

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY
ON BEHALF OF CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE AND TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CENTRAL TEXAS
July 9, 2015

Good afternoon. My name is Marc Nigliazzo, and I'm the President of Texas A&M University-Central Texas. My purpose here today is to present a brief overview of the educational opportunity available to Fort Hood soldiers and their families as provided by two unique public institutions of higher education, both located in Killeen.

Central Texas College (CTC) was established in 1965 as a public, two-year community college, and over its fifty year history has become one of the premier military-serving institutions in the world, with over 140 locations on military installations worldwide, including two CTC-funded facilities on Fort Hood.

Texas A&M University – Central Texas (A&M Central Texas) was created by the Texas Legislature in May 2009, but its roots run back to the 1970's when community and Fort Hood leaders began laying the groundwork for a future public university by first creating a small private institution on the CTC campus.

More than thirty years later, in 2009, A&M Central Texas was created by the Texas Legislature as one of eleven universities in The Texas A&M University System. Like CTC, it has an exceptional military heritage, and the two institutions combine to present a continuously growing array of educational opportunities, ranging from certificates through associate, baccalaureate, and master's degrees.

In addition to programs offered in the traditional classroom, both institutions offer a robust menu of fully online programs, with CTC offering 27 certificates and 21 associate degrees online, and A&M Central Texas currently offering five bachelors and five masters degrees, with more to come. Both institutions are regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Both CTC and A&M Central Texas are ranked among the top 20% of all institutions formally recognized as Military Friendly. Both house successful VET Success programs on their campuses. Both have demonstrated exceptional capability in evaluating and granting credit from military transcripts, with CTC one of the founding institutions in the Texas College Credit for Heroes program. Both institutions were among the first in the nation to become designated as Purple Heart institutions, and they share an exceptional Army ROTC program that commissioned 15 officers during spring commencement 2015 at A&M Central Texas, with 11 of them designated as distinguished graduates.

While CTC enrolls almost 20,000 students, fall and spring combined, through its Killeen campus in both certificate and degree programs, A&M Central Texas is an upper-level university enrolling more than 2,500 students at the junior level and above. Working in close partnership, the two institutions assure all of the region's residents that associate, baccalaureate, and advanced degrees are attainable:

- In reasonable proximity to their homes;
- Delivered in an instructional mode most appropriate to the individual student;
- At a cost that will not require students or their families to take on the burden of extraordinary debt.

When a student starts the first two years of a baccalaureate degree at CTC and completes that degree at A&M Central Texas, the total estimated cost in mandatory tuition and fees is \$17,000. In addition, A&M Central Texas offers a guaranteed tuition and fee program, assuring students that their mandatory tuition and fees will not change for a period ranging from two to four years, depending upon their academic rank when they first enter the university, as well as a 12 semester hour maximum tuition for undergraduates, with no mandatory tuition or fees charged for hours taken above 12.

The student bodies of both institutions are demographically diverse, and both serve a large percentage of military affiliated students: 67% of the student body at CTC, and 46% of the student body at A&M Central Texas. CTC awards more associate degrees for military affiliated students than any other institution, and is one of the nation's largest producers of associate degrees overall. In only six years, A&M Central Texas has graduated more than 4,000 students with baccalaureate and master's degrees, with 49% of the spring 2015 graduating class made up of military affiliated students.

When A&M Central Texas was transformed in May 2009 from dream into reality, it became a natural partner with CTC in the cooperative development of a new pathway to higher education, joining a public community college with a new, public upper-level university. It is a creative and cost-effective pathway and promises to become an innovative model of how students within the region may access opportunities for quality higher education in both a time and cost-efficient manner. It is grounded in a unique partnership of institutions committed to aligning their strengths in a complimentary fashion while avoiding the needless and costly duplication of effort. It is a pathway that embraces excellence while insuring educational opportunity and inclusion, and its impact will ultimately be measured by the success of those students who will enjoy its benefits. Almost 60% of the A&M Central Texas student body transfers in from Central Texas College.

In their support of Fort Hood soldiers and their families, CTC and A&M Central Texas provide exceptional educational opportunity and support services under a common guiding principle, that:

"Our commitment to them . . . must be worthy of their commitment to us."



Marc A. Nigliazzo, Ph.D.

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