



NATIONAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

April 27, 2016

Mr. James Cunningham, Chairman
Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations
jimbob48@sbcglobal.net

Dear Mr. Cunningham:

In response to the comments that Mr. Jim Brennan recently made about National American University in an article in the Houston Chronicle, I wanted to write to the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations to correct some misunderstandings and provide more information about the University and the services that we provide to our many men and women who served this great country.

National American University has been providing quality career education to students for 75 years, and we are honored to have included veterans as an essential part of our student body throughout our long history. Veterans, and organizations like yours that provide services to veterans, are very important to us. We take the role of educating these men and women very seriously. Our decades-long commitment to providing veterans with educational opportunities includes numerous accomplishments that appear to be unknown to Mr. Brennan and your organization. Here are just a few examples of National American University's work with and commitment to veterans:

- NAU is included on the Military Advanced Education's Top Military-Friendly Colleges and Universities list, and named a Military-Friendly school by GI Jobs.
- NAU is a participant in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Principles of Excellence program, which is intended to ensure that student veterans, servicemembers and family members have information, support, and protections while using Federal education benefits.
- NAU is a participant in the VA's Yellow Ribbon Program, which allows institutions of higher learning and the VA to partially or fully fund tuition and fee expenses for veterans that exceed thresholds provided for in the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Under this program, students receive a contribution of up to \$8,500 per year from National American University.
- NAU is a signatory of the affirmation letter for the 8 Keys to Veterans' Success promulgated by the U.S. Department of Education, which are steps institutions can take to assist veterans and servicemembers in transitioning to higher education, completing their college programs, and obtaining career-ready skills.

National American University offers associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs in technical and professional disciplines that prepare students for careers in the real world. NAU is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, with several academic programs separately accredited or approved by national educational and professional associations.

Our dedicated faculty and staff provide our students with a high quality education in a caring and supportive learning environment —working separately with each student to provide flexible options that help each student achieve his or her academic goals. We provide our students with individualized career counseling and have regional career services coordinators available to assist students with their job search. Our overall goal is to take all of our students’ needs into consideration, and we are constantly evaluating additional services and programs that may benefit them both during their time at National American University and after they enter the job market.

Because of our unwavering commitment to veterans, we were very troubled to see Mr. Brennan’s comments in the article, which called National American University a “predatory higher education institution” and suggested that the University targets veterans unfairly. We were also extremely troubled by other comments in the article that were not provided by your organization, but which we believe will be misleading to anyone at your organization, or in the public, who reads them. We do not believe that these comments truly reflect the strong support we have provided for veterans and servicemembers over the years.

Many of the negative comments in the article centered on the 2012 U.S. Senate Report on For Profit Higher Education—and we believe the article mischaracterize the report’s statements about National American University in particular. It is true that National American University was included in the report—as was every publicly held university in the United States. The report does not call National American University a “predatory operator.” In fact, it clearly states in its opening paragraph that “the company’s performance, measured by student withdrawal and default rates, is one of the best of any company examined.”

Because it is owned by a publicly traded company, National American University understands that our actions and those affiliated with our institution are subject to scrutiny. However, we do not feel it appropriate to allow our proud, 75-year legacy to be tarnished for political gain. It is not fair and does a great disservice to our students, our faculty, our staff, and the veterans that we have helped achieve their educational goals.

I have spent the past 25 years serving students at National American University—starting as a teacher, and now as its President and CEO. Throughout that time, I have said my door is always open for discussion. As an organization that also provides valuable services to veterans, I invite you, Mr. Brennan, and anyone else at the Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations to talk to us to learn more about our institution. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Shape, Ed.D.
President & Chief Executive Officer



NATIONAL AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
Proudly Celebrating 75 Years of Providing Quality Education!

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