AFCEA Expands Teacher Education Scholarships
Supporting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Studies

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FAIRFAX, VA – Calling the nation’s declining numbers of science, technology, engineering and math students “one of the greatest challenges facing America,” AFCEA International and the AFCEA Educational Foundation are increasing the number of scholarships available to support those preparing to teach a STEM subject in an American middle or secondary school. The increase from 35 to 50 annual scholarships of $5,000 each comes only one year after AFCEA launched the initiative.

“The latest studies show we are continuing to fall behind while other countries multiply their investments in science, math and technical education,” said Fred Rainbow, Vice President for Education, AFCEA International. “Our schools, labs, industries, military, government agencies – plus the quality of our lives – will suffer if we don’t address this as one of the greatest challenges facing America.”

Among the latest in warning signs, the recently released Science National Assessment of Educational Progress in the U.S. found that 79 percent of high school seniors fall short of science proficiency. President Barack Obama has set a goal of preparing 100,000 new teachers in STEM fields over the next 10 years, saying in his Jan. 25 State of the Union address, “Maintaining our leadership in research and technology is crucial to America’s success. But if we want to win the future – if we want innovation to produce jobs in America and not overseas – then we also have to win the race to educate our kids.”

AFCEA is a long-time supporter of STEM education, offering annual $1,000 grants to STEM teachers to help pay for classroom supplies through its Science Teaching Tools program. Last year, with major support from Booz Allen Hamilton and AFCEA International’s own funds, the number of STEM teaching scholarships grew from two to 35. Two hundred future teachers of STEM subjects applied.

For the 2011-2012 school year – with the added support of Terremark Worldwide and five AFCEA Chapters, 50 scholarships will be available. To be eligible, students must be a U.S. citizen and a sophomore, junior, graduate or credential/licensure student attending an accredited college or university in the U.S. and be pursuing a degree for the purpose of teaching a STEM subject in a U.S. middle or secondary school. Additionally, nominees must be enrolled full time and hold a minimum grade point average of 3.0.

In addition to the $5,000 scholarship, each graduating AFCEA STEM Scholar will receive a $1,000 AFCEA Science Teaching Tool grant each year for three years if the recipient continues to teach a STEM subject. These grants can be used to fund hardware and software, other classroom tools, field trips, STEM-focused clubs and other activities.
Interested candidates, teachers and mentors can get more information and apply online at http://stem.afcea.org. The application deadline is May 1, 2011, and scholarships will be awarded in August.

About AFCEA International and the AFCEA Educational Foundation

AFCEA International, established in 1946, is a non-profit membership association serving the military, government, industry, and academia as an ethical forum for advancing professional knowledge and relationships in the fields of communications, IT, intelligence, and global security. For more information, visit www.afcea.org.

The AFCEA Educational Foundation works closely with the chapters, raises funds, and provides leadership, guidance, and rewards to help motivate more students to become scientists and engineers. The Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing educational incentives, opportunities, and assistance for students and teachers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines (broadly known as STEM). In 2009 the AFCEA Educational Foundation awarded more than $1.5M in scholarships and grants. The AFCEA Educational Foundation has been granting scholarships and grants to college students in STEM disciplines for 30 years. Working with AFCEA local chapters, the Foundation’s Science Teaching Tool program annually reaches 200+ teachers and an estimated 50,000+ students in grades kindergarten through high school.

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