VetSuccess on Campus (VSOC) is a collaborative initiative between selected universities and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with the purpose of providing a supportive, on-campus environment where student-veterans may gather to obtain assistance and peer support. The goal of the program is to assist student-veterans in making a smooth transition to college life and to successfully complete their educational programs. In 2013, the University of Houston was selected by the VA as a site for the placement of one full-time, experienced VSOC counselor. Mr. Ralph Harrison has been serving UH student-veterans since January, 2014, providing services relative to academic support, personal and career counseling, access to VA benefits, and referrals for disability, rehabilitation, and psychological counseling. Mr. Harrison brings a wealth of experience in serving veterans, including ten years serving the citizens of Georgia as a Mental Health Counselor and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. From the onset of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mr. Harrison was assigned to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio (2003-2007) to assist injured service members.

As a result of Mr. Harrison’s leadership, the VSOC program and Veterans Services at UH have strengthened and/or developed creative and collaborative relationships with such organizations as the United Way, the Greater Houston Network of Veteran Affairs Professionals, the Wounded Warriors Foundation, Student Veterans of America, and on-campus departments, including the Women’s Resource Center, Learning Support Services, and the Center for Students With Disabilities. Because of these outreach efforts, Veterans Services at UH has created a stronger referral network for student-veterans and has shared best-practice experiences with many in the administration of veterans services.

“Being on the campus of UH has been an exciting and rewarding assignment,” stated Mr. Harrison. “I have learned there are may aspects of student involvement and resources associated with attending a large university. It is a winsome experience to see student-veterans utilizing the resources available in Veterans Services and the VS work-study students sharing their transition experience or just lending an ear with new student-veterans. I hope to see the office of Veterans Services grow in size and resources during my tenure.”

As the VSOC program continues into the new academic year, we remind and encourage student-veterans to take advantage of the broad array of support services available through VSOC and Veterans Services, as well as the opportunity to simply enjoy the camaraderie of fellow veterans. We salute all UH student-veterans and thank them for their sacrifices and service on behalf of this great nation.
UH student-veterans and the campus community will learn whether UH has been designated as a “Military Friendly” university on September 23, based on a national survey conducted by Victory Media, Inc. Approximately 850 of the nation’s 4500 colleges and universities were named as “Military Friendly” last year, according to Victory Media. UH’s participation consisted of the completion of a comprehensive survey addressing support services, physical facilities, and retention rates for student-veterans. Watch for announcements following September 23. The envelope please ...

**Veterans Educational and Tutoring Services Returns**

Veterans Educational and Tutoring Services (VETS), a student organization established during the spring semester, 2014, will continue to offer free peer tutoring for student-veterans in a broad array of academic disciplines. With an emphasis on the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), VETS volunteers will begin tutoring sessions early in the fall semester. VETS peer tutoring is an excellent resource for student-veterans who want to get off to a strong start in courses that might otherwise prove extremely challenging. VETS tutoring can focus on specific courses, including MATH 3321, ECE 2300, CHEE 2331, PETR 2311, PETR 3313, and others, depending on the needs of the student-veteran. Apply for services early to ensure that you will get a tutor for your particular course(s). For additional information, contact VETS at vetsuh.director@gmail.com. For veterans who would like to become tutors to fellow vets, contact: vetsuh.secretary@gmail.com.

**“Readings and Reflections” Memorial Day Program**

On May 27, Veterans Services and members of the campus community celebrated and honored the men and women who serve and those who have died serving in our nation’s armed forces. Attendees shared readings and/or reflections as related to the service and sacrifices of others who have served in the military. They chose from poetry, excerpts from books or articles, personal remembrances, histories/letters, and other published and unpublished sources.

“Readings and Reflections” is held on the day following the Memorial Day holiday.

**In Memoriam**

Tawana Hairston, and a son, Hayden. He was an 82nd Airborne Division Paratrooper assigned to Fort Bragg, N. C. Among his numerous awards were the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, and Meritorious Service Medal. In addition, Sam played football for UH from 1997 to 2000 as a defensive lineman.

Military information posted Wednesday, August 13, 2014, by Drew Brooks, editor for Stars and Stripes
Student Veterans of America (SVA) at the University of Houston will participate in Welcome Week this fall semester for the first time. Members will sell popsicles to new and returning students, as well as pass out information about SVA. In addition, the organization will host a social mixer at Calhoun’s Rooftop Bar and Grill, welcoming new and returning student-veterans.

