MEMORANDUM

Date:       August 20, 2012

To:         VA Certifying Officials

From:       Gayla Stoner
            Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs

Re:         VA Certification – 2012 Fall Semester (IT)

These are part of the changes that must be followed immediately.

Definitions:

Standard semester: a standard semester is one that is 15 to 19 weeks in length.

Standard class session: one standard class session is 50 minutes of instruction.

Class session: This is a scheduled class meeting with an instructor or by closed circuit TV where a class meets together at a scheduled time, the instructor gives instruction over a TV monitor large enough for all in the class to see, and there are arrangements for instant two way interaction between the instructor and the students. A lecture that students view at their own convenience does not meet this requirement.

The definition of online courses depends upon whether they are at the undergraduate or graduate level.

Undergraduate courses – To be approved as in residence training an undergraduate course must be scheduled to meet at least one standard class session per week for a standard 15-week semester. This means that a one-semester credit course must be supported by at least 15 standard class sessions regardless of how long or short the semester is.
This means that, for example, a 3-semester credit course must be supported by at least 45 standard class session (3 X 15). This calculates out to 37.5 clock hours of instruction per semester calculated thus: 3 X 15 = 45 X 50 minutes = 2,250 minutes divided by 60 minutes (a clock hour) = 37.5 clock hours of net instruction. This is true whether the semester is 15 weeks in length, 10 weeks in length, 6 weeks in length, etc.

Another requirement is that the classes must be scheduled to meet at least once every two weeks. **The total of class sessions must still be the same**, but they may meet twice as long every other week.

Any undergraduate class that does not meet **all** of these requirements is considered to be an online class.

**Graduate courses** – To be considered in residence training a graduate course must be defined by the school in its catalog as resident study, but is only required to have **two** scheduled class sessions during the enrollment period. Once again, the definition of a class session is the same, but graduate students need only be scheduled for two class meetings during the term. Organized research classes such as doctoral dissertation, master’s thesis, etc., are not required to have any scheduled class sessions, but are required to have regular interaction between the student and a faculty member of the school.

Any graduate class (not dissertation, thesis, etc.) that is not defined by the school’s catalog as resident study or does not have at least two scheduled class meetings during a term is considered to be an online class. It is possible for a graduate course to have two or more class meetings during a term, but if it is defined as online training/independent study by the school’s catalog, it is **not** resident study.

In each case class meetings must be scheduled **before** the enrollment period starts. Classes arranged **after** an enrollment period starts are **not** considered to be scheduled class sessions. All class sessions must be **required** sessions and **not voluntary or optional** class meetings – such voluntary or optional class meetings are **not** included in the calculation for total class sessions during an enrollment period when determining whether or not a course is in residence or online.
One Certification. The current policy of one certification per semester will continue.
If you are not using VA-ONCE, contact the Office of Distance Education and Off Campus Programs immediately. VA-ONCE must be used for all first, second, and third term certifications. We have processed the requisite M.O.U. for your site and you should have received your account and password information.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill

It is extremely difficult to write one VA Certification instruction for all locations about the Post 9/11 GI Bill also known as Chapter 33. The reason being the dollar amounts for housing allowance vary depending upon the zip code where the student is attending classes. Notice I said WHERE THE STUDENT IS ATTENDING CLASSES. This is a bit different than we have dealt with before with previous GI Bill Chapters.

However, for students at SIUC Off-Campus, as of August 1, 2011 payments are limited to:

The net charges for tuition and fees for an in-state student at a public school/college. Essentially this means VA pays full net tuition and fees for all in-state public school students including associates degrees, bachelors degrees, masters, doctorate, Medical Doctor, Juris Doctor, etc.

Net charges exclude any waiver or reduction in tuition and fees and any scholarship, or other Federal, state, institutional, or employer-based aid or assistance (other than Title IV funds) that is provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees.

Let me give you an example taken from the page located at:

http://gibill.va.gov/community/announcements/general.html#20111214

Go to the benefits calculator:

To determine the BAH for Little Rock and Jacksonville (as well as everywhere else), enter your zip code.

They will also receive up to $41.67 per credit hour (to a maximum of 24 hours) for books and supplies per year.

All of this information assumes four things:

One: They are entitled to 100% of the Chapter 33 benefit;
Two: They are NOT ON ACTIVE DUTY; and,
Three: They are attending class full-time; and
Four: You are looking after October 1, 2011

To be entitled to 100% benefit under Chapter 33 they must have served 36 months on active duty after September 10, 2001. If they served less than 36 months their benefit is reduced. The VA calculates their benefit. All tuition is paid directly to SIUC under Chapter 33. You certify them using VAONCE just like any other VA student.

If a student is on active duty, they are only entitled to tuition and the book allowance. They do not receive BAH.

Books and Supplies Stipend:

- Up to $1,000 per academic year
  - $41.67 per credit hour
  - Up to 24 credit hours in a single academic year
  - Lump sum payment (each quarter, semester or term attended) paid directly to the individual

- Prorated based on the percentage of the maximum benefit payable
- Active duty members will be eligible for this stipend effective October 1, 2011
Your Responsibilities under Chapter 33:

Keep VA informed of the enrollment status of veterans and other eligible persons.

