

## **Veterans Application Tracking System (VATS) Updates**

As I mentioned in a previous communication, we have items in the backlog to enhance your VATS experience. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic put all IT projects on hold as the resources were needed to develop and implement the MDVA disaster relief grants.

Last week, Eric, Ed, Paula, and Dave met to groom and add stories to the backlog. Dave met with Patty (IT) to discuss an on-going maintenance schedule and to identify stories for immediate needs.

We have identified a few issues with the calculator for summer term. Thank you to all the financial aid staff who have brought this to our attention. If you are experiencing any of these issues, please give us a call/email to assist you. These bugs are identified and will be worked by our IT staff as soon as possible. We will provide updates as we go through the process.

1. The first problem centers around Chapter 33 (Post 9-11) book allowance in summer terms. Students who use Chapter 33 may receive up to \$1000 per year for book allowances. The calculator logic applies rate of pursuit and eligibility percentage, then enters the appropriate amount in the book allowance field. The logic understands that the maximum is \$1000 per year. Unfortunately, the summer term book allowance does not adjust based on previous term benefit. If you experience this problem or have questions, please call us as we have a work around.
2. The second problem centers around students who are using the federal tuition assistance program (FTA or Go Army Ed) and Chapter 33 (Post 9-11) simultaneously in summer term. We discovered that the calculator does not subtract the tuition paid by FTA when it calculates the tuition students receive from Chapter 33. Example: The student's actual tuition and fees are \$4000, the student is 100% Chapter 33, and using FTA which will pay \$3000. As we know, FTA is the first payer. The bill is \$4000, FTA pays \$3000 leaving \$1000 for Chapter 33. Unfortunately, the calculator will not subtract the \$3000 from FTA when it calculates Chapter 33 tuition and fees. The logic will assume the student will receive \$3000 from FTA and \$4000 from Chapter 33, potentially causing this student to miss out on MN GI Bill benefits. If you experience this scenario, please call us and we will assist.
3. The final scenario centers around students who taking summer session and using any chapter of the GI Bill. If the student is considered part-time based on the institution but full time based on the federal GI Bill, the rate of pursuit in the calculator logic is incorrect. If you experience this problem, please give us a call.

As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions on improvements, bugs, or user experience.

## **Reminder: 2021 Applications**

You should see 2021 applications in your portal. Many of them may be in a requested status, so you will not be able to complete the calculation until the MDVA staff approves the application.

**Note:** Please do not award 2021 benefits until you have completed the 2021 participation agreement and funds have been released to your institution.

**Reminder: MDVA staff**

All MDVA staff are working from home until further notice. [Use this link](#) to find staff contact information. Once you are on the page with the map, click on the region to display the staff information.

We wish you a safe and healthy summer and look forward to another academic year beginning soon!

Stay healthy and safe,  
Ed, Eric, and Dave