



South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

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January 28, 2015

Dr. Luther F. Carter
President
Francis Marion University
PO Box 100547
Florence, SC 29502-0547

Dear Dr. Carter:

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency conducted a federal compliance survey visit at Francis Marion University on January 15, 2015. Thank you for the courtesy and assistance your staff (Ms. Amanda Mosley, Student Service Counselor) extended during the federal VA Education Compliance Survey at Francis Marion University.

The files reviewed were 15 veterans and one non-veteran. The 15 veteran files reviewed contained all of the supporting documents requested for the compliance survey. During the exit briefing, the SAA staff informed Ms. Mosley, VA School Certifying Official, that there were four (4) files noted with discrepant findings. The regulatory references and the VA student files with the noted discrepant findings are as follows:

The facility accurately and promptly reported enrollment, Tuition and fees, lessons serviced (38 CFR 21.4203).

- [REDACTED] summer term - 7/8/2013 - 8/8/2013 - Mr. Hyatt was certified in Math 111. Mr. Hyatt did not complete the Math 111 course by the end of the summer term of 8/8/2013. Mr. Hyatt received a grade of carry over (CO).

The school certifying official certified [REDACTED] again for the same Math 111 course at the reduced rate of \$693.25. Certifying veteran students for VA benefits in the same course is not permitted unless they have received a failing grade. [REDACTED] received a grade of CO for the Math 111 course. According to Francis Marion University's grading scale, CO is not a failing grade.

As a result of the second certification in Math 111, the State Approving Agency submitted a referral to the Department of Veteran Affairs Education Services for adjustment to [REDACTED] VA certification for benefits for the noted term. The Department of Veterans Affairs Education Services adjustment resulted in overpayments to Francis Marion University and to [REDACTED]. The amount of overpayment to the Francis Marion University was \$693.25. The amount of overpayment to [REDACTED] was \$932.25.

The State Approving Agency will work with Francis Marion University to create an addendum to the CO grade for veteran students: Veteran students who elect to be enrolled in courses that have the option of receiving the grade of CO will need to be informed by Francis Marion University Certifying Officials, (Ms. Mosley or Ms. Dollie Newhouse) prior to their enrollment in that course / program. Subsequent veteran enrollments should not be certified to the Department of Veterans Affairs until the CO addendum has been approved by the State Approving Agency.

The facility promptly notified VA of any changes in credit or clock hours, or tuition and fees, that would affect the amount of payment to beneficiaries (38 CFR 21.4203, 21.7156(b), 21.9735).

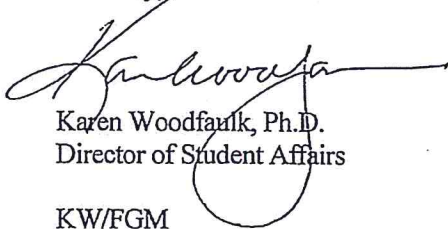
- [REDACTED] - spring term - 1/8/2013 - 4/30/2013. Student reduced credit hours from 16 to 13. The reduction was after the drop period. The effective date for the reduction in student credit hours was 3/06/2013. VA Form 22-1999b was submitted late to the VA to reduce the credit hours from 16 to 13. Date of submission of VA Form 22-1999b to the VA was 4/17/2013.
- [REDACTED] fall term - 8/18/2014 - 12/09/2014 - Student reduced credit hours from 12 to (9). The reduction was after the drop period. The effective date for the reduction in student credit hours was 9/09/2014. VA Form 22-1999b was submitted late to the VA to reduce the credit hours from 12 to nine (9). Date of submission of VA Form 22-1999b to the VA was 10/31/2014.
- [REDACTED] - fall term - 8/20/2012 - 12/11/2012 - Student increased credit hours on the first date of term from ten (10) to 13. The increase in credit hours was during the add period. The effective date for the increase in student credit hours was 8/20/2012. VA Form 22-1999b was submitted late to the VA to increase the credit hours from ten (10) to 13. Date of submission of VA Form 22-1999b to the VA was 10/02/2012.

Please be advised, that whenever VA students reduce their hours or withdraw for any reason during a term that was certified to the VA for payment, the education institution must report the changes in enrollment via VA Form 22 - 1999b within 30 days after the change occurred. Generally, the education institution must report the last date of attendance in the class or a withdrawal from school.

Please be further advised that it is absolutely essential to ensure VA students are certified accurately and promptly to avoid payment errors against the certifying education institution and student.

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education State Approving Agency sincerely appreciates the willingness of Francis Marion University to provide these educational opportunities for our nation's veterans. Should you wish to discuss any part of this survey, please feel free to contact Mr. Frank Myers of my staff. Mr. Myers can be reached at (803) 737-2282 or by email at fmymyers@che.sc.gov.

Sincerely,



Karen Woodfaulk, Ph.D.
Director of Student Affairs

KW/FGM

C: VA: South Carolina Education Liaison Representative

C: Ms. Amanda Mosley, Student Service Counselor