



July 18, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

I apologize for not being here myself to explain my bill, AB 201. My family had a vacation planned for this week. Thank you for your understanding.

The idea for AB 201 was brought to me by an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran who shared the experience many veterans face when trying to complete their higher education. Many student veterans receive financial assistance, such as the federal GI Bill, that have specific time limits. When they are unable to complete their programs because classes they are required to take are already full, this extends their educational timeframe beyond the allowed window. They will need to pay for their tuition expenses for any further time it takes for them to graduate.

Additionally, student veterans face other obstacles in completing their degrees or programs as they transition from active duty to a college classroom. Because of their military service, these students are already behind other people in their age group, and some may be facing the added burdens found in raising their families and working full time as they struggle to improve their futures.

AB 201 simply adds students who are veterans or currently in military service to the list of other students who are entitled to priority registration, such as athletes or disabled students. Each college system has its own policy as to who gets priority registration



and how it is processed. Already, UW-Oshkosh has extended it to include veterans. However, not all campuses have agreed to do so on their own. The substitute amendment that passed the Assembly includes students at Wisconsin Technical Colleges as well as the UW System.

I have worked with the University of Wisconsin System, the Technical College System, and fellow Assembly Colleges & Universities committee members as we addressed concerns with regard to the effective date, expanding the bill to include all student veterans and active members of the military. With these changes, I have gotten the go-ahead and endorsement from our higher educational systems.

Veterans groups are highly supportive including the American Legion Commander, United Council, UW Madison Vets for Vets, the UW Board of Regents, and UW Colleges and Extension Chancellor as well as individual veterans testified in favor of the bill at the Assembly hearing.

The bill that passed the Assembly unanimously was amended at the request of the Wisconsin Technical College System to specify the bill becomes effective for the Spring 2014 semester that begins in January 2014.

I believe this is a good bill and would appreciate your support for AB201. Thank you.



## Recent UW Activities & Events for Veterans

### UW-Eau Claire

- 1) UW- Eau Claire hired a full time benefits coordinator and program manager to certify enrollment for veteran benefits and to advocate for veterans on campus.
- 2) UW- Eau Claire hosted a You Served--We Care Student Veterans Conference in February 2011, to provide forum for professionals who serve student veterans in the higher education and for student veterans from across the state and to gather to share ideas and discuss issues affecting veterans. Conference sessions focused on military education benefits, the value of military experience in career planning and navigating the VA medical system.
- 3) On an ongoing basis UW-Eau Claire hosts and sponsors multiple events honoring veterans including the Welcome Home program on Reintegration, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and MST, the Veteran Print Project and the Field of Honor flag display.
- 4) UW- Eau Claire established the UW-Eau Claire Veterans Center in their student union to provide a meeting place on campus for veteran students, faculty and staff, to honor them for their service to the country and to be a place of welcome for veterans on campus.
- 5) UW-Eau Claire hosts a federal Veterans Administration Telehealth station to provide mental health counseling and case management to veterans and lessen the need to travel to VA medical centers.
- 6) UW-Eau Claire engages in a wide range of veterans outreach & support activities:
  - Surveying non-returning veteran students to assess why they had not returned
  - Recognizing veterans at football game;
  - Sponsoring lunches for women veterans; donating to the Women Veterans Stand down project at the American Legion; inviting a therapist on campus from the LaCrosse Vet Center to speak with women veterans
  - Holding a veteran student orientation in the summer
  - Two students selected as guardians on Freedom Honor Flight.
  - Veterans Day programming included presentation by a 25 year Air Force Veteran who discussed his service and 7 years as POW.
  - Veteran's office recognized and awarded CARE Award for support of Adult returning students.
  - Started fund for veterans to receive personal tutoring
  - Veteran's office recognized for support of students with disabilities
- 7) UW-Eau Claire participated in the Field of Honor and Honoring Our Veterans presentations on 9/13 and 9/14 <http://www.uwec.edu/CE/programs/veteran.htm>.

