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Education Committee September 30, 2022
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WALZ: Senator Sanders-- OK. I'm like, I know we have another senator here. Good afternoon, everybody. Apologize, we have a senator coming and one that's going to join us on the phone. And other than that, I know that we have a lot of people who are pretty busy today. So just want to apologize for our small group, but we're a mighty group, right, Senator Sanders?

SANDERS: Yes. Um-hum.

WALZ: Yeah. So welcome to the Education Committee. My name is Lynne Walz from Legislative District 15. I serve as the Chair of the committee. The interim study was introduced to help us as a committee better understand the feasibility of developing a policy and implementing a statewide process for awarding college credit in specific programs of study across all public educational institutions for military education and training. So, in other words, this study was created to find a solution so that all students with a military affiliation can easily understand and determine how their military training and experience will translate into a college credit. Today, I've invited a few people to speak with the committee to offer their perspective on Nebraska's military accreditation system and how we can implement it, improve it, and overall round it out to support our military students to the highest degree. The committee will take up the items, the LR, on the posted agenda and today's hearing is for invited testimony only. To better facilitate today, today's proceeding, I ask that you abide by the following procedures. Please turn off or silence cell phones or other electronic devices. If you have written material, materials that you would like to distribute to the committee, please hand them to the page to, to distribute. We need ten copies for all committee members and staff. If you need additional copies, please ask a page to make copies for you now and then when you begin to testify, state and spell your name for the record and please speak directly into the microphone so our transcribers are able to hear your testimony clearly. The committee members with us today will introduce themselves beginning at-- we're going to begin at my far left today.

SANDERS: Good afternoon. Rita Sanders, representing District 45, which is the Bellevue-Offutt community. And thank you all for being here.

WALZ: Yes. And I know that Senator Linehan is on her way. I'd like to introduce the committee staff. To my immediate right is research analyst, Elsa Knight. And to my far right end of the table is

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Education Committee September 30, 2022

Rough Draft

committee clerk, Noah Boger. And our page today is Morgan Baird. You can wave. I'd also like to remind our committee members to speak directly into the microphones and limit their side conversations and making noise on any personal devices. We are an electronics-equipped committee and information is provided electronically as well as in paper form. Therefore, you may see committee members referencing information on their electronic devices. Be assured that your presence here today and your testimony are very important to us and crucial to our state government. So with that, I will turn it over to Dr. Mike Baumgartner of Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education as the first testifier.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. To be clear, the comprehensive plan is listed right here first. Are we--

WALZ: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm sorry. Yes, go ahead.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: You're wanting to do that one first.

WALZ: Yes.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Correct?

WALZ: Yes.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: OK. This won't take long.

WALZ: Yep.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman, members of the committee. My name is Mike Baumgartner, M-i-k-e B-a-u-m-g-a-r-t-n-e-r, and I'm the executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. You may be wondering what the hearing about the comprehensive statewide plan is so I'll give you a quick legal tour. Article VII, Section 14 of the Nebraska Constitution grants the Coordinating Commission the authority to adopt and revise as needed a comprehensive statewide plan for postsecondary education. That authority is further delineated in Nebraska Revised Statute 85-1413, which talks about the plan, the planning process, and what needs to be in the comprehensive plan. Among the things that are laid out that must be addressed in the plan are recommended guidelines for admission, recommended guidelines for rational and equitable tuition and fees, designation of geographic and programmatic service areas, establishment of peer groups for public institutions, development of a state strategy for state-supported financial aid programs. And that

section concludes with a requirement that prior to March 15 of the year following a year in which revisions are made, we have to bring revisions to the Education Committee for their review at a public hearing, and so that's why I am here. We don't undertake revisions every year. The last time we did this was 2016. In fact, it was literally six years and ten days ago that I appeared before the committee to talk about the previous revisions. This is what the revised plan includes. I did not bring copies for everybody. If you would like copies, please let me know. But it's a lot of paper, and the revisions actually were not very extensive, so I didn't want to do that to you. With the recent adoption of LR335, which created the state educational attainment goal and the passage of LB887, which updated several Nebraska State College System statutes, including the role and mission of Peru State College, the Coordinating Commission reviewed and revised the comprehensive plan in the spring and the summer. The primary objective was to incorporate the LR335 attainment goal and the LB887 Peru State College changes. But we also took the opportunity to do a few more things. We removed obsolete statutory references and practices associated with them. Whenever a statute changed, other statutes had changed, we, we corrected that in the comprehensive plan, things that have changed over the past six years. We referenced 2020 Census data in the review of Nebraska's social economic, political, and educational landscape, which is a required section. Updated references to the college savings programs to incorporate Meadowlark Savings Pledge and state matching funds, made slight modernizations to guidelines for transfer in foundations education, recognized growth in competency-based education and new credentials, took into account the current state of distance education and instructional technology, replaced the previous dual-credit guidelines with the Statement of Principles and Standards developed and adopted by the public institutions in 2019, updated Carnegie Classifications for campuses and degree offerings as necessary, updated Distance Education Guidelines to reflect, reflect current Higher Learning Commission policies and State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement policies and made general modernizations as necessary. Institutional input was solicited in June and July. We received suggestions from several institutional leaders and incorporated most of the suggestions into the draft. It was reviewed and recommended by the Commission's Planning and Consumer Information Committee and then adopted by the Commission at its July 21, 2022, meeting. I would be happy to address any questions you have.

WALZ: Thank you. Questions from the committee?

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Rough Draft

SANDERS: Just a quick question. Since you have no extra copies, is this online?

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: It is online.

SANDERS: OK. I'll make sure we take a, a closer look.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: I do have an extra copy that was--

SANDERS: I'll just pull it up online.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: OK.

SANDERS: I have a lot of time to look at it and review it.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: I'm happy to send, I'm happy to send you a printed copy too, but.

SANDERS: I'll look at it.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: OK.

SANDERS: Thank you.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: All right. Thank you.

WALZ: All right. I don't see any other questions, so thank you. This ends our hearing on the statewide-- education statewide comprehensive plan update. And we will begin our hearing on LR373.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Good afternoon.

WALZ: We're going to stay with you.

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Thank you. Good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman and members of the committee. My name is Mike Baumgartner, M-i-k-e B-a-u-m-g-a-r-t-n-e-r, and I'm the executive director of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. Nebraska has a goal of being the most veteran-friendly state in the country and has done much in the past several years in pursuit of that goal, which you all know well: elimination of state income tax on military pensions, making it easier to obtain occupational licenses for veterans and active military spouses, waiving additional tuition for service members, and extending state residency to many more veterans, active military and their family members for tuition purposes. Nebraska postsecondary institutions are nationally recognized for their work

with veterans, with many being ranked very highly by military publications as best institutions for veterans, service members, and their families. Still, Nebraska may have room to improve in developing policy and implementing a statewide process that will provide credit transparency to veterans and service members allowing them to easily access information and understand how their military training and experience will translate into college credit in specific programs of study across all public institutions. Some states are ahead of Nebraska in this regard, either as a result of legislation or concerted action by the public colleges and universities. And I believe Nebraska, Nebraska should give serious consideration to what best practices across the Midwest can make Nebraska better. Nebraska joined the Midwestern Higher Education Compact's Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit in 2014. Per MHEC, the mission of the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit is to facilitate an interstate partnership of 13 states and to translate competencies acquired by service members through military training and experience toward meaningful college credits. I will not get further into that because we have the expert with us today. I do want to point out that Dr. Kathleen Fimple, who is the Coordinating Commission's academic program officer and who is with me here today, has been Nebraska's steering committee member from the beginning of the creation of this group. Through the ongoing work of the MCMC, through attending MHEC meetings and state visits by MHEC staff and through meetings with Army University officers and civilians, a number of us in the room today have been exposed to and taken part in conversations about best practices in military credentialing. And I am grateful to Sara Appel, who has directed MCMC for MHEC, Lieutenant Colonel Phil Turner, the Army National Guard liaison officer at Army University, assigned to Army credentialing, continuing education services for soldiers, and Tobias Wood, the associate director of career and technical education at the Kansas Board of Regents and also a sergeant first class in the U.S. Army Reserve, for traveling to Lincoln today to share their work with us and to our institutional representatives for sharing how they and our public colleges currently translate military credit-- military training and experience into college credit. And I believe we'll have a good conversation with this excellent group of people who came today. Any questions?

WALZ: OK. Any questions?

SANDERS: Just a quick statement, if I might. Thank you so much for bringing this forward. You are singing my song. So thank you very much.

WALZ: I don't see any other questions. Thank you. And with that, I'll ask Sara Appel, associate director for policy and research at MHEC. Welcome.

