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Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges... Educators, Employers, Community Partners

G.I. Bill and Yellow Ribbon Program – Benefits for Post 9/11 Veterans

By Judith B. Greiman

Most of Connecticut's private, nonprofit colleges and universities have joined the almost 600 such institutions across the country in signing up for the Yellow Ribbon program, a new veterans' student assistance program, which goes into effect August 1.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill, which includes the Yellow Ribbon program, is a critical investment in the nation's veterans and a prime example of how by working as partners, the federal government, colleges and universities, and others can pool critical resources to enhance student access and affordability.

Tuition and fees, up to the cost of the highest undergraduate tuition at a public university in the state, plus stipends for books and supplies and a housing allowance that is set according to the location are among the benefits covered by the GI Bill. Additionally, the Yellow Ribbon program includes additional tuition payments for attendance at participating private colleges. Under this program, the federal government will match dollar-for-dollar an amount contributed by a campus in an effort to close the tuition gap for the veteran. Many of these benefits are transferable to an eligible spouse or dependent.

Colleges and universities across the country and in Connecticut are gearing up to increase the number of veterans enrolled and look forward to playing a role in the future success of the men and women who have served our country with such dedication and bravery.

GI Bill info at: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/>

Mariners Set For Maiden Voyage In NCAA

You could say that the Mitchell College athletics program has undergone a sea change. On the surface is a brand new identity and logo - the Mariners - represented by a new mascot, a personified wave of blue water.

But more important are some of the deeper changes that underlie the new identity: Mitchell's athletics program has completed its transition from the National Junior College Athletic Association to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division III.

The process started when Mitchell College Athletic Director Mo White and her predecessor Doug Yarnall were thinking about the future of Mitchell's athletics program. The College itself was in the process of transition - adding a

number of four-year Bachelors programs to its two-year Associates program - thus evolving from junior college status to become a Baccalaureate institution.

"We considered both Division II and Division III," says Yarnall, "but given Mitchell's size and the fact that the NCAA wasn't growing the number of Division II schools in the northeast, we recommended Division III. We had the facilities, both indoors and out, we felt we could be competitive in Division III, and that it would be more in keeping with the College's mission and values."

"We see non-scholarship student athletes as students first," White says. "Athletics is a privilege." According to the NCAA, colleges and universities in Division III place priority on the overall quality of the educational experience and on the successful completion of all students' academic programs. They seek to establish and maintain an environment in which a student-athlete's athletics activities are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience. They also seek to establish and maintain an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among their student-athletes and athletics staff.

Mariners (cont. on p. 2)



Students, faculty, President Jukoski and Athletic Director Mo White with new mascot at a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Yarnall Fitness Center.

Trinity College and the Arts meet at Hartford's Montessori School



The Trinity Art Department's Broad Street Gallery is filled with vibrant paintings and clay sculptures. The gallery is abuzz with the sounds of children proudly showing off their artwork and introducing their family members to the Trinity students who are milling around. Musicians fill the air with the rhythmic beat of conga drums and the gentle sounds of a flute.

In one corner, a group of children is creating an "art-in-progress" piece that will be finished by the time the gallery opening ends. This is the annual Neighborhood Arts Exhibition sponsored by Trinity's InterArts Program. And it's clear that everyone is having a very good time.

Several days later, in a corner room on the lower level of the Greater Hartford Montessori Magnet School at the Learning Corridor in Hartford, art teacher Lena Stein sits on a small desk chair and talks about the joy that radiates from her students. As in any typical elementary school art room, paintings drape the walls, colored pencils are crammed into tin canisters, and there is an abundance of art material that fills every nook and cranny. But this art room, where the collage of items form a beautiful mess, is far from ordinary.

Every week, students from Trinity walk across Broad Street to the Montessori School, where they collaborate on projects with Stein and her art students. The Trinity students are enrolled in a Community Learning Initiative (CLI) course taught by Professor Clare Rossini. The core activity is working with the kids at the Montessori School.

"I feel like I came across a hidden gem by signing up for this program," says Beryl Croft-Atkins '09, a political science major. "In the end, I think [the children] taught and inspired me more than I could have ever helped them. It was a joy to watch their intensity, creativity, and genuine appreciation for new experiences."

Rossini, director of Trinity's InterArts Program, began the collaboration with the Montessori School as part of a seminar. When InterArts trimmed its curriculum, Rossini developed a new course through the College's CLI program that combines service learning and research in the community with work in the classroom. Rossini says the art collaboration at the Montessori School fulfills the mission of CLI, and she takes delight from the response of the children and the growth she sees in the Trinity students.

The Trinity students receive a half-credit for their three hours a week during the fall semester, and many continue in the spring on a volunteer basis. The fall semester concludes with the Neighborhood Arts Exhibition at the Broad Street Gallery.

"Everybody benefits," Rossini says. "Trinity students are not just being noble. They get just as much back. Working at the school inspires them to pursue related fields in education and the arts, and they experience a great deal of personal growth."

Mariners (cont. from p. 1)

This move will help Mitchell gain broader recognition and provide a number of opportunities that, until now, were not options at Mitchell. These include participation in national championships, the ability to nominate Mitchell student athletes for Academic All-American honors, and participation in the Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC).

There were many steps to take in order to achieve 100% compliance with the NCAA's rules. White says a key step was choosing a new identity. The NCAA Executive Committee strongly suggests that institutions follow the best practices of institutions that do not support the use of Native American mascots or imagery. Since its founding in 1938, Mitchell College athletes had been known as the Pequots.

