April 23, 2015

Present: Amber Alexander, Terry Allebaugh, James Alston, Wesley Alston, Christopher Bailey, Valentina Bailey, Ann Marie Beall, Michael Bishop, Dr. Ken Blackman, Judy Woodson Bruhn, Erica Buckley, Fain Buete, Dr. Bruce Capehart, Dr. Jennifer Chauncey, Christopher Clark, Will Collins, Dr. Eric Crawford, Hank Debnam, Michael Devault, Dr. Wei Li Fang, Pat Fitzgerald, Reginna Ford, Betty Gardner, Moses Gloria, Victor Glover, Emily Godfrey, Karen Goetz, Craig Gorham, James Gorham, Daniel Hackley, Judy Harmon, Angela Harper, John Harris, Troy Hershberger, Jack Holtzman, Dr. Greg Inman, Charlene Irvin, Andy Jackson, Victoria Johanningsmeier, Valerie Johnson, Robert Jones, Stan Kimer, Wilson Lester, Maddy Mahaney, Stephanie Manning, Bud Martin, Enrique McClymont, Brenda Monforti, Henry Moore, Linda Nichols, Terry Nichols, Ilario Pantano, Charles Pennington, David Porter, Cheryl Rawls, Jean Reaves, Michael Redic, Katie Reynolds, Dave Roddenberry, Dr. Lisa Sacco, Allie Scandalis-Dempsy, Betty Jo Shepheard, Robert Sherwood, Kevin Smith, Randy Smith, Tony Sowards, Flo Stein, Annette Stevenson, Charlotte Stewart, Courtney Strickland, Robert Tabares, Doug Taggart, Mark Teachey, Matt Thewes, Dr. Kimberly Tran, Lucas Vrbsky, Susan Watkins, Dr. Joseph Westcott, Dawn Whetstone, Herbert Woodward, Diane Yelverton, Shadia Young, and Julia Zeigler

GEN Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions of those present and those who joined remotely were then provided.

Dr. Capehart kicked off the *NC STRIVE 2015!* conference. He emphasized the importance of the conference not only for promoting education in facilitating careers and effectiveness on the job but also in terms of recovery—greater health, happiness, and engagement with family and community. He also spoke about the partnership that has formed during the planning stage. There is a need to move from silos to initiatives that are veteran and family focused.

Mr. Hershberger presented on the federally funded Foreclosure Prevention Fun. Since 2010, his office has helped 19,000 in NC avoid foreclosure. They still have enough funds to help another 2000. If a veteran is using a VA bill to return to school and is the primary owner of a home that is less than $300K, s/he is eligible for the program (s/he must have a letter from the college on letterhead verifying eligibility). All others must have a degree. Other services include job search, retraining, reinstatement, and SMRP (second mortgage refinance program). Part-time enrolled students also may participate but a graduation date is needed (which can change).

Mr. Taggart has assisted 850 veterans go into teaching careers in the past 12 years. The best paying counties are Wake and Mecklenburg; they are also more selective. The state ranks between 38 and 50 in terms of pay. Veterans interested in the program must have at least a 2.5 GPA and a 4-year degree from an accredited college. They can enter laterally but will have to return to school to get a teaching license. It is a great program for wounded disabled veterans. To date, Cumberland County has hired the most graduates from the program.

Ms. Beall's program, the UNC Partnership for National Security, serves active and reserve components, their spouses, and their children through degree and academic support programs. UNC is interested in growing NC's economy. She also noted that they have two UNC System Military Academic Advisors—one in Camp Lejeune (Ashly Adamovage) and the other iin Fort Bragg (to be hired). The Military Affairs Council was established in 2012, and the Student Veterans Council is being formed now. The UNC System has a policy related to military student success, which was passed in January 2015. It also offers internships/fellowships an the online resource NC MEPS, which is free for all military connected students to explore all postsecondary options. There are six modules, with the first three targeting those who have not yet entered college and the last three related to college and transition, from college to career and from college to grad school. All 16 schools have a military/veteran student website and student veterans organizations.

Mr. Thewes fashioned the FTCC All American Veterans Center after the Arizona State University program. They try to provide services while student veterans are transitioning. They offer aplace for veterans to go as well as a variety of services and activities for student veterans. FTCC is schools expanding to offer academic and support programs for student veterans.

Mr. Lester noted that the Veterans Upward Bound program was established in 1972 to assist veterans coming back from Viet Nam to get their GED. The program has changed over time, becoming more holistic. It is interested in educating first generation low-income veterans. Currently, his grant provides services in 5 counties. His goal is to have 90% go to college and complete their degree in 6 years. CCCC offers a retail management certificate. Mr. Lester said that there is currently a deficit of managers in fast food restaurant chains. Zaxby's in Harnett county has salaries that start at $30K, but the bonus potential exceeds $60K. They plan to hire 3 veterans as managers shortly. He voiced his excitement about the NC STRIVE 2015! Conference and welcomes the opportunity to get educated by the "best in the State".

Attendees shared upcoming activities and events:

- Memorial Day weekend has a number of events planned throughout the Sate
    - Field of Flags (10,000) – money goes to military charities like AMVETS – volunteers are need to staff hydration stations and other areas – wounded warriors from Fort Bragg and wounded battalion from Camp Lejeune will be participating
- New Hanover County May 8 Stand Down in Wilmington
- Eagle Rock camp, free for military families from May 15-20
- VET Center – 2 mobile vehicles in state – happy to come out to any veteran-related event and link with partners – need advance notification to any of 5 Vet Centers
- The NC Department of Public Safety will be conducting job interviews across the state (search http://www.glassdoor.co.in/Job/nc-department-of-public-safety-jobs-SRCH_KE0,30.htm).
- Six service members/veterans are raising funds to ascend the summit of Mount Everest in 2016.
- Valor Games – May 18-21 in Triangle
- DoD Warrior Games in Quantico

- The Veterans Pro Bono Network sponsors a walk-in legal claims clinic on the 2nd Tuesday in Salisbury and the 3rd Friday in Durham. They are piloting an Amnesty Day to clear low level misdemeanors as having a criminal background is the biggest barrier. If it is successful, they plan to replicate the program.
- Cheryl Rawls noted that Goodwill has been one of their biggest partners in addressing the claims backlog. They saw 562 veterans last Saturday. She emphasized the need for veterans to pursue educational degrees.
- Will Collins said that the NC Department of Public Safety is hiring positions for corrections and state highway patrols. The Rural Economic Division has a $4.6M grant for veterans in rural areas to find jobs.
- Flo Stein stated that all state agencies are trying to hire veterans. Currently 680 veterans are employed by DHHS, but the Department wants to expand this number. She emphasized that the next two meetings on PTSD and TBI are critical to DHHS. Studies have shown that veterans are reluctant to seek help until it is too late. We need to get veterans the services that they need when they need them.