SARA APPEL: Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I appreciate the invitation. My name is Sara Appel, S-a-r-a A-p-p-e-l, and I am from the Midwestern Higher Education Compact. This compact hosts the program, the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit. We applied for a grant in conjunction with NCHEMS and we were very happy to get it. It allowed for us to do a lot of research on this issue. The American Institutes for Research granted us \$5,000 to work on postsecondary competency-based education research around military transcripts and the award of a CBE/L. AIR helped us to connect with other researchers in the area of competency-based learning all around the country. So that was also beneficial. It allowed us to collaborate with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, NCHEMS. There's all kinds of acronyms in here. So if I, if I just mention one, you don't know what it is, please let me know. The foundation of our research project was to do a policy scan of the 13 member states of the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit. The agenda for my presentation today is to do an overview of research questions and design, policy commonalities and variances and the interpretations of those commonalities and variances and provide a summary and answer any questions. As Mr. Baumgartner said, the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit was established in 2014. We actually began writing the grant proposal back in 2012, and we worked very hard on that and we ended up getting over \$1.5 million to do the work for this special area of students in the 13 states. And as Mike mentioned, we do really focus on promising practices, really looking at the competencies and not the seat time for military-connected students. And we-- one of the things that we noticed we wanted to put in there was meaningful college credit. We have had some issues before with institutions just providing, you know, whatever credit the student comes in with, which creates a problem with satisfactory academic progress. And that could flag them then as not moving on to meet their, their educational goals. So we always stress meaningful college credit. And before we just said a college degree, but now there's so many different pathways that folks can go through, not only a college degree, earning a certificate, industry-recognized credential, or a license from industry or a, a related organization such as Microsoft. But they have their own program and provide education, and then folks typically get a job with them when they complete it. So it's not actually a degree, a

certificate, but it really helps them out. High-demand jobs need folks trained in that area. And a lot of folks in our military do have a lot of training in data security, cybersecurity, and typically have a high level of security clearance, which is good when you're dealing with IT. So our research questions were: What policies do the 13 states involved in MHEC's MCMC have in place related to the review of military transcripts and experience for military-connected students entering or reentering postsecondary education? How are these policies generated-- generally interpreted by the state agencies involved with military, military-connected students in higher education? Our research, our research design is very simple. We looked at policies of the 13 MCMC states and found that currently some of-- seven of them have enacted legislation. Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio currently have legislation on record. I've been working with the state of Kentucky for the last two weeks and they too are-- have a working group established to hopefully propose a draft for their legislation in the spring. So they, they too again, they're working on it. So with the research design, we primarily used good old Google and researched the policies that we could find and put those together and then kind of pulled out some things to review. Then we actually did individual conversations with folks or teams of folks at the State Higher Education Executive Office or a similar organization to really understand how they interpret these state policies. What kind of involvement did they have? So that took a lot of time, but we had a lot of great conversations with folks and also got some additional interest from those states on what they would like to see next for military-connected students. So to date, I have not seen or read or found an analysis of the policies that these states and institutions have that really look-- excuse me-- to see how they've been affected, how the military-connected students have been affected and/or the institution or state. That would be really nice to have a grant to do that. But maybe I can get there someday. But again, it's the data, and I'll talk about that here in just a little bit. So first, we're going to talk about the policy commonalities. And we really wanted to clarify who the policy applies, was one of the very first things that, that we noticed that a lot of the policies had. Some of them did not. So this would be something like serving or has served as a member of the military, National Guard, or military reserves. Some folks just use the word "veteran," which can leave out a lot of students because state institutions, the federal government all have different ideas or definitions of what that means. So we just went with military connected and thought that was very good language to use. And we-- actually that's one of the recommendations that, that

we put forth. A lot of them are referred to the American Council on Education. They actually have their military credit recommendations that are institutions. That would be the number one go-to for them in looking at transfer credits. ACE has been doing this since, I think 1945, so they, they've got, they've got it down. They do a lot of research. They have educational teams go in and review documents, data, POIs, which is the equivalent of a syllabus for a course in the military, and speak with instructors and students so they get that firsthand knowledge to make those credit recommendations. I'm very happy to report that after several years, they now have done away with their two-hour credit recommendations and are trying to get away from that because many colleges didn't know what to do with two hours of credit. And again, don't want them to go into that satisfactory academic progress trap. So again, they've been doing much, much better for that. And actually, who does it clar-- who clarifies who the policy applies? So who makes that determination? Is it a group of folks? Is it the policy at the institutions? Do they help work in those work groups with the legislators to come up with that? And again, using that definition of making sure that institutions know who this applies. Some-- again, some institutions, they use the term "veteran." Some of them left off Guard and reserve units, which are highly important, especially here in the Midwest, as we don't have a lot of a large active bases where I come from down in southeast Missouri, but the rest of our, our Midwestern area region does. So very important to make sure that we include those folks. And that was another recommendation; again, just broaden that definition. Some variances. Some of the policies included wording for license and certification agencies that if they come back into the state, if they already have a license or certification, they automatically are able to then become licensed or certified in that state, like-- and typically put on a, a quick process to have that established. We also found that it was very helpful too for military spouses who tend to have a license certification in teaching, which we need, counseling services and other industries as well. So that really varied. I think the one state that really clarified that was Indiana in their policy. They included that and they did a really great job. Also must complete a CLEP, DAN TES, or Excelsior College exam. Those were, again, some of the variances that we saw. One state in their policy said that they must, they are required, must do a CLEP exam, DAN TES, or Excelsior. So CLEP is College-Level Examination Problem [SIC]. So some of you are very familiar with that. DAN TES is Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, and they also have exams that kind of help them CLEP out of different courses. And again, Excelsior

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Education Committee September 30, 2022

Rough Draft

College exam is similar to, to a CLEP. Any, any questions so far? So one of my favorite ones to talk about is the report. Most of the states that we reviewed do require a report either to the state governor, to the Department of Veterans Affairs, towards the State Higher Executive Offices to show how many transfer credits came in with student-- military-connected students, how much time was saved by them not having to duplicate coursework, as well as dollars saved for taxpayers. Because military-connected students, if you've already had anatomy and physiology in the military, why should you take that again? So I have some figures that I'm happy to share with you later on, but again, not always done in everyone, but I think, again, very important to keep people educated on that data. So some of the policy interpretations, again, how people review or have questions on. What we found was that most of the SHEEOs or the other agencies that review this really understood what this policy was because a lot of them were included on the discussion and had their say at working groups with legislators. We wanted to make sure that-- I'll give you an example. I love Minnesota dearly, but when they did their first policy, they put in there: must accept all credits. And that got into an issue. They didn't have anybody at the table from institutions or financial aid, and they actually had to go back, I think, the following year and change that policy because people were starting to get-- military-connected students were starting to get unsatisfactory academic progress so it hurt them. So they did go back and change that. So that really, again, was, was a, a learning tool for a lot of us. Again, military counseling-- I'm sorry, the American Council on Education use those recommendations. Again, not all of the, the folks in these policies specifically called them out. And some of the interpretations about public institutions, they weren't sure if private institutions were included in this or not. Mostly not, but they weren't sure. But fortunately, our Midwest is a wonderful place to live and reside and always want to collaborate with one another. So a lot of them took it upon themselves to work closely with those private, non-for-profit education institutions to encourage them and/or help them understand what this policy was and connect them with other state institutions and helping write one-- so there was a little bit of interpretation there that was different-- and efforts on awarding credits for military experience and training connected to broader efforts on transfer and articulation. Many institutions have a, a transfer credit policy and they accept transcripts from institutions where you transferred from. So having the additional-- a lot of them weren't sure what it meant to look at these other areas such as ACE. Some of them might not be familiar with that. Also, the

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

Joint Services Transcript, admissions folks might not be familiar with; DD214, which is the form that folks get once they, they leave the service, and also just interviewing the student. If they found something on their DD214 like, oh, you served in Afghanistan for six years. Wow. I don't really think they probably need a geography or cultural understanding credit if that's something that's required. Also, another place for information that wasn't really listed and institutions were confused, well, can we or can we not use this is the Defense Language Institute. When you go in there, you learn foreign language and you learn it, hands down. You have to be excelled, excellent and excelled in that to graduate from that program. And they weren't aware of those because it wasn't written in the policy or directed; for more information, go, go here. So there were some issues with that. But again, some of the institutions definitely listed those. So varying levels of reporting. One of the best reports, I, I think, came from Iowa. They have 10 to 12 pages of a report that they do to the governor. And interestingly enough, that doesn't come from the Iowa Department of Higher Education, but it comes from their financial aid office. But they have it down to core hearts. And so they can see first year, second year, third year. They've been logging this for quite a long time. So that's one that I think is too lengthy but is very detailed and can get you additional data. Another one that we found had some variances were networks of professionals really vigorously engaged in collaborative work to encourage consistency across the state. Some states did that, but many states didn't. But thankfully, Indiana is an example of a state where they got together and worked on that through a special group of folks in the-- each campus on college has to have as a requirement by the Department of Defense and, and the VA on educational benefits that they have to have a center dedicated or an officer dedicated to military-connected students. So the Indiana professionals in this area worked together and had meetings to discuss about these policies to make sure that they were all on the same page because they wanted to make it as easy as possible. And it has really worked out well. But again, some variances; some states didn't do that. Another state that did do that is Ohio. And Ohio has what they call their Military Transfer Assurance Guides, MTAGs. They've been working on that for several years. And what that means is that if you come in with these transfer credits at an Ohio institution through military, those credits transfer to any public institution in the state. So nobody can go back in, well, we have to review your transcript. No, it's already been accepted. Not a problem. So they've done some really great things there and they continue to add courses to that. And they work with assigned folks

