

FROM SERVICE TO SUCCESS

*How Donor Support Transforms Military
and Veteran Education at TESU*



For more than 30 years, Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSEG) and the PSEG Foundation have been dedicated partners in advancing Thomas Edison State University's mission, resulting in one of the institution's most significant corporate collaborations.

With a strong commitment to developing a regional workforce and investing in its communities, the New Jersey-based diversified energy company has established a series of initiatives supporting U.S. military veterans and students, ensuring they have the resources necessary to transition successfully to civilian careers. The company has played a crucial role in expanding TESU's Operation Vet Success platform – a virtual resource hub designed to assist veterans and active-duty service members in starting a degree program, accessing essential support services and advancing toward degree completion.

This support was further solidified in 2023 when the PSEG Foundation established the PSEG Military and Veteran Scholarship Fund with a generous \$100,000 gift. Since then, the scholarship fund has supported nearly 100 U.S. service members enrolled in academic programs at TESU, with an emphasis on veteran scholarship support.

According to Craig Smith, director of Military and Veteran Enrollment and Outreach at TESU, 35% of the University's 1,656 veteran students enrolled were prevented from fully utilizing their VA benefits to fund their educational goals.

"Their benefits are often exhausted, expire or have been transferred to a family member," noted Smith. "The PSEG funding effectively eliminates this gap, allowing veterans to continue their degree pursuits."

The \$1,000 in scholarship funding for 2025 graduate Robert Bryant provided



Robert Bryant, B.A. '25, recipient of PSEG Military and Veteran Scholarship Fund support

the momentum he needed to conclude a decades-long degree pursuit.

"As a U.S. Navy veteran and community leader, education has always been my top priority," said Bryant, who earned his B.A. in Liberal Studies from the University in March. "Earning a college degree seemed impossible, but I just kept moving forward. I chose TESU because of its commitment to busy, working adults. I was motivated to finish, but unfortunately, I did not have the available funds, so I had to put my degree pursuit on hold. I remember the day I received an email from TESU announcing the Military and Veteran Scholarship Fund opportunity. It was my chance. I applied for and was awarded the scholarship. With the funding, I've finally earned my degree after a 30-year pursuit."

The TESU Foundation has additional corporate giving partners to support

this initiative. Most recently, NJM established the NJM Military and Veteran Scholarship Fund at TESU.

"The TESU Foundation is grateful to have wonderful partners who believe in the power of education and who share our deep commitment to serving those who serve our country," said Mary F. Heagley, vice president for Advancement and executive director of the TESU Foundation. "This funding creates opportunities for our Veteran students to either begin their educational journey or finish their degrees."

Donor support has not stopped there. TESU Foundation board member and TESU alumnus Rick St. John was inspired to contribute \$10,000 to the effort following the lead of his board colleague Ron Gimbel, who established the Ron Gimbel Military and Veteran Endowed Scholarship Fund in 2021. Gimbel's endowment has grown to over \$100,000 since it was created and will be a consistent and permanent source of funding for military and veteran students.

"The meaningful partnership between TESU and PSEG began more than three decades ago and continues to grow," said Merodie A. Hancock, Ph.D., president of the University. "The PSEG Foundation's support of military and veteran students at TESU demonstrates the company's deep commitment to our nation's service members and their transition to the workforce. It is an honor to have our institution serve as a leading educational provider for the men and women who serve our country, and this partnership has made that possible."



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