Within the past two months, a coalition of faculty, staff, and administrators have focused on issues dealing with veterans returning home from war. Taking the lead on these issues has been Agnes DeFranco, Assistant Vice President for the Undergraduate Studies Program. She is responsible for the review of undergraduate programs, assessment of the core curriculum, developmental education, and issues of retention and graduation. She put together a coalition of departments to address many of the issues returning veterans may encounter in admissions, financial aid, and retention, just to name a few. Various faculty and staff attended several meetings, workshops, and seminars. On October 16, DeFranco; Jeff Fuller, Associate Director of Admissions; and I, Program Manager of Veterans’ Services Office (VSO), were invited to The Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors meeting for a workshop by the Enrollment Services Efficiency Committee (ESEC) to discuss opportunities for higher education to increase the enrollment and degree completion of Texas’ military veterans. The Texas Veterans Commission informed our office about an initiative and proposal to put veteran educational centers throughout the Texas Region in every college and university. They intend to use our office as a regional representative.

Other initiatives by Agnes DeFranco include reviewing the DANTES Program, which is a credit-by-examination test at colleges and universities. She plans to discuss specific academic subjects with Patrick Daniel, Executive Director of Learning & Assessment Services, and Amanda Payne, Staff Manager of Admissions. The idea is to find a way to adjust the military in-service credits to insure university accreditation for the returning veteran. UH staff member, RoLana Starr in Enrollment Services, will look for ways to modify the admissions application to include check boxes that identify veterans, spouses, and other dependents in order to track them better for data and retention. The Veterans’ Services Office, after researching and reviewing other universities around the country, suggested making the VSO a one-stop-shop by including the certification process at its facility.

With all of these efforts toward the returning veteran, we anticipate changes in policies and procedures that better assist these men and women who will be our next leaders. We believe the changes will ease the burden of transition from military to civilian life by improving the academic journey. The university has the resources to accomplish new and innovative processes for our veterans and to enhance the mission of becoming Tier One in our region. Let’s keep up our efforts to offer these deserving citizens a good education, a Cougar Education!
By Brian Campbell

When Mr. Allen Grundy asked me to take part in the Veterans History Project, I obliged but had little knowledge of what the project was or what its goals were. After a few questions and a little research online, I realized how far-reaching this project went. The Veterans History Project is a nationwide project, started eight years ago by the Library of Congress, which preserves written and oral stories from veterans around the country. With the help of the School of Communication, the UH Veterans’ Services Office is able to do its part, interviewing local veterans of all branches of the military who have served in the nation’s past conflicts.

My part in the project was small; I simply called veterans to confirm a time that was convenient for them, and upon arrival they signed a few forms I handed them in the staging area. While waiting for their interview, I had the chance to talk with them and check out some of their mementos.

The first person I spoke with was former Marine Cpl Elby Wade Hudson, who served in Vietnam with a Recon unit back in 1964. He seemed a little uncomfortable at first, but after he learned that I am seeking a commission via ROTC and currently serving before Jan. 1, 1977.

○ You served on active duty for at least one year after Dec. 31, 1976.
○ You never received Chapter 34 benefits.
○ You elected VEAP.

• You gave money to VEAP while on active duty, and you have money available for benefits. Contributions had to be made before April 1, 1987.

• Length of duty requirement depends on the date you enlisted or entered active duty.
○ If first-time enlistment is after Sep. 7, 1980, or active duty as an enlistee or officer is after Oct. 16, 1981, you must have completed 24 continuous months of active duty, with certain exceptions.

○ Your discharge or release from active duty during eligibility is under conditions other than dishonorable.

For further clarification and additional information, go to http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH32/CH32_Pamphlet.pdf

1-800-827-1000 Houston
1-888-GI-BILL-1 or
1-888-442-4551

Congress authorized the post-Vietnam era Veterans Educational Assistance Program under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 32. It is also known as VEAP or Chapter 32. VEAP makes educational and training benefits available to persons who paid into the program while they were on active duty.

