Chairman Flores, Ranking Member Takano, and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate having the opportunity to appear today to discuss the value of higher education for our nation’s veterans. I am Dan Carey, president of Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin.

Edgewood is a liberal arts Catholic college in the Dominican tradition, with 3,064 undergraduate and graduate students. We offer more than 40 academic and professional programs, including master's degrees in business, education, nursing, and other fields, and two doctoral degrees in educational leadership (Educational Leadership and DNP – doctorate Nursing Practice.)

Today, I represent today both my college and the member institutions of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. With more than 1,000 members nationwide, NAICU reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the United States. Members include traditional liberal arts colleges, major research universities, church- and faith-related institutions, historically black colleges and universities, women's colleges, performing and visual arts institutions, two-year colleges, and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business, and other professions. NAICU is committed to celebrating and protecting this diversity of the nation's private colleges and universities.

At the outset, I would like to commend the committee for highlighting the importance of veterans’ receiving value for the time and money they put into obtaining a higher education. As an independent college president and as the former board chairman of NAICU, I welcome the chance to talk about the value of private, non-profit colleges. I’m proud of my service as an infantry officer in Vietnam, and I retired as a full Colonel in the Reserves. The GI Bill changed my life and the lives of countless others! I am personally committed to seeing that veterans have a positive educational experience both at my institution and at other high-quality colleges across the country.

Veterans’ Education at Edgewood College

The post-9/11 GI Bill has opened the doors to higher education across the country. The key question before this Committee today is how to ensure veterans get the most out of the GI Bill. I believe the answers lie in the success veteran students have at Edgewood. What makes
Edgewood and the other private non-profit colleges so successful for veteran students? Three key factors:

First, we dedicate financial and personnel resources to students. Like most non-profit colleges, Edgewood spends the vast majority of our revenue on student education and student services.

Second, we focus on teaching. We have a top-notch faculty of PhDs. Most of our students sit in small seminars of fewer than 20 students. Like most non-profit colleges, we push our students to learn. We teach them to think critically, to write effectively, and to work in teams. Our nursing and science students learn in high quality labs. Our students graduate with strong skills to tackle professional careers. And when they graduate, we offer intensive job placement assistance to every graduate.

Third, Edgewood offers significant student support services. Some veteran students need a little extra guidance through their college experience. We have a full-time Veterans Services Coordinator, Matthew J. Schroeder, who served in the Army Reserve and United States Marine Corps between 1996 and 2000. In response to the requests of our veteran students, Edgewood will be providing a dedicated space for veterans on the Monroe Street campus—beginning this July. We make psychological counseling services easy to access. We also offer personalized academic advising to assist veterans and dependents in determining their course of study at Edgewood.

Because of these factors, our enrollment of veterans and dependents at Edgewood College has grown dramatically in the past several years. Fall enrollment has more than tripled in the last four years (from 43 to 144), and spring enrollment has nearly quadrupled (from 36 to 143).

Our graduates are appreciative of the high quality education experience at Edgewood, and they find success on the job market. Employers know that Edgewood students have benefited from hands-on learning and deep engagement with faculty. Employers hire our graduates.

Colleges can solve the drop-out problem and veterans can thrive – if colleges make the spending choices to offer an excellent education, dedicate resources needed by students, and build a strong sense of community and support.

Edgewood College has partnered with multiple veterans groups and agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Workforce Development. These partnerships have allowed Edgewood to provide our student veterans and dependents, as well as the veterans community, the widest range of resources possible during their academic pursuit and when looking for employment. Edgewood College has been host to the Women Veterans Health Summit 2012, has offered veterans’ job fairs each of the last four years, and has held a veterans employer symposium. These partnerships have contributed to Edgewood College’s strong reputation among veterans and their families.

Edgewood College has been recognized by several organizations for our commitment to veterans. GI Jobs, a military and veteran focused employment group, has recognized Edgewood as a Military Friendly School since 2009, and Edgewood has been named by Forbes Magazine to the Best Colleges List for the past three years. Edgewood’s School of Nursing has also been
recognized for its contribution to the local VA hospital and as part of the “Joining Forces” campaign to address veteran health issues. In 2012, Edgewood College was recognized by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker for our efforts in helping area veterans find employment.

Cost of Higher Education

Obviously, there are costs involved in providing this intensive educational experience. At its simplest level, college prices have gone up because institutions’ annual costs have gone up, and because colleges are providing more services than ever. While the list of cost drivers changes somewhat from year to year, there are some expenses – such as health insurance and financial aid – that have perennially been major cost drivers over the past decade.