Use basic forms to keep VA informed, such as: Enrollment Certification (VAF 22-1999) to report tuition, fees, enrollment dates, term dates, Notice of Change in Student Status (VAF 22-1999B) to report all changes to enrollment information (including those that do not result in a training time change).

REMEMBER: You must report all enrollments and changes within 30 days. Enrollments may be reported 60 days prior to the start of the term. Report one term at a time (SIUC Policy).

Monitor student’s grades to ensure (s)he is making satisfactory progress; report unsatisfactory progress.

Monitor student’s conduct and report when student is suspended or dismissed for unsatisfactory conduct.

Responsibilities for maintaining records of VA students and making the records available for inspection:

* Retain file of VA papers submitted & records of academic progress, program pursuit, etc.
* Maintain records for at least five years following the student’s last date of attendance.
* Ensure that records are kept in a safe place and that the privacy of VA students is protected.
* Make available all school records to representatives of the SAA and VA.

A school’s file for a VA student should contain:

* Copies of all VA paperwork.
* The school’s transcript, grade reports, drop slips, registration slips (for those courses dropped during drop/add), transcripts from previous schools with evaluations of same, student’s school application, records of disciplinary action, program outline (to track proper courses taken), etc.

Date for Submitting Enrollment Certifications. For Chapter 30 active duty students and veterans training half time or more, enrollment certifications may be submitted up to 120 days prior to the first class date of the semester. Since the Fall semester begins August 25, 2012, this means enrollment certifications may be dated and submitted August 25, 2012, or up to 120 days prior to this date. (This change does not apply to active duty students using other Chapters, e.g., Chapter 32/VEAP and Chapters 1606/1607.)

If you are uncertain as to the intention of certain students, you may wish to hold their certifications until after the first weekend of classes before you submit them.

Advance Payment. Chapter 30 active duty students may request advance payment. Students must be enrolled half-time or more to qualify, plus other conditions must be met. If you have a student who is interested in advanced payment, please call me to discuss eligibility requirements and the process which must be followed. (This change does not apply to active duty students using other Chapters, e.g., Chapter 32/VEAP and Chapters 1606/1607.)

Shortfall created by class schedule overlap. A shortfall is created for active duty students who are enrolled full time, because there are two overlap periods (September 23, 2012 and November 4, 2012) when students are taking two resident training courses and a distance learning course. On these days, the prorated semester hour charges for the three courses exceed the maximum daily entitlement (see Tab B-1, VA Policy and Procedure).

At the present time, for the Fall Semester 2012, depending on how each VARO calculates entitlement, it appears full-time, Chapter 30 active duty students (12 hours) will have a shortfall/payment of approximately the following:

**VA EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS ANTICIPATED SHORTFALL/PAYMENT**
(Full-time Chapter 30 Active Duty Students)

FALL SEMESTER 2012 (IT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shortfall</th>
<th>$1196*</th>
<th>$1473</th>
<th>$1661</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payment</td>
<td>$2987</td>
<td>$2999</td>
<td>$3000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Monthly educational assistance allowance varies under Chapter 30. The most common allowances are $1196, $1473, and $1661 per month; $1196 for initial obligation of two years, $1473 for initial obligation of three years or more, $1661 for active duty students who have converted from the Old GI Bill (Chapter 34) to Chapter 30. Since the VA educational assistance allowance for students using Chapter 30 varies, please contact me if you have questions concerning the anticipated shortfall/payment for students in other situations.

Shortfall/payment created by supplemental enrollment. If a student is taking a course from another school, an additional shortfall may be caused by the supplemental enrollment. A shortfall will occur if the prorated semester hour charge for the supplemental enrollment, and the prorated semester hour charges for the SIUC courses exceed the maximum daily allowance.

Notes Concerning Several Parts of VA Form 22-1999.

Where to send. Chapter 30 enrollment certifications should be sent to the Chapter 30 Processing Center which services your program. Enrollment certifications for other chapters should be sent to your VA Regional Office or to the Chapter 30 Processing Center in accordance with instructions from your VA Regional Office using VA-ONCE.

VA Facility Code. Include your VA facility code on the enrollment certifications.
Chapter 30 Adjudication Officers in VA Regional Processing Centers do not always recognize that the weekend (resident training) classes are taught in the accelerated format. As a result, they have failed to calculate the credit hour equivalent for these courses, and have produced incorrect award letters.

**Distance Learning Courses.** All courses are considered resident training courses except those listed below. These courses are Distance Learning courses (by VA definition).

- IT 240
- IT 305
- IT 340
- IT 382
- IT 392
- IT 395
- IT 445
- IT 492
- IT 494
For Chapter 33: Online Courses. All courses are considered resident training courses except those listed below. These courses are Distance Learning courses (by VA definition).

IT 240    IT 395
IT 305    IT 445
IT 340    IT 492
IT 382    IT 494
IT 392

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 453-4033, and or email gstoner@pvc.siu.edu.

Thank you.

GS: jm

cc: John Warwick, Dean, College of Engineering
    Mandara Savage, Director, Technology Off-Campus Degree Programs,
    College of Engineering