

# COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Friday, March 9, 2012

**DISCUSSION ITEM A:**                    **Update of the Higher Education Landscape Report from the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University West Lafayette**

**Staff Recommendation**                    For information only.

**Background**                                    Founded in 2000 with funding from the U.S. Department of Defense, the Military Family Research Institute (MFRI) focuses on research and outreach, and works closely with collaborators to improve the lives of service members and their families across the country. With support from the Lilly Endowment Inc., MFRI created a higher education initiative, *Operation Diploma*, to work specifically with Indiana’s higher education institutions and student veterans organizations. Since 2009, MFRI has awarded more than \$2.4 million through *Operation Diploma* to Indiana colleges and universities to help campuses become more “veteran friendly” by creating support services for students with military backgrounds.

MFRI, Commission staff, and STAC have been working together for about two years. A primary focus of this collaboration has been to identify ways service members can earn and transfer credit based on military training and experience. Of special interest has been the courses in the Core Transfer Library and, more recently, coursework in technical areas.

The presentation at this meeting will provide an update of *The Higher Education Landscape for Student Service Members and Veterans in Indiana*, which MFRI published in April 2009. The 2009 report summarized a number of topics, including new legislation, the demographics of student service members and veterans, and the unique challenges faced by students who have served or are serving in the military or reserves. The report also included a profile of each Indiana public and independent college or university, as well as a summary across all institutions, which contained information on admissions, financial aid, academics, student services, and participation in the network of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC).

**Supporting Document**                    To be distributed.