

Help for veterans is available

by John Caldwell
Editor-in-Chief

Are you a veteran looking for money to offset the cost of higher education? Do you need a tutor for a class you're struggling with? Need a job that works with your class schedule while you attend college? Are you having medical, dental, visual, or other health issues that are preventing you from doing your best while studying for your degree?

If you're a student veteran or a veteran's dependent attending college, there may be a program that can assist you with obtaining an education. The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs offers several programs designed to aid veterans or their families while either attends school. If you meet established eligi-

ty requirements for the Reserve Educational Assistance Program (REAP), the Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP), or the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (DEAP), you may want to visit Fayetteville State University's VA representative, Mrs. Beverly Allen, for more information.

Depending on your circumstances, you may also be eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapter 30), the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (Chapter 31), or the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33).

The VA's Web site is a great starting point to find out if you can take advantage of their programs. The Web site states, "the GI Bill of Rights has been heralded as one of the most significant pieces of legislation ever produced

by the federal government—one that impacted the United States socially, economically and politically." Initially enacted in 1944, the GI Bill, which governs all educational programs, has evolved and has assisted veterans from WWII to the present day.

Once you determine your basic eligibility, the next step is the Office of Veterans Affairs located on the 3rd floor of the Lily building. There you'll find Mrs. Allen, who serves as a counselor, problem-solver, and all-around go to person for veterans and their families at FSU.

"Having the VA Office on FSU's campus is a tremendous benefit and help to dependent students as well as to their service member parents," said Chief Warrant Officer Cornell Fox. "It's been one-stop shopping for me and

my son. We were able to take care of everything at that one location thanks to Mrs. Allen's guidance. Mrs. Allen made my experience extremely convenient; she knows what she's talking about, and she jumped right on my issues."

The active duty soldier's son, sophomore Tyler Watson is using his dad's Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit to assist with his attaining a visual arts degree. Chief Fox says he's glad one of the changes with the newest GI Bill is that his son can use his educational benefits to pay tuition.

Mrs. Allen, a 23-year veteran First Sergeant from the Army, recommends vets do their homework by visiting www.gibill.va.gov before seeing a VA adviser. Quite often her office is the first stop for new students, and she says her goal is to make the process as friction free as possible and to get the benefits started quickly.

"When the vet has some idea of what he or she is eligible to receive, it maximizes their time spent with me, enabling me to really dig into their particular situation. Instead of trying to figure out basic info they can get from the website, we can focus on other aspects that may not be readily available to them, and it allows me to see more veterans," says Mrs. Allen.

Mrs. Allen also serves as the VA certifying official. She is the person who reports a student's status—fulltime or part-time—verifies qualifying course selection, and any pertinent changes in a student's status to the VA. It's the student's responsibility to ensure his or her benefits are received. She said it's imperative that students utilizing any of VA programs contact her immediately with changes, via email or phone.

Mrs. Allen suggests veterans and their dependents may also be interested in the Vet Tutors and work-study program. If you're a student who needs help with a class, Mrs. Allen has a team of student vets who volunteer to provide tutoring services. If you maintain a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher and want to tutor, you should see Mrs. Allen to become part of the team.

"It's great seeing veterans help other vets," said Mrs. Allen.



Voice photo by John Caldwell

Sophomore Tyler Watson (seated) and his dad, Chief Warrant Officer Cornell Fox (standing) listen as FSU VA adviser Beverly Allen explains the next steps they need to take. Tyler is using his dad's Post 9/11 GI Bill to help pay for school.

NURSING from page 1

driven towards producing quality nursing students who will make a difference in the lives of many.

The new curriculum will equip its students with courses that will prep them for the NCLEX (National Council of Licensure Exam for Registered Nurses) with an integration of Kaplan, which is an organization that helps students prepare for licensure exams, entrance exams, and certifications.

The program has managed to

maintain a good relationship with Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, the Veterans Hospital, and Womack. They have also increased their number of clinical hours.

With approximately 300 pre-nursing majors on board, the nursing program expects many students in 2013. Along with the generic nursing program, FSU will continue their RN to BSN track that offers registered nurses with an associate's degree the opportunity to

receive their bachelor's degree in the science of nursing. Around 35 students from the BSN to RN program will be graduating this fall.

According to Dr. Arhin, in order for students to be successful in nursing, they must already have a strong foundation in math and science. This has been one of the factors causing low test scores on the NCLEX. Even though students from the previous program usually passed the exams after the first at-

tempt, the first try reflects on the program.

"The sky is the limit," says Dr. Arhin. The department hopes to expand what they have to offer with an accelerated nursing program possibly being introduced in the next four to five years.

Dr. Arhin has been a nurse for 25 years and says that they have the "perfect marriage." She loves nursing, and hopes to lead the program in the right direction.

Fayetteville State's nursing program was first established in 1992 and received its initial accreditation in April 2005 by the Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education.

The nursing program will be due for an on-site evaluation in the fall of 2014, as their accreditation is set to expire in June 2015.

For more information, visit: www.uncfsu.edu/nursing/