- 8) UW-Eau Claire kicked off a campaign with UW Foundation to target Veteran alumni and veteran friendly businesses in area for contributions to provide scholarships for veterans, children and dependents.
- 9) UW-Eau Claire Hosted "Remembering Our Fallen" from 10/28-11/2  
<http://rememberingourfallen.org/>
- 10) UW-Eau Claire plans to provide employment assistance to veteran alumni and develop a military experience "portfolio" course so all students can have their prior learning reviewed for military credit. Also a goal is to develop tours of local business to promote the hiring of veterans.

#### **UW-Green Bay**

- 1) UW-Green Bay hosts an Annual Chancellor Veteran Reception with dynamic speakers, refreshments and door prizes. This is the Chancellor's chance (along with the community) to personally welcome back students who have been deployed and say thanks to all veterans in the community. We also have varied displays during the reception including the Wisconsin Traveling Wall (pictures all Wisconsin residents who have given the ultimate sacrifice in the latest conflicts), Cammo for Quilt Project, POW table and music from our talented music students.
- 2) UW-Green Bay schedules regular Student Information Sessions for our students to update them on veteran benefit changes.
- 3) UW-Green Bay hosts an annual State Veteran Benefit Open House for our area.
- 4) UW-Green Bay donates/collects items for Vets for Vets care package project each Fall to send to military personnel on active duty.
- 5) UW-Green Bay has started a mentor program to bring current students together with prospective student's right at the start by offering a campus tour and connecting them with the Vets 4 Vets club.
- 6) UW-Green Bay invited LTC (Retired) Cynthia Rasmussen to Campus in 2011 to speak about veterans reintegration issues. This included a panel of veterans who shared their story.
- 7) UW-Green Bay purchased books from the Veteran Book Project for school library and a display in Lawton Gallery on Campus.

#### **UW-La Crosse**

- 1) UW- La Crosse hired a full time educational benefits coordinator to administer Federal and State VA programs, as well as appointed an Academic Adviser who works specifically with Veterans and transfer students.
- 2) UW-La Crosse opened a Veterans Service Center which provides a space for Veterans and their dependents to hang out or study. The Center is equipped with several computers for Veterans to use for homework, as well as a big screen TV for relaxation.
- 3) UW-La Crosse was named a Military friendly school by G.I Jobs magazine for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row.
- 4) UW-La Crosse offers a separate orientation program for veterans titled From Combat to College in the Fall and Spring.
- 5) UW-La Crosse has a very active Veterans Club, which meets weekly and holds events on campus and out in the community.

## UW-Madison

- 1) UW-Madison Division of Student life hosted a career and internship fair in September 2012 with the participation of over 40 major employers participating including Google, Ford Motor Company, US Bank and Mayo Clinic
- 2) UW-Madison is implementing a 1-credit hour veteran's transition course in spring 2013 and fall 2014 to help ensure that veterans have smooth transition from military culture into civilian and university culture.
- 3) UW-Madison provided a Veterans Welcome desk at 41 separate orientation sessions.
- 4) UW-Madison student veterans volunteer at the Middleton Good Neighbor festival in conjunction with the local VFW.
- 5) UW-Madison student veterans unveiled a giant American flag on the field during the Badgers game vs. University of Nevada Las Vegas
- 6) UW-Madison student veterans host a Fall Resource Fair to share information about on and off campus resources agencies as well as boost involvement in the Student Veterans of American chapter.
- 7) UW-Madison student veterans planted 3,000 U.S. flags on Bascom Hill to commemorate the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks.
- 8) UW-Madison hosted an evening with Kyle Hausmann-Stokes. Stokes was awarded the Bronze Star for service in Iraq and produces soldier-centered including the PTSD short "Now, After" is currently used in hospitals, universities, police stations, and courtrooms across the country.
- 9) UW-Madison participates in the Remembrance Day National Roll Call on Veterans day to honor those killed in action in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.
- 10) UW-Madison Vets for Vets hosted a screening and talk with director Heather Courtney whose film "Where Soldiers Come From" at the experience of young men who fight overseas wars and then return to their small hometown in Michigan.
- 11) UW-Madison's Waismen Center is sponsoring a ground breaking clinical trial research project with student veterans to determine the impact of different Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) treatments. A news video highlighting the study can be seen here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYYYBA7HdSM>

