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# Grant will fund new MBA program for military veterans

Posted [April 17, 2012](#) at 7:18 am by [Tom Scherberger](#)

ST. PETERSBURG, FL (April 17, 2012) – The University of South Florida St. Petersburg College of Business today announced a new program to aid military veterans interested in pursuing Masters degrees in business administration.

The two-year program will be funded through a \$409,299 grant from the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), the world's leading membership organization of graduate business and management schools. The USF St. Petersburg grant was among more than \$7.1 million awarded by the GMAC Management Education for Tomorrow (MET) Fund to 12 organizations worldwide.

The USF St. Petersburg program is called "Leading in a Civilian Context: A Socially Responsible MBA for Returning Veterans." Its two primary goals are to support veteran needs to complete an expedited MBA course and to integrate principles and practices of corporate social responsibility.

Corporate responsibility is a major focus for the USFSP College of Business, which was ranked in the top 100 in the world by the Aspen Institute based on the strength programs in corporate and social responsibility.

Among other things, the grant will fund a course to help participants prepare for the Graduate Management Admission Test used by more than 5,400 graduate and management programs. The program also will include a workshop for veterans about the challenges of returning to higher education and scholarships for MBA Essentials, a course focused on eight core business subjects that help to prepare them for MBA studies.

Students also will take a series of courses on corporate social responsibility, including a newly designed social enterprise course focused on non-profits. Military veterans have shown a keen interest in helping others, particularly other veterans. Tampa Bay alone has approximately 70 such organizations. Program participants will develop their own business plans for starting a non-profit.

Another key part of the program will be support seminars to help participating veterans adjust and navigate through the higher education system. MBA faculty will be trained to ensure they have the tools to support veteran students. And a dedicated advisor and career services counselor will guide the students through their university experience and in their job search.

“We hope the program will be a model that can be replicated across the country wherever there is a significant veteran population,” said Maling Ebrahimpour, Ph.D., dean of the USFSP College of Business.

U.S. Rep. C. W. Bill Young, who represents USF St. Petersburg in Congress and is a champion for veterans, praised USF for its commitment to helping veterans with this innovative educational opportunity. “Providing this new level of support to our veterans who have returned home and want to continue their education is the least we can do to honor them and their service to our nation,” Young said. “Our men and women in uniform have developed tremendous work and leadership skills that will make them invaluable to their classmates and to their future careers in business and industry. I particularly want to commend USF for developing a unique program that will enable these members of our all-volunteer force to continue their public service to our communities through their work for non-profit organizations that will help those in greatest need, including their fellow veterans.”

USF St. Petersburg Regional Chancellor Margaret Sullivan praised the GMAC MET Fund’s decision. “GMAC MET Fund support enables us to provide much needed service to those who put their lives on the line for this country,” she said. “In these tough economic times, our program helps these brave men and women to gain skills they need to continue to be productive members of society.”

The project director is Alison Watkins, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Graduate and Executive Education at the USFSP College of Business. The project manager is Rebecca Harris, Ph.D., a visiting instructor of economics in the USFSP College of Business at USFSP. The principal advisor is Lawrence Braue, Ph.D., director of Veterans’ Affairs at USF Tampa.

The program will begin in June. Veterans interested in participating can e-mail [MBA@usfsp.edu](mailto:MBA@usfsp.edu).

The USFSP College of Business also offers MBA Online, in which students take two online classes a semester. No visits to campus are required. On-campus students can complete a full-time MBA in 12 months or part time in 24 months.

The winning grant proposals announced today were prepared in response to an earlier phase GMAC’s Ideas to Innovation (i2i) Challenge. The proposals sought to answer this question: “What one idea would improve graduate management education?”

The i2i Challenge was created and managed by the GMAC’s MET Fund, a US\$10 million initiative to advance business education around the world.

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