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Military spouses get financial help at OU through MyCAA program

By Dan Bodene, contributing writer

When a service member is called to active duty, it unfortunately can result in financial worry for their spouse, especially when college attendance is involved.

But spouses of active-duty service members are getting financial help for their studies at Oakland University through the Department of Defense's (DoD) Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) program.

One, senior Starr Lowman, is working on a Bachelor of Integrative Studies degree in biology and art history. Her husband is with the Army National Guard, stationed in Afghanistan.

Lowman had earlier attended OU but returned after several years off. She expects to graduate after the fall 2010 semester. In the meantime, she is expecting her first child. "That's why this program is so great," she said. "It's helped me out when I really needed it, with so much going on."

MyCAA pays up to \$6,000 to eligible military spouses who are pursuing degree programs, licenses or credentials that lead to jobs in a "portable" career field. It also pays for General Education Development tests and English as a Second Language classes.

Late in 2009, OU was approved by the DoD to partner with it to administer the MyCAA program.

Students work through the DoD to enroll in the MyCAA program, develop a plan of study and apply for financial aid. Ann Besaw of the university's Office of the Registrar said, "Basically, the Department of Defense puts the responsibility on the students."

Besaw's office ensures class enrollment forms completed by students are provided to OU's Student Business Services for billing and payments. At the end of each semester, Besaw also verifies the students' grades.

The MyCAA program is the newest in a number of services that Oakland provides to veterans and their families.

The Veterans Certification Office in the Registrar's Office assists veterans with applying to OU, registering for Veterans Administration benefits, certifying school enrollment, providing grant and scholarship information and helping veterans work with other university departments.

In addition, OU's Veterans Support Services Office can help students make the transition from military to campus life with information, advice and a variety of referrals.

For detailed information on the MyCAA program, visit the **Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts website**. For more information on veterans services at OU, contact **veterans@oakland.edu**, visit the **Veterans Support Services website** or call (248) 370-2010.

SUMMARY

Spouses of active-duty service members are getting financial help for their OU studies through the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts program.

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