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QuickTakes!

Stockton Reaches Beyond Atlantic City to Connect with Panama in a Language Training Initiative

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Stockton University has been approved by the Panamanian Ministry of Education to offer training to teachers from Panama as part of the government's Bilingue Initiative.

The University has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Universidad Latina de Panama to expand opportunities for Stockton students to study in Panama.

The Panama Bilingue initiative is a national effort to improve public education and economic development in the country by increasing the English language fluency of its citizens.

The goal of the program is to train as many as 10,000 Panamanian teachers over five years in the latest teaching methods and techniques for classroom success, including the use of technology. Participants will also have the opportunity to expand on their own language skills, as they are immersed in an English-speaking culture.

Stockton President Harvey Kesselman, his wife, Lynne, and Stockton's Interim General Counsel Brian Kowalski visited Panama this month to meet with Panamanian Ministry of Education officials, the Latina University president and other senior government representatives, to introduce Stockton University and present Stockton's Bilingue proposal. They also toured Latina University, the nation's leading private university, and the City of Knowledge, an educational, economic and business development center in Panama.

"This has been an incredibly productive trip that will yield significant results for Stockton," Dr. Kesselman said. "The officials I met with in Panama are very excited about our partnership."

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The partnership will be managed by Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Michelle McDonald and the Director of Stockton's Office of Global Engagement India Karavackas. It will be supported by Stockton's School of Education, ELS Language Center, and Southern Regional Institute and Educational Technology Training Center.

The first group of teachers from Panama is expected to arrive in January and will be housed at the Stockton Seaview Hotel and Golf Club. Stockton will offer two programs and anticipates hosting 24 to 30 participants in each.

The first option is an eight-week program for working teachers to enhance their ESL teaching methodology, pedagogic skills and the use of technology in the classroom.

The second program, for pre-service teachers studying to work as English teachers or elementary school teachers, will be a 16-week program focusing on English language acquisition, ESL classroom methodologies, and technology training.

Participants will attend classes, visit area schools, participate in local social and cultural events, and explore the region more broadly through trips to Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D.C.

This partnership is the latest in a series of projects supported by Stockton's Global Engagement Initiative to prepare students for a multicultural and interdependent world.