

House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Subcommittee on Higher Education and the Workforce
September 11, 2013

“Keeping College Within Reach: Supporting Higher Education Opportunities for America’s Servicemembers and Veterans”

Witness: Kimrey Rhinehardt, The University of North Carolina

Madam Chair, Ranking Member Hinojosa, and distinguished members of this panel, on behalf of the great State of North Carolina, I thank you for this opportunity to come before this Subcommittee.

My testimony today will:

1. Convey general information about North Carolina and its military family and how the University of North Carolina as a system of higher learning is working hard to support these friends and neighbors;
2. Share why North Carolina and the University of North Carolina system are uniquely positioned to deliver what these students need to successfully complete their studies;
3. Articulate specific action steps taken by the University of North Carolina system to be a relevant partner in the pursuit of specific goals; and
4. Share how the University of North Carolina system provides veterans, active duty service members and their families with a “one-stop-shop” for information.

Madam Chair, you know well that North Carolina is a proud state. We are proud of our legacy of “firsts” and are not afraid to tell you about them. Revolutionary War patriots fought for and established the University of North Carolina, the nation’s first public university. In fact, these patriots insisted that North Carolina’s constitution include a guarantee to its citizens that *“All useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities.”*

Over two centuries, the University has evolved into one of the strongest and most successful systems of public higher education in the nation. It remains today, as Governor Zebulon B. Vance described in 1866, “the pride and chiefest ornament of North Carolina.” To give you a better sense for who we are, the University of North Carolina is a multi-campus university composed of all 16 of North Carolina’s public institutions that grant baccalaureate degrees, as well as the NC School of Science and Mathematics, the nation’s first public residential high school for gifted students. The University has 220,000 students, 55,000 faculty and staff and an operating budget of roughly \$9 Billion. We are proud of our University and the role that it plays in every North Carolina community.

North Carolina is also proud of our military family. And, it is a big military family. We are home to Fort Bragg, the nation’s largest Army post. Fort Bragg is home to the 18th Airborne Corps, United States Army Special Operations Command, Joint Special

Operations Command, United States Army Forces Command and the United States Army Reserve Command. Aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune we host the Second Marine Expeditionary Force and the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command. Other service members are stationed at Cherry Point, New River, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Coast Guard Station Elizabeth City and the North Carolina National Guard. North Carolina is home to 106,461 Active Duty service members and their 144,718 spouses and children. Our National Guard and Reserve population is 24,093. According to the Veterans Administration, 771,654 Veterans call North Carolina home. Approximately 11% of North Carolinians are, like me, in some way directly connected to the military and are proud of their current and past family members' service.

My father proudly served as a citizen-soldier for 29 years. My sister, two uncles, an aunt, my grandparents – including my grandmother all served this great nation in uniform. I can trace my family's record of military service to the pre-Revolutionary war period. Our state's military family includes those who have served, are serving and will serve in the future. This culture of "prideful acceptance and support" of the military is a North Carolina core value. And, it is as embedded in our culture as deeply as our love of NASCAR, barbecue and college basketball.

So, it is likely not a surprise to you that North Carolina's public university system is working hard to enroll, educate and graduate as many academically prepared service members, veterans and their family members as we possibly can. I should also mention that the University works collaboratively with the North Carolina Community College System to ensure that we offer seamless transferability and credit articulation.

After the Post 9/11 GI Bill became law in 2008, UNC institutions experienced a surge in admission applications from military-affiliated students for the 2009-2010 academic year. The surge continues. New programs like the VA's Yellow Ribbon program emerged. Military-affiliated students were confused about how their Montgomery GI Bill and the new GI Bill worked together. In 2010, Congress made changes to the Post 9/11 GI Bill. And then, in parallel, the Department of Defense (DOD) asked institutions participating in the "Voluntary Education Partnership" to sign new Memoranda of Agreement in March 2011 and then again in December 2012 as a condition of permitting active duty military to use Tuition Assistance funds to pay for their higher education on campus. As you know, the DOD recently submitted its third version of the MOU for public comment in August 2013.

Concurrent to these changes and requirements, President Obama issued Executive Order 13607 "Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members" in April 2012. Subsequent to this Executive Order, in May 2012, the Department of Veterans Affairs asked for institutions of higher education to commit to certain "Principles of Excellence" as contained in the President's Executive Order by August 1, 2012. To be clear, the University of North Carolina system agrees with the spirit of the intent behind each requirement, but after time-consuming internal review of each of these requirements we concluded that each constituent institution of the University of North Carolina not only met the standard outlined

in the Executive Order but exceeded it. And, such is the case because the University of North Carolina constituent institutions self-imposed our own standard of excellence long before the federal government required us to do so.

