

# **Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC)**



**SOC, established in 1972, is a consortium of national higher education associations and approximately 1750 institutional members.**

**Functions in cooperation with the Department of Defense, the Military Services, including the National Guard and the Coast Guard, to help meet the voluntary higher education needs of servicemembers.**

# SERVICEMEMBERS OPPORTUNITY COLLEGES

## Sponsoring Organizations

American Association of State Colleges and Universities  
American Association of Community Colleges

## Cooperating Organizations

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers  
American Council on Education  
Association of American Colleges and Universities  
Association of American Universities  
Career College Association  
Council for Higher Education Accreditation  
Distance Education and Training Council  
Education Commission of the States  
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities  
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education  
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities  
National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges  
State Higher Education Executive Officers

U.S. Air Force  
U.S. Army  
U.S. Coast Guard  
U.S. Navy  
U.S. Marine Corps  
National Guard Bureau  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense



# **Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Mission**

- **Serve as vehicle to help coordinate postsecondary educational opportunities for servicemembers**
- **Strengthen liaison and working relationships among military and higher education representatives**
- **Advocate for flexibility needed to improve access to and availability of educational programs for servicemembers**

# SOC Principles

- **Servicemembers should share the same educational opportunities available to their civilian counterparts**
- **Educational programs that are provided by appropriately accredited colleges and universities**
- **Educational programs that are flexible in terms of scheduling, academic residency, course transfer, and acceptance of non-traditional credit**

# **SOC Consortium Criteria for Membership**

- **Reasonable with Transfer of Credit**
  - **Minimum loss of previously earned credits**
  - **Avoid coursework duplication**
- **Reduced Academic Residency Requirements**
  - **25% maximum for most programs**
  - **30% for schools providing undergraduate degrees 100% online**
  - **No final year or semester requirement**
- **Credit for Military Training and Experience**
  - **Award credit for military service schools**
  - **Recognize and use *ACE Guide* in evaluating military training experiences**
- **Award Credit for Nationally-Recognized Testing Programs**
  - **Award credit for at least one nationally-recognized testing program such as CLEP (General and Subject Exams), DSST (DANTES Standardized Subject Tests), ECE (Excelsior College Examinations)**



**SOC's mission  
requires sending AND  
receiving messages within the  
higher education community  
and being in touch with current  
developments related to veterans and  
military students**

**What are the major topics/areas of  
concern from the field?**

# **Major Topics/Areas of Concern**

- **Aggressive marketing strategies of educational competitors**
- **Sufficient staffing and funding for the existing workload**
- **Affordability of college for military students/family members**
- **Added layers of bureaucracy and administrative procedures within institutions and voluntary education community**
- **Tuition equality for Reserve Component called to active duty**
- **Heightening military and veteran issues as an institution priority**
- **Fair treatment of returning “warriors” by faculty and college administrators**

# **Heightened Concern about Marketing and Recruiting Efforts to Military Students**

**Feedback from military educators and students signals concern for aggressive marketing efforts to enroll military students**

**The technology explosion opens numerous new communication channels to military students; a double-edged sword of possibilities and potential misuses**

**Military Student Bill of Rights created to inform veteran and military student populations that they have basic rights to satisfactory college marketing, admissions, and student services practices before enrolling.**



# Scenario 1 — Couldn't say NO

A college recruiter contacts a servicemember about his college's programs. Surprised and flattered, the servicemember says yes, he'd like to pursue a degree with that college.

However, after talking with an education counselor, the servicemember changes his mind—and tells the college recruiter that he is no longer interested in the college. But the calls keep coming—at home, at work, on his cell phone. The servicemember gets two or three e-mails a week—all urging the servicemember to change his mind and enroll.

# Scenario 2 — Personal Information “or else”

Wanting to learn more about the college, a student finds that she has to input her name, address, work phone number, home phone number, and e-mail address to access information on the college’s home page. Without providing all of that information, the prospective student can’t see the degrees offered by the school, its catalog, its college policies, its accreditation status, or even course costs.

## Scenario 3 — College for free!

“Free College Tuition for Military Students!” screams the headline in the college’s ad.

“Send for more information about how you can earn a degree at no cost.” (When student inquires, no mention is made Tuition Assistance or other education benefits to which the student may be entitled, nor are limitations or obligations that go along with “free” mentioned.)

## Scenario 4 — no way out

A student signs up for a online course with a college. She chooses to withdraw—she knows she’s going to be deployed soon, but can’t figure out how to “un-enroll.” She tries phone calls and e-mails—but gets no response or confirmation from the school. So she logs on to the first online session of the course to announce that she is NOT taking the course. But the college bills her for the full amount of the course because she attended one class before dropping it.

# Contact Us



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