

**For Immediate Release**

February 20, 2020

**Contact**

Logan Lewkow

loganl@themooreagency.com

850.527.1209



**Florida College System Council of Presidents Launch  
The Patriot's Path Program**

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** – Florida has the third largest veteran population in the nation, with more than 1.5 million veterans, 20,000 of which are currently enrolled in the Florida College System. The Florida College System Council of Presidents (COP) are continuously elevating methods to advance the educational and workforce experience for veterans and active duty military members and their families. Today, the COP and Representative Ponder are excited to announce the creation of the Patriot's Path program with leaders from higher education, the veteran community, and veteran students. The Patriot's Path program will help veterans and active duty members to have the most accessible and affordable educational options. Each college will have services and programs that reflect their community's needs. A few examples of the baseline services and programs that can be expected within the Patriot's Path program are as followed:

- Waive out-of-state tuition fees for affordability
- Obtain credit for skills and knowledge gained in military to accelerate workforce entry
- Help veterans navigate their path through the process of their education benefits
- Career center access for employment information and workforce assistance

"The Patriot's Path provides a tremendous framework for active duty members and veterans. I am so honored to be carrying HB 171 that complements the vision of Patriot's Path," said Representative Mel Ponder. "Making higher education more affordable for active duty members and our veterans is critical to help them transition back into society and to continue strengthening Florida's workforce."

"Florida is fortunate to have a large veteran population and we are proud to be one of the most veteran-friendly states in the nation," said Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran. "I applaud the Florida College System's Council of Presidents for creating the Patriot's Path program to ensure our veterans have a high-quality, low-cost route to earn a degree or industry credential that leads to high-demand, high-wage careers. Under Governor DeSantis' bold leadership, Florida is well on the way to becoming the best state in the nation for all students to receive a world-class education."

"The Patriot's Path program emphasizes a foundation that the Florida College System was built on," said Tallahassee Community College President and COP Chair Jim Murdaugh. "Our system will continue to do everything we can to promote those who have served our country."

"It is always our goal to make Florida the most veteran-friendly state in the country," said Florida Veterans Foundation Chairman Bob Asztalos. "Patriot's Path helps our veterans bring their many skills and talents to Florida's workforce in a streamlined approach."

A top priority for the COP is to help ensure that members of the military can have the greatest accessibility possible to earn their higher education credentials as they transition into civilian life, and the Patriot's Path program will function with that exact mission in mind.



###

**About the Florida College System Council of Presidents**

The Florida College System Council of Presidents is the collective body on issues and matters of concern to Florida's public college system and will provide information, as it deems appropriate, to the State and Federal Executive and Legislative branches and to the Chancellor of the Florida College System, the Commissioner of Education, the State Board of Education and other public and private entities and individuals as appropriate.