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Contact: Amy Sherman – (312)499-2635, asherman@cael.org

CHICAGO-AREA COLLEGES TO ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR STUDENT VETERANS

(Chicago, IL – September 19, 2012) – The leaders of colleges and universities throughout the Chicago area will convene at the University Club in Chicago on September 27, 2012 to explore ways to support the more than 30,000 student veterans enrolled in Illinois institutions of higher education. College and university leaders attending the event will have an opportunity to sign a pledge declaring their commitment to meet the needs of student veterans on their campuses.

The event, entitled “*Valuing Veterans: How Our Campuses Can Better Serve Those Who Have Served*,” is co-sponsored by the [Robert R. McCormick Foundation](#), the [Council for Adult and Experiential Learning \(CAEL\)](#), the [Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs](#), and [Student Veterans of America](#).

“By bringing together leaders of local colleges and universities as well as experts in the field, we hope to enable a smooth transition for veterans as they pursue the education needed to be successful in their new civilian careers,” said David Hiller, president and CEO of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation.

Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon will offer remarks at the event, and Colonel David Sutherland, U.S. Army (Ret.), Former Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Warrior and Family Support, will give the keynote address. Attendees will also hear an overview of best practices in serving student veterans by Becky Klein Collins of CAEL. Stacey Baca of ABC7 News will moderate a panel discussion about campus support systems and services that meet the needs of student veterans and promote their unique contributions to their campuses. Panelists include Dennis Trejo, a student veteran at DePaul University; Dr. Steve Curda, a faculty member at National Louis University; Dr. Steven Franz from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; and Stacie Hitt of the Military Family Research Institute.

The event will be hosted by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation; the Presidents of National Louis University, the University of Illinois, and Northeastern Illinois University; the Chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago; and the Executive Director of the Chicago Mayor’s Office of Public Engagement.

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The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) links learning and work. CAEL works at all levels within the higher education, public, and private sectors to make it easier for people to get the education and training they need to attain meaningful, secure employment. With a membership of over 600 colleges, universities, corporations, labor unions, associations, and individuals, CAEL is headquartered in Chicago and also maintains offices in Denver and Philadelphia. More information is available at www.cael.org. Follow CAEL on Twitter at www.twitter.com/CAELnews or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CAELnews.

Robert R. McCormick Foundation is committed to fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic programs, Cantigny Park and museums, the Foundation helps develop citizen leaders and works to make life better in our communities. The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. The McCormick Foundation is one of the nation’s largest foundations, with more than \$1 billion in assets. To learn more about the McCormick Foundation visit www.McCormickFoundation.org follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/McCormick_Fdn, or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/McCormickFoundation.

***The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs** is a state agency dedicated to empowering veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors, to thrive. We do this by helping veterans navigate the complex veteran support system and assisting them in obtaining benefits; by providing long term health care for eligible veterans at our four Veterans' Homes; and by working with other government agencies and non-profits to help veterans address education, mental health, housing, employment, and other challenges.*

***Student Veterans of America** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit coalition of student veteran organizations on more than 550 college campuses globally. Each chapter, run by and for student veterans, provides a critical peer-support network that has been linked to improved academic success. The local chapter is essential to accomplishing SVA's mission, which is to provide military veterans with the resources, support, and advocacy needed to succeed in higher education and following graduation. To learn more, please visit www.studentveterans.org*