



**Minnesota**  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

STATEWIDE

PROJECT/REQUEST

LOCATION

## Systemwide

Veterans Re-entry  
Education Program

\$2,300,000



### Project at a Glance

- Implement phase 2 of Minnesota's groundbreaking reintegration pilot project
- Provide a seamless credit and transfer experience from military to higher education
- Integrate existing military training with civilian training to provide military competency and civilian credentials
- Create a collaborative network of mental health care to assist students who are returning veterans
- Develop a reintegration research and training center at a state university

### Project Description

To meet the needs of returning soldiers, the Minnesota Army National Guard created a groundbreaking reintegration pilot project. Through 2007, approximately 4,000 troops from Minnesota have participated in the various aspects of this national model for reintegration training.

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system has been an active partner in the reintegration project, together with the Minnesota Army National Guard, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies. In less than two years, the system developed policies to remove

barriers to veterans returning to college and participated in developing the Minnesota GI Bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature, signed by the governor and implemented July 1, 2007.

Currently, 44 campuses of the system's 53 campuses across the state have established veterans resource centers to ease their transition and help ensure their academic success. Thousands of faculty and staff have attended training on issues related to veterans and their families, and nearly all system colleges and universities have become Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges, or SOC for short.

At the invitation of the Minnesota Army National Guard, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities presented higher education information to soldiers at demobilization and to soldiers and families at family preparation events, family reintegration activities and 30-day follow-up sessions.

The importance of the system's higher education presentations is underscored by a survey conducted during demobilization events: Almost 80 percent of the 2,600 Minnesotans returning with the 1/34 Brigade Combat Team expressed an interest in beginning or returning to higher education. In addition,



*Minnesota Veterans returning from active duty benefit from counseling, education and training at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.*

current data suggests that 60 percent or more of these returning Minnesota troops seek higher education through one of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

To further accommodate these Minnesota veterans and military members, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system needs to develop a computerized system to enable registrars and faculty to carry out a comparative analysis of courses and experiences to manage the credit transfer process. The

system's colleges and universities currently use military transcripts and American Council on Education Guides. By building a systemwide database to store learning outcomes and military course information analyzed by the campuses, the information will be available for use by other faculty and registrars as they make decisions on similar military specialty training.

Second, many soldiers receive specialty training that also could qualify for higher

education credits in various career and academic fields. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, working in partnership with the Minnesota Army National Guard, will develop a model to identify the additional training and education needed for specialty training to qualify for college credits and develop “bridge” classes to complete the credit requirements. Effectively integrating military training with college requirements could enable soldiers to earn credits while they serve as well as when they return home.

Third, greater mental health needs were identified among returning National Guard and Marine Reserve troops than among returning active duty soldiers and Marines, a U.S. Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health reported in June 2007. National Guard members and military branch reservists often bring mental health issues with them to college. The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities will work with its military and veterans services partners to develop a mental health resource network for system students, soldiers and their families.

Finally, the system requests assistance with developing a center for civilian and military studies to be located at one of the seven Minnesota state universities. This center would be responsible for conducting research on the impact of reintegration on individuals, families and communities, as well as on the interaction between the military and local communities, both in times of peace and war. The center’s research will be used to advise military and civilian authorities on reintegration issues, and the center will develop academic programs relevant to these issues and collect and analyze data. Complementing this expanded programming is the expectation that additional existing service members will be reached through representatives and counselors at the state colleges and universities, WorkForce Centers and community service agencies.

#### **Project Contact:**

Linda Baer  
Senior Vice Chancellor,  
Academic and Student Affairs  
Minnesota State Colleges and  
Universities  
Phone: (651) 282-5515  
Fax: (651) 296-0872  
[linda.baer@so.mnscu.edu](mailto:linda.baer@so.mnscu.edu)

#### **Partners:**

- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Minnesota Army and Air Force National Guard Joint Command
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Veterans Employment Services



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STATE COLLEGES  
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WELLS FARGO PLACE  
30 7th St. E., Suite 350  
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-7804

ph 651.296.8012  
fx 651.297.5550  
[www.mnscu.edu](http://www.mnscu.edu)

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