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THE WHITMAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

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Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities Fills Important Need

FACT: Improvements in body armor and other technological advances have resulted in an unprecedented number of American soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan surviving major injuries, but returning home disabled. In fact the number of American soldiers injured, as of January 2007, has exceeded 22,800.

FACT: For the veteran returning from war with a disability, it is often the case that the traditional means to 'climb the economic ladder' are closed as a result of their disability. These veterans also face policy and attitudinal barriers to their employment.

FACT: One in five American soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan come from towns with less than 5,000 inhabitants. Therefore, roadblocks to economic productivity for veterans with disabilities affect not only the soldier, but their communities as well. Notably, many of these veterans are young adults, in their early to mid-20s

SOLUTION: The Department of Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises in the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University is launching the "Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities" (EBV), a cutting-edge, experiential training program in entrepreneurship and small business management for veterans identified as disabled resulting from their service in Operation Iraqi Freedom and/or Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Entrepreneurship is a means through which veterans with disabilities can engage the economic engine of their community," says Mike Haynie, assistant professor of entrepreneurship in the Whitman School, and a former Major in the

U. S. Air Force. "Statistics show that people with disabilities are nearly twice as likely to be self-employed as the general population. With this unique program, veterans with disabilities will gain the necessary training and education to develop the skills for small business creation."

EBV will focus on practical training in the tools of new venture creation and growth, reflecting issues unique to disability and public benefits programs. Through experiential workshops and lessons from world-class entrepreneurship faculty, participants in EBV will learn how to write business plans, raise capital, and attract customers, as well as determine what type of marketing is most effective for their business model, whether or not they need to hire employees, and how to take their business venture to the next level.

The inaugural EBV will involve two phases: Phase I will begin July 17, 2007, and will include a self-study curriculum facilitated through online discussion during which participants will develop their business concept. Phase II will begin August 11 in Syracuse, N.Y., where participants will be immersed in a nine-day residency. Applications to the program are due by June 5, 2007. The program, including travel, lodging, and meals, is free to all participating veterans.

"Syracuse University is a natural place to hold a program like EBV," says Melvin T. Stith, dean of the Whitman School, and a former captain in the U.S. Army. "SU has a long history of supporting veterans through education, beginning in 1946 with our former chancellor who opened the doors for veterans returning from World War II. The Whitman School is honored to be able to host such a program in 2007, especially because we recognize that the program is filling a great need among veterans with disabilities, who are eager to participate in their local economies, and in the national economy, and who don't always have doors open to them."

The Department of Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises in the Whitman School is ranked among the top entrepreneurship programs in the nation by *US News & World Report*, and *Entrepreneurship Magazine* and *The Princeton Review*. EBV is offered in collaboration with the Burton Blatt Institute, which seeks to advance the civic, economic, and social participation of persons with disabilities. For more information about EBV, contact (315) 443-8736 or EBVinfo@syr.edu or visit the website at www.whitman.syr.edu/eee/veterans