from those departments, from those state institutions to ensure that what they're looking at from the programs of instruction from the military, again, similar to the syllabus of an institution, look at the syllabus of the institution with that department chair and find those connections, and then they determine how many credits are given. And again, that's put on that transcript from that one state institution. And it's accepted at all the other institutions in the state that includes community colleges as well. As we know, some folks start there and move on to the four-year. So very important to make sure those community colleges were on board with this. There's been a variety in which entity or entities in a state are charged with follow-through. Some of the policies that we looked at were very vague and institutions, folks at the SHEEO agencies, they weren't sure, do, do, do we do this? Is it the, the, the VA? Is it the certifying official for the state? Who does this? So there were some variances with that as well. So some folks have really started to collaborate with their state VA office and school certifying officials to make sure that they understand and they're all, again, on the same page. Some more, in some states, local military bases and installations partnered with their state higher education agency. One-- a good example for that one is the Kansas Board of Regents. They work very closely with their military. And one of the, the fun stories I, I like to tell was that they weren't talking to one another. The institutions say, well, nobody can teach it like we do. And the military was saying nobody can teach it like we do. So a wonderful woman by the name of Connie Beene there at the Kansas Board of Regents said, well, I'm just going to put them in a room, and she did. And come to find out, a lot of the folks had doctorates. A lot of them use the same textbook. And then that really got the conversation started. And then that's when they really were able to get those, those credits from those transcripts put into college credit. And they created a really nice portal that students are able to go into and, and see what they can get from their transcripts. A few states collectively developed systems and tool kits to assist institutions in determining credit, very similar to the Kansas Board of Regents. Minnesota State has had one, I think, since 2009. Yes. And they kept really good data. I can't push data enough. So, for example, in-- since 2009, Minnesota State awarded more than 212,000 credits for prior learning to military-connected students. They've saved those students and-- seat time by using this over 8.5 million hours and duplicated course time. So they didn't have to repeat those courses. That's a lot of time to where it's opened students' ability to take classes that they need to graduate on time and then get into the workforce and it saved

taxpayers more than \$40 million. That's a lot of cash. So, again, it's a win for everyone. But again, you have to collect the data. You have to have a report. And then the variety at the national and state level in defining veteran, which I touched upon a little bit earlier. Recently, the department-- the Ohio Department of Education collected, I think, their first year of information on how their Military Transfer Assurance Guides did. So in Ohio, the average award for military-connected students was 26 semester credit hours. And on average, that translated to-- per savings of students of \$9,906 at a community college or \$21,996 at a university. That's savings. That's-- again, that's also savings for taxpayers. So in summary, some states and institutions with policies are really doing exciting work. They're assuring the institutions are following through on the policies. They're reporting data to the, the state officials who help perform this policy to make sure things are working right, if there needs to be any tweaking, and again, help driving decisions. Data totally drives decisions, as I'm sure our research analyst at the table can, can attest. And training, it's not all-- people don't always know how to read a Joint Services Transcript. That's kind of a specialized area. So institutions need to make sure that folks have that training and are able to read that and understand all of the different aspects, not just the JST, not just the ACE credit recommendations, but also that DD214 or the Defense Language Institute certification. And again, collaborating with various stakeholders to help draft policy such as bases if you're, you're located veterans groups, if you have student veterans groups on your campus, that could absolutely be a resource and ensuring systemwide consistency of practices and awarding credit like the Ohio Department for Ed [SIC] with their MTAGs and Minnesota State. So legislative policies can provide accountability and coordination and really document a state's interest and the success of military-connected students in postsecondary education. Many institutions want to do this well, and they need to make sure they have the time, staff, resources, and a motivated network of colleagues, again, those school certifying officials, folks in financial aid who deal with the GI Bill benefits. Bless them. Again, we make sure we have those to really help those students move forward and reach those educational goals that the military-connected students have when they return or sometimes are, are learning through distance education. I have to say that there-- the other, the other states that did not have a policy are doing wonderful things as well. It's just that they didn't have it written down. But the institutions were like, yeah, we're going to do this. So at that time, they didn't require a policy. But I have to say that having something printed and written

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

down always helps make sure-- keep people in line and understand what's going on and, and what the goal is. Thank you. Any questions?

WALZ: Thank you. Questions from the committee?

SANDERS: Thank you.

SARA APPEL: Um-hum.

WALZ: I don't see any.

SARA APPEL: All right.

WALZ: Thank you so much for--

SARA APPEL: Thank you.

WALZ: --coming today and for that--

SARA APPEL: Thank you.

WALZ: --information. Next testifier is Paul-- Phil Turner, excuse me. Sorry.

PHILIP TURNER: All right.

WALZ: Welcome.

PHILIP TURNER: Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. My name is Lieutenant Colonel Phil Turner, P-h-i-l-i-p T-u-r-n-e-r, and it's a pleasure to be here today. But, man, it's going to be a tough act to follow from Sara. And we have collaborated before, and I look, I look forward to seeing how this is going to play out on behalf of the people in Nebraska. And I was told to stay on, stay on script. I'm a native Texan, so I tend to ramble, but I'll do my best. So again, good afternoon, Madam Chairwoman Walz, Education Committee members, Dr. Baumgartner, and Dr. Fimple, and the Multi-State Collaborative on Military Credit and the Kansas Board of Regents, all fellow collaborators. Purpose of my brief is to inform legislative leaders. Now I got to run slides to you. I'm sorry. There we go. Please take a look at the first two paragraphs. These are the official mission and vision statements for Army ACCESS and how we intend to help you guys and intend to help fellow collaborators. But I would direct your attention to the third paragraph. The purpose of this brief is to inform the legislative leaders of credit for military learning best

practices through the American Council on Education course evaluation and the Joint Services Transcript. In order to suggest ways that states and schools can partner to provide optimum academic opportunities for military-affiliated students. I truly appreciate this opportunity to begin the discussion of ideas, best practices. We have a phrase in the Army. It's called: Observations, Insights and Lessons Learned. And in support of your goals as described in LR373. While I'm honored to represent voluntary education initiatives led by Army University ACCESS, today in my current active-duty role, some items of discussion are from my experiences as the former education services officer of the Iowa National Guard. So you're kind of getting a two-layered cake here. And I was also told that football is an off-limits topic. [LAUGHTER] So the, the next slide I have is an acronym slide. I'll give you a moment to digest that, please.

WALZ: Thank you.

PHILIP TURNER: Yes, ma'am. And you'll notice a couple of common themes that Sara has already mentioned. I'll give you just a second to digest those. I would ask that if you do distribute these copies of slides, these are live links and they will actually take you to some of Sara's products, OK, which I routinely go there and hijack stuff and, you know, rip their label off and put my label on it. You know, plagiarism in our community of practice in some ways, while not admitted to, it is certainly encouraged. But it's a good thing, it's to help get messaging out and to make sure that people gain understanding of what these teams can do for you. The two acronyms I also wish to highlight today are the JST and the ACE. ACE standing for American Council on Education and the JST, the Joint Services Transcript. So regarding best practice number one, that's what, that's what I call it. The big question is how do we maximize credit for military learning using the ACE recommendations and the Joint Services Transcript? While I cannot fully answer that today, hopefully-- you know, it's my intent to hopefully and respectfully generate interest to inform you sufficiently, to wet your appetite to consider what could be, and to influence you to take LR373 and combine these with considered ideas, build relationships and pathways, and consider next steps on your journey to lead Nebraska to a new horizon of military-affiliated adult learning possibilities. So the three blocks here on the slide represent the three key audiences that ACE uses to categorize people. So you can see the top one there, academic institutions. My favorite one in that is translating military-specific language into academic terms on official transcripts. That's a big piece of the business of what we do, the actual, you know, the actual nature and work and the,

the, the physical analysis of what happens there. So that's my favorite bullet there on the, the first grouping: for military learners, facilitating degree completion. And then for military training organizations, this is a unique aspect that ACE and DoD continue to improve and continue to emphasize, and that is to make sure that the things that are being taught in the DoD military school systems are, are creditworthy. They meet academic rigor standards, they meet clock hour or a seat time standards because those do exist. And for, for example, Sara mentioned POI. That's an acronym that I failed to, to put on the list, but it stands for Program of Instruction and it, it, along with a course management plan and the student guide, those three documents like a three-legged stool. That's what, that's what makes up the syllabus in general academic terms that the ACE will evaluate. Excuse me just a second. Sorry, ma'am, I couldn't see you.

LINEHAN: That's OK.

PHILIP TURNER: All right, so, so regarding these three audiences, my favorite on the bottom is validating the quality and integrity of military learning. Because that's, that's, that's what's going to meet both the academic goals for a civilian academic institution, but it's also going to improve our training, probably the leading-edge construct that we are, we are-- I mean, we are this deep in it all day, every day is the cyber domain. And we have to be at the cutting edge with industry standards and used to-- you know, kids would come in and they would just, OK, here's a computer, here's how you hook it up. No, their, their, their training now consist of, like, nine months and they have to certify on the Sec Plus, CompTIA, all this other stuff that I, I don't know, I'm not a computer guy, so I apologize. But I know that they have to meet civilian certification standards before they can touch the Army domain, if that makes sense. So that's an example of that last audience group and how it's described. And the, the links there are both ACE links and ACE goes to great depth to try and describe for both students, academic institutions and also leaders like yourselves to educate-- to, to share information that will educate you on how ACE conducts their business. And I could, I could go into it quite a bit, I've been a, a part of a couple of faculty review panels convened amongst subject matter experts, but it's a little bit more than that. And, you know, it's not easy, it's not easy to get a military course certified or with enough academic rigor to make sure that ACE will provide a, a credible credit recommendation. So-- but it's, it's an active pursuit and we're constantly looking for ways to improve that. For the Joint Services

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Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