## UW-Milwaukee

- 1) UW-Milwaukee constructed a new space in the Union for our veterans. The brand new Military and Student Veterans Resource Center serves as a general meeting area and offers supportive programming.
- 2) The 4<sup>rd</sup> Annual UW-Milwaukee 2012 Veterans Day Recognition event: A week-long observation kicked off on Nov. 12 at 7 a.m. on Spaight's Plaza with the National Roll Call, a reading of the names of U.S. military members who have lost their lives in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. A Ribbon cutting Ceremony took place at the Military and Veterans Center. Invited guests include Gerald V. Kapinos, the founder and director of Student Veterans of America association from Washington DC, and other dignitaries.
- 3) UW-Milwaukee hosts a new website focused on veterans that has an inclusive listing of general information, news & current events, campus and community resources. <http://www4.uwm.edu/veterans/>

- 4) UW-Milwaukee offers veterans only classes covering military to campus transition (Ed Psych 101-098) this fall and a vets writing workshop (Eng 218-001).
- 5) UW-Milwaukee's IRB is currently vetting several research proposals that focus on veterans. One of these research proposals is titled: "Assessing the Needs of OEF/OIF Veterans During the Transition Process from the Military to Civilian Life."
- 6) UW-Milwaukee offers a Guitars for Vets or G4V class at no charge and no credit to veterans enrolled or working at UW-M for health and wellness. Students receive a free guitar for participating.
- 7) UW-Milwaukee Office of Residence Life is planning a Veteran/Military Living Learning Community (Panther Barracks) planned for launch on campus fall of 2013.
- 8) Chapter of Student Veterans of America (SVA) honored as outstanding student organization by the University. This organization has seen immense growth in membership and event participation.
- 9) The Co-President of UW-Milwaukee's Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter has been chosen to participate in the Leadership Institute at Google's Headquarters. This was an invitation-only training/workshop hosted by Purdue University's Military Family Research Institute.
- 10) UW-Milwaukee was chosen as one of only 50 schools nation-wide to attend the launch of the "Got Your 6" program in Washington, DC this past July. [www.gotyour6.org](http://www.gotyour6.org)
- 11) UW-Milwaukee is partnering with the Pat Tillman Foundation and 49 other schools to collect data for a six-year longitudinal study of student veteran persistence – Completing the Mission.
- 12) UW-Milwaukee's Veterans Advisory Council plans on-going activities including committees for website, education, communication & marketing, and vets day week events.
- 13) UW-Milwaukee holds an Annual Benefits Open House for students, vets, and the community that connects participants to both federal and state agencies and the services that they offer for veterans and dependents.

#### **UW-Oshkosh**

- 1) UW-Oshkosh football coaching staff and players assisted World War II veterans as they prepared for an Old Glory Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. Approximately 80 veterans from the region took a day-long tour of the D.C. memorials before returning to Oshkosh, where they were again assisted by the UW Oshkosh volunteers.
- 2) UW-Oshkosh ranked 42 out the top 100 Best for Vets colleges nationally by Military Times Magazine for financial assistance, academic flexibility, and campus culture and support services. (2011)
- 3) UW-Oshkosh opened a Veterans Resource Center with veteran lounge, veteran computer lab, office/ meeting space.
- 4) UW-Oshkosh created a Veteran Resource Coordinator (staffed by Shawn Monroe) position to facilitate outreach and coordinate student services and non-education VA resources.
- 5) UW-Oshkosh's 2012 Veterans Week activities included Speakers (LTC Schulz, DOD Yellow Ribbon program), Film screening (The Welcome), Art Exhibits, a flag display for each veteran on campus, and a Student Veterans Association video game tournament

