

# Vicky L. Carwein, Chancellor

## TRI-CITY HERALD COLUMN



### WSU Tri-Cities works hard to serve veteran students Nicholas Zaharevich, Guest Columnist

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WSU Tri-Cities strives to serve every student, regardless of his or her background, but I am particularly proud of how we reach out to veteran-students. I served in the Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Now I am a psychology major at WSU Tri-Cities and I work as the Veterans Affairs Work Study where I assist other veterans in obtaining their education benefits and coordinating with the many community programs.

Military veterans are an important population in our community, and a population that is steadily increasing as soldiers return from service in Iraq and Afghanistan. As I have worked with veteran-students, I have seen how many of them are in need of additional services to help them readjust to school.

Currently, there are 46 known veterans, and dependents of veterans, attending WSU Tri-Cities. Because of small class sizes, this is an ideal place for veterans to earn their degrees. We also have a counselor on campus who can help veteran-students as they transition back to school.

WSU provides financial help for veteran-students. We offer a 50 percent tuition waiver for honorably discharged veterans. In addition, students eligible for the Survivors & Dependents Educational Assistance Program receive a 100 percent tuition waiver.

WSU Tri-Cities participates in a federal "work study" program and we strive to maintain at least one veteran in the two work-study positions allotted for our campus. This allows veteran-students to hold jobs that are extremely flexible with their schedules, while working with another veteran-student who can help them gain access to other veterans' resources in the community.

The campus also provides a stipend for tutorial assistance. We maintain a list of available tutors who can work with our student-veterans in any of the academic areas in which they may be having trouble.

There are many other educational benefits for veteran-students to utilize including the federal VA programs and through Washington State. For example, WSU Tri-Cities is the only campus that is approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer the certified Entrepreneurial Certification Course that veterans take in order to receive benefits from the state.

There are many facets to a veteran's need for assistance, and people in the community are helping to find ways to aid local and neighboring veterans. For example, the Columbia Basin Veterans Coalition is helping veterans in a way that I have never



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seen before. This nonprofit organization that is giving one-on-one mentoring to veterans to assist them in obtaining their college degrees, as well as becoming future entrepreneurs and professionals in our community. The coalition is led and managed by local veterans and is located at 1600 North 29th Avenue, Suite A, in Pasco.

Their ideas are unique because they do not want to fix the immediate problems; rather, it is their goal to show individuals how to help themselves in order to become future leaders and mentors to other veterans entering the education process.

WSU Tri-Cities is poised to serve veterans, and especially the D Company, 161st Infantry (AR) from the Pasco armory, when they return from their recent deployment to Iraq. We will work with these future students to transition them into school and prepare them to enter the workforce. We are proud to serve those who have served us.

- Nicholas Zaharevich is a senior, graduating in May 2009. He's also an officer candidate in the U.S. Army and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. For more information about WSU Tri-Cities, call 509-372-7250 or visit [www.tricity.wsu.edu](http://www.tricity.wsu.edu).



Nicholas Zaharevich



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