

STOCKTON COLLEGE

THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Stockton to Participate in Operation College Promise

Coordinator of Veteran Affairs, Patrick Shields, to Represent Stockton at September 15th Conference

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Galloway Township, NJ- The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey is an established veteran-friendly institution; however, student-veteran support is strengthened as the College broadens its involvement in veteran initiatives. Stockton will be participating in Operation College Promise, a statewide conference for college administrators, educators, student affairs personnel and student-veterans. The conference runs from **8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** on **September 15th** at the Trenton Marriott at Lafayette Yard on 1 West Lafayette Street in Trenton, New Jersey.

Operation College Promise, a collaborative initiative endorsed by all nine New Jersey state colleges and universities, is supported in part by the American Council on Education through a grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation. The conference aims to help college personnel meet the needs of New Jersey's service members. Patrick Shields, Coordinator of Veterans Affairs at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey; along with New Jersey State Senator (District 7) Diane Allen; Stephen Vence, Director of Veterans Affairs at Kean University; and Denise Rodak, Coordinator of Veteran and Military Resources at Montclair State University, will be speaking in a joint presentation titled, *Building a Military-Friendly Campus: Simple Steps to Assure That Service Members Excel on Campus*.

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To provide needed support for students who have served their country, Stockton established the Office of Veteran Affairs in January of 2009, and in August 2009, a Veterans Advisory Board was created. Patrick Shields, Coordinator of Veteran Affairs, developed veteran programs on campus under the auspices of Tom O'Donnell, Assistant to the Dean of Students. Various offices on campus including Admissions, Financial Aid, Administration and Finance and Academic Affairs have provided assistance and consultation. The Office of Veteran Affairs has also established relationships with the 177th Fighter Wing's Air National Guard, Fort Dix and Fort Bragg. A primary mission of the Office of Veteran Affairs is to help student-veterans make the difficult transition from battlefield to college campus as smooth as possible. Stockton's Office of Veteran Affairs also has received support from the Stockton Veterans Organization (SVO) with Charles Kern, as President of Stockton's SVO. Rebecca Patterson is another student veteran who has been instrumental in the development of Stockton's campus veteran programs. Recently, the Office of Veteran Affairs added Martha McGinnis to its staff as an Assistant to the Veteran Coordinator.

Stockton College is also participating in the Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program, which is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. Stockton is one of seven hundred colleges and universities in the US recognized as Yellow Ribbon Institutions who proudly support their student-veterans. In addition to offering in-state tuition for all veterans and active service members, regardless of state residency, Stockton will pay \$1500 per student per year to student-veterans falling within a seventy-five-student cap.

For more information and to register for the conference, please visit www.OperationCollegePromise.com. For directions to the Trenton Marriott at Lafayette Yard and parking at the hotel, please visit their Web site: www.TrentonMarriott.com.

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