Transcript, which is my next slide, give you a moment to digest that. And if interested, I do have an example, JST, as a hard copy. So a couple of, couple of main ideas coming out of this slide is in the bottom bullet there that ACE supplies the data that populates the JST, you know, based on course evaluations performed by ACE evaluators-- that's, that's that faculty review panel that I mentioned-- and performs quality checks on the transcript. But now here's something to please note that ACE cannot make changes to the document, meaning that the credit recommendations-- excuse me, the Joint Services Transcript, because that's a soldier's personal record, OK? Only the applicable service, service representatives are allowed to update information on the transcript. So in other words, if ACE-- if there's a disconnect between what ACE recommends for a course credit for a, a particular course in the service, ACE has to go and remediate that with the schoolhouse that's teaching that course, and they reconcile their differences and then make changes. So there's changes going in a couple of different directions, both in the ACE system of record, which is the ACE guide for evaluations, and then also on the soldier's JST, and within the, and within the records of a, a given Army schoolhouse, for example, like the medic course or the wheeled vehicle mechanic school at the Ordnance, at the Ordnance Center. This, this link down here, it's a live link. It doesn't take you directly to the Joint Services Transcript. It takes you to what a service member sees at Military OneSource if they do a, a, an open search for JST. But within that Military OneSource web page or web presence, that's where we send soldiers and applicants and interested parties to look, and the JST actual link is readily available right there. Any questions so far? All right. Super. So for best practice number two, what I, what I call best practice number two, how do we partner to optimize credit? How do states collaborate to optimize outcomes for learners, academic institutions, and communities at large? To me, this is your list of things and organizations to think about, OK? It's not exhaustive. I could have probably did three slides worth of this stuff, but the good news is, is that these basic organizations represent numerous entities and people who are dedicated to enhancing service members' opportunities to earn college credit for work and training already performed. And Sara had some great numbers. I've seen the same type numbers. One of the key sources that I go to for, for data research of this nature is I do go to Syracuse University out of New York. They have a very robust and aggressive veterans support environment and they produce a lot of data, so just FYI. ACE estimates the dollar value of each semester credit hour earned in, in military training, which is then evaluated by ACE and placed on a JST, to be

approximately 250 bucks. OK? So, strangely enough, in DoD instructions and other law policy and regulations that govern federal, federal tuition assistance across all services, the cap that I will pay a, a, a school for a course that Tobias takes as an Army reservist is capped at \$250 per semester hour. And as a, as an admin note, that money cannot be used for any other cost of attendance. It has to be pure to tuition itself. OK? GI Bill state tuition is for the other stuff. All right, academic partners reserve the prerogative to accept the JST recommended credits in all cases. It's where that teamwork, collaboration, and negotiation takes place, all with an eye to academic rigor. OK, getting near the end here. So this is my list of useful links. They're all live links. I, I test-fired all of them. And these are excellent resources to guide your further discovery learning as you gain understanding and seek to really make LR373 and beyond a reality for Nebraska's current and future service members and student veteran populations. Your ACE guide will describe in detail how ACE performs their course evaluations and how they arrive at a recommended credit level for military learning. The notes there about-- or excuse me, the links there named MilGears and Career Path DECIDE, these are DoD counseling and career search tools that are-- that-- these use near real-time data based on zip code, based on DOL-- federal DOL labor market outcomes and Department of Education outcomes. These are both really good sites. They're just, they were just created by different contractors, but they do roughly the same thing. But Senator Sanders, you can plug in your zip code, OK, and your MOS, you know, your military job that you would either like to have or you used to have, and these websites will actually, they will actually help you figure out what school to go to, OK, and what degrees would align with your military training choices and what recommended credits your schooling would provide to that civilian college that you chose. OK? So both of those websites are really good. If you're really into the workforce development aspect of this, these are outstanding resources. OK? Ohio and Kansas state-sponsored sites, which Sara had mentioned, I, I think as a former ESO for the state of Iowa, these are platinum examples for what states can compile and synergize to inform and attract military-affiliated students to their states. I would steal their stuff and don't look back. OK? Not sure it's appropriate for testimony, but they are that good. OK? They really are. In our community of practice, Connie Beene was a rock star and, and Kansas continues to march on with some fantastic efforts with what they're doing. The remaining links are things that I find useful for policy research, data analytics and general reference when working on credit for military learning projects. You'll readily notice quantifiable

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

data from world-class sources and institutions that reflect what we all know, and that is that better education equals better economic health and potential for individuals, communities, and states. And subject to your questions from yourself or the committee, I'm excited to be here. This is-- I'm passionate about it. I have been that staff sergeant with a house full of kids trying to figure it out, OK, and the system works when we work it. So subject to your questions, that's the limits of my brief.

WALZ: Thank you very much. Questions from the committee? Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: I don't know if this is appropriate, but, but just think-- so this is mostly enlisted, right? We're talking about enlisted, not people who already have degrees or is it for people who already have degrees as well?

PHILIP TURNER: It can be for people who have degrees as well. We taught--

LINEHAN: So could people, they have their bachelor's, their degree, they get-- can they get point-- credits toward a master's degree?

PHILIP TURNER: With certain training, yes, ma'am.

LINEHAN: OK.

PHILIP TURNER: And if you would like a copy of a JST, then you can see that as an example.

LINEHAN: OK.

PHILIP TURNER: There is work yet to be done because the ACE focus for many years was on the enlisted ranks.

LINEHAN: Right.

PHILIP TURNER: But that's changed.

LINEHAN: Appropriately, I meant--

PHILIP TURNER: Yes, ma'am.

LINEHAN: --appropriately.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

PHILIP TURNER: But that's changed over the years because of DoD's recognizance that we have to do better talent management. So it's all tied in. You know, it's not just tied in with recruiting high school kids to go to a two-year college or a trade school. It's now more than that because of talent management and talent drain that DoD seeks to, to remedy through keeping or through attracting and keeping, hopefully, the best and the brightest. So does that help?

LINEHAN: It does. So if somebody goes to War College, that's--

PHILIP TURNER: Right.

LINEHAN: --then those credits, that probably stands on its own, right, but--

PHILIP TURNER: It, it does stand on its own, but it's all related. OK? It's all related in the sense of academic rigor and partnering with schools and colleges who will accept those credits. But as you had mentioned about prev-- historical efforts being primarily geared towards enlisted folks, the War College, of course, you'd only had to be like a full-bird colonel or a senior Army civilian, that type of stuff. And they have a shot at one, if not two different master's programs. So a lot of that boils down to what is a partner school willing to examine? And ACE is the baseline that they start with. Same applies for Command and General Staff College, the Advanced Operations Course.

LINEHAN: Which is in Leavenworth. I'm--

PHILIP TURNER: It is.

LINEHAN: Right?

PHILIP TURNER: It is.

LINEHAN: All right. Thank you very much for being here. It's helpful.

PHILIP TURNER: Yes, ma'am.

WALZ: Any other questions from the committee? I don't see any. Thank you so much for coming today. We appreciate it.

PHILIP TURNER: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

WALZ: He's already up here.

TOBIAS WOOD: Good afternoon. I'm Tobias Wood with the Kansas Board of Regents. That's T-o-b-i-a-s, Wood is W-o-o-d. I'm associate director of career and technical education with the Kansas Board of Regents under the workforce development arm of the Kansas Board of Regents. And I'll tell you the two individuals prior to me stole quite a bit of my thunder but I'm going to try to clap that back a little bit. So I am from education. I taught public education for 14 years. So there is already built in a-- quite of, of a range of acronyms. I'm also-- I've got 19 years in with the Army Reserve in Kansas. That's another set of acronyms. And so I am a sergeant first class with the 312th Army Band. I'm the-- one of the senior leaders in that group. So a lot of the where the acronyms meet, I can help translate some of those. And that's, that's one of the reasons why I got to be on the part of the, the team with Connie Beene, whose name you've heard a couple of times today so, but in Kansas she really did help get, get things started with that. So some quick facts about Kansas. My population is just about one more million-- under million above. Unemployment is very similar. We do have some more public institutions. However, it's not-- Kansas and Nebraska are not wildly different. We do-- the Kansas Board of Regents governs the state universities, and we coordinate the municipal university and two-- and the two-year college sector that, that [INAUDIBLE] some community colleges and some technical colleges. We oversee that student financial aid, which the Kansas National Guard and Kansas Guard, Air Guard, those students get the tuition paid if they're in the Guard through the state of Kansas and the Kansas Board of Regents oversees that. And we also at the Kansas Board of Regents, through the, through the workforce development team, we oversee the adult ed and high school equivalency procedures and, and spaces throughout the state. So for armed forces in Kansas, we do have Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth, which was mentioned earlier. We also have Fort-- excuse me, McConnell Air Force Base and Forbes Field, which is the air-refueling wing in Topeka, Kansas. We also have the National Guard and Reserves Air Guard as well. And from speaking with one of the individuals on Fort Riley, the-- around 300 soldiers transfer out of Fort Riley per month. That's a lot of people. That's per month. And this is, this is why they're leaving. So that might be a little bit difficult to read, but the 8 percent in the blue is through retirements. Those individuals have achieved at least 20 years of service. They've got that DD214 that we spoke of earlier that encompasses all of that service. Sixteen percent is involuntary. That means they're just getting transferred out. Maybe there's some, some legal issues there. But look at the 76 percent, those are people who are-- have reached a three-year term or a six-year term. They've,

they've, they've, they've gone through their period of service and they're choosing to go into civilian life. And so that's who we are trying to keep in Kansas. I mean, in each state, when you see that, you're trying to keep your own, grow your own. And the next, the next slide is those deciding factors. And again, I'll read these to you because it is pretty small. The top one is to receive better job opportunities. The next one is not enough things to do in the community. Below that is, I want to go home to be closer to my family. And that's the largest, that's the biggest group. There's better salary opportunities and then there's better education opportunities. We can't take care of all of those. But as an institution, the Kansas Board of Regents can certainly try to push to get better job opportunities through the Kansas Department of Commerce, better salary opportunities to do the same, and also better education opportunities. And that's where we fit in. So with the Kansas initiative, we've heard several times today that, that, that seat time does not actually mean course credit. We, we struggle with the idea of accepting and recognizing credit. We talked about the Joint Services Transcript. We've talked about ACE, the ACE, and but what we see a lot of and what we focused on early on was that elective credit that was given. So someone might get credit for the physical education through the military. But what we've really strove to, to gain was technical credit. With the workforce development arm of the Kansas Board of Regents, we focus primarily with-- on the efforts of community colleges and technical colleges, those students who are trying to earn a certificate or a degree to get to work quickly. And so that's what we were aiming for, was to try to find a way to connect these technical credits with lessons learned and with military learning from the, from, from the military. So, for example, an easy one that we started with was a combat medic. So a combat medic should have a lot of the same training as a nurse. That's what the original thought was. So we had Connie Beene and some others before me travel down to San Antonio at the Fort Sam Houston, where they trained the Army combat medics, and they also trained some of the other services as well. We found out that being a nurse isn't the same as being a combat medic. There are some similarities, but there are many variances. And so some of those similarities were some of the technical things that we wanted to get together. So the idea came from, from quite a few different groups. And so the-- on the screen, you'll see the Kansas Board of Regents, the community and technical colleges and universities. The Governor's Military Council was very important in this. The, the-- right now, the, the current head of the Governor's Military Council is a former retired general from Fort Riley, Perry Wiggins. He is