- 6) UW-Oshkosh implemented peer mentoring program. Each incoming student is paired with a trained student veteran mentor to assist with integration on campus.
- 7) UW-Oshkosh 's Student Veterans Association raised approx \$700 for the Boys and Girls Club of Oshkosh through a branch vs. branch "Penny War".
- 8) UW-Oshkosh hosted a veteran listening session on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011 with Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, Secretary of Safety and Professional Services Dave Ross, Secretary of Workforce Development Reggie Newson and Secretary of Veterans Affairs John Scocos.
- 9) UW-Oshkosh implemented on campus office hours and services for the County Veteran Service Officer, the Vet Center Counseling Office and for Department of Veterans Affairs Case Managers.
- 10) UW-Oshkosh implemented veteran specific orientations and a priority registration program. Student veterans who complete the orientation and meet with their academic advisor are eligible for the first date of registration for their academic class (Fall, 2012).
- 11) UW-Oshkosh in conjunction with the Veterans Resource Center and the UW Oshkosh career services office created a "professional skills" workshop to assist veterans in résumé writing, job searching, professional networking, and interviewing.
- 12) UW-Oshkosh hosted a veterans week (Nov 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>) that includes a Student Veterans Association video game tournament, Vietnam War discussion Panel, Film screening (Lioness) and discussion panel, the Remembering our Fallen Exhibit, presentation and exhibit on veteran nurses, and the Iraq in Retrospect historical symposium.  
<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/21924/pulitzer-winning-journalist-to-keynote-nov-10-iraq-war-symposium/>
- 13) UW-Oshkosh's Veterans Resource Center honors each branch of service with a small birthday celebration on the branches recognized birthday.
- 14) Two UW Oshkosh Student Veterans Association leaders were selected to attend the national leadership workshop at Google Headquarters sponsored by Student Veterans of America (July 2012).

### **UW-Parkside**

- 1) UW-Parkside and the WDVA co-hosted a Veterans Benefits Open House in 2011-2012.
- 2) UW-Parkside has over 30 student members in the Parkside Military Veterans Organization.
- 3) UW-Parkside has established a Veteran Services Improvement Work Group to analyze current veteran services and support; identify potential gaps in service; and develop recommendations for program enhancements.

### **UW-Platteville**

- 1) UW-Platteville's Campus Programming & Relations, in conjunction with the UW-Platteville Veterans Club annually hosts a series of programs for Veterans Week in November.

- 2) UW-Platteville's School Certifying Official, Counseling Office and the Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital conducted a VET NET ALLY training seminar in spring 2012. The training for faculty and staff raises awareness of veterans' specific issues and provide resources on how to assist students in crisis.
- 3) The UW-Platteville Registrar's Office is working with the new Chief Diversity Officer to hire a Director of Veterans Services and open a dedicated Veterans Resource Center.
- 4) UW-Platteville Veterans Club organized multiple fundraisers and donated approximately \$2,200 to the Wounded Warrior Project.
- 5) UW-Platteville Veterans Club conducted a silent auction and generated over \$9,000 for an alumnus seriously wounded in Afghanistan.
- 6) UW-Platteville staff attended the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators conference in fall 2012 to better connect students with their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.

### **UW-River Falls**

- 1) UW-River Falls has a full time staff member to assist veterans with transition, certifying and an office solely dedicated to veterans on campus.
- 2) UW-River Falls has three VA-Work Study students to help with the daily operations of the office.
- 3) UW-River Falls has a Vet Center therapist that meets with students weekly.
- 4) UW-River Falls provides faculty and staff training at various times throughout the year.
- 5) UW-River Falls has a week-long Veterans Week that offers various activities for students, faculty and staff.
- 6) UW-River Falls surveys veterans and dependents annually to ensure we are providing the best possible services to them. If anything needs improvement we work on it.
- 7) UW-River Falls has an active veteran club which is heavily involved with the local community (Habitat for Humanity)
- 8) UW-River Falls provides important notifications to veterans on social media to keep all students in the loop.