SVA is affiliated with the national SVA organization with the purpose of improving the college experience for student-veterans and dependents. The UH chapter of SVA was established in January, 2014. Petroleum engineer senior and SVA Vice-president Fontaine Wilson is one of the founding members.

“(We) started the SVA chapter when we saw that there was a great need for an organization that would speak on behalf of veterans,” said Wilson. “It has everything good that you miss from the military: camaraderie, cool people, talking trash. And it doesn’t have what you don’t miss: PT, cleaning, and bad food.”

“Being a student-veteran makes it difficult to assimilate and feel accepted,” said Pre-optometry senior and SVA Secretary Christina Klein. “The SVA has given me the camaraderie I’ve been missing and the tools I need to succeed academically as well.” Wilson adds that the popsicle sale and the social mixer are only the beginning.

“There’s so much happening with the SVA this school year,” Wilson said, a Navy veteran. “We’re having workshops, company meetings, and branch birthdays in the following months.”

Klein, a Marine veteran, believes this new academic year for the SVA will be fantastic.

“This is something the university should have been doing a long time ago for veterans,” said Klein. “It provides a warm welcome for veterans and their families who are new to the campus community.”

For more information on joining and upcoming events, get connected to “Get Involved” through your AccessUH account, or visit www.facebook.com/svaofuhouston.
Now listen up. I’d like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the staff members of Veterans Services and to the many student-veterans with whom I have come in contact over the past year. My association with Veterans Services has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career, and it is my wish that the friendships fostered during this period will continue well into future years. I firmly believe that there is no greater reward than to provide a measure of support to those who have courageously and unselfishly stepped forward to defend our way of life. May Veterans Services continue to fulfill its vital role in the campus community, and may all of our veterans realize success in the pursuit of their educational and life goals. Thank you for the privilege.
As you were.

David B. Small
Interim Director (Ret.)
Veterans Services
dsmall@uh.edu

The first graduation ceremony honoring University of Houston graduating veterans was held on campus on April 18, 2014. Each graduate was presented with a patriot cord and invited to wear it during the all-campus general commencement ceremony. During the general commencement, audience members were informed that the patriot cords signified that the wearer was a veteran. Over 200 veterans, family members, and friends attended the inaugural UH graduation ceremony for veterans. Patriot cords were presented by Lawrence J. H. Schulze, U.S. Navy Campus Liaison Officer. The keynote speaker for the event was William Sherrill, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.).

“It felt really good that they did this and took the time to honor veterans,” said human resources major and Marine Alma Santes-Vargas. “When you come to college, you really don’t connect well with the typical college student, but you connect really well with fellow service members,” she added.

Supply chain logistics major and Marine veteran Alexander Amador said, “I think that’s one of the biggest things — making connections with other veterans. The ceremony was great.”

Planning for the Veterans Graduation Ceremony was a collaborative effort, including coordination among the offices of Veterans Services, academic colleges, and the President’s office. Given the enthusiastic response of the honorees and attendees, graduation ceremonies for veterans are slated to be held twice per year in conjunction with the overall UH commencement exercises.

The Reveille is published three times each year in April, August, and December. The editor reserves the right to select and edit articles for publication. Send comments regarding this newsletter to vets@uh.edu.

MARK YOUR EVENTS CALENDAR

Here is a partial schedule of events sponsored by Veterans Services (VS) or Student Veterans of America (SVA). All UH student-veterans, whether SVA members or not, are invited to all events.

AUG 26: SVA Ice Cream Fundraiser, PGH 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.
AUG 28: SVA Mixer, Calhoun’s Rooftop 6:00 - 9:00 pm. Meet and greet for new and current student-vets.
AUG 29: SVA Football Tailgate at the new stadium. Location and time TBD.
SEPT 2: SVA Financial workshop, 6:00 pm at Veterans Services.
SEPT: 9/11 Commemoration Ceremony (VS). University Center. Date TBD.
SEPT 18: SVA Resume workshop, 6:00 pm at Veterans Services.
OCT 4-5: Houston Stand Down (SVA). Volunteer and help Houston’s homeless vets.
OCT 7: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and Center for Students With DisABILITIES (CSD) workshop (VS). 6:00 pm at Veterans Services.
NOV 11: Veterans Day (VS). Veterans Services will present a program honoring all veterans. Location and time TBD.
DEC: Graduation Ceremony for Student-Veterans (VS). Date and location TBD.

For additional information about any of these events, please contact Veterans Services.

UH professor and U. S. Navy Campus Liaison Officer Lawrence J.H. Schulze presents Akinleyimu Blessing with a graduation patriot cord at the April 18 Graduation Ceremony for Veterans.