

Mail Call...the Newsletter of Operation College Promise

(OCP)

Winter 2018

Happy New Year from Operation College Promise!!

Thomas Edison Selects New President – Merodie A. Hancock, Ph.D., Slated to Take Office on March 5

We are pleased to share that Merodie A. Hancock, Ph.D., was unanimously elected the fourth president of Thomas Edison State University by the institution's Board of Trustees on Dec. 20. She will take office on March 5, 2018.

Hancock currently serves as president of SUNY Empire State College in New York and has dedicated her career to serving adult learners. She has a particular passion for supporting military service members and veterans.

"We are honored and excited to have Dr. Hancock as our new president, said TESU Board Chair Brian T. Maloney who also chaired the University's presidential search committee. "She has the experience, expertise and vision to lead Thomas Edison in today's challenging marketplace. Dr. Hancock has dedicated her distinguished career to expanding access to higher education for adults, including active military service members and veterans, and is a national leader in meeting the unique needs of nontraditional students."

Hancock has served as president of SUNY Empire State College since 2013 where she is responsible for the overall operation of the institution's 35 locations throughout New York, the worldwide Center for Distance Learning and eight international sites. She oversees the teaching and learning of the college's 20,000 students as well as the employment of 1,700 faculty and staff and active engagement with 70,000 alumni.

"Thomas Edison State University is such a respected pillar among adult-serving institutions in the United States and has been at the forefront of offering degree pathways for busy, working adults since its inception in 1972," said Hancock. "I hold dear this mission, and am honored to take on the presidency of this pivotal university."

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OCP Holds Certificate for Veterans' Providers Training at Fairleigh Dickinson University

OCP hosted its first CVSP in New Jersey since 2010. The event was held in collaboration with Fairleigh Dickinson University 28 November through 1 December 2017. Included in the



agenda were approximately 30 presenters from across the nation including representatives from the National Association of State Approving Agencies, New Jersey Army National Guard, US Air Force 621st Contingency Response Wing, NJ Association of Veterans Program Administrators, Veterans Education, the VA, US Department of Labor, Soldier and Marine for Life, the Mission Continues, and Team Red, White and Blue. It featured keynote speeches by NJ Secretary of Higher Education, Rochelle Hendricks and Colonel Jack Jacobs (ret.) – MSNBC analyst and Medal of Honor Recipient.

The New Jersey Army National Guard provided a tremendous, and unprecedented, tour opportunity that included orientation flights in UHC-60 Blackhawks along with a private tour of the Joint Headquarters battle lab. In total, 9 states were represented along with the District of Columbia and inclusive of 22 universities and organizations.

Operation College Promise's support of veterans utilizing GI Bill provides an important gateway to their civilian life," said Colonel Jack Jacobs (Ret.), an OCP Board Member. "The unique CVSP training curriculum provides attendees with valuable information, connections and skills which will support their efforts to optimize the higher education experience for their military-affiliated students."

Note: You can access the slideshow on the Operation College Promise Facebook page.

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MFRI Forward Fellowship Program Applications for Female Veterans to Open February 16, 2018

The Military Family Research Institute's Focus Forward Fellowship at Purdue University is designed to help women student veterans build skills, leadership and a sense of community with their peers. Women student veterans from across the country are invited to apply to the four-day residency Fellowship (July 25-28) starting Feb. 16. Personally encourage your women student veterans to apply at https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxraH4GXMrO1gxL

Program highlights:

The Military Family Research Institute's Focus Forward Fellowship at Purdue University has been a highlight for women student veterans across the nation. This year the Fellowship will be held July 25-28 at Purdue University. The 2018 cohort will build leadership skills, connect with corporate mentors, develop skills that foster their academic and career goals, understand and maximize their individual strengths, and build a supportive community of peers.

Eligible Fellows are competitively selected from a national group of applicants who hold an honorable discharge from the U.S. military; are sophomores, juniors, seniors, or pursuing a master's degree; and maintain a 2.75 GPA or better. The Fellowship covers the cost of travel, food, lodging, activities and materials.