instrumental in this. And, and when we got buy-in on this procedure from that group, that helped us with help taking steps. We've gotten quite a bit of, of, of help and push from, from the, from that group. Army University, with having Fort Leavenworth in our backyard does not help-- or didn't, didn't hurt at all. It was very helpful. And, you know, Fort Leavenworth is just a hop, skip and a jump away from here. So I assume that that's going to be helpful for you as well. And you can see the other, other partnerships that, that assisted with this group. So the, the military articulation process was to determine the MOS, which is the Military Occupation Specialty, and for the articulation. We tried to get the SOC codes, which is the Standard Occupational Codes, that we're-- again, we're hitting some acronym minefields here. So we coordinate the SOC codes with what is expected at the employment level with some of the, some of that Program of Instruction that was previously mentioned for those soldiers and Airmen and Marines that are going into schools. And some of those really do connect pretty, pretty closely. We also looked at some of Kansas labor demands and Army University was very helpful in, in providing us the programs of instructions for those articulations for the areas that we were, we were trying to, to get into. So the first statewide articulation process, it, it began with college administrators and some college faculty and the military instructors. And that's what you heard Lieutenant Colonel Turner speaking of earlier, is we got them in the same room, and it really was surprising. We call them the green suits. You know, the folks that are wearing the, the fatigues. They're, they're talking about what book they're using for their instruction. And they find out that they're using the same book as the technical colleges and, and the community colleges for the same work. So then it was a matter of, OK, well, what does the syllabus say? OK, what does the, what does the Joint Services Transcript say? OK, well, this is, this is the seat time that we're looking at. And the military says we don't really look at seat time, how are we going to make this work? So it was that-- getting everybody in that room that really focused the efforts on, yes, this is something that we can do. Later on, you're going to see a live demonstration of our Military Articulation Portal. And for the members of the audience and even for the members of the committee, that-- I've got a QR code, so I'm going to-- I have a set of articulations that I want to show you, but members of the audience and members of the committee could snap that with your phone and you could go on your own adventure with that Military Articulation Portal. But to be honest, it was fairly clunky at the beginning of the process. It was literally a collection of PDF documents that the institutions shared with us,

saying these are the courses that we would articulate in this specific area of work for the military. And we started with the Army and we quickly realized that we were missing out on quite a few of our military-connected folks. So we've, we've expanded. We now have all five branches. We don't have Space Force yet. We don't have any veterans from the Space Force yet. So they're, they're still serving. But I anticipate that that's going to be a part of the, the Air Force conversation. The Air Force Community College is its own accredited institution, and so it's really easy to articulate some of those, those credits. So a sample and a really easy one for us all to understand is culinary. So at Johnson Community College, say, I am a food service specialist. I just got done with my annual-- my-- excuse me, my advanced individual training. I've been serving for three years, and it's time for me to get out. So having graduated that advanced, that-- the AIT, that Advanced Individual Training, I am doing the job of, of a food service specialist. I am cooking every day. I'm cleaning every day. I'm baking every day. I'm doing the work. And so this is an example of some of the articulations that exist for that food service worker when they enter into a culinary arts degree at Johnson County Community College in the Kansas City area. The highlighted courses are the courses that are given to that individual. And so we're looking at a total of, of 12 hours. So those 12 credit hours, like, like as was said before me, translate to dollars. And that translates to time for some of these soldiers. And that also translates into we heard tax fund-- taxpayer money earlier. If we're paying soldiers, if we're paying the government to train soldiers and Airmen and Marines and sailors in these areas while they're off doing their job, it doesn't make sense that we're all going to, on the backside, ask them to spend their tuition assistance dollars and spend their GI Bill getting the same thing because our tax dollars are also funding the tuition assistance and that GI Bill. So that-- I hope that-- that point was made earlier, but I did, did want to put a little bit of an exclamation point on that. So imagine a soldier has been in the culinary food service specialist area for quite a few years, has been through several trainings, some advanced training, some senior leader training. And at the 50 level, which is the equivalent of a master sergeant or an E-8, that you can see that there is a lot more credit that is awarded to that soldier. And a lot of these are more managerial. A lot of them are more, more on the business side. So this is going to be the soldier that is in charge of ordering all of the materials and ordering all the food for that week or for that month to, to operate that dining facility that they're in charge of. They're also in charge of the, the daily management of all

of those specialists and sergeants and, and E-6s that are, that are working and doing the job. So most recently, we've, we-- up until most recently, we have been really focused on the community colleges and the technical colleges. And we were working on that technical, technical credit. So the, the work of, of cooking or the work of tearing down an engine or repairing a transmission. And what we found was through the Lumina grant, and we'll speak a little bit more to the groups behind that, this-- a Lumina grant that we were awarded, which is around, around \$220,000 to the Board of Regents to, to help facilitate this with the, the, the colleges and the two-year sector. They focused on four areas, and you can see those four areas at the bottom: supply administration, combined personnel administration, warehousing and equipment handling, and food service. And they found that these were four areas, and it's not exact for all of the exact names from the different services don't quite match up, but these are kind of umbrella jobs. They found that a majority of these-- more than half of black, Hispanic, and Native American service members are clustered into these four areas. And they were trying to find a clear path-- and the word "clear" is very important-- a clear path from the military to the community college or technical college into the university that would culminate in a four-year degree. And what that did was that forced us to find different ways to look at this. And what we did was we encouraged each of our institutions that wanted to participate, fortunately every one of them wanted to participate, and they, they were able to partner with a two-year college or more than one or more a technical college to say, OK, to your sector, this is what you are going to give to these, these service members. How does that translate into a four-year degree? So imagine someone who is an HVAC degree, so the heating, air conditioning, ventilation, but they want to own their own business. They might enter into a business degree. And so this is how some of these leadership areas can translate into, translate into coursework. So what we did was we created ways to, to find those articulation paths. So each of those in universities partnered with those two-year, two-year groups to create that-- a written, basically a written path that says, OK, here's where you are, here's what you're going to take, here are the credits that you're going to get. When you move on to X University, this is where-- these are the courses in the program that will help you out with that. And that military.kansasregents.org is the, is the website for that, that live model that we're going to show soon. Do we have any questions so far? And I know, I, I feel like I'm going fast. I see you're trying to write. So I want to make sure that I'm not leaving anybody behind. OK. Very good. All right. So some lessons learned. It

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Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

was mentioned several times today-- and the JST is a very important part of this-- a soldier can't access a JST without this. And so a really important lesson learned that we learned was making sure that each of our colleges have that reader that will accept this, that will enable that soldier or Airman to get their JST while they are in that-- the admissions office or the registrar's office. That seemed like a really-- that was something that we overlooked until just last year, believe it or not. But that's a very important part of it, because I certainly don't carry around my JST and I don't even have an electronic copy of it right now, but I can get it with that, with that card. And just by having in your admissions office someone who can understand the idea of what that JST is or someone that has served, your faculty members or someone in the admissions office that has-- that is a veteran that understands how to get through the, the steps of tuition assistance or the steps of the GI Bill. And so that was another part of the, the recent activity that we did with those-- with our colleges was ensuring that they had somebody on staff that could speak the language of, of our soldiers that are coming in. And it was mentioned earlier that every university is required to have somebody on staff that does this. What we asked was our institutions have somebody in the admissions office or someone that, that, that is also familiar with military credit. Because when we talk about military-connected students, we're not just talking about the soldiers, the sailors, the Airmen. We're talking about spouses, we're talking about children. So if I had a military spouse and I've been moving every three years for 12 years or 15 years, my military spouse might have a lot of credits accumulated in a lot of different institutions. And so Fort Hays State University pioneered a, an area that they call a transfer and military center, and that's operated by, by officials who have served, that understand how that process works. And I believe Wichita State University has also created something like that, and we're going to see that website later on. I want to make sure I didn't miss anything. That third bullet, the Program of Instruction is critical and similar to a syllabus. However, it is not the same thing as a syllabus. It is really important to note when, when and if-- hopefully it's a when-- when you get a, a group together of military instructors and civilian instructors that they are able to navigate what is, what is what, what is seat time? What is considered to be on the syllabus? So the Program of Instruction quite literally basically shows the schoolhouse how much it's going to cost to train X number of soldiers per year. But it does have outcomes and that's where it is similar to the, the syllabus. Some other things that we've learned is what I, what I call the go/no-go. So if we, if we have