In October 2010, then University-system President Erskine Bowles responded to campus requests to convene a working group to evaluate and recommend specific action steps for improving how the University system and its individual institutions serve veterans and their families. The working group convened and was named "UNC SERVES (UNC Systemwide Evaluation and Recommendation for Veterans Education and Services)". Four questions were presented to the UNC SERVES working group of student, faculty and administration representatives from the sixteen campuses:

- How are UNC campuses currently serving active service members, veterans and their families?
- What are the accepted best practices for serving these students?
- What can the University reasonably do to improve access to, retention and graduation of active-duty and veteran students?
- What are metrics of success for the University in serving these students?

The UNC SERVES working group was charged by President Bowles with developing a comprehensive report with recommendations to him that provided an:

- Evaluation of current state of military and veteran affairs on UNC campuses;
- Institutional, systemwide, and state/federal statutory policy changes, regulations and/or guidelines to improve access, retention and the graduation of active service members, veterans and their families on UNC campuses;
- Institutional and systemwide best practices to improve access, retention and the graduation of active service members, veterans, and their families on UNC campuses; and
- Opportunities for institutional and systemwide improvement.

The UNC SERVES Working Group was asked to consider the following factors in their work:

- Diversity of campuses, including size, capacity, and number of active service members, veterans, and their families;
- Constrained resources – Consider all options but prioritize no cost, low cost recommendations;
- Return on investment; and
- Costs should accompany each recommendation, if possible.

The UNC SERVES working group issued its report to the University's new President, Tom Ross in April 2011. The report included recommendations for improvement at the University system and individual campus levels. President Ross and the campuses embraced the recommendations and the UNC system Faculty Assembly passed a resolution of support for UNC SERVES. I am proud to share that the University is making

great strides toward implementing almost all of the recommendations. As a follow up to the UNC SERVES working group report, the University system now issues an annual "UNC SERVES Resource Guide" that demonstrates systemwide and campus progress with each of the action items. Within the Resource Guide we publish what we call "the matrix" of campus-by-campus progress with each UNC SERVES recommendation. The most "up to date" matrix is attached to this document as an addendum. The Resource Guide also includes examples of specific campus initiatives like the North Carolina Central University Veterans Law Clinic and the Fayetteville State University Veterans Business Outreach Center. The UNC SERVES working group report and Resource Guides may be reviewed online at:

<http://www.northcarolina.edu/frc/uncserves/serves.html>

University of North Carolina system President Tom Ross, believes that serving these students requires leadership from the top. President Ross and the sixteen Chancellors are aggressively implementing the recommendations of UNC SERVES. UNC Campuses have established Military Affairs Committees at the institutional level and the UNC system convenes the University's Military Affairs Council, to improve coordination of effort.

The University's Board of Governors is equally engaged, having recently established a Special Committee of the Board to focus on military affairs. Further, in June 2013, the Board approved a "Military Student Success" policy to provide a systemwide framework for a comprehensive network of services for military-affiliated students seeking to meet their educational goals.

President Ross is in the process of establishing internal University regulations to implement the requirements of the Board's policy and to promote the general welfare of service members, veterans, spouses, and dependent family members at the constituent institutions. Under this new policy the University considers any individual having completed a minimum of two years of cumulative active duty service in the United States Armed Forces a transfer student in the admissions process. The service branch serves as the transfer institution of record. Further, the University system is establishing systemwide uniform data collection procedures to enable the constituent institutions to identify and track the academic progress of service members, veterans, spouses, and dependent family members for the purposes of evaluating and reporting retention, graduation and the length of time to degree. A copy of the UNC Board of Governor's policy is attached to my testimony as an addendum.

These recent actions by the UNC Board of Governors and the President of the University occurred because the UNC campuses asked for assistance and support. Individual campuses have a long history of working with military-affiliated students and the military installations in North Carolina. A select few campuses like Fayetteville State University, the University of North Carolina Wilmington, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and East Carolina University have actually had a physical presence on post at Fort Bragg, aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune or at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. The

campus' geographic proximity coupled with their regional focus naturally aligned with serving these specific communities. Other campuses in the University have specialized programs of interest to the active duty military population like North Carolina State's Bachelor of Arts in Leadership in the Public Sector or UNC Chapel Hill's Master of Arts in Military History. Additionally, several of our campuses work with the military commands to provide professional military education. In some cases these course are directly connected to pre- or post-deployment requirements.

