

BUSINESS PLAN

2015 | 2016



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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Student Veterans' Organization at the University of Massachusetts Lowell is to ensure all student veterans are successful on their path to graduating from college; and reach-out to, serve, mentor, and celebrate all student veterans past and present.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Veterans' Organization (SVO) at the University of Massachusetts Lowell is an organization aimed at reaching out to all students of the campus to make the presence of veterans known and celebrated. This organization meets the needs of veterans—whether those needs are academic, personal, moral, or financial. In conjunction with the Veterans' Services Office and Student Veterans' Organization, the University of Massachusetts Lowell provides a safe and comfortable learning environment that empowers student veterans to become tomorrow's leaders.

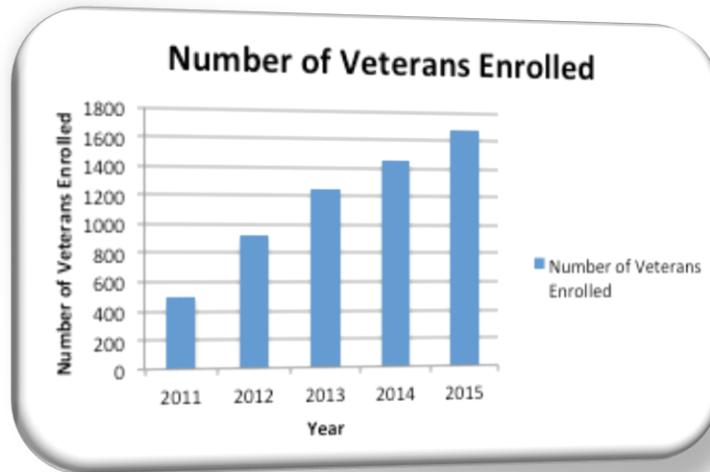
CAMPUS AND SERVICES OVERVIEW



For two years, the University of Massachusetts Lowell has been recognized as one of the “Best for Vets” colleges in the country by Military Times, in addition to being one of the nation’s “Most Veteran Friendly Schools” for six years by US Veterans' Magazine. As a result, the Veterans' Services Office has been the example for schools across the nation to follow regarding the service of veterans and procession of educational benefits. With more than ten percent of the total student population comprised of veterans, the resources necessary to produce excellent service has been graciously provided by the University of Massachusetts Lowell—the latest example being the new Veterans' Services Office and lounge located in the newly-constructed University Crossing building, consisting of five spacious rooms totaling over 1,100 square feet.

Because of the tireless work the Veterans' Services Director and staff deliver, along with unlimited support by faculty, the University of Massachusetts Lowell is, without question, a consideration all veterans should place first when choosing a school to attend.

The Veterans' Services Office is staffed with fifteen work-study students, all of whom are veterans. In addition, three employees—two part time and one full time—process all benefits, one of which is a Vietnam infantry combat veteran. Most importantly, the office is led by Janine Wert, the most dedicated woman any veteran on this campus will meet when it comes to advocating, protecting, and serving veterans. Since 2011, the University of Massachusetts Lowell has had a growth of over 300 percent in its veteran population. The following chart illustrates the number of veterans enrolled at the University of Massachusetts Lowell each year, starting with 2011.



ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Student Veterans' Organization is located in the Veterans' Services Office, suite 354 in the University Crossing building. The organization's origin can be traced back to the Pershing Rifle Drill Team during the post-World War II era, but its modern lineage dates back to 2008. Currently, the SVO is in a stage of growth, focusing on expanding active membership in order to become a prominent presence at the university. Much of the SVO's success can be attributed to its Annual Care Package Drive and Coin Drive that takes place in November during a campus-recognized Veterans' Week. The purpose of the Coin Drive is to raise funds for various causes and charities that directly benefit and assist veterans. Furthermore, new programs are prepared to deploy this year, including peer mentorships and community volunteer opportunities. The organization is developing a strategy that outlines a plan for continuity and consistency, resulting in a lasting tradition and high level of member participation.

PERFORMANCE AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The SVO at UML is one chapter of a larger organization known as The Student Veterans of America (SVA). The SVA is formed by hundreds of other chapters around the country, brings all leaders together once a year in order to facilitate networking, and provides advice on how each chapter can be successful.

It is also one of many student organizations at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. This organization's focus is being directed towards encouraging more veterans to use their educational benefits, as well as meeting the needs of veterans who are using them, whether it is through peer tutoring, or mentoring. More initiative to reach out to all veterans is important in ensuring no one is left behind.

