Principles of Excellence  
Review and Recommendations

On April 27, 2012, President Obama signed Executive Order 13607 Establishing Principles of Excellence for Educational Institutions Serving Service Members, Veterans, Spouses, and Other Family Members. After initial review, the CO instructed CSU campuses to abstain from signing any DoD documents indicating participation in the program until further detail was outlined by the federal agencies involved, and until the CO could determine if campuses would be able to comply with the specifics of the order.

Academic Affairs recently conducted a second review of the Principles of Excellence utilizing additional information provided since the signing of the Executive Order. We have found two sections (2 and 4) of the Principles to be more problematic. These are outlined below and highlighted.

Section 1: The Policy  
We concur and support the intent of the policy

Section 2: Principles:  
We concur and support the principles. However, there are internal policies and practices that will need to be evaluated and reinforced through additional communication to the campuses. Below are the principles in abbreviated version. The highlighted principals will be discussed in more detail below.

a) Provide personalized, standardized form to prospective students to help them understand total cost of attendance, cost covered by federal aid benefits, debt information, etc.
b) Inform students of other aid available  
c) End fraudulent recruiting techniques on and off military installations  
d) Obtain approval from accrediting agencies for new programs/course offerings  
e) Allow service members and reservists to be readmitted if they are unable to attend classes due to service related requirements, and take additional steps to accommodate short absences provided that satisfactory progress is being made  
f) Agree to an institutional policy that is aligned with the refund of unearned student aid rules (Title IV of the HEA of 1965 under section 484B) when students withdraw prior to course completion  
g) Provide educational plans for all individuals  
h) Designate a point of contact for academic and financial advising

Principles a-d, and f above have been resolved and CSU campuses should be able to implement. The involved federal agencies have provided additional guidance that will allow us to be in compliance with the expectation. However Principles e, g, and h require additional steps.
**Principle (e)** requires that campuses allow service members and reservists to be readmitted if they are unable to attend classes due to service-related requirements, and for campuses to take additional steps to accommodate short absences provided that satisfactory progress is being made.

**Discussion/Challenge:** CSU Executive Order 1037 provides campuses with broad guidance in this area, but gives ultimate authority for decisions on withdrawal to the campus. As such, we have varying practices across the system.

**Recommendation:** Issue a new executive order that supersedes Executive Order 1037 to include a prescriptive policy regarding military personnel and veterans and readmission. In addition, we may want to be clearer in regards to refunds for this category.

**Principle (g)** requires that each campus provide educational plans for all individuals using federal military and educational benefits.

**Discussion/Challenge:** CSU campuses will be able to comply with the overall intent of this principle as written in the Principles of Excellence document. However, the final Q & A Document that provided additional information adds another component to this section. The final Q & A document states that the institution shall also provide members who have previous coursework from other accredited institutions and relevant military training and experiential learning an evaluated educational plan that indicates how many, if any, transfer credits it intends to award and how these transfer credits will be applied toward the student’s educational program within 60 days after the individual has selected a degree program and all required official transcripts have been received. Furthermore, the Q&A document provides a definition of the “evaluated education plan” that specifies the components of the plan and that the plan must be provided by the institution upon successful completion of six semester hours by the service member.

Campuses have varying models that provide this information to students’ in terms of the timeframe (i.e. some campuses will provide this during the first semester, and other campuses indicate that they will provide this at the end of the first year.) The Principles of Excellence is clear in that the Educational Plan needs to be done after the first semester (completion of 6 units). There is no system-wide policy that provides guidance and campuses have authority on their internal timeframes. In addition, an evaluation of this work is currently used for admission purposes, not for individual education plans that lead to completing a degree. This section of the proposed evaluated plan needs further analysis by others in academic affairs. Adding military training and experiential learning as a requirement for compliance of the individual education plan for the student will require training to the advising group and discussion with faculty to determine the feasibility of applying such training to specific programs/degrees.
Recommendation: The CO will need to provide specific guidance to campuses regarding the timeline of delivery of the plan to both the admission leadership and the advising leadership. In addition, CO staff will need to discuss the feasibility of the evaluated individual education plan with other CO departments and faculty.

Principle (h) requires that campuses designate a point of contact for academic and financial advising.

Discussion/Challenge: While our current model has designated a point of contact, our campuses have a diversity of individuals who have this responsibility. Depending on the campus, these individuals may or may not have authority beyond the certifying process and in many cases some of these individuals often do not have the skills/training required to develop cross campus partnerships and relationships. It is possible that there would be a cost associated to bring all campuses to an appropriate level of compliance and understanding.

Recommendation: Work with campus veteran teams to determine these responsibilities, clearly identify appropriate points of contacts, provide training where necessary, and assist campuses in re-configuring current campus veteran lead model where necessary.

Section 3: Implementation of the Principles of Excellence
CSU campuses have the capacity to comply with all paragraphs of section 3 abbreviated below.
   a) Educational institutions may sign DoD agreements which state they comply with the Principles of Excellence. (However, the CO would recommend campuses to hold off on signing new agreements if the DoD does not show a final document)
   b) Report progress
   c) Comply with student outcome measurements as outlined in the final Q & A document
   d) Use the provided, streamlined electronic resources

Section 4: Strengthening and Compliance
This section focuses on developing a structure for complaints and compliance. To comply with this section the DoD, USDVA, and other relevant agencies will need to provide uniform procedures which our campuses will need to understand and use when appropriate.

However, paragraph (e) is specific to establishing new uniform rules and strengthening existing rules for access to military installations by educational institutions.

Discussion/Challenge: While we currently enjoy a positive relationship with military installations in the state, we do not have formal agreements that allow CSU campuses access.
**Recommendation:** This provides a great opportunity for the Chancellor Designee to form and develop these agreements for the system.

**Section 5: General Provisions**
No concerns with this section.