The UNC SERVES working group recommended and Presidents Bowles and Ross implemented the recommendation for UNC General Administration to lead the University in a coordinated effort to serve the military. At President Ross' direction, I lead and manage the systemwide "UNC Partnership for National Security." The UNC Partnership for National Security works to connect the resources of the University of North Carolina system to the needs of our military, its service members, veterans, their families and the defense industry in North Carolina. The partnership's goals are to support the service member, contribute to the mission, and grow North Carolina's defense economy.

As it relates to serving the military, the University system's strength as a whole is greater than the sum of our individual efforts. Presidents Bowles and Ross made the deliberate decision to leverage the University's greatest strengths and resources to deliver the best solution to the customer – whoever that may be. It may be the student, an Army civil affairs unit deploying to Africa, or a defense contractor seeking faculty expertise for a federal contract. But, ultimately the real customer is the taxpayer who expects a "whole of nation" approach to ensuring national security. I lead a team of committed professionals dedicated to five specific Partnership efforts:

1. Degree Programs and a fellowship program for service members (UNC SERVES);
2. Pre-deployment short courses, training, and subject matter expertise exchange;
3. Science and technology support for the special operations community;
4. UNC Student internship opportunities with the military or defense companies; and
5. Stakeholder engagement in the state to grow North Carolina's defense economy.

The UNC Partnership staff works closely with each of the sixteen UNC institutions in support of the five efforts. One thing we learned quickly from our campus colleagues is that veterans are not your typical students. They come to us from a highly structured, bureaucratic environment and are often uneasy with the loosely structured, bureaucratic environment of the University. The university admissions and enrollment processes for veterans can be complex. Sometimes it requires the veteran to visit different departments across the campus. One of our top priorities is to centralize information sharing using a technology-based platform, providing a virtual "one-stop-shop" for veterans. This enables us to provide reliable and consistent information to veterans by offering answers to their most commonly asked questions. And, as unique situations arise the veteran always has the name and contact information for a specific campus-based staff member to ensure that his or her questions can be answered. All campuses are encouraged to go beyond a technology-based solution and provide a centralized physical location that provides

veterans with access to the resources they need. Many UNC institutions already have veteran's centers and several others are in the process of getting them in place. To access our virtual one-stop-shop:

www.uncserves.northcarolina.edu

Another technology-based resource in development is the North Carolina Military Educational Positioning System or NCMEPS. This website, funded in part by the Aurora Foundation, is designed to provide an active-duty service member or veteran the opportunity to utilize "decision-tree" modules to assist them in making good choices about pursuing higher education in North Carolina. For example, the GI Bill module allows the user to answer a series of questions about their personal circumstances so that the student can learn more about how to maximize their VA benefits. While the website is being developed by the University of North Carolina system, the goal is to help the prospective student find, pay for, and apply to the college that's right for them, help them navigate college successfully wherever they enroll, and finally graduate and transition to the workforce. To access the NCMEPS:

www.ncmileps.northcarolina.edu

For active duty service members, the University system has military academic advisors at Fort Bragg and Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. At Fort Bragg, we work closely with the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) and have an academic advising office in their Special Warfare Center and School. We will assist any service member or their family member at this location. The University also works closely with the Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) and recently hired an academic advisor to work with all Marines through the base education office.

The University system works with the North Carolina community college system to create Associates, Bachelors, and Doctoral degree programs and transition pathways geared toward active duty service members, veterans, and their families. Specific examples include:

- Fayetteville State University, North Carolina State University, UNC Pembroke, and Western Carolina University partner with Fayetteville Technical Community College and the USASOC Special Warfare Center & School at Ft. Bragg to develop an Associate of General Education (A.G.E.) degree that awards credit for military training and transitions to Bachelor degree programs in areas such as Intelligence Studies, Criminal Justice, and Interdisciplinary Studies (<http://www.soc.mil/swcs/education/>). This Associates to Bachelors degree pathway was created specifically for active duty soldiers in the US Army Special Operations Command.
- UNC Wilmington and Coastal Carolina Community College have partnered with the United States Marine Corps to offer undergraduate and graduate courses and Associate, Bachelor and Master's degrees on the community college campus and

Kimrey Rhinehardt, The University of North Carolina: Full Testimony

September 11, 2013 Hearing: "Keeping College Within Reach: Supporting Higher Education Opportunities for America's Servicemembers and Veterans"

aboard Camp Lejeune for active duty and veteran Marines and their spouses or dependents (<http://www.uncw.edu/onslow/>).

- UNC Wilmington created a Master of Arts degree in Conflict Management and Resolution specifically geared toward active duty service members, which has since been expanded to include tracks for civilian students (<http://uncw.edu/cmr/index.html>).