In the past two years, elected board members of the SVO have attended National Conferences hosted by the SVA in order to gain skills necessary to accomplish the goals of the organization. It is imperative that our leaders, as well as potential future leaders, continue to attend these conferences.

STRENGTHS

- Since 2008, the Student Veterans' Organization has grown increasingly larger in size each year with a total of over fifty active members this year.
- The Pershing Rifle Group at the University of Massachusetts Lowell has been, without a doubt, one of the most charitable groups that supports veterans on this campus. This group provides interest-free loans to veterans who are in serious financial crises, and may face leaving school as a result. Countless veterans' education has been saved as a result of this group.
- Over the last five years, many programs and events have been introduced and sustained:
 - In 2009, an annual flag raising ceremony began taking place.
 - In 2011, Veterans' week was established. This is a week that honors all veterans from all branches of the military and provides various daily events in support of honoring those who served.
 - The Annual Military Ball
 - Flag Raising Ceremony
 - Free seminars and workshops
 - Military Appreciation Hockey Game
 - Also in 2011, our first class of veterans was inducted into the University of Massachusetts Lowell Veterans' Hall of Fame, which consisted of three World War II veterans, and the Pershing Rifle Group of Lowell, Massachusetts.
 - In 2012 and 2013, an annual Boston Harbor Cruise took place. During this event, our Student Veterans' Organization change of command ceremony would take place where the President would hand-off our chapter's guidon to the incoming president for the following year.

WEAKNESSES

- There has been difficulty in finding a continuous, fluid, and consistent plan as a whole for the Student Veterans' Organization. Each year, new leaders come into the organization, and each leader/group of leaders has a different agenda than that of the previous leader/group of leaders.
- The Student Veterans' Organization could do more to help the community as a whole, as well as the community's veterans. This year, the organization hopes to hold clothing drives for homeless veterans, as well as volunteer at the homeless veterans' shelter and local charities.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The Student Veterans' Organization would benefit from getting more involved with the community. Previously, the organization conducted a toy drive for underprivileged children in the Lowell community. The organization should participate in more activities such as this, in order to serve others.
- The Student Veterans of America hosts an annual leadership conference every year. Every year since 2009, the organization has sent at least two participants. This year, hosted by Disney, the Student Veterans' Organization plans to send at least six members.
- The University of Massachusetts Lowell also hosts various leadership conferences and retreats. This year's president attended a leadership retreat held on the weekend after school started in order to build connections with other leaders on campus.
- The Student Veterans' Organization has created a source of consistency by developing an account on Google+ that standardizes the documentation and correspondence processes and functions of the organization.

THREATS

- Nationally speaking, an extremely large population of veterans is not using their educational benefits. The fact that so many veterans are allowing their benefits to expire is concerning, and our organization must do whatever is possible to ensure the veterans on our campus are provided everything needed to be successful. "Untapped potential, squandered benefits."

2015 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

1. Goal: Strengthen student veteran camaraderie

- a. **OBJECTIVE:** Increase active membership by twenty-five percent no later than 01 May 2016.
 - i. *Strategy:* Improve correspondence of information to members via social media, email, and newsletters.
- b. **OBJECTIVE:** Establish a mentorship program with at least ten participants (five pairs) no later than 01 December 2015.
 - i. *Strategy:* Pair participants together by major.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Encourage participants to tutor, and support each other through daily communication.
 - iii. *Strategy:* Encourage weekly mentoring sessions.
 - iv. *Strategy:* Evaluate effectiveness of program twice a semester via surveys.
- c. **OBJECTIVE:** Execute three social events by 01 May 2016.
 - i. *Strategy:* Host a graduation dinner for all outgoing senior student veterans.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Partner with local VFW chapter to host a family day for student veterans.
 - iii. *Strategy:* Assist Student Veterans' Services in organizing travel and visit to Washington D.C. during spring break 2016.

2. Goal: Rebuild organizational infrastructure

- a. **OBJECTIVE:** Finalize the 2015-16 Student Veterans' Organization Business Plan by 01 November 2015
 - i. *Strategy:* All drafts reviewed by the organization's elected board, advisor, and director of Student Veterans' Services.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Elected board will meet weekly until the plan is finalized.
- b. **OBJECTIVE:** Establish a continuity plan for each elected board position by 01 December 2015.
 - i. *Strategy:* Review the organization's bylaws to determine responsibilities of each board member.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Update Collegiate Link website to maintain correspondence with the University as a whole.
 - iii. *Strategy:* Ensure newly elected board members have a chance to shadow their predecessors before their term begins.

