

George Hanbury: Needs of returning veterans a big priority at Nova

By George Hanbury

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Unemployment, homelessness, and mental health issues face many of our returning veterans because of their sacrifices and service.

Also, their military service may have interrupted their efforts to pursue their academic dreams and ambitions by attending an institution of higher education.

More than one million men and women will return to the United States from the wars in the Middle East over the next four years. Re-integrating into one's community – our community – is a daunting challenge for those who have risked their lives to protect our freedoms.

We must meet this challenge with human and physical resources – as individuals, as a community, as a university, and as a nation.

Helping assuage the difficult life situations I enumerated is possibly one of the most important things we can do to help get veterans back on their feet when they return home.

One of the best ways to ensure our heroes obtain meaningful employment is to ensure that they are well educated and prepared for the knowledge-based industries that will lead Florida forward.

Nearly 800 veterans are currently pursuing undergraduate, graduate and medical degrees at **Nova Southeastern University**. One way we make the pursuit of knowledge easier to attain is by matching, dollar for dollar, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Yellow Ribbon G.I. Bill Education Enhancement Program. NSU has contributed nearly one million dollars to this program since 2009 and we are proud to continue providing this type of support.

Many people may not know that the Post-**9/11** G.I. Bill allows for transfer of benefits to spouse or dependent, which is a great option for those who have relatives who want to pursue a higher education.

Beyond education, NSU is committed to assisting the veteran community through its psychology clinic services, including trauma resolution, anxiety treatment and comprehensive bio

psychosocial diagnosis and treatment. NSU is also establishing South Florida's first Veterans Law Clinic.

In tandem with other university efforts dedicated to empowering the veteran population, such as NSU's Veteran's Assistance Center, the clinic will work with community partners such as Legal Aid, the Public Defender's Offices and various military service agencies to spread the word and collaborate on initiatives to serve as a much-needed pro bono resource to the thousands of U.S. veterans, military personnel and their families living and working in the tri-county area.

Our Law Center recently held a national symposium aimed at exploring how to meet the needs of active-duty military personnel and veterans with **post-traumatic stress disorder** (PTSD) that was widely attended.

And across the campus, NSU's medical school established the Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine this spring, led by world-renowned researcher Nancy Klimas, M.D., who is conducting cutting-edge research and treating patients suffering from Gulf War Illness. Universities are the key to forging innovation and progress, and we serve as South Florida's multidisciplinary hub, bringing together the brightest people from many fields to tackle our community's most difficult challenges.

For those of you who wonder how you can help, I encourage you to get involved with NSU and with the "Mission United" campaign created by the **United Way** and the **Red Cross**. Individuals, communities, universities and corporations can make a profound impact in their own ways and I challenge everyone to prioritize our returning veterans and their families now and in the future as our way to say thank you. Let's make **Veterans Day** every day!

George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D. is President and CEO of Nova Southeastern University, one of 37 universities and colleges out of more than 4,000 nationwide with the dual classification of "High Research" and "Community Engaged" by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

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