



## VETERANS EDUCATION SUCCESS®

August 31, 2021

***Sent via email***

Dr. Glenn Phillips  
Howard University  
2400 Sixth Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20059

Dear Dr. Phillips,

We are pleased that the suspension imposed by the Washington, D.C. State Approving Agency ("DC SAA") has been lifted and Howard University remains accessible for those utilizing veteran education benefits. We appreciate the efforts that the institution has undertaken to achieve this result since our previous letter sent on July 13, 2021.

With the suspension lifted, my organization is now turning to the discrete issues raised by the student veterans and service members who have contacted us. Most significantly, we remain concerned that some of Howard University's programs were not previously approved by the DC SAA or the Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") and, therefore, currently remain unapproved despite the DC SAA's recent lifting of the suspension. We also want to ensure that any institutional debts or balances incurred by student veterans or service members during the recent suspension are removed or cancelled. Finally, we would like to offer some suggested improvements to the services provided to student veterans and service members.

In light of these unresolved issues, we would greatly appreciate it if you could provide an update on your efforts in the following areas, so that we may relay that information to students who have contacted us. I would be happy to have this conversation via telephone at your earliest convenience.

1. We believe that there are programs that remain unapproved by the DC SAA and that student veterans are enrolled in those programs because they believed that they were approved for VA educational benefits. For instance, it is our understanding that the Master's in Social Work and the doctorate program in communication, culture, and media studies remain unapproved. We hope that you are moving quickly to obtain the necessary approval for those programs. Is there any information you can provide to students about the status of the remaining unapproved programs and the expected timeline for obtaining approval from the DC SAA for those programs?
2. We are particularly concerned that student veterans, whether enrolled in programs whose eligibility for veteran benefits has been restored or enrolled in programs that had not been previously approved, may have incurred charges that have resulted in debts owed to Howard University. We would strongly urge you to cancel or forgive such balances, as they were incurred through no fault of the students. As you are aware, HEERF guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education to implement the three rounds of coronavirus relief legislation allows institutions to cover the cost of discharge of debts owed to them by students and former students as an allowable expense. We also ask that you consider the anxiety caused by the suspension when determining whether to grant permission for affected students to retake exams that they failed in the previous semester.
3. In order to ensure that this situation does not arise again, we would offer the following suggestions to improve the experience of student veterans at Howard University:
  - a) Publicize the point of contact for student veterans and service members to address concerns.
  - b) Establish a VA [Work Study](#) program that would allow students using VA education benefits to provide assistance in the Veterans Services Office with any student questions, and processing or organizing veteran-related documents and files.
  - c) Support student veterans in establishing a [Student Veterans of America](#) chapter.

We appreciate your attention to these matters, as it is our goal to work with you to ensure that student veterans, service members, and their families may continue to pursue their educational dreams at your historic institution utilizing the benefits they (or their families) have earned through service to this nation. I hope that we can schedule a call at your earliest convenience to discuss these issues in more detail.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Madaio  
Vice President for Legal Affairs  
Veterans Education Success

cc: Tianna Pantovich  
Valencia Scott  
Leana Mason