Education Programs Tailor Made for Veterans

Veterans Programs Offered at Area Colleges and Universities

With military veterans called on to serve in countless vital roles in our country and around the world, sometimes their educational plans can be temporarily interrupted. Area colleges and universities are discovering that flexibility is the key and transitioning military personnel from student to soldier and back again presents a unique challenge. To meet the distinct needs of military personnel, colleges and universities in cooperation with the federal government are developing programs that are tailored to meet the specific needs and circumstances of veterans.

Passed by Congress in March 2009, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is the most extensive educational assistance program for veterans authorized since the original GI Bill was signed into law in 1944. Known as the Yellow Ribbon Program, it provides tuition and fees, as well as book and living allowances, for veterans of the nation’s armed forces who have served since Sept. 11, 2001. If the amount provided by the government (which varies from state to state) does not cover the full amount of tuition, the Yellow Ribbon Program allows institutions of higher learning in the U.S. to contribute. They can voluntarily enter into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to fund tuition expenses, and whatever amount they contribute will be matched by the VA. To qualify for the program, veterans must have served on active duty for at least three years after Sept. 10, 2001 or have been honorably discharged from active duty for a service-connected disability.

Drexel University is proud to be a participant in the newly implemented Yellow Ribbon Program. At its Center for Graduate Studies in Sacramento, Drexel offers 100% free tuition to veterans who qualify for the program. The University’s contribution allows veterans who meet government and University admissions requirements to receive a completely free education in any one of Drexel’s 10 masters and one doctoral degree programs at the Graduate Center in Sacramento, plus receive a monthly living stipend while studying. The program also benefits veterans who wish to attend Drexel’s main campus in Philadelphia, as well as those who prefer to pursue their education entirely online, where Drexel offers more than 70 different programs. Drexel is among a small number of universities with no cap on the number of veterans who may enroll.

“When I was researching colleges for my graduate program, Drexel University came up as one of the most highly accredited evening programs in the area,” explained Phil Schell, a veteran taking advantage of the Yellow Ribbon Program. “In addition to having a strong graduate program in Human Resource Development, the generosity of Drexel and the Yellow Ribbon Program allowed me to continue my education without having to worry about the cost.”

Drexel opened its doors in Sacramento in January 2009 and currently has over 175 students in 8 masters and one doctoral program in areas such as entrepreneurial business, knowledge management and information science, nursing, public health, and higher education leadership and management. Six graduate programs will start again next March. For more information, visit www.drexel.edu/sacramento or call 325-4600 or (888) 389-3781.

William Jessup University also offers veterans the opportunity to further their education through the Yellow Ribbon Program. William Jessup supports veterans who qualify for the program by agreeing to cover 100% of their tuition costs. Half a dozen participated in the program last spring with nearly twenty students qualifying for and enrolling in the Yellow Ribbon Program this fall.

“We are delighted to have the opportunity to participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program at William Jessup University,” said Konye Campaun, Director of Financial Aid for the school. “We believe this is a service we owe to our veterans for what they have done for our country and we are pleased to support it.”

The private, four-year Christian university offers degrees in many different disciplines, including Intercultural Studies, Business Management, Public Policy, Teacher Education, Psychology, Christian Education, Bible and Theology, Pastoral and Youth Ministry, and Music and Worship. Check them out online at www.WJU.edu or call 771-2200 for more information.

The Veteran’s Program offered at Sierra Community College provides returning military personnel with support in their transition from military life to college studies if they have served in any branch of the military. Counselor Catherine Morris and her staff are proud to make the program available to military veterans.

The program includes assistance with things like financial aid, referrals to outside agencies for disability claims, combat stress related issues and other topics that would be helpful for veterans. Morris meets with every one of her veteran students at Sierra College for a minimum of an hour, assessing their individual needs. Then she follows up, tracking their support to give them the best opportunity at collegiate success. Morris also teaches a college success course entitled “Boot to Books,” which is a personal development class about the transition from military to college life. To help link veterans and their family members with one another, Sierra College encourages veterans to join their active Veterans Club, the Veteran Student Alliance. More information can be found at their website, www.VeteranStudentAlliance.net.

“This is an important program for our military personnel who are also college students,” explains Morris. “We owe our veterans a debt of gratitude for their service to our country, so anything we can do to make the transition easier for them to college life is key.”

Sierra ranks number one in awarding associate degrees in California and is in the top one percent for the same category nationwide. The student transfer rate to four-year universities is the highest in Northern California. More information is available on their website at www.SierraCollege.edu or by calling 771-0540.