anybody in here that is, that is former military or current military, other than our gentleman in the back that's got the uniform on, when we go to school and we get trained, you are either go or you're no-go in that activity. And if you're go, that means you have demonstrated that you have met 80 percent or more in that area. No-go means you get to do it again. You get to be trained again. And if a soldier that-- if a soldier cannot or a, a service member is having difficulty getting that go, then we do what's called a "reclass" and they get reclassified into a different job that is more suited for them. Fortunately, in my career, I've never had to, had to deal with that. Something-- and one more document that is helpful for this is the 1059, the 1059. That is a document that, that should be part of the JST that is when, when a service member or specifically Army leaves a school. And if they have, if, if they have met the top 10 percent of their class, they will be on what's called the Commandant's List. That signifies to the world and to everybody who's looking at that document that that student that flew basically through that, that course, no retraining required, definitely at the top of that class. So that's something that, that's another piece of document that might be helpful in this conversation. The third goal up there, institutions vary greatly on how aggressively they pursue this. So the Kansas Board of Regents governs the universities and coordinates the two-year sector. In my wing, which is the workforce development, we work primarily with the two years, the community colleges and, and the technical colleges. And it was not required that the institutions got in on the ground floor with these military articulations. However, once they found that students were shopping for credit between the institutions, that's when more of our institutions chose to get on board and say, hey, I'm losing out X number of students to a, a neighboring community college. How do I get in on the ground floor on this? And so that's, that's also something that I can help you with if you have some further questions later on. So as far as the funding, I mentioned several grants that we've, we've, that we've been fortunate enough to be a part of. That Midwestern Higher Education Compact is, is huge and Sara has been a big help. And I'm on, I'm on slide 19 for anybody that's still looking. We, we mentioned that recent Lumina grant which was just over \$200,000. And we've got staff on-- we've got several military-connected staff that help with this, this project. I'm probably the most military connected of them, but it's, it's, it's-- I find it very fulfilling to be able to connect what I know and what I do in the military with what I know and what I do in higher education. So the next-- this is where we can get the phones out. If you'd like to follow along with me, you don't need to do that. But if you would

like to follow along on your own and choose your own adventure, you can go to the-- you can snap a photo of this, and it will take you hopefully directly to the military.kansasregents.org. If for some reason this process doesn't work, we do have further pages in my presentation that are screenshots. So we're going to hopefully answer some questions and then we'll get to the live demonstration. What are some questions that we have so far?

WALZ: Questions from the committee? I do. Excuse me. I have a couple, I think.

TOBIAS WOOD: Sure.

WALZ: So you talked a lot about going from the military into school. What about, backing up a little bit, do you start those clear paths with high school students?

TOBIAS WOOD: It is possible that high school students could be a part of this. And I'll, I'll give you an example. So if I was, if I was a student that was 17 years old, with my parents' permission, I can, I can enter into military service. And I could join, for example, the Kansas National Guard.

WALZ: You have to get past the mom first.

TOBIAS WOOD: You got to get past the moms and dads [LAUGHTER], yeah. But if we get, if we get past the moms and dads and we get somebody that, that can join up, that student can actually attend basic training between, between their junior and senior year of high school. Then they are actually working with, let's say, the Kansas National Guard, their entire senior year, one weekend a month, two weeks a year, that one weekend a month, they're getting paid to put on that uniform and go do that job at the Kansas National Guard. Then after their senior year, they do, they do what's called a split, a split deployment or split-- I know that the word split is in there. It's been 20 years, so forgive me. But then they do that advanced training after their senior year and that's when they get, they get moved up in rank. They get more-- they've got more education. And so someone-- say, for instance, as, as this example, that student was a, a diesel tech. They wanted to be in diesel tech at a community college. And maybe that's their job as a wheeled vehicle mechanic in the Kansas National Guard. They can be doing that job. They can be going to school-- during the school year in Kansas, students can receive technical credit through an initiative called Excel in CTE, and they

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Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

can get that credit. They're actually going to technical college or community college while they're in high school. So they're receiving some of their, their required high school credits in the morning or in the afternoon that their other half of the day they're at that, at that other school learning that thing. So with this example of a, of a diesel tech that is a wheeled vehicle mechanic, they're using their training that they learned in, in the military to help better them in the-- in their technical program. And because of that, they are probably skipping things in the-- they're probably given-- been given some credit with their diesel tech credit. You know, tearing down a diesel transmission, they probably got that at AIT. Working on brakes, they probably got that at AIT. There are probably some, there are probably some things that don't quite match up, and those bridge programs might be required at the institution that says, OK, well, I know you know a lot of this. We still need to get you caught up to, to give you the credit for that. And so that's where we bring in some bridge programs. But to your example, we could have a soldier who graduates high school, graduates the, the same year with a technical certificate and is already in the Army National Guard doing that job. Did that answer your question?

WALZ: Yeah. Yeah, that's a great opportunity for kids.

TOBIAS WOOD: I, I fully agree.

WALZ: Thank you.

TOBIAS WOOD: Any other questions?

WALZ: I have one more question.

TOBIAS WOOD: Sure.

WALZ: We have passed legislation for military spouses to transfer credits and certifications for teaching. Are you able to transfer credits for high school students-- a family of a military high school student--

TOBIAS WOOD: Right.

WALZ: --if they have dual college credit-- college credits? Is that--

TOBIAS WOOD: I don't know the answer to that.

WALZ: OK.

TOBIAS WOOD: That's, that's, that's speaking more into, I think, maybe the four-year realm, which is a little outside of what I'm-- what I do with this.

WALZ: OK.

TOBIAS WOOD: But I'm going to, I'm going to mention something of that to my, my supervisors.

WALZ: OK. All right. Any other questions?

TOBIAS WOOD: OK. So let's take a look at the Military Articulation Portal and hopefully some of you are, are playing along at home. So what we have here is from our Kansas Board of Regents' website, we have, we have already passed the, the-- a link that says get your JST here. And so what we're going to do is with any of the-- our institutions that have participated have, have entered into this. Now, I, I mentioned before that when this thing was first started, when this Military Articulation Portal first went live, all it was is a collection of PDF documents. So if you, if you clicked on Eleven Bravo Infantrymen and you clicked on that, you would see a PDF from Cowley Community College to see what they would offer as, as credit. We have since changed that so it's a little bit more robust. And since Offutt Air Force Base is the Air Force Base and the military installation in your area, we're going to go to the Air Force. And notice we do have all four or five of the six services and we are going to look at materiel. So we will focus on Wichita State. As you can see, this will show you how many have been involved in this. And I can click this to all. And so all of the Air Force, you can see Wichita State, you see Washburn University, you see community colleges there. If we go down to the very bottom of this, we have 113 entries just for the Air Force with, with Kansas Articulation Portal. So let's go back to the top here and then we're going to focus on Wichita State University. And I do that because Wichita State University is right next to McConnell Air Force Base. So if we were using an example in, in Lincoln's terms, Lincoln and Offutt would be the, the two that we're going to see. So with Wichita State University, we are going to look at the Materiel Management Apprentice. So what we see here across the top, we have the Wichita State University. We have the, the AFSC, which is the Air Force equivalent of the, the MOS, and we have the title: Materiel Management Apprentice. The next column is how far along that Airman is in their service. An E-2 has not been in long, as long as the E-3. The E-4 has been in longer, the E-5 has been in and longer than that. Then you have the other E-8 down, down at the bottom. You can see the next

column is the number of credits awarded to that soldier or number of credits possible depending on the program. And we'll-- I'll show you what that means in a minute. But I wanted to come back to the, the two really key areas. On the right hand side of this is the website and email and a phone number. So if I'm an Airman and I have some questions, I can call that phone number and get answers from Wichita State University's office. I can go directly and email that person. That email goes to, I think it's military@wsu.edu that multiple people see and can respond and the website hopefully-- OK, good, it gives me a new one. Hopefully this will be military. Yeah, this is the military and veteran services section of Wichita State University. Transfer military credit. Learn more. Here's a menu. You know, we want you here. We want you at Wichita State University. Basically, that's what it's doing. So let's go back to the Military Articulation Portal and let's click on what an E-2 in the AFSC 2S031 can get. So what we're looking at, let's take a look at the right-hand side column, the related educational programs. What we're looking at is one program, Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Leadership and Learning. They're only giving 12 credit hours. But again, the Air Force Community College is its own accredited installation and that-- those 12 credit hours are probably already bundled together that that Airman has received. So we're going to back out and we're going to see what our E-8 learns and can get within the same, the same AFSC, changed a little bit because of the, the nature of the, the senior leadership usually oversees multiple areas, in this case, the 51, the 71. So the materiel management E-8 has a lot more opportunities of college credit awarded to him or her in the same Bachelor of Applied Sciences in Organizational Leadership and Learning. That's 57 credit hours. Now that-- an E-8 is someone who maybe, at my level of service, has been in maybe 20 years, 25 years, that's just going back in and wanting to get a college degree. They might have multiple, multiple college hours from whatever university was near them while they were going to school. Hopefully they all, they'll count. We know that they not all will. But this is hopefully a good demonstration of how, how powerful this tool is. Because, again, you can go into the Navy, Coast Guard. We actually have a Coast Guard installation in Topeka, Kansas. They, they, they give out paychecks. They don't touch the water. But it is a very powerful tool. It's not perfect. It's-- we're, we're still trying to make it more, more usable, I mean, user friendly. But I'd, I'd love to answer any more questions you have.

WALZ: Thank you. Any other questions from the committee?

SANDERS: Thank you for all the information. It's a lot of information.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

TOBIAS WOOD: It certainly is.

SANDERS: I've been playing with the portal as well.

TOBIAS WOOD: Very good. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

WALZ: Thank you so much for coming today. Appreciate it. Next is Courtney Wittstruck, executive director of Nebraska Community College Association. Welcome.