- c. **OBJECTIVE:** Create one central filing system of all the organization's documentation by 01 November 2015.
 - i. *Strategy:* Utilize the Google Drive account and ensure all elected board members can accurately file appropriate documents.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Maintain consistent contact through the organization's Gmail account with potential partners and members.
 - iii. *Strategy:* Train all incoming elected board members on the appropriate use of the Google Drive and Gmail account.
 - iv. *Strategy:* Establish a guiding document on how filing is to be done.

3. Goal: Support a plan to acknowledge all veterans in the community

- a. **OBJECTIVE:** Execute, host, and assist in the three main events during Veterans' Week on campus (09 Nov 2015 – 13 Nov 2015.).
 - i. *Strategy:* Execute the annual Veterans' Week Coin Drive by ensuring accountability of donations made on a daily basis.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Assist the Veterans' Services Staff in the set-up and breakdown of the annual Military Ball held at the University of Massachusetts Lowell's Inn and Conference Center.
 - iii. *Strategy:* Provide a flag detail comprised of student veterans who are active members of the organization for the annual Flag Raising Ceremony.
- b. **OBJECTIVE:** Assist the Veterans' Services Staff in promoting the SALUTE national honors society.
 - i. *Strategy:* Ensure that applications for SALUTE are present at all club meetings, and made part of the meetings' agenda.
 - ii. *Strategy:* Regularly post the SALUTE application on the organization's social media webpage and collegiate link.
 - iii. *Strategy:* Participate in the set-up and breakdown of the annual SALUTE induction and graduation ceremony held at the University of Massachusetts Lowell's Inn and Conference Center.

SVO FY 2016 Annual Budget

Expenses

Line Item	Description	Budget	Actual	Difference (\$)	Difference (%)
SVA National Conf	Lodging and Airfare for 6	\$3,420.00	\$2,372.00	\$1,048.00	30.64%
Intramural Team	Fees for semester	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	50.00%
FY 15 overdraft	Expense from last FY	\$174.48	\$174.48	\$0.00	0.00%
Fundraising Supplies	Paracord Bracelets, etc.	\$150.00	\$151.54	-\$1.54	-1.03%
End of Year Bash	Graduation Dinner	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	100.00%
Food for Meetings	Pizza/Drinks	\$400.00	\$175.00	\$225.00	56.25%
Family Day	VFW Function Hall	\$550.00	\$0.00	\$550.00	100.00%
T-Shirts	New Design	\$600.00	\$533.00	\$67.00	11.17%
Bowling Night	Lane rental for 15	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	100.00%
Semester Total		Projected			
		\$5,964.48	\$3,416.02	\$2,548.46	42.73%

Revenues

Line Item	Description	Budget	Actual	Difference (\$)	Difference (%)
FY 15 discretionary	Rollover	\$1,028.93	\$1,028.93	\$0.00	0.00%
FY 16 SGA Funds	Annual	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	0.00%
SVA Chapter Grant Fall 15	Business Plan Competition	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	100.00%
SGA Travel Grant	Additional Fund Grant	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	100.00%
Fundraising	Year Total	\$1,000.00	\$578.00	\$422.00	42.20%
Semester Total		Projected	Actual		
		\$7,028.93	\$3,106.93	\$3,922.00	55.80%

Balance

Balance		Projected	Actual		
		\$1,064.45	-\$309.09	-\$1,373.54	-77.50%

CONTINUITY

The organization strictly follows the bylaws drafted by the elected board and approved by the members of the organization. The bylaws may be found on the SVO's Google docs drive and can also be requested at any time by any member through contacting an elected official or advisor.

To be successful, the organization must conduct meetings as often as the bylaws, elected officials, and active members deem appropriate. The meetings must not stray from its purpose in order to use the time of all participants efficiently. The organization must also be diligent in participating in campus wide events such as Fall Festival, Spring Carnival, and community service.

The Student Veterans' Organization will store and maintain important documentation in the Google Drive account. Folders accommodating all necessary operations of the organization are present in this drive. All general correspondence with the active members regarding the time and location of meetings, social events, and service/volunteering events will occur through the Gmail account. Active member email addresses are stored in this account, and upon graduation, will be moved to an alumni group where they will continue to receive the organization's correspondence. Upon individual request, the email addresses of both active members and alumni will be deleted from the account.

When a new group of members is elected, all members of the newly elected board will shadow their predecessor before their term begins. During this period, a general overview on what is necessary to be successful in each position will be passed down. Additionally, the Google Drive will be reviewed and all new elected officials will know how to use, navigate, and access past documentation. This will allow the new board to smoothly transition into taking control of the organization, creating consistency from year to year.