### **UW-Stevens Point**

- 1) UW-Stevens Point has a full time Veterans Coordinator who is a resource for both perspective and current students. She helps facilitate the admissions and financial aid application process and is an advocate for Veteran students to other offices on campus. The coordinator also meets individually with all new veterans to explain VA benefits and the services that are available on our campus.
- 2) Because many veterans choose to live off campus due to their age/life experiences, we collaborated with the UW-Stevens Point Veterans Club and the Diversity and College Access Office to host a "Welcome to UWSP" for new veterans. The informal event was held just prior to the start of classes this fall to provide an opportunity for veterans to socialize with one another. Food and soft drinks were provided. Campus tours were also given.

- 3) UW-Stevens Point provides dedicated space for a representative from the regional Vet Center to provide free walk in counseling one day each week.
- 4) UW-Stevens Point Vets Club Office is located in the Dreyfus University Center. The space has two computers, a printer, phone, and a “safe space” for them to gather. In this “safe space” the Tutoring-Learning Center provides several hours of tutoring each week. As veterans become comfortable with tutoring they can, if needed, receive more specialized tutoring at the Tutoring-Learning Center. The student organization unit gives the Vets Club an annual budget for programming and outreach. Diversity and College Access and Registration and Records supplement the budget as needed.
- 5) The UW-Stevens Point departments of History, Art, and Communications are planned a Combat Paper and Warriors Writing workshop in spring 2013.
- 6) UW-Stevens Point Registration and Records in conjunction with the Dreyfus University Center hosted the “Always Lost Exhibit”. This traveling exhibit is an emotional moving pictorial and literary representation of the Iraq War. Among its many pictures is a mosaic of thumbnail pictures of each veteran who has been lost. The exhibit includes the 2004 Pulitzer Prize-winning Iraq War combat photographs by David Leeson and Cheryl Diaz Meyer. This exhibit has traveled throughout the country, from its origins at Western Nevada College to Washington, DC.  
[http://www.wnc.edu/always\\_lost/](http://www.wnc.edu/always_lost/)
- 7) The UW-Stevens Point veterans advisory committee represented by student services units (i.e. Tutoring-Learning Center, Admissions, Financial Aid, Billing, Counseling Center, Diversity and College Access, Registration and Records, Student Academic Advising, Disability Services, Career Services and a member of the Veteran’s Club) that meets to share Veteran services on campus.
- 8) UW-Stevens Point students and deployed veterans who leave school and attend advanced individualized training (AIT) for the Army Reserve and National Guard are placed in a course that keeps their UWSP email accounts active. Students can connect with their advisors and on their return to UWSP, register on-line with their peer classmates as if they have not left school. For deployed veterans, this account is kept open for up to two years.



### UW-Stout

- 1) UW-Stout hosts a number of veteran related events, including: presentations and speakers, Veterans Day ceremonies, National Roll Call, and an annual Military Appreciation Day (this event offers free food, refreshments, and admission to a UW-Stout football game for Veterans and military Service Members).
- 2) UW-Stout has implemented a Veterans Council that meets quarterly to address veterans’ issues on campus.
- 4) UW-Stout hosts an annual Veteran Student Fair that brings together veteran resources from the university, state and federal organizations, and the local community.
- 5) UW-Stout is now offering Telehealth services in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Telehealth is a secure, confidential, on-line video conferencing system for psychiatric services. This allows veterans who have established psychiatric

care to conduct all follow-up appointments at UW-Stout to help cut down on travel distance and costs. Please see the following link for more information: <http://www.telehealth.va.gov/>

- 6) UW-Stout was named a Military Friendly school by G.I. Jobs Magazine. According to G.I. Jobs, the ranking places UW-Stout in the top 15 percent of all colleges, universities and trade schools nationwide in services offered to veterans(Awarded 2010, 2012, and 2013).
- 7) In 2010, UW-Stout ranked 78 out the top 100 Best for Vets colleges nationally by Military Times Magazine for financial assistance, academic flexibility, and campus culture and support services.
- 8) UW-Stout has an official campus veteran organization, the UW-Stout Veterans Club. This organization sponsors events on campus and in the surrounding community. It serves as a support system for veterans at UW-Stout and provides a means for them to network with fellow veteran students and their local community.
- 9) **UW-Stout Veteran Services has a Military to UW-Stout Career Preparation webpage. This provides insights to veterans who are interested in pursuing careers that relate to their military training. They can review this list and identify degrees at UW-Stout that build off of the skills they already have. More information can be found at<http://www.uwstout.edu/veterans/careers.cfm>.**
- 10) UW-Stout hired an additional half time Veterans Certifying Official to process veteran benefits and advocate for veterans at the university.

