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University of Phoenix is proud to highlight during National Mentoring Month an agreement with the national nonprofit American Corporate Partners (ACP) that provides post 9/11 service members and veteran students with a unique and personalized mentoring experience.

Veterans and active duty military members often encounter unique challenges when transitioning to civilian workforce and seeking employment or career pathways. In fact, a recent University of Phoenix survey of veterans and active duty members found that while most (83%) say the military has provided them with all of the skills that they need to be successful in the workplace, a similar proportion (87%) feel making a successful transition from the military means learning a new set of skills to adapt to civilian workforce culture.

University of Phoenix and ACP have collaborated to help address this challenge and ease the transition from the military service to the civilian workforce by facilitating access for University post 9/11 service member and veteran students to the ACP mentoring program.

"Veteran students face a number of unique challenges after transitioning from military service. Their lives in the military came with a language, culture, and sense of purpose and camaraderie that they come to expect. There is an efficiency and sense of professional competence that is expected of every servicemember, and that does not end with our time in uniform," states Eric Ryan, Marine Corps veteran and senior director of Military Operations at University of Phoenix. "While I firmly believe that a college education is a cornerstone to personal and professional growth, the ACP mentorship program can be the mortar that brings it all together. Building a career and long term professional success is a big task and ACP mentors help their protégés figure out what is next and build a plan to tackle it."

ACP provides transitioning veterans and active duty military spouses a full year, one-to-one, customized, national corporate career counseling to help them determine the right career path toward meaningful employment. Veteran students, called Protégés, are paired with a mentor from one of over 100 of ACP's partner corporations, organizations or institutions. Mentors provide Protégés with career guidance and support in the civilian workforce.

"We are grateful for our long-standing partnership with University of Phoenix, and proud that the Military Affairs team has made it such a priority to ensure that student veterans are on the right path toward successful careers," states ACP Executive Director Colleen Deere. "ACP is a one-of-a kind organization with a proven track record of connecting veterans with meaningful career development opportunities, and we look forward to impacting even more students and alumni from University of Phoenix through this relationship."

Grace Kim successfully completed the program in 2021. Kim, a veteran who transitioned from the Army as an E-5, earned a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration and Management from the University of Phoenix while she was serving, and is now a Service Engineer for Microsoft.

"I signed up with ACP because I wanted to get connected with a person who was a corporate professional working in the corporate world, and it was such a personalized experience," Kim shares. "My mentor was a great fit – he had experience in the field, a really interesting and relevant background, and he had an awareness of challenges. I learned from him about

corporate expectations, and other data I missed while serving my country. He also provided access to a network of professionals in my field, and even now continues to share with me professional opportunities to expand my skills and network."

According to ACP, 1,967 veteran Protégés obtained employment with their ACP mentor's assistance in 2020. And of those who obtained employment during their mentorship, 86% remained in that job for at least one year, and their average starting salary was \$86,000. Further, 98% of ACP's veteran Protégés would recommend the program to a fellow veteran.

"I absolutely would recommend ACP to other student veterans," states Kim. "You just need the initiative and the time assigned. If I could do anything different, I would start earlier – I tell other active duty service members to get the help you need as early as you can to support you in the transition. For active duty members planning to transition out, start a year ahead. ACP mentors can help whether you've decided on a career path or not."