



Stockton College to Host Innovative Teacher Education Program for Returning Veterans

Enrolled Students Would Also Have Full Access to Stockton Veteran Services

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Galloway Twp., NJ – A bill approved this week by the New Jersey Assembly Education Committee would establish a pilot program hosted by The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey to train returning military veterans as teachers.

The VETeach program, coordinated through the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) and Operation College Promise, would initially train between 20 and 25 veterans as teachers. They would be enrolled in a 36-month teacher preparation program leading to a bachelor's degree and elementary and middle school certification.

“This is an important program on numerous levels, said Stockton Provost Harvey Kesselman. “It will serve as a model for colleges and universities nationwide in support of our brave veterans who seek careers as educators. In addition it will bolster urban school districts.”

Dr. Kesselman said the program is open to all veterans who have served the military since September 11, 2001. However, one goal of the pilot program is to help place male and minority teachers in urban districts, where they are underrepresented.

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the full Legislature in January. If approved then, Stockton could begin enrolling veterans in the fall 2012 semester.

According to Dr. Kesselman, the program will assimilate veterans into the Teacher Education program at Stockton through specially-designed courses to address veterans' needs. The student veterans will also take regular courses with non-veteran students enrolled in the teacher ed program.

"We also plan to assist the student veterans with housing and include them in the numerous other services available to them through our Veterans program, such as the Stockton Student Veterans Organization, access to our veterans lounge, counseling and other support services."

The cost of attending Stockton and participating in the program is covered through the Post 9/11 GI Bill, he said.

Wendy Lang, Director of Operation College Promise said the VETeach program would give veterans an advantage as they return to work following their service to the nation, while providing unique education to employment alternatives. "The goal is to get our veterans into college and teaching careers as expeditiously as possible while optimizing the benefits they have earned through their service to our nation," she said.

Students who successfully complete the program would receive authorization to apply for positions in kindergarten through eighth grade and in certain secondary education fields as well.

"This program is a win-win-win for veterans, the College and the school districts and students that will ultimately benefit from a new generation of veteran teachers," Dr. Kesselman said. "We expect it will be a great success and ultimately become a permanent part of our teacher education offerings."

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