President Vargas’ Inauguration

The inauguration of President Carlos Vargas as the 18th president of Southeast Missouri State University has been set for 2 p.m., May 5, 2016, in the Show Me Center. Dr. Tomas Morales, president of California State University-San Bernardino, will be the keynote speaker. This campus-wide event will celebrate Southeast's successes, its future, and it is open to the entire University community.

Dr. Vargas took the helm as president of Southeast July 1, 2016, and since that time, he and his wife, Dr. Pam Vargas, have been very active in getting involved in the university community, including with the OMVS, SVO, and our military-connected community.

Events will be going on throughout the day to include Academic Hall Dome tours, student gatherings with free food, music, and t-shirts, and more! Details regarding all the arrangements, as well as the ability to RSVP, are available at the inauguration website at www.semo.edu/inauguration. While you do not have to R.S.V.P. to attend, it will help to plan for food and beverages for the reception. Please stop by an event and show your appreciation for our new Southeast President!

What’s one of your favorite things about the OMVS?

“The OMVS is a community where heroes are welcomed, cared for, and understood for their bravery on the battlefield and [their] pursuit to further their education.”

- Chris Williams
US Army National Guard

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Voc Rehab: What is that?

Amanda Woods

You’ve probably heard about GI Bill benefits and DEA benefits, but you might not be familiar with the Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment program, commonly known as Voc Rehab, to its participants. Like the Post 9/11 benefit, Voc Rehab pays for tuition and class-related fees, pays a monthly housing stipend, and covers books. However, unlike Post 9/11, this benefit also covers supplies needed for class, provides referrals for medical, dental, and other preventative care, and provide career readiness and assistance throughout a Veteran’s academic career, even a for a short period after graduation.

In order to be eligible, a Veteran does have to have a VA disability rating. From there, an assigned counselor will work with the Veteran to determine if the Veteran has an employment barrier and eligible for the program. The counselor continues to work with the eligible Veteran throughout his/her degree program, ensuring the Veteran has what he/she needs to be successful and stay on track to graduate, and then the closer to graduation the Veteran gets, the more the counselor will begin to work with the Veteran to find gainful employment.

It’s an excellent program that we’re not sure a lot of Veterans know about, so we’re trying to spread information about the program. Also, this program isn’t just for recent Veterans. This can be for a Veteran of any era who has a VA disability rating, as long as he/she is determined eligible for the program.

If you have any further questions about the program, please feel free to contact the OMVS at our office, via email at veterans@semo.edu, or via phone at 573-651-2253.

VA Rate of Pursuit

Trying to figure out if you’ll receive your maximum payment from the VA? Here’s some handy information when planning your schedule for the upcoming semesters.

| Term Duration | Maximum Credits
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*Graduate is a little different, so if you have questions, contact me.*

Overlapping terms is always allowed; however, please keep in mind that any portion of the term you’re not considered full-time, you will receive a prorated payment from the VA.

Additionally, for Summer, if you take anything above nine credits, you have to get a recommendation from your advisor and have a hold lifted by the Registrar’s Office, so please plan accordingly.

SP ’16: Team America
It’s Party Time!

It’s that time of year again. The time when the Office of Military & Veteran Services provides a stress-free evening for all of our military-connected population and their families poolside. That’s right! It’s time for the OMVS’ Splash Bash!

We’ve had great success with our family-oriented pool parties in the past and have decided to continue the tradition on April 29, 2016, from 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. The party will be held at the North Recreation Center’s Aquatic Center (the one attached to the Show Me Center). There will be competitive games, music, free food, and maybe even some prizes at this semester’s OMVS Splash Bash.

Come by and relax a little before finals, and don’t forget to bring your family! We do ask that you RSVP at veterans@semo.edu or 573-651-2253, so we can make sure we have enough food for everyone.

Proposed Post 9/11 GI Bill Changes

There are several proposed changes coming down the pike for the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Two of the bigger changes include the transferability of and the housing stipend payment to dependents.

Currently, a Veteran has to have six years of service, as well as have an additional four years left of service, in order to transfer. This equates to 10 years of dedicated service to transfer benefits. Lawmakers are now proposing that a Veteran must serve at least 10 years and sign up for at least two more, in order to transfer. This would be a total of 12 years of service, just to transfer the benefit to his/her family member. Not only are lawmakers considering changing the transferability of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, but they’re also considering changing the payout for dependents’ housing stipends as well.

