

## OTTERBEIN COLLEGE

# Education aid to be offered to veterans

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Military veterans looking for options in higher education will soon be able to receive extra assistance to attend Otterbein College.

Otterbein officials announced earlier this month that the college plans to participate in the Yellow Ribbon program.

Formally known as the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, the Yellow Ribbon program is an effort to pay for veterans' college expenses --similar to what the original G.I. Bill did after World War II, according to Otterbein spokeswoman Jennifer Hill.

The Yellow Ribbon program offers payment for tuition and fees, a housing allowance and a stipend for books and supplies for eligible veterans who have served at least three years on active military duty, or at least 30 days for someone released for a service-connected disability since Sept. 11, 2001.

"We anticipate and very much want to be a part of the Yellow Ribbon program," said Tom Stein, Otterbein's vice president for enrollment. "To date, there's nothing we can do, however, because more information on the program won't be released until April for us to start registering to participate. We're anxiously awaiting the opportunity to support our returning troops through this program."

To register for the program, Otterbein must enter into an agreement with the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs that spells out items such as the manner in which the institutional match will be provided, the maximum amount of the institutional contributions and the number of eligible veterans the institution will serve, according to Hill.

For all colleges, public and private, the Yellow Ribbon program provides scholarships equal to tuition and fees at the most expensive public institution in a state, plus a monthly housing stipend and \$1,000 a year for books, she said.

The Veterans Administration is expected to provide official figures through a Federal Register notice in the coming weeks, but in Ohio, such scholarships are expected to be about \$11,400 -- the maximum tuition and fees for Ohio students at Miami University, according to Hill.

Program benefits will go into effect for fall quarter of 2009. According to a report prepared by the American Council on Education, the act will have three components: It creates a new veterans education benefits program, known as the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, for persons on active duty on or after Sept. 10, 2001, and authorizes the Defense Department to develop a program to allow active duty service members to transfer those benefits to family members. The act also aims to increase veterans' education benefits under the pre-existing Montgomery G.I. Bill-Active Duty (MGIB) and by authorizing the Defense Department to expand active duty service members' ability to transfer MGIB and other benefits to their family members.

Since the benefits programs are considered entitlements (unlike Pell Grants and other Higher Education Act student aid programs), the benefits provided by the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill will not depend on future funding legislation by Congress.

Otterbein has a history of providing veterans with higher education, Stein said. Since the early 1950s, Otterbein has participated in the Army ROTC program with Capital University, in which full-time students enrolled at Otterbein can enroll in the ROTC program at Capital and take classes on both campuses.

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