



University offers new fast-track teaching program

By Sarah Rohrs/Times-Herald staff writer

Posted: 04/05/2009 02:02:48 AM PDT

Crystal Slusher took a circuitous route to the front of the classroom, but she's about to get on the fast track through Touro University's new teacher intern prep program.

In June, Slusher will be among the first to enroll in Touro's program which will allow students to teach as interns after just one semester.

The program addresses students' divergent career goals and the growing demand for new teachers, said Karen Kreider Yoder, Touro's College of Education credential programs chairwoman and associate professor of literacy.

Touro is seeing an increase in education students, Yoder said. Because of the economy and widespread lay-offs, more people are returning to school to secure teaching credentials, she said.

The market for good teachers is always open, and the demand is particularly high for math, science and special education teachers, Yoder said. Many of Touro's students are older and entering their second or third careers, she said.

While students complete their internships, they take two more semesters of classes to secure a teaching credential. Many classes are held in the late afternoon and evening.

A Richmond resident, Slusher, 29, said she realized her dream of teaching a few years ago after spending

6 1/2-years in the military before the Iraq War. As she raised her child, she secured her bachelor's degree in business administration through an online university.

Her goal is to teach English to middle school students. "The kids at that age are so open to learning. They don't fully have their minds made up," she said. "At middle school kids are finding out where they are and that's where a good teacher can be really effective."

The teacher prep program was created after Touro took a step back to look at its course offerings, Yoder said. The College of Education opened in 2004.

As an added incentive, Touro offers a

25 percent discount on tuition for students committed to teaching in low-performing and high-need schools after graduation, she said.

To learn more, Touro is holding an informational session 5 p.m. April 28 at Lander Hall, 1310 Johnson Lane, Mare Island. Call 638-5971 for more details.

Contact staff writer Sarah Rohrs at srohrs@thnewsnet.com or (707) 553-6832.