Under current policy, dependents are paid a housing stipend, if they have a rate of pursuit of at least half-time, regardless if their parent/legal guardian is on Active Duty or not. Spouses follow payout law for the Veteran, so if a Veteran is on Active Duty, the spouse does not receive the housing stipend. There are no proposed changes to spousal housing stipend payout. However, newly proposed changes would essentially cut the housing stipend in half for dependents. The opposition to these new changes argue that it will have a negative impact on the recruitment and retention of Service Members, as well as decrease the offset of education assistance that a dependent receives. As of right now, no new law has been passed, but without any opposition, these new changes very well may go into effect as early as next year.

People ask how they can make a difference. We encourage you to write your governor, congressman, senator, representatives, and any other body that might rally behind the opposition. These changes can drastically cut the financial assistance afforded to our military families, as well as the strength of the force needed to defend and maintain our national security. Banded together, Veterans can make the difference, so please tell all your brothers and sisters in arms to contact their representatives with their concerns about this topic, to help maintain the integrity of this duly-earned education entitlement.
Student Veterans Organization

We are steadily working on the SVO’s Veterans’ Transition House, but we still have a long way to go. We are going to be setting up more work days to work on the house. Our next workday is April 30th. If you are able, please stop by to help with the final demolition phase. Remember to be eligible to attend conferences you need to be at the work days.

The Veterans’ Transition House is our baby right now. The house is to help future Veterans who are transitioning acclimate to both the academic and civilian lifestyle. Once we finish the house, Veterans will be able to rent rooms, in secured, comfortable environment, for a very affordable rental price. Also, the house will turn into the SVO’s meeting place, so we would be able to hold our own celebrations at the house.

Next year, we will be attending the Student Veterans of America National Conference 2017 at Disneyland in California. We have started the selection process of who we want to take on the trip. Remember to attend conferences, you need to participate in renovation, SVO projects, and community service events.

We will be continue to work on creating a video for incoming Veterans, in order to help them know what to expect when transitioning into the college setting. We will be going over ideas at meetings, and hopefully, by the end of the next semester we will have the video complete.

DON’T FORGET TO CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK: SEMO Student Veterans Organization!

Get Involved

SVO membership and participation is easy. Contact Chris Williams @ 314-403-5598 or email: cnwilliams3s@semo.edu for further details. You can also like us on Facebook at SEMO Student Veterans Organization.

SVO Meetings

Our SVO meetings are held on the first and third Tuesday of each month, at the OMVS (UC, Rm 302), at 1700. Please mark your calendar for the following meeting dates:

- April 4th: Veterans Center @ 1700*
- May 2nd: Veterans Center @ 1700*

*Times and dates are subject to change. Every effort will be made to notify members of schedule changes.

SVO

The Student Veterans Organization (SVO) is comprised of military and military-affiliated people who want to make a difference in the lives of our Veterans and their families.

The SVO is a chapter of the Student Veterans of America and is a certified non-profit organization whose primary mission is to support our Veterans and their families.

Community Service

The SVO is trying to get more involved in the community.

As a 501c3 organization, we are required to do community service and we will keep updates for opportunities on our Facebook page.

Newest/Upcoming

- Dues
- Check out our FB page for future SVO Transition House workdays
Current Events and Important Dates

April 19th, 1700-1900: Coloring for Grown Ups
Who says coloring is just for kids? The Cape Girardeau Public Library (711 N. Clark Street) is offering a night of relaxation & entertainment for adults. Coloring pages from books designed especially for adults, as well as colored pencils, markers, and gel pens will be available, but feel free to bring your own supplies as well. Registration is required to ensure they have adequate supplies. Please contact Adult Services at as@capelibrary.org or (573) 334-5279 x113 to register. Future dates are available on their website at http://www.capelibrary.org/CalendarAdult.aspx.

April 23rd, 1000-1130: Seed Party
The Cape Girardeau Public Library (711 N. Clark Street) is hosting a Wildflower Seed Bomb party. Go play in the dirt and make wildflower seed bombs to use at home, give as gifts, or spread some cheer in the community. Registration is required to ensure they have adequate supplies. Please contact Adult Services at as@capelibrary.org or (573) 334-5279 x113 to register.

April 29th, 1730-2000: OMVS Splash Bash
We’ve had great success with our family-oriented pool parties in the past and have decided to continue the tradition. There will be competitive games, music, free food, and maybe even a prizes at this semester’s OMVS Splash Bash. Come by and relax a little before Finals. The party will be held at the North Recreation Center’s Aquatic Center on April 29th. More information be available closer to the event.

