



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## Harckham Helps Pace University Open Its New Student Veterans Center

PETE HARCKHAM September 21, 2020

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*Pleasantville, NY* – New York State Senator Pete Harckham participated today in the grand opening of the new Student Veterans Center here at Pace University, where he joined campus leaders and school officials, including Pace’s President Marvin Krislov, in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

The new center, jumpstarted through a \$200,000 state grant secured by Harckham, will serve as a one-stop resource center and meeting place for student veterans at Pace. Centrally located inside the Kessel Student Center on Pace's Pleasantville campus, the new center will benefit the growing number of student veterans and their dependents who are matriculating at the university.

"The new Student Veterans Center on Pace University's Pleasantville campus will be an important resource for the Pace veterans community, and I am pleased to have supported its creation from the start," said Harckham. "These days, more veterans of our Armed Services are pursuing postsecondary educations, and their needs differ somewhat from other college students in terms of certain resources and networking. Pace's Veterans Center is a recognition of this shift in the student body, and will be met with wide appreciation as a result."

"Let's not forget how much we owe to the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces," Harckham continued. "It is only right that we empower them the best we can so they can succeed in the civilian world."

Among the newer veterans on college campuses across the nation, there are soldiers, Marines, sailors and air men and women, along with National Guard and Coast Guard men and women, and reservists, many who have served during the Global War on Terror. On campus, students and professors would be hard pressed to distinguish these recent veterans when attending classes and labs. But student veterans are unique, and their needs differ somewhat from typical college students in terms of certain resources and socialization.

Pace's Student Veteran Center offers a central location on campus to connect, socialize and use the school's resources. Veterans, for example, will be able to obtain information on how to work with, and navigate, the Veterans Administration, as well as the various educational

benefits student veterans are entitled to, including the Forever GI Bill, Post 9/11 GI Bill, Yellow Ribbon Program and Vocational Rehab.

“Pace University has a proud tradition of supporting student veterans and their families, and this new Student Veterans Center, our first space dedicated exclusively to their needs, will help us deliver on that mission,” said President Krislov. “We are grateful to Senator Harckham for his support. He shares our firm belief that we must go above and beyond to serve those who have served our country.”

Student veterans often benefit from receiving introductions to the college community and insights on how to make the most of the college experience. Many are still transitioning from being a service member to a student, and may need help with Admissions, Financial Aid, federal and state benefits and obtaining work-study. These are the kind of resources that a student center for veterans can offer, along with help preparing résumés and conducting job searches, and people to talk to about housing and legal issues. And at some times during the day, veterans appreciate being able to talk and relax with other veterans, with whom they can share information, thoughts and conversation with.

“This is a dream come true,” said Steven Garcia, a USMC Veteran and Past President of the Student Veterans of America (SVA) Pleasantville chapter. “Bringing veterans together at one central location will be great for the entire Pace community. This space will be essential in helping veterans connect with available resources at Pace and get them the support they need to be successful.”

Added Sukh Singh, a USMC Veteran and current President of Pace’s Pleasantville SVA chapter, “I’m so excited. My fellow veteran students here and I have been hoping for the new

center for a while. Pace's New York City campus, where I transferred from, already has a veterans center, and I saw there was quite a demand for one here. At certain times, it's just nice to be able to relate to another veteran about different things."

Following meetings to discuss the need for a student veterans center, Harckham last year joined student veterans and university leaders to announce the project. Construction on the new Student Veterans Center began this past winter—delayed only slightly because of the pandemic—and was completed over the summer.

"Student veterans contribute to the diversity and campus life here at Pace University," said Colonel (Ret.) Peter Riley, director of the Pace Office of Veterans Services. "It is terrific that veterans have their own Center. It gives them a place to use the computers, study, relax, commiserate and support each other. We appreciate all the effort that Senator Harckham and his staff did to open the Veterans Center. COVID-19 might have delayed its opening, but could not prevent it."