant learning for military formal schools, courses, classes and information sessions.

First, just a little about on line college courses. Most universities have an on line program for obtaining a degree that military personnel can take in their spare time, state side or overseas. This program is the same for civilian and military alike.

Second, distance learning for military courses is another can of worms. There is a system in place for these courses to be accredited for college credits. The Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript (AARTS) is a computerized transcript system that produces official transcripts for eligible soldiers upon request. The transcripts combine a soldier's military education and job experience with descriptions and college credit recommendations developed by the "American Council on Education" (ACE). Other services have the equivalent, Navy/Marine has the SMARTS system and the Air force has the Community Collage of the Air Force. By the end of this month DOD will launch a new Joint Services Transcript (JST). Each service will announce its scheduled release date. The merge of each services system under a single name and program is a major accomplishment for the Military Voluntary Education Program and was enthusiastically promoted and supported by (DANTES)

DANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional education Support) which is a DOD organization created to help Service members pursue their educational goals and earn the degrees or certification they deserve while continuing to serve their country. DANTES offers information and support for numerous "Non-Traditional" ways to pursue these academic and vocational goals including information about courses taught through distant learning such as, Audio Cassette and or Video Tapes, E-mail, internet, CD-ROM, podcast, print based correspondence, and satellite television.

DANTES offers several support programs. The one we use most is the Military Evaluations Program. This program provides academic credit recommendations for training completed while in the service. The results of these credit recommendations are also published in the ACE Guide. These evaluations are provided in the form of official military education and training transcripts. There are many other programs to gain transcripts, but the two, AARTS and DANTES are the most used.

When a military person has accumulated their transcripts they need to see their Command's Education officer to help apply with a college of their choice that participates in the AARTS program, and have their military education accredited.

I personally received 86 usable credits through Washburn University toward my degree with this program.

As of yesterday there were 6847 distant learning military courses, classes and information sessions available. They range from 8 phases of DL plus on site flight school for pilots at Ft. Rucker AL, to 6 phases of DL plus clinical for Register Nurses at Ft Sam Huston TX. Many of these courses are over 200 hrs long each.

I hope I have not totally confused you on how distant learning and formal school military training and education can be accredited.

Respectfully,

Brad Stauffer