



For Immediate Release
Thursday, April 5, 2012

Contact: Wendy A. Lang
(609) 989-1100 / (561) 302-5282
walang@njascu.org

Bill To Streamline Teaching Certification for Veterans Signed Today by Acting Governor Guadagno

VETeach Pilot to be housed at Stockton College

ATLANTIC CITY, NJ – Legislation establishing the nation’s first condensed teaching certification program designed specifically for a veteran cohort was signed today by Acting Governor Kim Guadagno. The program was initiated through legislation sponsored by Senator James Whelan D-Atlantic and Assemblywoman Mila Jasey D-Essex. The VETeach™ pilot will be housed at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and is slated to launch in September 2012.

“Stockton College is proud to host the inaugural VETeach class. The signing of this law further demonstrates the commitment of Governor Christie and Acting Governor Guadagno and the Legislature in seeking innovative ways to support the transition of our veterans,” said Stockton President Herman J. Saatkamp. “As a result of the passage of this legislation, with strong bipartisan support, veterans in New Jersey and across the United States will have access to one of the most innovative programs available for those seeking a teaching degree.”

VETeach is the first of a number of education-to-employment initiatives being developed by Operation College Promise (OCP)™ in collaboration with partner colleges and universities. OCP is researching condensed degree programs that optimize the distinct skills honed in the military in fields with potential for long-term employment.

“Operation College Promise (OCP) would like to extend our sincere thanks to Senator Whelan and Assemblywoman Jasey for sponsoring this initiative to accelerate our mission of developing condensed degree plans for student veterans,” said Wendy A. Lang, Director of Operation College Promise. “Today, with the signing of this legislation by Acting Governor Guadagno, New Jersey is sending a powerful message of mutual commitment to the veteran community that their service to our nation is acknowledged with viable education and employment options. The VETeach pilot program will do just that.”

– MORE –

The legislation, S-1026, creates a 36-month teacher preparation pilot program. Veterans who successfully complete the program will receive a bachelor's degree and satisfy the necessary requirements to apply for a certificate to teach kindergarten through grade 8. Stockton plans to prepare future educators in the critical fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Veterans under the Post-9/11 GI Bill are receiving the most generous package of benefits since World War II; however, the time constraints of the measure – 36 months – limit the ability of student veterans to pursue professions – such as teaching – which have requirements that exceed the traditional four-year degree plan.

“I could have benefitted from this program; I would have been a better prepared teacher. I hope many veterans take advantage of this opportunity to better the students of New Jersey,” noted Sergeant Matthew Generally, a Stockton graduate and member of the New Jersey Army National Guard.

####

About Operation College Promise

Operation College Promise (OCP) is a national education, resource and policy initiative founded by the nine New Jersey ASCU state colleges and universities. More information on the project can be accessed at www.OperationCollegePromise.com. ASCU is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy advocacy organization chartered by law in 1985. Its members are: The College of New Jersey, Kean University, Montclair State University, New Jersey City University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Rowan University, Thomas Edison State College and William Paterson University. The founding institutions, collectively, serve about 108,000 students and 12,000 veterans.