The University system also has a long history of working with the North Carolina Community College system to establish smooth and seamless transfer pathways for community college students. The North Carolina Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) – a statewide agreement governing the transfer of credits between North Carolina community colleges and North Carolina public universities – defines a 44-semester credit hour general education core which, if completed at the community college, is fully transferable to UNC institutions and will satisfy general education requirements.

In addition to the statewide CAA, some UNC institutions have established separate articulation agreements that are specific to certain majors and enable students to progress from an Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree to a Bachelor's degree. Major study areas include Information Systems and Engineering Technology, which are directly applicable to military education requirements.

NCSU Engineering Online is a unique partnership between NCSU and other North Carolina institutions to extend the offering of NCSU's undergraduate engineering instruction throughout North Carolina. Through Engineering Online, students can complete a site-based pre-engineering program at Craven Community College, Johnston Community College, UNC Asheville or UNC Wilmington and later transfer to NCSU to complete their Bachelor's degree in Engineering.

We believe that the "one stop shop" approach works well for the University, the student veteran and for the military. And, a primary reason for this approach is because as a state and as a public university we care deeply about "the whole soldier." (I use to the term "soldier" to represent all of the men and women in uniform.) We care about providing them with access to a high-quality, affordable education in support of their personal or professional goals. We care about the families that they leave behind when they deploy. We care about the kit and equipment they carry down range. We care about providing them with a top-notch civilian workforce to support their mission. And, when they decide to separate or retire from service we care about helping them transition to a good-paying job in North Carolina.

Our efforts in this regard are not because a government agency requires us to do something. We commit ourselves to the UNC Partnership for National Security because of that deeply embedded "prideful acceptance and support" referenced earlier. The soldier that deploys may be our family member, friend or neighbor. The family that they leave behind is our family. The education that the service member needs is crucial to the mission because the most important weapon that he or she has is not an assault rifle - but

their mind. They need to be able to adapt to changing environments, use critical thinking skills, learn a foreign language, employ negotiation skills, and apply conflict management lessons. The kit and equipment they need must be the latest and greatest thing because they need the ability to gather intelligence, execute a mission and come home safely. And, when the service member makes the transition to veteran in civilian society we want that veteran to remain in North Carolina for the long term. It is no secret that veterans make great employees and start and grow successful small businesses.

The University of North Carolina can and should be a natural place of transition for the veteran. They have earned an educational benefit. And, this benefit can be the ticket to their future. Our faculty report that they love having veterans in their class. These students attend classes regularly, take the assignments seriously, are attentive and provide a unique perspective in class discussions. All students benefit from their presence in the classroom.

Finally, the University of North Carolina system commits itself to partnering with the military because national security should be a priority for all us - not just for the less than half of one percent of us that serve in the armed forces. We can all do something to contribute. The faculty, staff and students of the University of North Carolina stand ready to do our part.

Thank you, Madam Chair. This concludes my testimony.

UNC SERVES: Campus Progress as of June 2013

| Best Practice Recommendation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|---|
| Appalachian State | Elizabeth City State | East Carolina | Fayetteville State | NC A&T State | NC Central | NC State | UNC Asheville | UNC Chapel Hill | UNC Charlotte | UNC Greensboro | UNC Pembroke | UNC Wilmington | Western Carolina | Winston-Salem | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Grants PE Credit to Service Members |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Clearly Articulated Military to Campus Credit Equivalencies |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Priority Enrollment for Active Duty Military Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Clearly Articulated Call to Duty Student Policy |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Classifies Military Students as Transfer Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Admissions Counselor for Military-Affiliated Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Conditional Admission Contracts |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Financial Aid Counselor for Military-Affiliated Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Accepts Tuition Assistance |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Accepts Veterans Education Benefit |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Payment Plan for Students with VA Payment Delay |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Scholarship or Grant for Military, Veterans or Dependents |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Military or Veteran Specific Housing or Assistance with Off Campus Housing |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Student Affairs Person for Military-Affiliated Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Established Student Veteran Organization or Other Military Student Organizations |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Veteran or Military Student Space on Campus |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Military or Veteran Orientation Session |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Tracks Active Duty Military and Veteran Student Populations |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Identifies Military-Affiliated Students on the Student Data File |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | PTSD, TBI and Military Stress Trained Support Staff in Counseling Center |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Yellow Ribbon Program Participation |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Military Affairs Liaison Appointed |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Targeted Collateral Material for Military Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Established Military Affairs Committee |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Core Education Curriculum Online |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Designated Military Ombudsman to Advocate on Behalf of Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Offers Targeted Online Programs to the Military |
| MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | MoU | Affiliated with the Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Employs VA Work Study Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Dedicated Web Presence for Military-Affiliated Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Conducts Military Student Awareness Training for Faculty, Staff and Students |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Military or Veteran "Seminar" Classes |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Delivers Classes on Military Base (with approval from Military Installation) |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Army ROTC |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Air Force ROTC |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Navy/ Marine Corps ROTC |

| | |
|-----|-------------------------|
| | Established > 6 months. |
| | New < 6 Months |
| | In Progress |
| | Planning |
| | TBD |
| MoU | DoD MoU Signed |

