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Resources, Opportunities for Veterans Abound at Pennsylvania's Community Colleges

HARRISBURG— Veterans of the US Armed Services – and their family members – receive a wide range of educational opportunities, benefits and support services at Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges.

“Pennsylvania's community colleges are dedicated to meeting the unique needs of veterans, their dependents, and those currently serving our country, and we appreciate the service and sacrifice of our servicemembers,” says Elizabeth Bolden, President & CEO of the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges. “The array of services provided by our colleges address a wide array of issues ranging from academic, to financial, physical and social needs.”

Many schools offer a Resource Center, Service Departments, or office dedicated to services for veterans on their campuses, where veterans, service members and spouses or dependents can receive assistance with their transition to college life, learn about educational benefits and work study opportunities, or meet with other veterans. The departments also provide referrals for campus and community services for veterans. At some colleges, veterans can receive college credit for some of their military training, including basic training.

Seven of Pennsylvania's 14 community colleges – Community College of Allegheny County, Bucks County Community College, Butler County Community College, HACC – Central Pennsylvania's Community College, Northampton Community College, Community College of Philadelphia and Reading Area Community College – were named to the 2015 Military Friendly Schools® list in late October, which means that they exhibit leading practices to support military students.

Five schools have official chapters of the Student Veterans of America: Community College of Allegheny County, Butler County Community College, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Montgomery County of Community College and Community College of Philadelphia. Several other schools have clubs for veterans that are unaffiliated with national groups.

Four schools – Community College of Beaver County, Bucks County Community College, HACC – Central Pennsylvania's Community College, and Montgomery County Community College – have been selected to participate in the US Department of Veterans Affairs' Yellow Ribbon Program for the 2014-15 academic year. The program allows approved institutions of higher learning and the VA to partially or fully fund tuition and fee expenses that exceed the established thresholds under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

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The **Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges** is a voluntary membership association for Pennsylvania's community colleges. Its members include the college presidents, members of the colleges' boards of trustees, and key college administrators. The Commission represents the interests of and advocates for the collective needs of the community colleges to federal and state policymakers. For more information, please visit www.pacommunitycolleges.org.