

NEWS RELEASE

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University of Saint Mary Signs On to New "Yellow Ribbon Program" for Military Students *Program to Begin Aug. 1, 2009*

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—Military veterans who qualify for GI Bill benefits are now eligible to attend the University of Saint Mary tuition-free through the university's participation in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Yellow Ribbon Program.

This month, the University became one of 700 institutions of higher learning to sign on with the Yellow Ribbon Program, which supplements existing Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. Under the existing GI Bill, veterans are eligible for tuition assistance up to a specific dollar amount per state that cannot exceed the highest public in-state undergraduate tuition rate.

The Yellow Ribbon Program allows universities to help make up any difference between their respective tuition rates and the GI Bill assistance for its eligible students, with the federal government matching the university's contribution. The University of Saint Mary has agreed to cover 50 percent of the difference, with the VA picking up the rest—meaning eligible students will attend USM tuition and fees-free.

"We are proud to participate in this program that aims to make quality higher education available and affordable to those who have served our nation as well as their dependents," said USM President Sister Diane Steele.

Carlton Philpot, the university's veterans services coordinator added: "This is another means through which Saint Mary can serve our veterans and their dependents. It's a great thing to be able to do this for our veterans."

The Yellow Ribbon benefits are payable for education pursued on or after Aug. 1, 2009, and is reserved for students who are eligible for 100 percent of their GI Bill benefits. Other benefits available to military students—including stipends and assistance for housing, books, and supplies—can offset the other costs of a college education.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs GI Bill website, http://www.gibill.va.gov/School_Info/Yellow_Ribbon/, only individuals entitled to the maximum benefit rate (based on service requirements) may receive Yellow Ribbon Program funding. Therefore, they may be eligible if:

- They served an aggregate period of active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, of at least 36 months;
- They were honorably discharged from active duty for a service connected disability and they served 30 continuous days after Sept. 10, 2001;
- They are a dependent eligible for Transfer of Entitlement under the Post-9/11 GI Bill based on a veteran's service under the eligibility criteria listed above.

Visit www.stmary.edu/veterans, USM's dedicated website for military students, for more information on the Yellow Ribbon Program and other services available to active duty and veteran students.

The University of Saint Mary has been designated as a Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC), one of more than 1,500 colleges and universities providing voluntary post-secondary education to members of the military. As an SOC member, the university recognizes the unique nature of the military commitment and seeks to ease the transfer of relevant course credits, offers flexible scheduling, and provides credit for learning stemming from appropriate military training and experience.

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