Dear Student Veterans,

Congress recently passed Senate Bill 3503 to ensure you continue to receive educational benefits without interruption even if schools have moved to remote instruction. Thanks to this legislation, GI Bill® students will continue receiving the same Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) until Dec. 21, 2020 or until the school is re-opened for in-person classes.

We know there are many questions regarding this legislation, COVID-19 and the impact to students receiving VA Educational Benefits. The following slides have been created to help answer some of the questions that our office has been receiving. If you have additional inquiries after reviewing these slides, please RSVP for our upcoming virtual office hours:

Office Hours: Thursday 4/2/2020 - (12p - 1pm)
Office Hours: Thursday 4/9/2020 – (12p – 1pm)

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael W. Allison, U.S.M.C.
Director/SCO, Military and Veteran Affairs
Senate Bill 3503 in Detail

Q1: What impact does Senate Bill 3503 have on Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) like FAU?

A1: When an IHL, such as FAU, converts an approved “face-to-face” course to online instruction (remote learning), the course will continue to be recognized as a “face-to-face” course. The law is in effect from March 1, 2020 until December 21, 2020 or until the school is re-opened for in-person classes.

A1b: The bill affects all VA education payments, including the Post-9/11 GI Bill®, Montgomery GI Bill®, Dependents Education Assistance and the Vocational Rehabilitation & Education (VR&E) programs.

Q2: Does the senate bill allow veteran students to enroll in Non-College Degree (NCD) education or training programs or courses that were not previously approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA)?

A2: No, only programs and courses previously approved by the SAA will be approved for veteran education benefits.
Your Housing Allowance & VA Work Study

Q3: How does remote instruction affect my Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA)?

A3: Students will continue to receive the same MHA they were receiving for “face-to-face” courses although course instruction is now remote or online.

Note: Non-COVID-19 related changes must still be reported to the VA. If you withdraw from a class or change your enrollment status, your monthly housing allowance may be affected. Students who are required to withdraw due to verifiable exposure to or diagnoses of COVID-19 or military activation should follow the university’s Exceptional Circumstances Withdrawal (ECW) process. See Q8-Q9.

Q4: Will I be able to continue my VA Work Study position while the university is under “remote instruction” only?

A4: For your safety and the safety of other students, we are discontinuing all VA Work Study positions. We are currently awaiting guidance from the VA on whether VA Work Study students may work remotely. If approved, you will be contacted by your supervisor.
Enrollment Status, Grades & Tuition/Fees

Q5: Will my enrollment status be changed from “face-to-face” to “online”?

A5: SCOs have been directed by the VA not to submit enrollment adjustments for the current term unless you withdraw from your course(s). The new law applies equally to current FAU students and new students who enroll in VA approved “face to face” courses that are now being offered remotely until December 21, 2020 or the school resumes in-person classes.

Q6: I heard I can elect “Pass/Fail” instead of a grade. Does the VA require me to have a certain GPA?

A6: No. There has never been a GPA requirement for GI Bill® programs. SCOs are required to report whether you add/drop courses, withdraw from the term, are placed on academic probation/suspension/expulsion, or suspended for conduct. We do recommend you speak to your academic adviser before electing the pass/fail option since some college programs do not permit pass/fail grades.

Q7: How does remote instruction affect tuition and fee payments?

A7: Tuition and Fee payments will not change due to COVID-19.
Help! I Have to Withdraw from my Courses!

**Q8:** What if I become ill due to COVID-19 and cannot continue with my classes?

**A8a:** The onset, severity, and length of the illness will determine your options. We encourage you to first contact your instructors to determine whether an “Incomplete Grade” is an option. An incomplete grade will not affect your monthly housing allowance.

**A8b:** If you are unable to continue in your classes and an incomplete grade is not an option, you may be eligible for an Exceptional Circumstance Withdrawal. Please click [HERE](#) for the ECW process. Your last day of attendance must be reported to the VA. The law does not permit the VA to continue MHA beyond the last day of attendance.

**Q9:** What if I am activated by the U.S. National Guard, Reserves or other military branch as a result of COVID-19 and must withdraw from all of my courses?

