

# Wichita State University

## Student Government Association

### 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Student Senate

**TITLE:** R-61-006: Advocating for Department of Veterans Affairs School  
Certifying Officials

**AUTHOR(S):** Jeremy Warren, Student Veteran

Michael Bearth, Veterans' Senator

Ciaban Canales Peterson, Business Senator

**SPONSOR(S):** Eugene Potts, Returning Adult Senator

Kegan Fisher, Student Veteran

Jared Smith, Chair of Kansas Student Veterans Consortium

Jaiden Soupene, Liberal Arts & Sciences Senator

Wichita State University, Student Veterans Organization

University of Kansas, Student Veterans of America Chapter

George Mason University, Mason Veteran Patriots

**DATE:** October 24, 2018

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1 WHEREAS the Department of Veterans Affairs; hereafter referred to as VA, recommends  
2 that every institution have one School Certifying Official (SCO) for every 200 service  
3 members, Veterans, spouses, and other family members utilizing VA benefits within  
4 the institution; and

5 WHEREAS Wichita State University, hereafter referred to as University, while having more  
6 than one SCO, has operated with only one dedicated and active SCO for the last  
7 couple of years, despite having several hundred individuals utilizing VA benefits  
8 within the University. According to the GI-Bill comparison tool, the VA reports 593  
9 students utilizing benefits as of October 8th. The University of Kansas (KU) shows  
10 848, only a 255 difference, however, they have 4 dedicated and active SCO's. This  
11 equates to 212 students per SCO, which is close to the VA recommended ratio,  
12 while the University has almost triple the recommended amount for a single SCO;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS Veterans and University officials advocated for additional SCOs during the  
15 Presidents Executive Team (PET) meeting in October 2017, and Federal  
16 Compliance Audit in December 2017 to more closely reflect the VA recommended  
17 ratio and to ensure accountability during high traffic periods or emergency leave.  
18 These instances were supported by the University's VA Educational Liaison,

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19 however, because of the level at which the sole SCO was performing the  
20 responsibilities, this was not made a priority; and

21 WHEREAS the University reacting to an emergency leave scenario (on of August 21) has  
22 started training (3) additional SCOs as of August 25th but again only has one actively  
23 working. However, based on the VA benefit report pulled October 8th, the  
24 individual who was at the top of the "ready for certification" list on August 20th  
25 (whose submission date was August 14) was still at the top of the list. Suggesting that  
26 no certifications have been accomplished from August 20th to October 8th; and

27 WHEREAS there are over one hundred student-veterans who have not received payments  
28 from their various benefits, even though their University requirements before  
29 certification submission to the VA have been met; and

30 WHEREAS this stagnated funding supply has created a severe financial crisis/hardship for a  
31 considerable portion of students at the University. Which has resulted in several  
32 individuals reduction/lack of day-to-day living expenses, accruing of student debt  
33 through loans, withdrawing from courses, and withdrawing from the University all  
34 together; therefore

35 BE IT RESOLVED that the 61<sup>st</sup> Session Senate requests that the University ensure both VA  
36 recommended compliance and that more than one dedicated SCO is actively  
37 working through the backlog of certifications currently present/accumulating, as well  
38 as throughout future school years. This will ensure SCO's familiarity with the process  
39 and application of certification software and policies. In addition, it will serve as a  
40 prevention method of future deficiencies such as this by having appropriate  
41 resources allocated during high "traffic" periods and unforeseen payment issues; and

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University should consider alternate means of  
43 compliance with VA mandates for certification submissions. One such system has  
44 been recommended by Omar Williams, KU Student Veterans of America Chapter  
45 President. The current model employed by KU is partially automated through online  
46 submissions by end users to the SCOs for approval of certification to the VA. KU's  
47 SCO representatives have extended the offer to assist in setting up a similar model at  
48 the University, free of charge. Thus we recommend that the University initiate talks  
49 with KU in order to develop a more appropriate model; and

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall be forwarded with respect to Lt.  
51 Col. Larry Burks (R), Director of Military and Veteran Services; Dr. Marche Fleming-  
52 Randle, Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement; Werner M.

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53 Golling, Vice President for Finance and Administration; Sheelu Surender, Director  
54 of the Office of Financial Aid; Abdul Mackie, Wichita State University Veteran  
55 Affairs Education Liaison; the Office of the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, Robert  
56 Wilkie; the Office of the Honorable Jerry Moran, Senator from Kansas; the Office of  
57 the Honorable Pat Roberts, Senator from Kansas; Dr. John Bardo, University  
58 President; the Wichita Eagle; and the Sunflower, the Student Newspaper of Wichita  
59 State University.

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60 **APPROVED: 24<sup>th</sup> Day of October, 2018**

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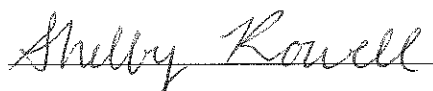


Kenon Brinkley

Student Body President

10-26-18

Date



Shelby Rowell

President of the Senate

10-30-18

Date