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CAREER & EDUCATION



Ron Kincaid helps recently returned soldiers access their educational benefits during regular office hours at each Portland Community College campus, including Cascade in north Portland.

Vet Helps with Tuition Benefits

Goal is college success for returning soldiers

sity.

Though he has a home office at PSU, Kincaid carries a mobile office—a laptop with WiFi and a phone—to the 10 campuses. He advises veterans on benefits for education, disability compensation and pensions, health care benefits, home loans and more. He also can assist vets in appealing claims that the VA has denied.

"Vets (in college) are so busy, and many have families, so they put off exploring benefits," Kincaid said.

He has worked with the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs for 14 years and his current position resulted from a 2009 state initiative to place state veteran services officers on Oregon's college campuses to assist returning combat veterans and active duty personnel. Kincaid knows what they are going through as he attended PCC in the 1980s and earned an associate's degree in construction before joining the U.S. Navy.

"When I came back (from the Middle East) I didn't know I had benefits other than education and home loans," Kincaid said. "Dealing with benefits while trying to succeed in college is one of the biggest challenges facing veterans today. The VA is trying to make it as easy as possible for the veterans really pulling out all the stops to help them."

To make an appointment with Ron Kincaid, call 503-559-3247, e-mail kincair@odva.state.or.us or visit the PCC Veterans' Services Office Web site: www.pcc.edu/vets.

With 3,000 members of the Oregon National Guard's infantry combat team recently returned from Iraq and eligible for college tuition under the G.I. Bill, there is pressure to provide quality educational and benefits services.

This spring, Portland Community College welcomed Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs' Ron Kincaid, who is holding regular office hours at each PCC campus, to do just that.

Kincaid, a combat vet in the first Gulf War, is spending the first and third Wednesday of every month at the Rock Creek Campus from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; and at Sylvania Campus from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month.

At the Cascade Campus in north Portland, he is available the second Thursday of the month from 8 a.m. to noon and at the Southeast Center on the third Thursday, also from 8 a.m. to noon.

The work is part of Veterans' Affairs reaching out to local colleges to help guide veterans as they enter college. As part of this outreach, Kincaid also holds office hours at Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia Gorge, and Tillamook Bay community college as well as Portland State University and Oregon Health & Science Univer-



I am Sharing my culture

"What sets OSU apart is the learning opportunities I have outside of the classroom. I teach a Bollywood dance class on campus, and I'm happy I can bring something from my culture to people who are really interested."

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