

S.J. Quinney College of Law National Service Academy Seminar

Because of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, it is anticipated that as many as half a million Veterans will matriculate to college campuses in the next decade. The National Service Academy Seminar will design the creation of a National Service Academy Pilot Project at the University of Utah to educate Veterans and others and employ their unique talents and leadership experience. This semester-long seminar will meet once a week to study the needs, related skill sets, and proposed curriculum for educating Veterans for national service. Seminar students will do significant research on successful or failed civilian efforts to provide crisis response, reconstruction and stabilization, economic and social development, health and education services, conflict resolution, political stability, security, or strengthened rule of law capacity at home or abroad. The lessons learned will be used in a shared template for national service academies at other colleges and universities. The seminar is intended for College of Law students and other graduate students who are active-duty service members, military veterans, and others who are interested in Veterans' issues and national service to our country.

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The three indispensable legs of our nation's strategic future are defense, diplomacy, and development. Experience in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and most recently in Haiti highlights the need for greater U.S. diplomatic, technical, and multidisciplinary capacity for pre- and post-conflict sustainable development. Moreover, difficult domestic problems, including joblessness, poverty, violence, and insufficient education and health care, sadly mirror similar needs abroad. Improving the human condition through diplomacy and development around the world (smart power) and at home (smart growth) is critical to the sustainability of our national interests and values.

Every year thousands of military service members detach from active or reserve service. Whether these individuals separate after completing a single tour or retire following a career of service, they represent an extraordinary asset of time, training, and experience, as well as leadership and willingness to serve our country. Unfortunately, this growing pool of Veterans is experiencing unemployment at rates much higher than the rest of the country. Our country desperately needs a structured program that can educate and train our Veterans and provide them with opportunities for a continuum of national service.

The University of Utah's S.J. Quinney College of Law and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences is establishing a National Service Academy Pilot Project to provide graduates with the education, training, and skill sets required to meet the needs of complex operations, service missions, and related tasks at home and abroad. The Academy will recruit Veterans and others as undergraduate and graduate students into the University's colleges and departments. Academy students will take a series of core courses together as they pursue degrees in their respective individual majors.

The National Service Academy Seminar in the 2010 Fall Semester will design how a national service academy deals with Veterans' reintegration, education and training, and employment. This design will cover marketing, recruiting, one-shop counseling and benefits assistance, creating a veteran-friendly campus, developing the curricula for core competency courses, identifying existing courses on campus that are relevant to the Academy's mission, assessing how a National Service Academy certificate should be awarded to graduates, and supporting graduates with service learning, employment counseling, and job placement assistance.