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## Yellow Ribbon program backs veteran's education

Furman University

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## Yellow Ribbon program backs veterans' education

Furman has agreed to participate in the new Yellow Ribbon GI Education Enhancement Program, which will allow qualified post-9/11 veterans to attend the university tuition-free.

The Yellow Ribbon program is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, which covers tuition costs for veterans up to the amount of the state's most expensive public university. The new program also allows veterans to attend private institutions tuition-free, with the schools and Veterans Affairs funding equally the costs that exceed the highest in-state public tuition rate.

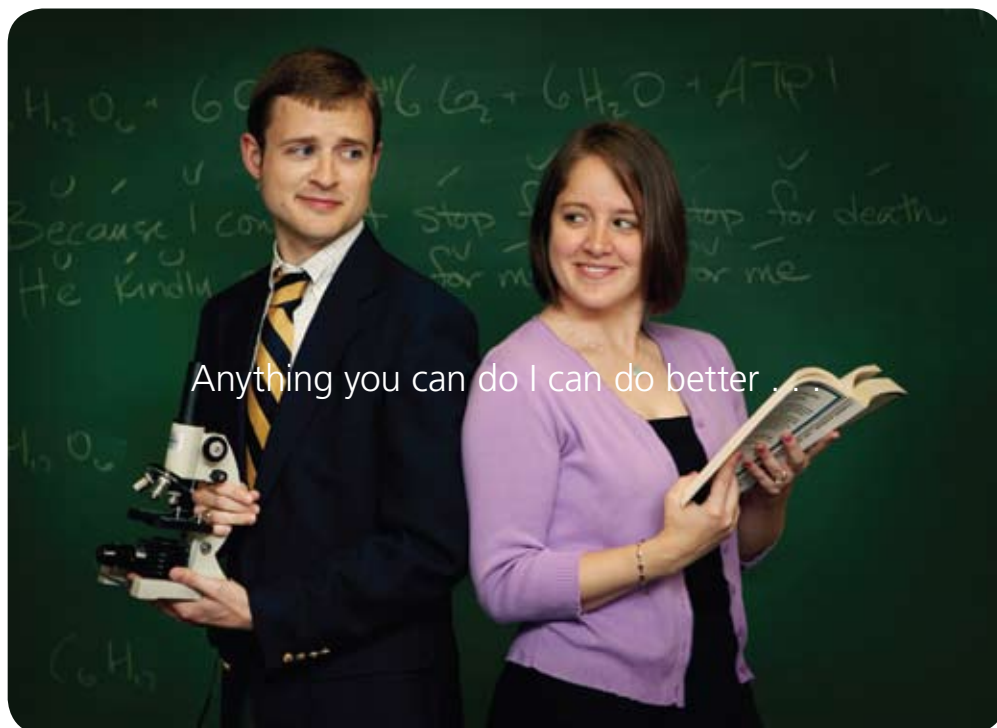
Furman's tuition for the 2009-10 academic year is \$36,296.

"This is a very tangible way for Furman to honor those veterans who have done so much in the service of our country, at great sacrifice to them and their families," says Furman president David Shi.

After meeting the university's requirements for admission, veterans may attend the university on a full-time or part-time basis. The program went into effect at Furman this fall.

To be eligible for the program, the VA says that veterans must have served an aggregate period of active duty after September 10, 2001, of at least 36 months and be honorably discharged from active duty.

Participation in the program is voluntary. Furman is one of the first liberal arts colleges in the nation to join the program.



Anything you can do I can do better.

JEREMY FLEMING

Ryan and Megan Prewitt Koon aren't yet 30, so they may be too young to have even heard of "Annie Get Your Gun" or the song from the musical that serves as the title of this article.

Nor are they interested in one-upmanship (up-personship?), as are Annie Oakley and Frank Butler in the 1950 Broadway show.

But the title seems to apply, in a light-hearted way, given the Koons' recent accomplishments. As long as you realize that there's no competition in their household — just mutual support.

The Koons, 2002 Furman graduates (she in English, he in chemistry), have taught at St. Joseph's Catholic School in Greenville for the last five years. In April, their classroom talents were recognized by the South Carolina Independent School Association when Megan, a high school English teacher, was named the state's "High School Teacher of the Year." Ryan, who teaches middle school science and pre-algebra, was one of two state finalists for "Middle School Teacher of the Year."

SCISA is an association of approximately

100 independent schools serving more than 3,000 teachers and 34,000 students.

Although their goals are the same — to provide their students the best educational experience possible — the Koons admit that their classroom styles differ. And opposites do, after all, attract.

Megan, a Jane Austen wanna-be, is perhaps a bit more free-flowing in her approach. As she told *The Greenville News*, "I hope one of the things the kids appreciate about me is that I'm not afraid to make an absolute fool of myself."

Of course, she's working primarily with 11th- and 12th-graders. Ryan's charges are a bit younger, so he says a more structured environment tends to be more effective.

A self-confessed Trekkie — which likely boosts his popularity among students — he told the *News*, "In middle school, you have to like what you're teaching. But you have to like the kids, too. If you don't like the kids, you're not going to last."

Evidently that's not going to be a problem for either of the Koons.