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**STOCKTON UNIVERSITY**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR**  
**2020 INITIATIVES PROJECT**

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<b>PROJECT LEADER(S):</b>	David Roessel and Jason Babin
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**PROJECT TITLE:**

Please attach a copy of your original proposal or list your stated objectives and expected outcomes.

From Troy to Ithaca: The Journey Home

A Study Tour Course of Stockton Veteran Students  
Based on GAH 2328 Worlds of Homer

The idea behind this project is twofold. First, it will reconfigure the current GAH Homer course as a seminar for Stockton student veterans. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey have been shown to

by ICHS. David Roessel and Tom Papademetriou, who will assist on part of the trip, will use ARHU travel money and ICHS Professorship funds.

This project has a college-wide impact both internally and externally. Stockton currently offers First Year Seminars and Transfer Seminars with the understanding that these are unique communities and there is value in having them take at least one seminar with their peers. But, while everyone acknowledges that veteran students are also a unique community, Stockton currently has no seminars for veteran students. Stockton veteran students mentioned this often when we asked them about their interest in this—that they would like to have a course which addressed their issues with other students “who get it.”

Integrating veterans into our community in the same way that we have moved to integrate First Years and Transfers will, as those programs have, make our community stronger. Other institutions have such veteran student seminars already, but as Tom O’Donnell can confirm, no one else has a study tour for veterans. By implementing a program such as this, Stockton University can be the first, and “lead the way” for others. The idea of the study tour originated as an integral part of the seminar process. As educators, we know that it is a different experience to read about something in a book, then it is to see something in person. (Roessel can attest to his from his experience with teachers, especially how the on-campus seminars after the trip offer much more depth than the ones that occur before). One might ask whether the seminar could be an on-campus course, with a visit to a battlefield nearby. But compare in the mind two photographs—one of twenty Stockton veteran students sitting in a classroom and one of 20 Stockton veteran students standing at the walls of Troy. The second, we submit, will indeed have college-wide impact. We also think the picture of the Stockton veteran students participating as a group during Internalization week, on Day of Scholarship, and at open houses for veterans will make each of those forums more inclusive and better our community. Some of the potential benefits are outlined in a new program by the VA called “AboutFace”

“When that something bad is a trauma, you can imagine how hard it would be to speak up about it. So imagine the courage it took for a special group of Veterans to tell their stories about their posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to the entire world. In the course of their recovery, these Veterans realized that talking about their experiences helped – and, wanting to help other Veterans begin talking as well, they agreed to put their stories out there. The hope is that other Veterans may relate to these experiences, may recognize themselves in what they see, and know that they are not alone”.

The same benefit is produced in our VETS program. When student veterans speak about their experience, they not only help the general population better understand what is happening to them, they also help other veterans, by showing they are not alone. It really is a benefit for all.

We have attached below a description of the proposed seminar that has been constructed by Roessel and Babin, to show how the study of Homeric poems can be used to highlight themes of importance to veteran students.

From Troy to Ithaca: The Journey Home is an 8-week seminar and 10-day travel tour that will investigate the themes of warfare, duty, and heroism as found in Homer’s works. The group will consist of

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Mycenae, and Olympia, where the Olympics originated. Travelling to these locations is designed to be a transcendent experience for the veterans; to stand on Troy—the site of the 12th century BC war—completes the experience one begins on the page. The program is looking to give that elevated moment to veterans. By reading these texts first and then travelling to the location, the veterans become the narrators of the experience instead of the subjects. They become mediators between witness and warrior. The goal of this seminar is to give back to veterans through great works of literature and travel. Over the course of the program, participants will engage with fellow veterans about their experiences and discuss the ways in which the text illuminates for them the universal experiences of the soldier.



be \$60,000 (\$3000 per student). It will provide transportation, accommodation and some meals. The students will be responsible for lunch and half of the dinners. We have an offer from the OXI Day Foundation, an organization of Greek American veterans, to supply the remaining \$40,000 if Stockton and the 2020 Initiative offers the first \$20,000. The remaining costs for the trip leaders will be provided by the Pappas Center for Hellenic Studies.

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FINANCES: Based on your proposal, please outline below how the award has been spent.		
	Amount	Notes/Comments
Beginning Budget Balance as of:	\$	
Salary Expenditures		





# A Study Tour Course for Stockton Student Veterans









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Over the course of the program, participants will engage with fellow veterans about their experiences and discuss the ways in which the text illuminates for them the universal experiences of the soldier. Upon returning home from the travel tour, participants are asked to reach out into their communities to discuss their experience. This initial program will be the groundwork for a larger and more extensive program, and this first group will later act as delegates for recruiting interested parties the following year.

A veteran's journey home is not as physically long as Odysseus' in the modern age but it is emotionally long as the veteran struggles to adapt to civilian life. In one way the modern age exacerbates the journey home as in only a few hours one can go from a military base in a warzone to the safety of home. The seminar *From Troy to Ithaca: The Journey Home* allows for the veteran to discuss this emotional journey home and the experience of war with fellow soldiers and, through the literary works, with the ancient soldiers. This allows for them to find a support group in people as well as in literature that transcends time.

