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Liberty Online Academy teams up with National Guard

December 01, 2008 | Ron Brown

Liberty University Online Academy has initiated an innovative educational program that will provide select Army National Guard recruits with a high school degree.

LUOA, which provides online education for grades 3-12, will be providing instruction for recruits who meet the Guard's eligibility requirements but lack sufficient education.

"If you want to enlist in the Guard, you need to have a high school diploma, a GED or be currently enrolled in school," said Jay Spencer, executive associate for online projects at LU.

The recruits must be able to meet high school degree requirements within 10 months of beginning the LUOA program.

Last year, a Guard study identified 1.2 million high school dropouts nationwide. Nearly half of those dropouts meet the Guard's eligibility requirements with the exception of education.

A potential recruit would benefit by having the Guard pay for his or her education. Recruits attending private schools are eligible for \$4,500 in tuition assistance.

LUOA and the Guard are a natural fit in many ways.

"Liberty has always been involved with the military in our Distance Learning Program and with our seminary for chaplain recruiting," Spencer said. "If you look at military chaplains across the board, a high percentage graduated from Liberty."

Talk of a joint venture between the Guard and LUOA began last spring when a Guard chaplain met with Charlie Davidson, a Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary professor.

Harvey Klamm, LUOA superintendent, happened to be walking by when the recruiter asked about the online program. "Once Harvey explained to him about the program," Spencer said, "it dawned on the chaplain that this might be a program that the National Guard might be interested in."

The chaplain mentioned it to his superiors, who contacted LUOA.

Prior to signing the agreement with the National Guard, LUOA (separate from Liberty Christian Academy) grew from 50 students when it opened in fall 2007 to 350 students this fall and anticipates an enrollment of 500 students by spring 2009