

November 15, 2018

Aaron Washington
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave. SW, Room 294-12
Washington, D.C. 20202
Re: Docket ID ED-2018-OPE-0076

Dear Mr. Washington

The undersigned veterans and military service organizations write to make the following nominations for upcoming negotiated rulemaking panels at the U.S. Department of Education. These groups represent millions of service members, veterans, and family members who are directly impacted by the decisions of the Department. These representatives take seriously the honor and distinction of representing the diverse interests of this large and unique population with a non-partisan approach. The proposed list of topics to be discussed in this process, including innovation in higher education, requirements for accrediting agencies, roles and responsibilities of the regulatory triad, and proposed rollbacks to regulatory protections has the potential to significantly help or harm those we represent. That is why, the service member and veteran community recommends the following to be appointed to represent us:

For the Negotiated Rulemaking panel, we nominate Tanya Ang of Veterans Education Success as the primary negotiator, and Lauren Augustine of Student Veterans of America, as the alternate.

Their qualifications follow:

1. Negotiated Rulemaking panel

a. Tanya Ang, Vice President of Veterans Education Success (VES)

Tanya Ang is an expert advocating for the value of veterans and military students with more than 18 years of experience in higher education with a focus on military-connected students. Tanya joined Veterans Education Success as the Policy and Outreach Director in the Fall of 2017 and has since been promoted to Vice President. Her previous experience includes serving as the Project Director at Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and as Director of Veterans Programs at the American Council on Education. Additionally, Tanya has served as a member of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Advisory Committee on Education.

As Project Director for Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Tanya aided the service branches and institutions of higher learning on ensuring military-connected students had access to and received a high-quality education. At the American Council on Education (ACE), serving first in their Military Programs as a Senior Program Manager and then as the Director of Veterans' Programs, Tanya oversaw initiatives such as the Toolkit for Veteran Friendly Institutions and worked in collaboration with their Government Relations team on policy and legislative issues related to military-connected students. Additionally, she collaborated with key-stakeholders at federal agencies, institutions of higher learning, representatives from the workforce, and veteran service organizations to disseminate and promote best practices in serving military-connected students on campus to aid in a smooth transition from military service to the civilian workforce.

Tanya has also served as a higher education consultant to veteran service organizations, federal agencies, and congressional representatives on issues related to the derecognition of ACICS, supporting military-connected students impacted by the closure of ITT, and the passage of the recent Forever GI Bill. She has served as a subject matter expert to those looking to implement policy and legislation related to military-connected students.

In addition to Tanya's policy, her experience in academia includes working as an Administrative Analyst for the Vice President of Student Affairs Office at California State University - Fullerton and as Associate Registrar at Vanguard University where the majority of her work focused on the non-traditional student including military and student veterans. She was the certifying official at her institution for student veteran GI Bill benefits and worked hand-in-hand with the various offices on-campus to ensure students received the benefits and the support they needed to successfully navigate their academic career.

VES is a 501(c)(3) that provides free assistance to military-connected students who need support and guidance with issues surrounding their military-education benefits, partners with institutions of higher learning and other key-stakeholders to increase access to and attainment of post-secondary education for servicemembers, veterans, dependents, and survivors, and advocates for policies to secure the integrity and promise of servicemember and veterans' educational benefits like the GI Bill. Finally, VES conducts non-partisan academic research on veterans' educational attainment and success.

b. Lauren Augustine, Vice President of Government Affairs at Student Veterans of America (SVA)

Lauren Augustine currently serves as the Vice President of Government Affairs at Student Veterans of America. In her role at SVA, Lauren is a leading advocate for the largest chapter-based student organization in the country. She is an expert on policy issues specific to veterans and military-connected students on a multitude of issues including higher education, health care, and employment. Major accomplishments include leading efforts to pass the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act and efforts to shed light on the dangers of the proposed PROSPER Act. Lauren is an Army veteran who quickly rose to the rank of sergeant and served 12 months in Iraq with the First Infantry Division. She has worked as a senior legislative associate for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a legislative representative for the American Federation of Government Employees, and the director of government relations for Got Your 6. In these positions she advocated on behalf of veterans, their families, and the services and benefits provided by the VA.

In recognition of her advocacy work, Lauren was named to the HillVets Top 100 in 2015 and awarded the Excellence by An Up and Coming Practitioner award from the Women in Professional Advocacy in 2016. She was also appointed to the Joint Leadership Council of Veteran Service Organizations for the Commonwealth of Virginia by Governor McAuliffe in 2016.

SVA is a 501(c)(3) coalition of student veterans groups with over 1,500 chapters on college campuses, representing a diverse population of nearly one million student veterans. Its mission is to provide military veterans with resources, support, and advocacy needed to succeed in higher education and after graduation. When coupled with the visible and invisible wounds of war, a college degree can be an elusive goal for men and women returning from military service. SVA is dedicated to helping make that goal a reality. SVA had chapters at ITT Tech and Charlotte School of Law and helped to work with the students after those schools closed.

SVA is fiercely non-partisan, and regularly conducts surveys of members and groundbreaking research. For example, in March 2014, SVA released a report on veteran achievement in higher education. This report was a collaboration among SVA, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse. The report examines veteran student success as a result of GI Bill educational benefits. Currently, with funding from the Ford Foundation, SVA is also working on a report on veterans' student loan debt using a unique dataset.

Both Ms. Ang and Ms. Augustine commit to participate in good faith. Both live in the Washington, D.C., Metro-region and can commit to attending all the negotiated rulemaking sessions and any associated subcommittees. The nominees' contact information is as follows:

Docket ID ED-2018-OPE-0076 Nominees

- Tanya Ang, tanya@veteranseducationsuccess.org, (949) 244-7690, 1250 H St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005
- Lauren Augustine, lauren.augustine@studentveterans.org, (202) 223-4710, 1012 14th St. NW, Suite 1200, Washington, D.C. 20005

It is imperative that only these true representatives of veterans and military service organizations are appointed to represent veterans and servicemembers' interests. We urge the Department to beware of other nominations it receives for the veterans and servicemember slots, as our community has heard that they may be industry posing as veterans, who will not represent the interests and perspectives of the broader veterans and servicemember community.

These nominations are supported by the following veterans and service member organizations:

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

Blue Star Families

Higher Ground Veterans Advocacy

Ivy League Veterans Council (IVLC)

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

National Association of Veterans' Program Administrators (NAVPA)

Student Veterans of America (SVA)

The National Military Family Association

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

Veterans Education Success (VES)

Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA)

Wounded Warrior Project