The following is a list of the themes that will be discussed during the seminar:

## **The Iliad**

Seminar: Mutiny Against Commanders

The *Iliad* begins with the rage of Achilles. The Muse tells us of Achilles' disagreement with his commander, Agamemnon, over the appeasement of Gods and the exchanging of war trophies. Achilles' anger and refusal to behave as a subordinate removes him from his troops and endangers his men. This seminar will examine what it means to be part of a hierarchy, what happens when that hierarc(b)-84(h)-0.6 (y)-1.5 (, )-1.5 (s)-3.45( b)-0.6 (e)-1.7 (c)-4.1 (f17e90.8 (s)-26 t)e5.9 (it)-3.8

Achilles exchanges his homecoming for his potential glory. How is military glory valued in modern American society? Does Achilles' choice compute for the modern soldier?

**Seminar: Humanity vs. Nationalism**

When Achilles kills Hector in Book XXII, Hector's body is dragged back to the Greek camps. The king of the Trojans, Hector's father, Priam, ventures down into the enemy camp to ask for the body of his son back. In Achilles' tent, Priam gets on his knees and weeps. In this moment Achilles and Priam share a profound sense of loss—Achilles has just lost his best friend

Patroclus. Can human loss or connection





## Budget

Veteran students are generally older than the average of the student body, and many have family or other responsibilities. We started with the concept that we should provide the travel expenses to make it accessible for all who have served and are now students at Stockton. The student travel expenses will be \$60,000 (\$3000 per student). \$1200 fo

Day 6: Travel to Pylos and Olympia (overnight in Olympia)

Day 7: Travel to Ithaca, (overnight)

Day 8: Walking tour of Ithaca

Day 9: Travel to Athens

Day 10: Tour of Athens

Day 11: Continued Tour of Athens

Day 12: Depart Home

In addition to Homeric sites, the class will visit, read and talk about: The experience of The Greek War of Independence in the early 1900s The Crusades in Greece The occupation of Greece in World War II and the Holocaust in Greece.

## **Assessment Plan for**

### **A Study Tour Course for Stockton Veteran Students (GAH2328)**

Assessing students' global learning:

1. Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Pre- and Post-study tour/course): to see students' development in the intercultural communication competence.
2. Qualitative evaluation using our Global Awareness Map (see below): students may write their reflections or maybe just videotape daily diary (but the problem is that we need someone to transcribe the diaries later).
3. Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI) (Pre- and Post-course): to see the differences of students' beliefs and values, and hence to better design the study tour.

## **Assessment and Feedback**

The students that took part in the course and trip during the spring 2017 semester have all suggested that the experience they've gained has been beneficial to them personally and

academically. Each student has reported an increase in global understanding and a connection to their fellow students and the campus community.

### **Feedback from students:**

Army Veteran, Freshman, Heath Services Major

*“Worlds of Homer has provided both an opportunity to learn and grow for me and, though I cannot speak for them, my classmates. It has allowed me to draw parallels between people who lived so long ago and now. It has given me the chance to go to the places where those people once stood and experience the people and culture of Greece. As a veteran, I can appreciate a story of a man who returns home from his service to a place that no longer seems familiar. I can understand the anger of losing someone precious. While it may not seem like it, being able to go through this class with others like me, veterans, has afforded me the chance to tackle the wall that is the transition to civilian life with those who can understand what it is that I am going through”.*

Marine Veteran, Freshman, Art History Major

*“Having an opportunity where we were afforded an otherwise rare chance to connect with each other- with that unique sense of esprit-de-corps, living within and standing upon history itself and experiencing a potentially once-in-a-lifetime course of study abroad is invaluable in every sense of the word. The fact is that I know I would have been unable to experience this of my own accord, and being permitted to have such an incredible experience”*

Army National Guard, Sophomore, Business Major

*“The most striking experience to me was seeing the Parthenon in-person. From the hike up the hill I saw ancient stone theaters where people would meet for entertainment or possible public speaking events. Also on the hike I saw beautiful stone statues of Greek gods and marble walkways/stairs. Upon arrival to the Parthenon I was breath taken by the sheer size and craftsmanship of it. I am not a religious man, but for the duration of being near the Parthenon I was converted to believe in ancient Greek gods like Athena; who the Parthenon was dedicated to”.*

Army Veteran, Senior, Environmental Science Major

*“I personally want to thank you for allowing me to discover this beautiful country and the stories who have died for it, their legends showing an insight of how the history of war repeats itself. The class was just the beginning, I befriended people whom I would have never interacted with. The trip ensured that these classmates went from strangers to close friends, knowing we all have a common background displaying comradery. The steps I climbed made me think of those whom walked before me with ideologies that made*

