The eligibility requirements are as follows:
• You must not be eligible for the Vietnam Era GI Bill (Chapter 34), unless:
  ○ You were only eligible for Chap. 34 because of your active duty for at least 181 consecutive days, with one day occurring before Jan. 1, 1977.
  ○ You served on active duty for at least one year after Dec. 31, 1976.

○ You served on active duty for at least one year after Dec. 31, 1976.
○ You never received Chapter 34 benefits.
○ You elected VEAP.

• You gave money to VEAP while on active duty, and you have money available for benefits. Contributions had to be made before April 1, 1987.

• Length of duty requirement depends on the date you enlisted or entered active duty.
○ If first-time enlistment is before Sep. 7, 1980, and active duty is before Oct. 16, 1981, whether an enlistee or officer, you must have served a continuous period of 181 days or more.

For further clarification and additional information, go to http://www.gibill.va.gov/pamphlets/CH32/CH32_Pamphlet.pdf

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The University of Houston (UH) has over 1,000 student-veterans. The Veterans Collegiate Society (VCS) at UH is here as an opportunity for those students and any UH student interested in bettering the college experience for veterans. VCS gives veterans an opportunity to network, make new friends, enjoy leisure activities, and participate in beneficial seminars and programs.

Currently, the VCS has 100 members and is growing every semester. We hold an annual paintball tournament, cosponsor informative resource fairs and special programs, and provide an environment for veterans to meet other veterans. We recently cosponsored the Veterans Resource Fair and Housing Seminar on November 11 and the Veterans Ability and Achievement Conference on November 12 during Veterans Awareness Week.

Former Marine Sgt James Shotwell’s story was equally as gripping. After expending all the draft deferments that he could through education, he signed up for service to take his brother’s place in Vietnam. Originally, he opted for the Air Force, but wound up in the Marines through a paperwork error. While in that country, he frequently experienced combat and was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in a firefight. Post-war, he became interested in the history of African-Americans who served this country in our prior conflicts. Mr. Shotwell currently resides as a board member for the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum located on Southmore Street in Houston, Texas.

I felt fortunate to have met these veterans and was inspired by the stories they shared with me. As someone who plans to continue his military career as an officer, I felt personally moved by their accounts. I look forward to continuing this endeavor by helping in any way to get these fine Americans’ stories heard.

Upcoming Event

**AUDIO SEMINAR**
"Veterans Services: Ensuring Success from Application to Graduation"
Tuesday, December 16, 2008
12:00 Noon - 2:30 PM
UH University Center
Bluebonnet Room 250
Live Question and Answer Session

Merry Christmas,
Happy Holidays,
and
Happy New Year

By Christopher Webb

We are based out of the UH Veterans’ Services Office in room 268 of the University Center. Our staff advisor is Allen Grundy, program manager of the Veterans’ Services Office. When you walk into the office, you’ll surely be able to find at least one member of the VCS.

We look forward to increasing our membership and welcome all UH students who care about the condition of the student-veteran at this university.
Graduating Veterans

We’d like to help you celebrate this milestone in your life. If you’re graduating this semester, let us know so that we can recognize you in the next issue of The Reveille. In addition, do you have words of wisdom that you’d like to pass on to the student-veterans you are leaving behind? If so, let us know in 300 words or less. Suggested topics:

- If I Knew Then What I Know Now
- What I Learned in the Military That Has Helped in College or Civilian Life
- How the UH Veterans’ Services Office Has Assisted Me

Keep in touch with the VSO after graduation. We’d like to know how you’re progressing with your career so that we can spotlight your successes and use them to encourage others.

To be considered for inclusion in the next issue, submit article at least three weeks prior to the first day of the scheduled publication month. Article should be in MS Word format and sent to the Veterans’ Services Office e-mail address.

Congratulations Graduates

Eric Valdez
BBA Degree
Major: Business Management

Allen Grundy
M.Ed. Degree
Major: Higher Education - Supervision