GI Bill Benefits for Students Learning Online
3/23/20

Issue
Federal emergency legislation signed into law on March 21, 2020, allows students who receive GI Bill benefits to maintain full benefits, including housing allowance and subsistence allowance, during conversion of face-to-face programs to online in response to COVID-19 is provided by Federal emergency legislation.

Impacted
Campus financial aid staff; veterans’ affairs staff.

Effective Dates
March 1, 2020 – December 21, 2020

Background
Veterans who take all of their courses in a term at a distance, receive only half of the Basic Allowance for Housing that veterans who enroll completely on-campus or in a mix of face-to-face and online courses. Concerns were raised that the veterans who participated in face-to-face courses that were converted to online courses would find their GI Bill benefits cut in half. Concerns were also raised about the impact on veterans’ ability to receive GI Bill benefits given that institutions must follow a designated process of institution approval by the Veterans Education and Training, the State Approving Agency (SAA) (which specifically oversees institutions serving veterans) in the institution’s state, and approval for changes in modality for the courses. Additionally,

On March 21, 2020, emergency legislation was signed by the President to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to continue educational assistance through December 21, 2020, for programs that have been converted to online due to an emergency or health-related situation. The types of assistance include monthly housing stipends and housing allowances.

Recommended Action(s)
- **Students**: No action necessary. Payments will remain the same through December 21, 2020. The VA will provide updates to students.
- **Institutions**: VA will provide training sessions to provide guidance and will work closely with schools to ensure that enrollments are accurately certified and timely processed. Making a record of all changes to maintain educational continuity will be beneficial.

Applicable regulations
- **S.3503** – Senate Bill signed by the President on 3/21/20

Resources
- **State Approving Agency (SAA)**
- **Basic Allowance for Housing**