



July 16, 2014

Dear Colleague,

We are writing today to thank you for all that you do to support our nation's Veterans and Servicemembers, and encourage your institution to take an additional step to help support their postsecondary success by signing on to the "[8 Keys to Veterans' Success](#)."

This summer, we celebrated 70 years of investment in the education and economic prosperity of America's Veterans as a result of the "Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944"—what we know more commonly today as the "GI Bill®." Over the years, the "GI Bill®" opened unprecedented access to opportunities for education and career readiness for more than 22 million beneficiaries. It has changed lives and led to promising futures. It is a living legacy—one that we continue to build upon through our many robust interagency efforts to strengthen postsecondary success for Servicemembers and Veterans today. These include Executive Order 13607, "Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members"; the Veterans Affairs' VetSuccess on Campus program; the Department of Education's Veterans Upward Bound and Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success programs; and the federal interagency redesign of the military's Transition GPS program. Our Departments are also offering a number of important tools and resources to help Servicemembers access their educational benefits, including the [GI Bill® Comparison Tool](#) and a new [Federal Student Aid website](#) with information focused on student loan benefits for the military community.

As we build on our collective work around these important efforts, we encourage you to join the over [400 colleges and universities](#) that have already affirmed their commitment to the voluntary initiative "[8 Keys to Veterans' Success](#)." These are concrete steps postsecondary institutions can take to assist Veterans and Servicemembers in transitioning to higher education, completing their college programs, obtaining career-ready skills, and achieving success.

The result of collaboration at an interagency gathering of more than 100 education experts, these strategies include creating a culture of connectedness on campus, coordinating and centralizing campus efforts for all Veterans, collaborating with local communities and organizations to align services and supports for Veterans, implementing an early alert system, utilizing a uniform set of data tools to collect and track information relating to Veteran students (i.e., retention and degree completion), and developing systems to ensure sustainability of effective practices. To learn more about ways you can affirm support for the 8 Keys, please visit the [8 Keys registration site](#), or e-mail 8keys@ed.gov. To those who already have signed on to the 8 Keys initiative, thank you.

As more Servicemembers return to civilian life, the urgency to ensure that they have the support they need to reach their educational and career goals grows each day. Thank you for all that you do to help our Veterans and Servicemembers achieve a promising future.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Allison A. Hickey in black ink.

Allison A. Hickey
Under Secretary for Benefits
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Handwritten signature of Ted Mitchell in black ink.

Ted Mitchell
Under Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education