Military Student Success

The University of North Carolina is committed to the success of military-affiliated students.¹ This policy, and its associated regulations and guidelines, provide a framework for the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina to develop and maintain a comprehensive network of services for military-affiliated students seeking to meet their educational goals. The President shall establish regulations to implement the requirements of these policies and to promote the general welfare of service members, veterans, spouses, and dependent family members at the constituent institutions.

A. Admission of Active Duty Service Members and Veterans

The University of North Carolina and its constituent institutions are committed to equality of opportunity. The University administers nondiscriminatory admissions policies by fairly evaluating the records of applicants.

For purposes of undergraduate admission to any constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, any individual having completed a minimum of two years of cumulative active duty service in the United States Armed Forces who otherwise meet the criteria for a transfer student will be considered a transfer student in the admissions process pursuant to 700.1.1.1[R], Special Consideration 3, with the branch of service functioning as the institution of transfer. If discharged from active duty, the veteran must have received an Administrative Discharge. This policy shall not apply to veterans receiving a “Bad Conduct or Dishonorable Discharge.”

Under conditions set forth by the President in regulations associated with this policy, applicants in this profile may be offered special consideration with regard to the minimum admissions and minimum course requirements for transfer students.

Nothing in this policy guarantees admission for students who do not meet institutional academic standards for admission. Constituent institutions retain sole authority for admissions determinations.

B. Military-Affiliated Student Data

The President shall establish appropriate and uniform data collection procedures to enable the constituent institutions to identify and track the academic progress of service members, veterans, spouses, and dependent family members for the purposes of evaluating and reporting retention, graduation and the length of time to degree.

C. Residency Status of Military-Affiliated Students

North Carolina created and maintains its public institutions of higher education primarily for the benefit of the residents of North Carolina, and its institutions are generously supported by the General Assembly and the public. Active duty personnel in the United States Armed Forces, and their spouses, dependent children and dependent relatives and members of the North Carolina National Guard may be eligible for in-state tuition under the conditions established by General Statutes of the state of North Carolina and enacted by regulations in the North Carolina State Residence Classification Manual and in association with this policy.

¹For the purposes of this policy, “military-affiliated students” shall include students who are service members (including National Guard and Reserve members), veterans, spouses of service members or veterans, or dependent family members of service members or veterans.

D. Campus Support Structures for Military-Affiliated Students

The constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina shall develop and maintain campus-based support networks as well as a comprehensive series of community, regional, and national referrals for military-affiliated students to assist in successful navigation of their educational goals. These services shall include, but not be limited to, admissions, financial aid, housing, student affairs, health services and counseling, and academic affairs.

E. Military Credit Transferability

The University of North Carolina recognizes the value of the education, training and experience that military students bring to the university. The university and its constituent campuses shall establish a process by which this learning can be evaluated for possible course credit. Such military learning may include but will not be limited to recruit training, military occupational specialty (MOS) training and education, Defense Language Institute foreign language coursework and exams, Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) coursework, CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) and DANTES Standardized Subject tests. The American Council on Education (ACE) credit equivalency recommendations serve as the standard reference work for recognizing learning acquired in the military.²

F. Call to Duty

The University of North Carolina supports students called to active duty or training in the United States Armed Forces, including service in the National Guard or Reserve.³ The policies of the University shall assist, whenever possible, the student in withdrawing and re-entering the university without financial or academic hardship. Such policies shall include but are not limited to:

- Military Withdrawal
- Refunds of Tuition, Fees, and Other Expenses
- Academic Credit
- Deferral of Enrollment
- Military Leave of Absence
- Re-admission into the University
- Scholarship Status

²Nothing in this policy prevents constituent institutions from evaluating military learning independent of the ACE evaluation.

³Campuses may choose whether to extend some or all of the benefits of these policies to the spouse or child of a person called to active duty. Campuses may also choose to include spouses and children of persons called to active duty under the extenuating circumstances regulation (BOG Policy 400.1.5[R]).