March 26, 2015

Dear Participating Institution,

In our review of educational institutions for the Department of Defense Voluntary Education Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), we found that several institutions appear to be displaying the “Official Seals” of the Department of Defense (DoD), the Military Departments (i.e., Army, Navy, Air Force, and the U.S. Marine Corps), on institution websites, and in various institution publications (e.g., catalog), advertisements, brochures, and billboards. We are presuming that the use of these official seals is intended to acknowledge support for our Service members and to advertise academic curriculum tailored to meet the needs of the military community. However, the use of these official seals is expressly prohibited without first obtaining official permission. Consequently, the Department is concerned that this type of inappropriate use may create an appearance of endorsement or affiliation. For example, consumers could view the advertisement and assume the Department of Defense or a particular Military Department or other DoD entity endorses or favors the policies, programs and services offered by a particular institution over those of another; or that a DoD entity may be affiliated with a particular institution. As a Participating Institution, it is imperative that all Voluntary Education Partnership MOU signatories be in compliance with DoD policy.

As explained at [http://www.defense.gov/trademarks](http://www.defense.gov/trademarks), the Department of Defense and Military Department seals are protected by law from unauthorized use, and these seals may NOT be used for non-official purposes. However, the Military Departments and some other DoD components may approve a private party’s use of an alternative symbol, such as a Service emblem or coat of arms, on a case by case basis. Notwithstanding those case-by-case procedures, however, there is no such substitute for the Department of Defense seal, and there is no optional graphic that would represent the Department of Defense. Additional contact information to seek permission for authorized use of Military Department or other DoD entity images is also provided at: [http://www.defense.gov/trademarks](http://www.defense.gov/trademarks). In addition, institutions are encouraged to review information regarding the appearance of uniformed Service members in advertisements at [http://www.dimoc.mil/resources/limitations.html](http://www.dimoc.mil/resources/limitations.html).

We hope this notice and the resources provided therein will inform current and future decisions concerning the use of any DoD official seals or other trademarked insignia. We request that any DoD entity official seals or other insignia that are currently being used in publications, advertisements, brochures, on billboards and websites be promptly withdrawn and that all future use cease, except in cases when permission has been granted by the appropriate DoD entity.

Your immediate assistance with this matter is greatly appreciated.

/signed/
Dawn A. Bilodeau
Chief, DoD Voluntary Education
Military Community and Family Policy