#### **UW-Superior**

- 1) UW Superior opened a Veterans & Non Traditional Student Center in September 2012 where the Vets Club holds meetings.
- 2) The part-time veterans benefit coordinator position was made into a full-time position and placed at the new center.

#### **UW-Whitewater**

- 1) UW-Whitewater provides a lounge for veterans inside the Anderson Library. The comfortable gathering space is equipped reading material and Skype-enabled computers that let veterans stay connected to relatives and friends in arms who remain stationed overseas. (2010, ongoing)
- 2) UW-Whitewater hosts an annual open house for veterans and salutes veterans with week of events including movie screenings, a resource fair, free football tickets and half-time recognition, free lunches and dining facility access and Art Gallery Exhibits that all students attend. (Annual)
- 3) UW-Whitewater has a Policy on Class Absences Due to Military Service: Students shall not be penalized for class absence due to unavoidable or legitimate required military obligations not to exceed two (2) weeks unless special permission is granted by the instructor. Students are responsible for notifying faculty members of such circumstances

as far in advance as possible and for providing documentation to the instructor to verify the reason for the absence

- 4) UW-Whitewater offers an annual Art exhibit with reception that highlights various military themes each year. Working with the Wisconsin Veterans Museum we have showcased the "Shadow Boxes" of fallen Wisconsin soldiers.
- 5) UW-Whitewater keeps our deployed veterans active in our computer system for up to two years, including their deployment, so they do not have to readmit to the University upon their return to UW-W. While on deployment, they can access all their e-mail, computer applications or take classes, meet electronically with advisors and instructors.
- 6) UW-Whitewater College of Education and Professional Studies instituted a policy that COEPS students who have already been admitted to Professional Education and get deployed will have their spot saved in the program, provided they meet all currently existing regulations/requirements for the program upon reinstatement.
- 7) UW-Whitewater instituted a "mini-orientation" for veterans/military servicemembers as part of the orientation process. This session allows them to meet other veterans, get information about resources and benefits on campus and meet with the Graduate Student Veteran advisor. Additionally, there is a separate resource table at Orientation check-in for veterans and family member to make sure all paperwork is turned in and/or complete and can set up appointments with the School Certifying Official.
- 8) UW-Whitewater will offers a military only section of Freshman English 102 and is exploring additional courses targeted to veterans and service members.

## UW-Colleges

### UW-Baraboo/Sauk County

- 1) UW-Baraboo/Sauk County formed a new campus veterans club in fall of 2011. The club, in conjunction with the SGA held a chili cook-off during Veterans Day activities that included area military recruiters setting up static displays of military equipment. The campus dean spoke, as did a student-vet. The proceeds of the chili cook-off were donated to a local veterans group that was sending care packages to deployed active duty service men and women. During the spring term the club held another fund raiser, this time donating the money to an area food pantry.
- 2) UW-Baraboo/Sauk County will be conducting another chili cook-off this year with the proceeds helping to fund a veterans' essay writing contest in memory of a former employee and veteran who lost his battle with service connected cancer this year.
- 3) UW-Baraboo/Sauk County is fortunate to have a student veteran as a videographer who records testimonial interviews about the quality of the education students receive at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County.

