For Immediate Release

**13 MORE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**NAMED**

**PNGAS GUARD-FRIENDLY SCHOOL**

*The Pennsylvania National Guard Associations (PNGAS) is a non-profit organization whose sole mission is supporting the men, women and veterans of the National Guard, their spouses, and families*

**(Fort Indiantown Gap - Annville, PA) – July 23, 2020** –At its July 23rd Board of Directors meeting, the Pennsylvania National Guard Associations (PNGAS) unanimously-approved and announced another 13 colleges and universities have earned the designation, *PNGAS Guard-Friendly School*. Developed by the PNGAS Education Advisory Council, the *PNGAS Guard-Friendly School* standards were designed to recognize colleges, universities and trade schools which meet or exceed ten (10) baseline criteria that create a supportive learning environment to assist members of the Pennsylvania Guard and their families in pursuing post-secondary degrees. Originally, 30-schools earned the designation as a PNGAS Guard Friendly School. Now, with 43-PNGAS Guard Friendly Schools, the 13 new schools are:

Gwynedd Mercy University, Muhlenberg College, Penn State University (Scranton), Penn State University (Greater Allegheny), Troy University, Clarion University, Villanova University, Penn State University (Lehigh Valley), Robert Morris University, Lehigh Carbon Community College, Shippensburg University, Grantham University, and Valley Forge Military College

The active and participatory PNGAS Education Action Council is chaired by Brigadier General (Retired) George Schwartz. Through his leadership, volunteers from some of the state’s leading colleges and universities voluntarily review applications, guidelines and recommend approval decisions and improvement criteria for each applicant.

For many years, the Education Assistance Program (“EAP”) has been the number #1 recruiting tool for the Pennsylvania National Guard. Since its inception, Pennsylvania has distributed more than $281 Million through the EAP so Guard members can get college, university and trade school degrees. The EAP provides a tuition benefit equivalent to the yearly tuition rate set by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) so that members of the Pennsylvania National Guard can attend one of 488 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) approved schools. Presently, the EAP is an almost $32,000 tuition benefit for each Guardsman.

With the July 2019 enactment of the Military Family Education Program (MFEP), there is a now a non-lapsing fund providing EAP-like tuition benefits to spouses and children of members of the Pennsylvania National Guard when a Guardsman re-enlists for another 6-year term too. Next year, the MFEP will be an almost $32,000 tuition benefit for spouses and/or children of a Guard member that reenlists for 6-years.

As state and national emergencies and global warfare become increasingly sophisticated, technology-driven, and complex, having a well-trained and educated Guard force is more strategic and valuable than ever.

“We are very confident the designation, PNGAS Guard-Friendly School, will keep producing immediate and long-term benefits and synergies for students, faculty, alumni, Guard-members, veterans, their spouses, families, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its economy,” Kathleen Fabrizi, Executive Director, PNGAS and Pennsylvania National Guard Foundation.

In 2016, to help optimize taxpayer dollars and increase the positive impacts of the EAP program for Guard recruitment and retention, PNGAS started collecting and sharing best practices among K-12, colleges, universities, and trade schools. By promoting, sharing, and championing best practices, many dozens of schools started improving their outreach, admissions, curriculums, guidelines, and relationships with Guard members, veterans, spouses, and military families.

To further these efforts, in 2018 PNGAS formed the PNGAS Education Action Council (EAC), chaired by Brigadier General (Retired) George Schwartz to jumpstart these initiatives. Very quickly the EAC had discussions to define and create an application for the designation of a PNGAS Guard Friendly School. For months, dozens of colleges, universities and trade schools gave edits, insights, commentary and suggestions of the definition and application process for a PNGAS Guard Friendly School designation. Released in April 2019, the PNGAS Guard Friendly School application, designation and logo were designed to showcase and promote the schools that meet and exceed the ten standards adopted by PNGAS.

Of the more than 480 schools eligible to receive EAP funds, only these 43-schools have earned the right to be designated a PNGAS Guard-Friendly School.

At the July 23rd meeting of the PNGAS Board of Directors, they also authorized the application for PNGAS Guard Friendly High Schools to showcase and promote high schools using best practices and standards adopted by PNGAS. That application will be released on August 7, 2020.

PNGAS is a non-profit organization, not associated with or legally connected to the Pennsylvania National Guard, the state or federal government, the US Military or the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

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**The List**

**of 43-Colleges, Universities and Trade Schools earning the designation, PNGAS Guard Friendly School – July 23, 2020**

**Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania**

**Central Penn College**

**Clarion University**

**Community College of Allegheny County**

**DeSales University**

**DeVry University**

**Drexel University**

**East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania**

**Edinboro University of Pennsylvania**

**Grantham University**

**Gwynedd Mercy University**

**HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College**

**Immaculata University**

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania**

**Lebanon Valley College**

**Lehigh Carbon Community College**

**Mansfield University of Pennsylvania**

**Montgomery County Community College**

**Moravian College**

**Muhlenberg College**

**Penn State University - School of Public Affairs (Harrisburg)**

**Penn State University (Abington)**

**Penn State University (Beaver)**

**Penn State University (Berks)**

**Penn State University (Greater Allegheny)**

**Penn State University- (Harrisburg)**

**Penn State University (Lehigh Valley)**

**Penn State University (Mont Alto)**

**Penn State University (Schuylkill)**

**Penn State University (Scranton)**

**Penn State University (University Park and World Campus)**

**Penn State University (York)**

**Pennsylvania College of Technology**

**Robert Morris University**

**Saint Joseph's University**

**Shippensburg University**

**Slippery Rock University**

**Troy University**

**University of Pennsylvania, College of Liberal and Professional Studies**

**University of Pittsburgh at Bradford**

**Valley Forge Military College**

**Villanova University**