

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Philip Pecorino, Chair, Academic Senate
FROM: Dr. Aaron Krac, Chair, HPED
SUBJECT: Welcome Home Initiative
DATE: September 14, 2006

A year ago this last spring, I appeared before the Academic Senate to propose the “Welcome Home Initiative” in order to address the return of Veterans to our Campus and express our gratitude to them for their service to their Country. Therefore, I think it appropriate to report the progress that has been made in this regard to you and the Senate.

A number of Faculty responded enthusiastically to the idea and generously offered their time, efforts and expertise. They include Prof. Vic Defazio, Counseling; Prof. Bob Kueper, ECET; Prof. Mark Van Ells, History and Prof. Andrea Cohen, Counseling. They deserve praise and recognition for their contribution to the success of this endeavor. Special thanks are offered to Prof. Cohen for her efforts in stepping forward and shouldering the major responsibility in organizing the Veteran’s Club which subsequently has been officially established under the auspices of Student Activities. In fact she will now become the prime faculty advisor to this student group. Attached please find a report of the Veteran’s Club’s activities over the last year for your information. It was penned by Prof. Cohen. It is provided as a possible submission to be included in the next Academic Senate minutes should you decide it appropriate. We are well on our way to provide our returning Veterans a Campus venue to address their specific needs, as well as providing them with the opportunity to be a vital part of Campus life. Our efforts continue.

Veterans Club Report

The Veterans Club, instituted during the spring 2006 Semester, is open to all Queensborough Community College students. One of the goals of the club is to provide a forum for the exchange of information such as the availability of educational assistance, health benefits, and financial perks. The Veterans Club is a social outlet for its members who determine the specific goals of the club each semester.

During the spring 2006 Semester the Veterans Club met eight times. The following is a list of the dates and corresponding number of attendees:

February 8, 2006	19 attendees
February 15, 2006	10 attendees
March 15, 2006	5 attendees
March 22, 2006	7 attendees
March 29, 2006	8 attendees
April 26, 2006	2 attendees
May 3, 2006	5 attendees
May 10, 2006	8 attendees

An informational workshop was scheduled during the May 10th meeting. Representatives from the Manhattan VA Medical Center and CUNY Veterans Affairs Steering Committee were available to answer questions that the veterans had raised throughout the semester. Topics discussed included educational and employment assistance available to veterans, and mental health resources. The representatives brought brochures and informational packets for further clarification and gave out contact information.

During the semester, a basketball fundraiser was organized by the president of the Veterans Club which took place at Francis Lewis High School. The event was held to raise money for USO. Additional fundraising events are planned for the upcoming fall semester.

A conference entitled, *PTSD Re-Deployed Readjustment Issues: 23rd Annual Conference "Still Hidden Client"* was attended by Dr. Cohen on June 12, 2006 at Hunter College of Social Work. Break out sessions covered topics such as, the treatment of war trauma, readjustment issues, veteran benefits, and traumatic stress. There was also a discussion panel of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans talking about their personal experiences of war and its aftermath. Press kits were available containing information about career opportunities for veterans, NY State and Federal Benefits for Veterans and their families, and various resources for veterans including a list of websites. This information will be disseminated to members of the Veterans Club during the Fall 2006 Semester.

One of the goals for the upcoming Fall 2006 Semester is to increase the membership by becoming more salient on campus. Efforts will be directed at organizing fundraisers and planning social events for members of the club. Additional informational workshops will be scheduled. Veterans can participate in a VA Work Study Program in which they can

work on campus up to twenty hours and earn tax free income. This includes doing work for the Veterans Club.

Within the Counseling Center, Dr. Cohen and Dr. Defazio are available to provide individual and group counseling for veterans to address readjustment issues, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and other concerns. The counselors also assist with registration, offer career/academic counseling, and provide information about transferring to other colleges. Information about the Veterans Club can be found on the QCC Counseling Web page which includes a link listing various referrals for veterans.