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: Hello, Chairwoman Walz and the rest of the committee. My name is Courtney Wittstruck. That's C-o-u-r-t-n-e-y W-i-t-t-s-t-r-u-c-k, and I'm the executive director of the Nebraska Community College Association. And yeah, first off, I'd like to say from the community-- from, from the community college perspective, we're absolutely on board. This is something that all of our colleges are very interested in. Obviously, our colleges are independent so, you know, they have their own governing bodies. They make their own decisions. But as a whole, they're very, very interested in this. So it's something that we as a group would definitely support. You know, obviously, there are operational and administrative details that will need to be worked out prior to rollout. But generally, conceptually, yes, absolutely on board. You know, one thing from our side, we're not looking to reinvent the wheel, as several folks already said. When best practices exist and have been successfully implemented, we absolutely want to do our best to shamelessly steal. I don't know if that's appropriate, appropriate word, but to, to really replicate those processes so that we don't have to do that learning and that experimentation over. And actually, I was looking on my phone as I was back there and I was making all kinds of notes for best practices to pass on to my folks. You know, that is one thing right now because we don't have this formal process really, everything is sort of piecemeal by the different organizations. And so having something formal that's very easy to navigate and a standard is something that's really important to our group, having it standardized so it's very easy to see exactly what, you know, what occupation or what training course will translate to what credit. So generally speaking, Offutt was mentioned a few times. As far as our institutions go, Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, closest to Offutt, probably has the most experience with, you know, prior learning credits. And, you know, so one thing, the way that they kind of do it is, ACE, the-- was mentioned earlier, they follow the ACE standards. So if something is listed in ACE and receives X number of credits or whatever, they follow the ACE standards. Now, one thing to note, if it's, if it's

something that's not covered in ACE, then it gets a little more tricky because then they have to look at, OK, what sort of competencies did, did the person acquire? Is there any testing that they could do? So if it's not an ACE, it is a little bit trickier. But, but right now, they follow, they follow ACE exactly to the extent that they're able. One thing also on courses that are not in ACE-- and I saw in the, in the present-- one of the presentations, I think, elective credit versus technical credit. If something's not in ACE, the chances of them getting technical credit for it for, like, a specific course are lower than if it is in ACE. If it isn't, if it, if it isn't in ACE, it's generally just an elective credit. Right? If it's in ACE and it says specifically to cybersecurity, then that's much easier to give a technical, you know, a technical credit for. Let's see. Oh, and also one thing to note what Metro does-- and I know we were listening about a go and a no-go, credits when they're transferred or when they accept credits, they accept the credit. They don't accept the grade. So if there was something where the, the individual happened to receive a grade, they would-- on Metro's transcript, it would just say passed cybersecurity, assuming that the, the student received a C or better at their old, at their old institution. So it would just show as a credit in which, you know, for me I, I transferred universities. That's exactly how it worked from transferring from one university for me to the other where I got credit for the course, but, you know, it wasn't-- the grade point didn't transfer. One thing I would also say is that as far as the, the ACE standards go, they're-- the more clear they can be, the better. So I, I really like the idea of this portal where you can very easily see exactly what translates to what. Because we are independent institutions, the more standardized the process can be, the better. And I will say, our institutions are very, very open to awarding credit. They try to work with students as best as they possibly can to find a way to award them appropriate credit. But if it's something that's not very clearly articulated, they try to match it up with the coursework as much as they can and try to work with ACE. But ultimately there are likely some instances where maybe they award-- have to award general credit instead of specific technical credit because they don't have a very clear path. So like I said, the clearer, the better, the more standardized, the better. As far as what Metro does, so students who submit the DD214 that was already mentioned, they're granted up to 3.5 credits in physical education just for completing the basic training. And then depending on what their training, what their job description and what ACE says, they can be awarded more on top of that, obviously. And I will say that, you know, if-- I mentioned this earlier-- credits not transferred to a

specific class at MCC, they may be-- bless you-- they may be applied if they can't find a good match, unfortunately to just undefined electives, but they still receive credit for it as well. So Metro, the, the transcripts that they accept or the, the forms that they accept are, I mentioned DD214, the DD2586, which is verification of military experience and training. I'm not sure if that was in the, the acronym sheet or not. They also accept obviously the Community College of the Air Force transcripts and then the Joint Services Transcript. The JST was mentioned several times. They accept that as well. And then if there are other documents that are-- show formal training or something, they, they will work with the students to accept as much as, as they can, as much as is appropriate. And also the DAN TES and the CLEP scores, as well, they will accept. And then once they accept those, again, it's based on the ACE standards. So they'll take all of that information that the student brings with them, look through the little, the ACE, the ACE manual and then award credits in that manner. And I had a lot more information on ACE and how that is done, but that's pretty much already been covered. So I don't want to waste your time belaboring that. Are there any questions that I could answer?

WALZ: Questions from the committee?

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: All right.

WALZ: Oh, wait. Senator Linehan.

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: Oh, yes, ma'am. I, I can't see above this.

LINEHAN: So Metro is doing this because they're close to Offutt. But, but we don't-- you're being silent on [INAUDIBLE]--

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: I didn't want to interrupt you. That's why.

LINEHAN: No, I'm sorry.

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: No, Metro is just the one that is most experienced with it. So they do it the most. The other colleges do, but they mainly get a one-off here or there. And so it takes longer for them to be able to go through and say, OK, what, what does this, what does this course match? All of the schools do it, but again, Metro gets the most students that they transfer credits for. So they're a little bit further along, I guess, in the process.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

LINEHAN: So if Metro accepts these credits and they get credits at Metro, and then they decide they want a four-year degree, so they want to go to UNO, do those credits transfer to UNO?

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: So it depends on exactly what the credits are for, what the degree of study is. So it's kind of on a case-by-case basis. And so there isn't-- like, you can go on, and I went on here, Metro's website and it just has a generic statement saying basically talk to your advisor. Credits, it depends on what your degree of study is, what credits and training you received on whether it will transfer to a four-year or other institution. So as a student, it would be, it would be very nice to have a, a system like that where I could say, OK, I know for sure I took this program and it will give me this number of courses and boom, I've got my pathway to my whatever degree or certification I'm looking for. So it does not exist now.

LINEHAN: OK. Thank you very much.

WALZ: Any other questions? Thanks a lot for coming today.

COURTNEY WITTSTRUCK: All right. Thank you, all.

WALZ: Appreciate it. OK, next, Dr. Jodi Kupper. Happy Friday.

JODI KUPPER: Happy Friday. Good afternoon to you all, Chair Walz, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Jodi Kupper, J-o-d-i K-u-p-p-e-r, and I currently serve as the vice chancellor for academic affairs for the Nebraska State College System. I'm here today to provide information on current practices of the state colleges for awarding college credit for military education and training. Currently, all three state colleges have military-friendly offices and specific representatives that serve any individual who wants to try to attend the state college and believes they have military training and experience that could be accepted for credit. The colleges abide by the Department of Defense MOU, which allows students currently serving to utilize tuition assistance at the colleges. Each college provides tuition and fees assistance to eligible military veterans through the Yellow Ribbon Program, with transfer options available to spouse and/or dependents as needed. Military personnel, regardless of physical location, pay the equivalent of resident tuition, as there is no difference between resident and nontui-- and nonresident tuition costs for any attendee at the state college. On-campus employment opportunities are provided. Flexible options are available for students who are called to active military service and can no longer

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office

Education Committee September 30, 2022

Rough Draft

attend on-campus courses. And that is determined on a case-by-case basis, whether it makes sense to move to online, whether they can work through a directed study with the specific instructor, etcetera. In terms of awarding credit, the state colleges award credit based on the American Council of Education or ACE guidelines, as you've previously heard. As Courtney mentioned, the DD214 documentation has been articulated at each of the colleges and varies from four to six credits at the college level, dependent on what that DD214 includes. The Joint Services Transcripts, which you've also heard about, are accepted by the colleges and unlimited elective credit is awarded for any class with a G, graduate, U, undergrad-- upper, or L, lower credit designation. The only credits that would not be accepted would be those identified as vocational or B. The college also considers credit for specific military training or educational preparation and experience on a case-by-case basis through evaluation of prior learning, in most cases, in relation to course outcomes and objectives. I would say the most common areas for which credit would be earned would be in the engineering or industrial tech program at Wayne State College, criminal justice across all three colleges, information technology, CIS, business administration and criminal justice. One example of such prior learning is Peru State offers credit to Navy veterans who hold a nuclear reactor license, and that is equated up to 30 credit hours toward the nuclear technology option for the natural science degree. So there are hit-and-miss areas that have been articulated to specific course requirements for some of our degree programs. But as you've heard, and especially depending on the nature of the training that that military personnel received, some of those trainings may not correlate to some of the four-year courses that the state colleges offer. So again, we do try to be as, as open in considering experiences in relation to the outcomes that are established for our course syllabi. But again, some of that articulation just isn't as, as strong as what we've seen from the state of Kansas. In terms of formal programs on campus, Chadron State has an active Army ROTC program, offers a minor in military science. Credit is granted based upon military experience and education, as well as some of the campus-based courses they complete. Wayne State was recently forced to discontinue its ROTC program due to the Department of the Army's inactivation of the USD's, University of South Dakota's program, which was Wayne State's partner. But-- and Peru has, has never held an ROTC program. In 2019, I-- you probably are already aware of this, but LB486 was approved, which created the Veteran and Active Duty Supportive Postsecondary Institution Act. Postsecondary institutions wishing to be designated as veteran and