### UW-Fox Valley

- 1) UW-Fox Valley invites veterans to receive a free breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria on Veterans Day. At noon that day in the Student Union, students read the names of the men and women from Wisconsin who have been killed during Operations New Dawn, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom. Refreshments and information from the Winnebago County Veterans Service Office is also available as well as give-a-ways for vets and a chance to meet and talk with the UW Fox School Certifying Official.
- 2) UW-Fox Valley hosted a veterans table at the all campus picnic to recruit students for the veterans club as well as to educate faculty, students and staff about veteran services.
- 3) UW-Fox Valley's veterans club hosted a flag football battle and invited anyone to sign up for a team from their favorite branch of the service. The Marines won 1<sup>st</sup> place! A cookout was also held and proceeds were going to be donated to the vets student group and local vets. The group plans to hold meetings every Wednesday.
- 4) UW-Fox Valley is planning a brown bag series where presenters will help educate faculty about veteran student needs within and out of the classroom.

## **UW-Marathon**

- 1) UW-Marathon County Veteran's Club has participated in the National Roll Call event on Veteran's Day. Starting at 8:00am until roughly 5:00pm, students, staff, and faculty take turns reading names of soldiers who "gave their last full measure of devotion" while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The National Roll Call project seeks to expand the grassroots effort to make Veteran's Day on every campus a special time of reflection and appreciation.
- 2) UW-Marathon County Veteran's Services Coordinator holds a Veteran's Open House at the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester for Veteran students to come and ask questions about college, campus life, and their education benefits. Representatives from the Marathon County Veterans Services Office, Wisconsin Department of Veteran's Affairs, and The Vet Center were also present to answer questions from the students.

## **UW Marionette**

- 1) UW-Marionette is in the process of starting a veterans club and is hosting a speaker from the Wounded Warriors Project to spark interest among student veterans.

## **UW-Marshfield/Wood County**

- 1) UW-Marshfield/Wood County will be hosted the "Remembering Our Fallen" exhibit from November 13 – 30 in our Library. This is an exhibit of all 127 Wisconsin soldiers who have given their life in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our Veterans Club will be part of the opening ceremony which will take place at noon November 13. They will be doing the Presentation of the Colors and leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **UW-Sheboygan**

- 1) UW-Sheboygan launched a Student Veterans of America chapter in the Fall of 2010. The group was very active in the 2010-11 academic year. They have a large wooden plaque on the United States and for a small donation of \$10 a tag is engraved with the name of the VET, branch and where served. There was a dedication ceremony in April of 2011. A picture of the dedication was in the Sheboygan Press. In 2011-12 the group held a brat fry to raise funds for scholarships.
- 2) UW-Sheboygan conducts outreach to students to try to encourage participation in the veterans club.

## UW-Waukesha

- 1) UW-Waukesha has an official campus veterans' club, the UW Waukesha Student Veterans Association. This organization meets weekly. It seeks to offer study groups, group events & outings, personal support, and promote community volunteerism. They sponsor a Veterans' Day speaker each November, with a social/refreshments period afterward. They sometimes sponsor speakers on veterans' related topics at other times during the year, and invite both campus and community to attend.
- 2) UW-Waukesha established a Veterans' Resource Center office on campus, staffed by student veterans, to assist current and prospective veteran students with questions and concerns about school and veteran benefit issues. T
- 3) UW-Waukesha will unveil a permanent art installation honoring veterans during the campus Veterans' Day celebration on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