Among the reasons that the cost of doing business increases for colleges are that:

- Colleges are labor-intensive. On average, 75 percent of the costs to run a college is related to personnel expenses, including benefits. Thus, all the costs related to recruiting and retaining staff, paying cost-of-living increases and keeping up with rising health care expenses are paid by colleges and universities as a part of doing business.

- Colleges are highly regulated by both federal and state governments. Compliance and reporting costs are substantial.

- In addition to providing an education, colleges must build and maintain large physical infrastructures that often include libraries, computing/technology centers, academic and student-services buildings and research facilities.

The primary sources of revenue for colleges are: tuition and fees; government support; gifts, grants, and contracts; auxiliary income; endowment income; and other income. Many of these sources of income are variable – and sometimes volatile.

At Edgewood, we have made every effort to restrain our tuition costs—holding increases below 3.9% in each of the past three years. We participate fully in the Yellow Ribbon program, so that all tuition and fee expenses are covered for eligible GI Bill recipients.

In general, private, nonprofit colleges have slowed annual tuition increases to the lowest rates seen in at least four decades. In 2012-13, published tuition and fees at independent, non-profit institutions grew an average of 3.9 percent—the first time on record the rate has been below 4 percent.

Value of Higher Education

The real question is what students are getting from the education provided. Later in my testimony I’ll outline the array of benefits provided by higher education—ranging from higher employment levels and higher lifetime earnings to healthier lifestyles.

But I think the value is best conveyed by the personal stories of the veteran students I’ve come to know at Edgewood and beyond. Let me share just a few of them:
From Ron Bettencourt: “As a student in my late thirties I wanted to attend a school that would give me the necessary education and the proper attention. Edgewood College was my first choice as it had a top notch nursing program and smaller class sizes. Due to being out of school for so long, the smaller classes allowed me to ask questions and interact with my professors to best learn the material. I am proud to call myself a student of Edgewood College.”

I had dinner with Ron and his wife and several other veterans about a month ago. Their drive, experience, and enthusiasm bring an energy to the campus that benefits all of us.

From Shanna Pelkey: “After being discharged from the Army I was able to get a decent job as an LPN with the skills that I obtained while in service. However, I knew that I wanted to further my education but at the time I could not afford to attend school on the Montgomery GI Bill. After hearing about the Post 9-11 GI bill and the yellow ribbon program, going back to school was my best option.

“I choose Edgewood College even though it is a private school that was beyond what my Post 9-11 benefits would pay for. The yellow ribbon program helped to cover the cost allowing me to go to a college that came highly recommended by other professionals. Going to Edgewood under the Post 9-11 with the yellow ribbon program has allowed me to finish my bachelor’s degree with minimal amounts of debt as compared with my other adult classmates. It has also allowed me to not rely on Student loans. I am 1 semester away from graduating with my BSN and feel very confident that between the vast experience that I received as an LPN and combat medic in the army now coupled with my degree that I will receive an excellent career path that will travel with me through my husband’s career in the Army.”

From Peter G. Shackelford, U.S. Navy veteran: "When I transferred into Edgewood, my goal was to get in and graduate as quickly as possible without being noticed. That meant not wanting to be recognized as a veteran in the classroom. This quickly changed when I added the Ethnic Studies and Latin American Studies Minor programs to my degree. I learned a key concept that I believe applies to all Veterans. That concept is that race and ethnicity are not synonymous. Race is biological, but ethnicity deals with one's culture and culture is a product of one's environment. What I realized is that being in the Navy, the military, and now a Veteran is a part of my culture.

“I come from the military culture. It is no different than any other official ethnic group. We have our language, customs, traditions and way of life. Upon this realization, I started identifying myself as a veteran at every possible opportunity and I had nothing but positive reactions from the students I interacted with both in and out of the classroom.

“In summary, my time at Edgewood College was a very great experience and I hope to continue being involved at some level as an alum. The best support for most veterans is for them to be able to speak to another veteran in a private setting when on campus. Thank you.”

Another of our students was Jason Diaz—Class of 2010—whom I got to know quite well during his time on campus. He is an Iraqi war veteran who was inspired to go into nursing while in the military. He was not a medic, but he was able to help keep a wounded comrade alive long enough to reach safety. While a student at Edgewood College, his wife was expecting twins and his father was struck with terminal cancer. Edgewood rallied around, and he graduated with a nursing
While in college he worked as a technician at Dean Clinic and is now working in the emergency room at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics.

