

SoPA paves new path for National Guard members to earn a graduate degree

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A renewed partnership between the Tulane School of Professional Advancement (Tulane SoPA) and the National Guard will open additional educational pathways for Guard members across the country.

Graduates of the National Guard Bureau Homeland Security Institute (HSI) in Massachusetts can now transfer nine credits toward a Master of Professional Studies in Homeland Security Studies or a Master of Professional Studies in Emergency Management at Tulane SoPA.

“The National Guard members are usually the first responders when disaster strikes,” said Michael Wallace, program director and senior professor of practice in emergency and security studies at Tulane SoPA. “These programs hopefully will teach them how to do their jobs better and give them ideas about what they should be thinking about during a response.”

Wallace said the program courses focus on emergency management, domestic and international terrorism, intelligence analysis, open-source intelligence, business continuity, risk analysis and more.

“These are lessons that they can apply as a National Guard member, but also in civilian jobs,” said Wallace. “These classes focus on building skills in critical thinking, communication, analysis and other areas. Those can certainly be applied in any industry.”

The agreement also means that applicants who are admitted to Tulane SoPA save time and money. By transferring the nine credit hours, they are closer to their degree. In addition, there is an estimated savings of more than \$9,000 in tuition and fees.

Since National Guard members must respond immediately to a disaster or incident with little advance notice, Wallace said Tulane SoPA will work to ensure flexible class schedules for those who pursue a Tulane SoPA education while still serving.

“I think a real benefit with us is that all of our faculty work in the fields in which they teach, so they bring in a practitioner focus and mindset to combine with the theory,” Wallace said. “They also understand that things come up that are unexpected. If a student must be deployed, the instructor will work with them because they’ve been in the same situation. I think that’s a real strength of our program.”

Wallace said the agreement will likely go into effect next year. The HSI and Tulane SoPA had initially planned to launch the partnership a few years ago, but the COVID-19 pandemic caused some delays. Now, the entities are excited about working together to help the country’s military service members grow in their education and careers.

“What is really exciting about this is that it’s for National Guard members in every state and territory. It’s not restricted to one area,” Wallace said. “I think it shows how we at Tulane SoPA are very supportive of our military. We’ve had other

agreements with different organizations for distance education and earning credits. As a veteran myself, I believe that making educational opportunities available to military members and veterans is very important, so we're excited to see where this goes."

For more information, visit the [HSI transfer page](#).

The partnership is just one way that Tulane SoPA supports continuing education for service members. Veterans and active-duty military members receive a 20% tuition discount. In addition, because of its participation in the Post-9/11 GI Bill[®] Yellow Ribbon Program, eligible students may be able to receive funds for master's degree programs without an additional charge to their GI Bill entitlement. Visit the [Veterans & Active Duty Military Benefits page](#) to learn more.