## UW Systemwide

- 1) UW System maintains an extensive **Veterans Wisconsin Education Portal** (<http://veterans.wisconsin.edu/>) to welcome veterans home and make it as easy as possible for to access benefits, make the transition from military service to college, and find the right fit from among Wisconsin's public colleges and universities. (2011, ongoing)
- 2) UW System developed the **Wisconsin GI Bill Data System**, a secure on-line data reporting and benefits calculation system that provides more accurate benefit determination and simplifies administration for campuses. The system went live in spring 2011 and is now used by WTCS campuses as well. (2012, Ongoing)
- 3) **Benefits:** UW institutions are now serving nearly 4,000 veterans and over 1,500 children and spouses. **Each veteran, child and spouse** with benefits goes through a separate intake process to gather information on their military history, individual benefit eligibility, course history and academic plans. The interaction of state and federal veterans' benefits requires an extraordinary level of coordination and effort between Veterans Certifying Officials and the Financial Aid, Registrar, Bursar and Academic Advising Offices on campus. (Ongoing)
- 4) **Hold Harmless / Supplemental Payments:** To protect veterans from the potential loss of benefits under the federal Post-9/11 program campuses paid out nearly \$1.8 million in hold harmless payments in FY 12. Calculating supplemental payments is an extraordinarily labor intensive and technically complex task that is done up to 4 times a year for every veteran eligible for a supplemental payment. (Ongoing)
- 5) **Statewide Committee on Veterans Issues (SCOVI):** At least once a year the UW System brings together representatives from the federal Veterans Administration, the state Department of Veterans Affairs, the state Department of Military Affairs, the Technical Colleges, student veteran organizations and campus staff to investigate and share issues related to student veterans in the UW. SCOVI recommends appropriate policy, shares best practices and innovative programs that enhance the recruitment, retention, and successful graduation of student veterans. (Ongoing)
- 6) **UW Veterans Certifying Officials host an intensive 2 day workshop** at the Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers (WACROA) meeting every June. How best to serve student veterans in the face of continually changing federal and state benefits is the overarching theme. (Annual)



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

## DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

May 28, 2013

To whom it may concern,

Our organization is currently in the process of studying AB 201. Student-veterans in Wisconsin have turned to The American Legion for support and we believe that providing them priority registration at University of Wisconsin campuses is an exciting possibility.

The proposition that student-veterans be granted priority registration, the same as student athletes and honors level students, strikes us as a reasonable request. There are also a large number of National Guard and Reserve service members who are attending college. They have schedule conflicts and expectations imposed upon them by virtue of their military obligations. Giving them the flexibility to register for classes that best meet their schedule will help ensure that they can pursue their education and continue to serve.

The education benefits that veterans earn by virtue of their service have a specific time limit in which they must be utilized; roughly four years' worth of school. Today the average student takes four and a half to five years to graduate. The expectation is that student-veterans are to complete their degree requirements within that window of opportunity. This can seem more daunting due to their different social and educational experiences. Allowing student-veterans to register for the classes they need, when they need them, is only giving them a better chance at completing their education and moving on to different opportunities.

Consequently, I am personally endorsing the concept of priority registration for student veterans at University of Wisconsin campuses to our leadership and anticipate that we will be able to establish an official position regarding the proposed legislation shortly.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Wayne W. Jensen  
Commander



**FULFILLING OUR PROMISES**  
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

***STATEMENT OF  
AL LABELLE  
DAV LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR  
STATE OF WISCONSIN  
ON BEHALF OF  
ASSEMBLY BILL 201  
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE  
ON TRANSPORTATION,  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
VETERANS AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
WISCONSIN STATE SENATE  
JULY 18, 2013***

Chairman Petrowski, Ranking Member Carpenter and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and our 16,000 members, all of whom are wounded and injured wartime veterans, I am pleased to present our views on Assembly Bill 201 (AB 201).

AB 201 ensures that students who are veterans or members of the United States armed forces are given priority in registering for courses at any University of Wisconsin campus or technical college.

DAV's single purpose is to empower veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. Using that standard, DAV supports the general intent of AB 201.

DAV also provides free, professional assistance to veterans of all generations in obtaining VA and other government benefits earned through service. We do this with National Service Offices that are staffed by veterans who have been wounded and injured while on active duty.

Given our background, DAV understands, both personally and professionally, that wartime veterans and active duty personnel serve not as individuals, but as family units.

Using this standard, DAV respectfully requests future consideration be given to making qualified spouses, unremarried surviving spouses and children of wartime veterans, who have been awarded at least 30 percent service-connected disability rating from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, also eligible for priority registration.

Before I conclude my testimony, with your permission Mr. Chairman, I wish to mention that the 2013-2014 Wisconsin DAV Legislative Program has been given to the Clerk of the Committee for distribution to the Committee members for your files and reference.

For your convenience, the packet also contains a cover letter that includes our five (5) state legislative priorities.

DAV appreciates the opportunity to submit our views on Assembly Bill 201. This concludes my testimony, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer any questions related to my statement and the views I have expressed on behalf of DAV.