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

active-duty supportive are required to meet at least five of the following criteria with respect to their operations in Nebraska. These criteria are outlined on the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs website with institutions that have been approved with this designation listed. The criteria include: have personnel specifically trained and assigned to work with military students and veteran students, which all three colleges have; have a student organization that is dedicated to helping veterans active military duty and their families, which two of the institutions that have or had the ROTC programs; give college credit for certain types of military training, all three; have a military leave of absence policy, all three colleges; have counseling and advising services for military students and veteran students, all three have that; have an accredited Reserve Officers' Training Corps, ROTC program, only Chadron; have clearly identifiable on their website a listing of services provided to military students and veteran students, which all three provide; and specifically recognize military students and veteran students during graduation, or in other ways which are intended to demonstrate the institution's respect for such students' service, which both-- I think all three do. I just never got it back. But the ROTC students clearly come in their uniforms to commencement, so all three provide that. Wayne State is only-- the, the only state college currently listed on the Veterans' Affairs' website as being designated by that. The other two are in completion of getting their applications considered by the Veterans' Administration. So we hope that soon all three state colleges will be listed on that state website. In closing, we're very proud of our support of veterans and active military. We welcome additional opportunities. When I look back to when I first started in this role, we spent a lot of work in the area of transfer articulations. I worked very closely with Gabrielle Banick and Susan Fritz from the NU System, and that resulted in our Nebraska transfer website, which provided a much more clear and transparent way for students and their families to be able to identify how coursework transferred or were articulated across colleges. I'm excited to see the MAP portal and what we could potentially do in the state of Nebraska to really be able to articulate those training and experiences that our military personnel have and how they can be aligned and articulated to some of the course outcomes and expectations that we have currently established for our program. So very excited to, to see what this brings and please know that, that we want to be at the table and figuring this out with you. Thank you very much.

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

WALZ: All right. Thank you.

JODI KUPPER: Any questions?

WALZ: I don't see any. Thanks for coming--

JODI KUPPER: All right.

WALZ: --today. Last but not least, Heath Mello.

HEATH MELLO: Be very quick. Very quick.

WALZ: We're going to ask you a lot of questions. [LAUGHTER]

HEATH MELLO: I was, was expecting that. So that's great. That's great. Good afternoon, Chairwoman Walz, members of the Education Committee. My name is Heath Mello, H-e-a-t-h M-e-l-l-o, and I serve as vice president for external relations for the University of Nebraska System. I'm appearing today on behalf of the NU System to discuss LR373, a study to examine the feasibility of developing a policy and implementing a statewide process for awarding college credit in specific programs of study across all public education institutions for military education and training. We especially want to thank Chairwoman Walz for bringing this study forward and our colleagues at the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education for their extensive work over a number of years in this space. It's glad to see it's finally moving forward. Increased flexibility in welcoming students from diverse backgrounds, such as those who bring military service and training to our campuses, is a significant priority of university system president, Ted Carter. All of our undergraduate campuses, which have been designated as a veteran and active-duty supportive by the Nebraska Department of Veterans' Affairs, evaluate transcripts from accredited military education institutions and other experiences consistent with the American Council on Education, better known as ACE, recommendations. Undergraduate credit up to four hours is generally available for those completing one year of active duty. However, a few credits can be obtained based on the Joint Services Transcript, or the JST, as en-- as a central entry-level military skill such as shooting, fitness and vehicle skills typically do not apply to most of our bachelor's degree programs on our campuses. However, individual colleges such as UNL focuses their time and energy with specific colleges within the campus to help get courses such as leadership and management to be able to transfer, depending upon the undergraduate major and the program's flexibility. Transferability of

credit depends on whether the app-- the applicable courses are part of the degree pathway and to a certain extent, if the credit transfer would benefit the individual's program completion. Certain degree programs are more flexible in elective credits and better suited for credit, for credit transference. These programs, such as the UNO Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies, are well-suited for those transferring to our campuses after completing their military service. These degree programs require less disciplinary specificity than highly specialized undergraduate programs, such as chemistry or engineering. The key challenge for awarding credit for any course outside the NU System is having the appropriate documentation, such as a syllabus, and the, and the resepe-- and the receptiveness by the individual college approvers reviewing those documents. Most of our academic programs are very prescriptive for the academic courses that meet program requirements for transfer and graduation, which unfortunately means that military credits may not be very useful for reducing a student's time to degree completion. Curriculum is often crafted in a precise manner in terms of how course offerings and progressions are organized. For programs with discipline-based accreditation, their requirements may limit the ability to apply credit. Now while there are certainly challenges that the NU System campuses face in awarding credit for military service or training, there's also significant opportunities to expand our efforts in awarding credit. All of our campuses are currently reviewing how to maximize the best applicability of a service member's prior education and training experience, in part due to LR373 that we're talking about today, and also President Carter's vision to make our university system consistently more friendly to military personnel and veterans. For a recent example, the University of Nebraska at Kearney is now evaluating a new proposal to offer undergraduate credit via the DSST or the DANTE subject standardized test, which is utilized by the Department of Defense. Once again, I want to thank Chairwoman Walz for her work in bringing the higher education community together to increase flexibility for our students who bring military service and training with them to our two- and four-year institutions. The University of Nebraska System looks forward to working with the committee that are friends with the Coordinating Commission and our other higher-ed partners on this critical issue moving forward. And I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

WALZ: Thank you. Questions?

SANDERS: No, I'm just thinking it's a lot of information to get through, and I thank you for the information. With your expertise,

both in the Legislature and now and with university, what do you think the next steps forward would be and how do we support that?

HEATH MELLO: Well, that's a great question, Senator Sanders, and I really would be remiss not to, to single out Dr. Baumgartner and Dr. Fimple's work in this space because really, they had kind of brought this issue-- and candidly, our friends at MHEC, as well, that they did a report and this is kind of how this conversation happened within our higher-ed partners. And the CCPE has been in this space. They directed the-- directed me and others to look at the KU Board of Regents' website, which is truly an amazing platform that hopefully we can replicate here in the state. I think that's a question I defer to the committee and candidly, probably Dr. Baumgartner, the executive director of the CCPE. The university is at the table willing to work this through and find ways to improve not just ourselves, but make sure that transfer articulation that works across the universities, state colleges, community colleges in this space also is benefiting not just the students and their families, but also our, our, our institutions themselves are making sure that we're, we're figuring this out on our own. So I think, if anything, I, I would give that deference back to, to the committee, maybe Chairwoman Walz and Executive Director Baumgartner about next steps. But clearly, there's a-- for the first time, we've seen real significant interest from all three of the public systems wanting to do something in this space, and it'd be a shame not to see something move forward.

SANDERS: Thank you.

WALZ: Senator Linehan.

LINEHAN: I think you mentioned it. Does UNO still have the degree for veterans at [INAUDIBLE]-- like, Hagel got it there after Vietnam. You mentioned degree at UNO.

HEATH MELLO: It's the, it's the, it's the, it's the multidisciplinary studies program and that is, that is perhaps for the university system, but mostly at UNO, it's the most flexible program that we've got in regards to competency-based education or competency-based learning that the students bring.

LINEHAN: Right, and isn't that one a lot of the veterans use?

HEATH MELLO: Yes. Yes.

LINEHAN: Because you have a number of veterans at UNO, right?

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

HEATH MELLO: We do, significant. Significant population at-- and a significant population at UNL as well. But that particular program is one that a number of, of existing military credits can, can transfer into that program at UNO.

LINEHAN: And then you also-- don't you do a lot at UNO with master's degrees for the military?

HEATH MELLO: We, we have a considerable number of, of partnerships and particularly with our friends at USSTRATCOM and Offutt Air Force Base at both for-- mostly at UNO. But we also offer some programs too at UNL.

LINEHAN: OK. Thank you very much.

HEATH MELLO: Um-hum.

WALZ: Any other questions? Don't see any--

HEATH MELLO: All right.

WALZ: --thank you so much for coming today.

HEATH MELLO: Thank you.

WALZ: Do you want to close? Would you like-- I think that's it for, for testifiers, right?

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Yeah, it is.

WALZ: OK. Did I miss somebody?

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: Thank you, Senator Walz, members of the committee for holding this hearing today. There is clearly a lot of good work going across the Midwest to our neighbors in the south and, and at our own institutions. I do not want to cast any aspersions at all. Our institutions are very military friendly, very veteran friendly. I do think it's an opportunity for us to work toward that attainment goal to make our state even more military friendly and to get students through their postsecondary education as quickly as possible as we move forward. So I, I look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with you all on this.

WALZ: All right. Thank you. Appreciate it. That ends our hearing for today on LR373--

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Education Committee September 30, 2022
Rough Draft

SANDERS: Oh, oh--

WALZ: I'm sorry.

SANDERS: Maybe a quick question

WALZ: Yeah.

SANDERS: The program-- thank you very much, first of all, for pulling this together, great information. The program called Troops-- Teacher-- Troops to Teachers. I don't know if you've looked into that, but would this help tie that together, making it more friendly for them to leave the military and become a teacher, helping our teacher shortage?

MIKE BAUMGARTNER: I think there's potential for that. I would defer and to-- I don't want to put her on the spot-- but we have a former dean of education here and vice president for academic-- vice chancellor for academic affairs [INAUDIBLE].

JODI KUPPER: I mean, I, I think that we all try to work with Troop to Teachers as much as we can. Sometimes the requirements for Nebraska certification can, can, can make it challenging. But I know that here and there, both the university and the state colleges have worked with individuals who wanted to take advantage of that program. I would say it's not a commonly used program across the state of Nebraska at this point.

WALZ: Any other questions? Follow-ups? No. OK.

SANDERS: Thank you.

WALZ: All right. Well, thank you. I think we have a really exciting opportunity for continuing education for our military service men and women. And very, very much appreciate you all coming today. Thank you. That ends our hearing.