Fellowship applications open for the 2018 cohort on Feb. 16.

Personally encourage your women student veterans to apply at https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bxraH4GXMrO1gxL

Featured Provider



MFRI conducts research and outreach for communities and professionals who serve military and veteran families. We collaborate to help shape policies, programs and practices that improve their overall well-being. We also help communities and organizations use research and best practices to achieve their goals within the military and veteran space. MFRI is a unit of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the College of Health and Human Sciences at Purdue University.

Learn more about MFRI here:

<https://www.mfri.purdue.edu/>

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OCP's Director, Wendy Lang, Reappointed to Joint Base McGuire-Dix Lakehurst Honorary Commander Program

Wendy has been reappointed to the JB MDL Honorary Commander program, which facilitates communication between community leaders and military personnel, by highlighting base capabilities, future leaders and the caliber of men and women serving at JB MDL. Members are selected based upon a record of service to the community and their demonstrated tradition of excellence in their professions. Wendy is assigned to Colonel Charles Henderson; Commander of the 621st Contingency Response Wing (CRW), the 621st is a bi-coastal wing with a membership of approximately 1500 members.



Board Member Updates

OCP announced the appointment of Betsy Montanez to its Advisory Board in November. Betsy currently serves as the Assistant Director of Veterans and Military Resource Center, NYU School of Professional Studies. Welcome Betsy!

Tom O'Donnell, a founding member of OCP, retired from Stockton University in 2017 after over 40 years in higher education. Tom remains an active member of the OCP Board and has returned to Stockton to teach part-time in 2018. Congratulations Tom!

Kudos to Phil Gore from Armstrong State University for his insightful article in Military Advanced Education on building community partnerships to augment campus offerings. You can read the article here:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/08869f_d32973043da54bef8b63adbde40e1ac1.pdf

Internship Opportunities

Operation College Promise frequently offers paid part-time internship opportunities through VA work-study and Mission Continues fellowships. If you or anyone you know might be interested in learning more about working with the OCP team, contact our offices at wlang@tesu.edu or 609-777-5696, ext. 2227.

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CVSP Training Host Site Opportunities

OCP is accepting proposals to host trainings for the Fall of 2018. Details on the Spring 2018 offering will be available shortly. Contact Wendy for more info!

Newsorthy

Thomas Edison State University Names New President

http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2017/12/thomas_edison_state_university_names_new_president.html

VA and Humane Society Launch Partnership

<https://www.mae-kmi.com/single-post/2017/12/06/VA-and-Humane-Society-of-United-States-Announce-Partnership>

Senators to Restart Negotiations on VA Choice Reform

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/01/23/after-impasse-senators-restart-negotiations-va-choice-reform.html>

Mental Health Benefits Slated to Increase

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/01/09/trump-expands-mental-health-benefits-decrease-suicide-rates-among-new-veterans/1016271001/>

NFL Rejects AMVETS' Super Bowl Ad Asking Players to Stand for Anthem

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2018/01/23/nfl-rejects-amvets-super-bowl-ad-asking-players-stand-anthem.html>

Military Veterans Continue to Serve in Puerto Rico's Recovery

<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/puerto-rico-crisis/four-months-after-maria-military-veterans-still-mission-puerto-rico-n839686>

Four NY Guard Soldiers to Compete in 2018 Winter Olympics

<http://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/1421680/four-ny-guard-soldiers-will-compete-in-18-winter-olympics/>

Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson Discusses Challenges to their Mission

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/air-force-secretary-heather-wilson-this-is-not-a-game-its-a-very-dangerous-world/article/2646408>

Navy's oldest deployable warship comes out of dry dock after 19 months

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/air-force-secretary-heather-wilson-this-is-not-a-game-its-a-very-dangerous-world/article/2646408>

Number of Homeless Veterans Down 40% Since 2011

<http://time.com/5019720/veterans-homeless/>

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