

April 1, 2020

Dear Partner in VA Education Benefits Programs:

I sincerely hope you and your circle of family and friends are whole and well and are able to support each other during these COVID-19 days. I know during stressful and challenging times, the Florida State Approving Agency (SAA) is very appreciative of you, our partners in education. We know you not only directly serve our veterans well, but you do it with both passion and compassion.

Great and historic legislative changes have recently been made across numerous areas, to include enabling VA, the SAAs, schools and employers assist our veteran students during this pandemic, as detailed in Senate Bill 3503. Please see the COVID 19 FAQs, applicable to your facility (below), provided by VA to VA Certifying Officials and dated April 1, 2020, for specific details pertaining to processes related to veteran beneficiary student enrollment, during this pandemic.

Please be aware that although the Florida SAA remains working, we have transitioned to operating solely as teleworkers. This means we no longer receive hard copy mail and we are only able to receive communications and documents from you, electronically. To facilitate this transition, the SAA now has a generic, office email repository known as the SAA Outreach box. To submit requests for approval, to include all required documents (catalog, handbooks, addendums, SAA approval forms, etc.) to us using this mailbox, the VA Certifying Official, or facility official in charge, should please send the emails and supporting documents to SAAOutreach@fdva.state.fl.us (maximum combined PDF files - 25MB).

Other items which may prompt you to notify the SAA, and require you to email documentation to us, include changes to: grading methods, Standards of Academic Progress (SAP) policy, academic calendar, temporary facility closure, permanent facility closure and changes to VA Certifying Officials, or Facility Official, in charge.

General approval inquiries should continue to be sent to your individual SAA Program Specialist, and not to this office Outreach mailbox. Please see the SAA Map for contact information.

If you submitted hard copy documents to the SAA during the month of March, or later, we ask that you please send them to us again using the new SAA Outreach mailbox noted above. Please do not email the documents directly to the Program Specialists.

Please also note, as time evolves, the Florida SAA will post updates and guidance for you on our webpage which can be found under Benefits and Services, within the www.FloridaVets.org site.

Questions related to veteran student enrollment certifications, VA-ONCE, VA payments, VA Workstudy, VA procedures as well as administration of VA education benefits must continue to be directed to VA. You may contact VA's Florida Education Outreach Office at FloridaEducationOutreach.VBASPT@va.gov and you may speak to a VA representative by calling the VA Education Call Center at (888) 442-4551. Please also go to VA's website which can be accessed at <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/covid19faqs.asp> for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs webinars, updates and guidance pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As each of one of us works within leadership's guidance for safety, please realize that you are not alone during this crisis. Please reach out to your partners in the SAA and VA as well as your colleagues and the

numerous people within your circle, via email or phone. In other words, stay connected, our dear colleagues.

With greatest appreciation for all of you,

The Florida SAA Team