Edgewood’s Veterans Services Coordinator, Matthew J. Schroeder, points out a number of reasons why Edgewood College is a good choice for veterans:

- Commitment to the Yellow Ribbon program;
- A strong reputation for being community minded and encouraging veterans to continue serving after their time in the military ends;
- Small class sizes;
- More opportunity to work one-on-one with professors and staff; and
- Strong support and knowledge of College resources from the veterans service department.

Matthew served in the Army Reserve and United States Marine Corps between 1996 and 2000.

We are very proud of the retention rates of our veterans and dependents. The last three degree completion program cohorts have first-to-second-year retention rates of 85%, 85%, and 80%, respectively. The last several transfer cohorts have had first-year retention rates as high as 100%, with the largest cohort (2010) retaining at 80% after one year. The overall one-year retention rate for graduate students has been more than 76% across all beginning cohorts in the study.

These stories are being repeated throughout private, non-profit college campuses across the country—where personal attention, counseling services, and smaller class sizes are hallmarks of the student experience.

Return on Investment

A college education has enormous value and an enormous return:

- Individuals with higher levels of education earn more and are more likely than others to be employed.
  
  o As of April 2013, the unemployment rate for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher was just 3.9% compared to 6.4% for those with some college or an associate’s degree, and 7.4% for those with a high school diploma. *(Bureau of Labor Statistics)*

  o For the first quarter of 2013, full-time workers age 25 and over holding at least a bachelor's degree had median weekly earnings of $1,189 compared to $651 for high school graduates (no college) and $457 without a high school diploma. *(Bureau of Labor Statistics)*

  o Over the course of their working lives, college graduates typically earn about 66% more than typical high school graduates, and those with advanced degrees earn two to three times as much as high school graduates. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*
• Federal, state, and local governments enjoy increased tax revenues from college graduates and spend less on income support programs for them, providing a direct financial return from investments in postsecondary education. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*

  o In 2008, just over 1% of those with at least a bachelor’s degree ages 25 and older lived in households that relied on the Food Stamp Program, compared to 8% of high school graduates. The pattern was similar for the National School Lunch Program. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*

  o Spending on social support programs and incarceration costs are much lower for college graduates than for high school graduates. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*

• College-educated adults are more likely than others to receive health insurance and pension benefits from their employers, and to be satisfied with their jobs.

  o Among private sector employees, 68 percent of those with bachelor’s degrees or higher received employer provided health insurance versus 50 percent of those with high school diplomas. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*

  o Federal, state, and local governments spent about $43 billion on payments for health care for the uninsured. *(Kaiser Commission report, 2008)*

• The percentage of people who donate their time to organizations increases with higher levels of education: 10.4% for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher versus 6.7% for those with some college or an associate’s degree and 5.1% for those with a high school diploma. *(Bureau of Labor Statistics)*

• College education leads to healthier lifestyles, reducing health care costs for individuals and for society. Of households living in poverty (age 25 and older), only 4% had bachelor’s degrees or higher, versus 7% for those with associate’s degrees and 12% for those who had attained only a high school diploma. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*

• College-educated parents engage in more educational activities with their children, better preparing them for school.

  o Among parents with a bachelor’s degree, 68% read to their children daily. This compares to 57% of parents with an associate degree, 47% of parents with some college but no degree, 41% of high school graduates, and 26% of parents who did not complete high school. *(College Board, Education Pays 2010)*

Public Law 112-249: Progress Towards Implementing Data Items

I know that the subcommittee is also interested in progress towards implementing the data items included in Public Law 112-249. The law identifies 10 information items that must be provided about each institution of higher learning.
These 10 items are listed below—along with information about the current availability of the data.

(1) **Whether the institution is public, private nonprofit, or proprietary for-profit.**

This information is available on the Department of Education’s College Navigator site. (http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/) The Department of Veterans’ Affairs also includes a link to this site. (http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/college_navigator.html)

(2) **The name of the national or regional accrediting agency that accredits the institution, including the contact information used by the agency to receive complaints from students.**

The institution’s accreditor is available on College Navigator.

Institutions that participate in the Department of Education student aid programs are required to provide students with information about where they can register complaints with an accreditor. Edgewood provides this information on our website at: http://www.edgewood.edu/Portals/0/pdf/About/StudentComplaintsProcess.pdf.