Chosen by a committee of Mitchell College students, student athletes, faculty and coaches, the Mariner name consistently received strong, favorable reactions. The association of the name with the ocean embodies characteristics the Mitchell student body sees in its athletic teams: powerful, fierce, intimidating and ferocious. The Mariner name also provides a connection to the college's location and heritage.

In addition to the NCAA membership, Mitchell College is also a founding member of the New England Collegiate Conference and the Eastern Collegiate Athletic Conference (ECAC).



St. Vincent's College Awarded Campus EAI Technology Grant

St. Vincent's College has been awarded a five-year technology grant. This \$1.2 million in-kind grant has been provided by The Campus EAI Consortium through the myCampus On Demand Portal Grant Program, a non-profit provider of information technology services headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio.

The announcement was made by Anjali Jain Chopra, Executive Director of Campus EAI Consortium and Martha Shouldis, Ed.D., President of St. Vincent's College. St. Vincent's is pleased to announce the selection of Campus EAI Consortium's myCampus, a Software-as-a-Service Web 2.0 campus portal solution that will provide students, faculty and staff with access to their academic and social information all in one place.

The grant is designed to cover the costs of software, hardware and services associated with the integration of all information technology at the College including online learning, administrative computing, and the student services system.

"The grant will enable the College to achieve our strategic initiatives in Information Technology, many of which would not be possible with our existing level of resources. In addition to helping us adopt the latest technology, the grant will make the College much more customer friendly for adult learners," said Dr. Shouldis.

Dr. Shouldis said the new system would put students "just a click away" from vital services and information they need to succeed in school and as healthcare professionals. Implementation of the new platform will begin this summer.

She said St. Vincent's was selected for the grant because it is a small college that has already made technology innovations and works in partnership with other higher education institutions and consortiums.

The grant includes project management, installation, hosting, managed services and training costs necessary to install and operate an *enterprise Portal solution*.

"Essentially the feature-rich web portal will allow St. Vincent' College to offer multiple systems and services through a single point of access. In organizing the diversity of resources through Campus EAI we will have the opportunity to enhance both our technology and the quality of service. The *Portal* will provide all members of the campus community with a single sign-on to integrated teaching and learning interests, student services and extra-curricular parts of campus life," said Janice N. Faye, Director of Administrative Services. "By integrating information technology, we can better serve the needs of the college community both on and off campus."



Faye said the grant will also enhance the College's online learning and distance education programs, email system, student-based web publishing, wireless and ecommerce initiatives and the college website along with campus security and emergency preparedness by better connecting faculty, students and staff.

"We've made considerable strides in many of these areas in the past couple of years, but the grant will accelerate our advances and tie the entire system together," Faye said the grant will enable the college to consolidate multiple systems and secure sign-ons into a new user-friendly system "that offers students a broader range of programs and services and makes the college more competitive in the marketplace."

The CampusEAI Consortium was created in 2003 as a response to increasing IT budget cuts, resource constraints and needs of incoming Internet-savvy students. Its mission is to help members reduce the time, cost and effort associated with implementing enterprise IT solutions and to facilitate collaboration amongst member institutions for the purpose of sharing, developing and distributing community-source software.

Now numbering more than 250 institutions world wide, it began with 14 institutions including Case Western Reserve University, University of Montana, Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Oklahoma State University. Current members represent 10 countries including the United States, Canada, India, Australia and the United Kingdom. Members now include Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Exeter, University of Melbourne, McGill University, California State University-Los Angeles, Boston College, and Loyola Marymount University

Student-Athletes at Albertus Magnus College Connect to Community

For student-athletes there are many lessons to be learned during the four years of an undergraduate college career— in classrooms and on the fields and courts of their chosen sport. Now there is another venue for them: the broader community, where they can develop their leadership skills as volunteers. At Albertus Magnus College, student-athletes are learning first hand about giving back through community service and engagement.

"We encourage our student-athletes to perform public service individually and as teams," says Jennifer Pacelli, director of athletics at Albertus and a member of the steering committee of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce's Sports Council. "We are always looking for opportunities to help enhance the leadership skills of our students."

Albertus Magnus College prepares students to become responsible, productive citizens and lifelong learners, encouraging them, as stated in the College's Guiding Principles, to contribute to their communities and to become moral leaders in a complex world.

Pacelli sees volunteering and community service while a student as an extension of these principles. "Our student-athletes are ambassadors for the College, and it's a great, personal learning experience for them," she says.

During the recently completed academic year, Albertus students participated in several community projects. In April, a dozen members of the men's basketball and women's soccer teams worked with two other area colleges and local sports organizations to clean up Dover Beach on the Quinnipiac River in New Haven's Fair Haven section, picking up trash and winter debris, and pitching in with landscaping.

Student-athletes also have helped with the set up and game management of New Haven and Bridgeport area youth basketball leagues and clinics. In addition, student-athletes discuss life skills and the value of remaining in school, important messages for youngsters ages 8 to 14.

Details are being worked out to establish an on-going relationship with a New Haven youth organization; this relationship will include mentoring and tutoring.

"Time is precious when student-athletes are juggling classes, study, games, practice—and some have part-time jobs as well. They volunteer because they see how what they do benefits the community, and broadens their own leadership skills and outlook on life. They learn what it means to be a responsible citizen," says Pacelli.

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The Independent Voice is a publication of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, a public policy association representing Connecticut's nonprofit independent higher education institutions.

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