**A9:** Students activated for military service should follow the ECW process and supply a copy of their official orders.
What about Summer?
Summer Terms & Covid-19

**Q10:** Will FAU be offering Summer Courses?

**A10:** YES! Summer Terms 1 and 2 are open for registration. You may register at any time as long as you do not have a registration hold. Terms 1 and 2 will be restricted to remote and online courses. No courses will be offered in-person. Term 3 has yet to be determined. You will receive notification as soon as a decision is made.

**Q11:** Why can’t I find the summer “Request for Certification” form?

**A11:** The VA is asking all schools to refrain from processing enrollment certifications in VA Once until they make a decision regarding summer. Once we receive approval from the VA, the certification request form will be made available on https://www.fau.edu/vets/.

**Q12:** It takes time for my veteran education benefits to pay-out. How do I receive a deferment for tuition and fees?

**A12:** Once you register for classes, contact our office at (561) 297-4725 or veterans@fau.edu for a deferment.
I’m NEW to FAU and want to use my Benefits

Q13: How do I use my veteran education benefits during COVID-19?

A13: Obtain your Certificate of Eligibility (COE) from the VA and complete FAU’s admission’s process by clicking HERE. Once admitted, you will be able to register for courses and begin the certification process. However, the VA has requested that we refrain from processing enrollment certifications in VA Once until they make a decision regarding summer. Once we receive approval from the VA, the certification request form will be made available at https://www.fau.edu/vets/.

Note: Please make a PDF copy of your COE. You will need to submit a certification request form and your COE for every semester you plan to use your educational benefits.

Q14: What do I do if I am out of state or do not meet Florida residency requirements for tuition purposes?

A14: Federal and state regulations allow us to provide in-state tuition rates. Please complete an “Out Of State Tuition Waiver” also available on https://www.fau.edu/vets/.
Full-Time Status for Summer

**Q15:** I heard that FAU won’t be offering in-person classes for summer. What will be considered full-time if everything is remote or online?

**A15a:** Summer terms 1 and 2 will be restricted to remote and online courses. No courses will be offered in-person. Term 3 has yet to be determined. We hope to be re-opened for in-person classes for summer term 3. FAU will provide details regarding summer 3 when they become available.

**A15b:** Senate Bill 3503 is in affect from March 21, 2020 until December 21, 2020 or until the university is re-opened for in-person courses. This means that “face-to-face” courses that are currently offered as “remote” will continue to be paid as “face-to-face”. However, the VA has not made decisions regarding “face-to-face” courses not currently offered as remote that are converted to online modality for the summer. They also have not determined what combination of courses will constitute full-time or part-time status. We recommend adhering to the VA credit requirements until they provide further guidance. Full-time status for undergraduate programs is 12 or more credits. Full-time for graduate programs is 9 or more credits.
No Required Courses for Summer

**Q16:** I do not see any of my program required courses being offered in summer 1 or summer 2. What happens now?

**A16:** We continue to wait for guidance from the VA as we anticipate that this will be an issue for student veterans across the nation. Further details will be shared once we receive guidance from the VA. In the interim, continue to monitor FAU's website for the possibility of summer 3 courses.

What if NO Classes can be Offered?

**Q17:** What if the university temporarily shuts down and no classes are offered remote, online or in-person?

**A17:** If FAU is forced to temporarily cease all operations after a semester has already begun and classes cannot continue to be offered remotely or online due to COVID-19, veteran students will continue to receive their MHA until the end of the term or 4 weeks (28 days) from the date that the school ceases ALL operations.
Fall 2018 Audit Corrections

**Q18:** I received a notice that my fall 2018 certification requires an adjustment. Why am I getting this message for adjustment during such a stressful time?

**A18:** FAU reached out to the VA and requested that we be permitted to postpone adjustments until after COVID-19 is under control. However, we were told to proceed with all audit corrections. We apologize for this inconvenience, but we must adhere to the VA compliance requirements.

I Miss My Fellow Comrades!

**Q19:** How can I stay connected to other student veterans or how can I meet new ones?

**A19:** The Registered Student Organization “Veteran Owls” and the Military and Veterans Student Success Center is here for you. Look for us on social media and keep an eye out for e-mails with the subject line “Engage” for virtual concerts, comedy shows, giveaways, and more! *We’re in this together!*
Thank You & Stay Safe

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