(3) **Information on the State approving agency, including the contact information used by the agency to receive complaints from students.**

Institutions that participate in the Department of Education student aid programs are also required to provide students with information about where they can register complaints with the State. However, this HEA requirement does not include the VA State Approval Agency complaint information. Edgewood provides the HEA information on our website at: http://www.edgewood.edu/Portals/0/pdf/About/StudentComplaintsProcess.pdf.

(4) **Whether the institution participates in any programs under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).**

This information is available on College Navigator, and most institutions also include it on their website. The information is located on our website at: http://www.edgewood.edu/ProspectiveStudents/Undergraduate/Freshman/FreshmanFinancialAid.aspx.

(5) **Tuition and fees.**

This information is available on College Navigator and most institutions also include it on their website. The information is located on our website at: http://www.edgewood.edu/ProspectiveStudents/Undergraduate/Freshman/FreshmanFinancialAid.aspx.

(6) **Median amount of debt from Federal student loans under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) held by individuals upon completion of programs of education at the institution of higher learning (as determined from information collected by the Secretary of Education).**

The “typical amount borrowed for a student’s undergraduate study” may be found on the College Scorecard (http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card).
“Average undergraduate loans owed at graduation” \(^1\) information is also included on U-CAN. The University & College Accountability Network (U-CAN) is designed to offer prospective students and their families concise, web-based consumer-friendly information about the nation's private, nonprofit colleges and universities in a common format. It was developed and is maintained by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU). Edgwood’s U-CAN profile may be found at: http://members.ucan-network.org/edgewood.

“Median borrowing” will be included on the Shopping Sheet that will be available for use beginning in the 2013-2014 award year. (http://collegecost.ed.gov/shopping_sheet.pdf)

(7) **Cohort default rate**, as defined in section 435(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1085(m)), of the institution.

This information is included on College Navigator and on the College Scorecard.

It will also be provided on the Shopping Sheet that will be available for use beginning in the 2013-2014 award year. (http://collegecost.ed.gov/shopping_sheet.pdf)

(8) **Total enrollment, graduation rate, and retention rate**, as determined from information collected by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System of the Secretary of Education.

This information is included on College Navigator.

(9) **Whether the institution provides students with technical support, academic support, and other support services, including career counseling and job placement.**

Most institutions provide this information on their websites. It can be located on our site at:
http://my.edgewood.edu/sites/services/src/default.aspx
http://my.edgewood.edu/sites/services/src/personalcounseling/default.aspx
http://lss.edgewood.edu/

(10) **the information regarding the institution's policies related to transfer of credit from other institutions, as required under section 485(h)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092(h)(1)) and provided to the Secretary of Education under section 32(i)(1)(V)(iv) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1015a(i)(1)(V)(iv)).**

Most institutions meet this requirement by posting the information on their websites. It may be found on our site at:
http://www.edgewood.edu/ProspectiveStudents/Undergraduate/Transfer.aspx

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\(^1\) The average per-undergraduate-borrower cumulative principal borrowed of the 2012 undergraduate class (does not include students who transferred in or any money borrowed while at other institutions) who started at this institution as first-time students and received a bachelor’s degree between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Includes loans through all loan programs: institutional, state, Federal Perkins, Federal Stafford Subsidized and Unsubsidized, Federal Direct Student Loans and Federal Family Education Loans, and private loans certified by this institution; parent loans are excluded but co-signed loans are included.
Principles of Excellence (Executive Order 13607)

Finally, Edgewood College is one of the many institutions that have voluntarily signed on to the Principles of Excellence outlined in Executive Order 13607. The purposes of the Principles are to assure that service members, veterans, spouses, and other family members:

1. Receive meaningful information about the financial cost and quality of education;
2. Are not subject to abusive and deceptive practices; and
3. Receive high-quality academic and student support services.

As noted throughout this testimony, Edgewood believes strongly in these principles and consistently puts them into practice. We are proud of the fact that our cohort default rate stands at 2.5%—well below the national average of 13.4% and the proprietary school rate of 22.7%. And this figure is not due to our having a wealthy student body; in fact, 35% of our current undergraduate full-time students are eligible for Pell grants. We see providing a supportive environment as a key element of our success. We provide individual support services for active military students and veteran students, and we provide placement support and assistance for all veterans of the state of Wisconsin.

As a veteran, it concerns me that not all of higher education demonstrates a commitment to the success of today’s veterans.

I am confident that veterans are receiving value from my institution and many other private, non-profit institutions that offer a high-quality education, supportive veteran services, and a strong sense of community for veterans and their dependents. Thanks you for the opportunity to share some of these success stories with you today.