May 4th, 1100-1300: Burger & Weenie Roast
As a kick-off to finals week, the OMVS will be hosting a FREE burger and hotdog roast. Stop by our office to relax, visit, and chat with our staff and other military-affiliated students. Please keep an eye out for additional information, closer to the date of the event.

May 11th: Cape Girardeau Air Festival
The Cape Girardeau Regional Air Port is hosting the 2016 Cape Girardeau Air Festival. Lineup includes the Canadian Forces Snowbirds Jet Team, Canadian Forces F-18 Fighter Demonstration Team, Redline Airshow performances, and more! You can find additional information on their website at http://www.capegirardeauairfestival.com/.

May 14th, 1400: Southeast Commencement
Commencement will be Saturday, May 14, at 2:00 p.m. in the Show Me Center. Congratulations and good luck to all of our graduating military-connected students!

May 21st, 1515: Southeast Day @ Busch Stadium
Southeast Day at Busch 2016 will be Saturday, May 21, as the St. Louis Cardinals take on the Arizona Diamondbacks in a 3:15 p.m. game. Discounted Loge Reserve tickets are available at www.cardinals.com/semo and include vouchers for a free hot dog and soft drink redeemable at any Busch Stadium concession stand. Attendees will also receive a specially-designed "Southeast Day at Busch 2016" visor, while supplies last. The Southeast Alumni Association and the St. Louis Alumni Chapter will host a pre-game gathering from 12:30-2:30 p.m., on the upper level of the Budweiser Brew House in Ballpark Village. Appetizers will be provided and a cash bar, featuring drink specials, will be available. You can register for the pre-game festivities at https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ec8jkd971b784240&oseq=&c=&f%

Spring 2016 Graduation
The end of the semester is always a bitter-sweet time of year. Things are coming to an end and other things are just ramping up, but the OMVS wanted to take this opportunity to wish all of our graduating Service Members and Veterans, as well as their family members the best of luck in their future endeavors! We are so proud of all of you for achieving this milestone!
SIU-Carbondale’s Veteran Adventures is offering another opportunity for Service Members and Veterans to come together and tackle issues while taking on some really exciting natural obstacles. Their next adventure is scheduled for May 23 - 26, 2016, and is a trip to Big South Fork of Cumberland River for a white-water paddling adventure.

Celebrating the end of the semester, Veteran Adventures is headed to eastern Tennessee for four-and-a-half days of whitewater canoeing. Upon arrival, participants will review canoeing techniques and water safety instructions. Then, they will spend the next few days paddling down the Cumberland River, from the section of the river that runs from Zenith Mine to Alum Ford. It’s approximately 50 miles long and is a great beginner-to-intermediate stretch that provides just enough excitement to keep participants on their toes, and no previous canoeing experience is necessary.

While the Veteran Adventures program does have fundraising events, donations, and grants, sometimes there is a cost to the Service Member or Veteran. The current estimated price for this trip is $175 per person. If any funding is raised to offset the cost of the trip, updated prices will be provided to the participants.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Shane Brady or Clayton Sheehan at 618-453-1121 or email them at tonec@siu.edu for additional information. To register for this event, visit www.veteranadventures.siu.edu.
Don't Miss Out...Get Involved Now!
Military Scholarships Available

Our office tends to field a lot of questions, but one of the frequently-asked questions is whether Southeast has scholarships for our military-affiliated population. I’m happy to report that because of the generosity of our scholarship donors, Southeast is able to offer several university-endowed, military-specific scholarships! What’s better, the application process is really quite simple: all you have to do is complete the general, university-endowed scholarship application, which is available through your student portal. The application period opens in October 2015, and there will be a notification on the portal’s homepage, just before you log into your student account. The application period is open until March 2016, but we encourage early completion of the application.

The following scholarships are offered exclusively to our military-affiliated population. Scholarships are generally based on financial need and academic standing, but all are encouraged to apply.

Pamela McClune
Ronald & Janet Pensel
Charles & Evelyn Whipple
Anita Frick-Held & Donald Held
Edwin Cardin (AF ROTC only)

For more information on these scholarships, please visit the university’s endowed scholarship page at http://www.semo.edu/foundation/endowed-scholarships.html or contact the OMVS.