Salem State University
Student Veteran Organization

~ 2013 | 2014 ~

Business Plan

Prepared by:
Patrick Cornell
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Student Veteran Organization (SVO) at Salem State University (SSU) is to assist military personnel and their families in achieving their educational goals and to provide assistance through the transition process and beyond. The group strives to provide a successful and memorable college experience by providing social, academic, and career planning events and services.

BACKGROUND

The Student Veteran Organization was originally formed in 2009 by a group of Army veterans and R.O.T.C. Cadets under the name of the “Military Support Group”. Unfortunately, the original members soon graduated and commissioned into the Army and the group lost momentum and fizzled out. In 2012, a handful of passionate veterans rekindled the flame and the new Student Veteran Organization was born. In the few months since our re-launch we have grown to over 15 active members and have served as the voice of the student veterans on the Salem State University campus advocating for support, mentoring, and academic programs and policies.

Student veterans on the Salem State University campus have been recognized as natural leaders, as many veterans have taken lead roles in student government, Greek life, and other student life groups.

The SVO has a bright future ahead of it, and through partnerships with local resources, the organization is excited to move forward with future plans, programs, and initiatives that will overall support our mission of supporting Salem State student veterans.

MSG: 2009-2011  
SVO: 2012-Current
KEY POINTS:

- 15 Active members representing over 300 student veterans and family members
- Monthly meetings, events, and social outings
- Specialized career services, Veterans-only orientation, and comprehensive peer mentoring program (Second Mission)
- Advocacy for student veterans on the SSU campus

UNIVERSITY BACKGROUND

Salem State University, located just 15 miles north of Boston, is one of the largest state universities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and an important partner in the economic, cultural and intellectual vitality of the greater north-of-Boston region. Situated in the historic seacoast town of Salem, Massachusetts, Salem State provides a diverse community of learners a high quality, student-centered education; one that prepares them to contribute responsibly and creatively to a global society.

CAMPUS CULTURE

- Military community comprised of over 300 students.
- Total body population of over 9,000.
- Student Veterans representing all branches of the military.
- 251 Undergraduate level veterans.
- 29 Graduate level veterans.
- Veteran community closely resembles traditional students for top major choices
  - Business
  - Nursing
  - Psychology
  - Criminal Justice
- Full-time Director of Veterans Affairs
- Full-time Benefits Coordinator
- Three VA Work Study students
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

*Provide a comfortable, positive, and supportive environment to veterans, current military members, military family members, ROTC Cadets, and military supporters.*

**Objective 1.a:** Establish a Veterans Resource Center/Lounge by Fall 2014.

*Strategy i:* Identify potential locations through The Office of Veterans Affairs.

*Strategy ii:* Create list of needed/necessary items for Resource Center/Lounge; present findings to University officials.

*Strategy iii:* Consolidate information onto written proposal and present findings to the university.

**Objective 1.b:** Celebrate and recognize service, achievements, and promote camaraderie through semi-annual parties and monthly events.

*Strategy i:* Hold a Holiday Party every December to celebrate the years end and welcome new student veterans to the SSU community.

*Strategy ii:* Sponsor a formal event every May to celebrate graduating veterans and newly commissioned military Officers.

*Strategy III:* Provide monthly social outings and weekend events for SVO members and interested students.
Serve as a voice for military veterans, current service members, and their families on the SSU campus

**Objective 2.a:** Create a Veteran and Military Task Force by Fall 2013.

*Strategy i:* Identify appropriate faculty members to serve on the committee.

*Strategy ii:* Identify shortfalls and offer solutions for veteran programs based on best practices found in the ACE Veteran-Friendly Toolkit.

**Objective 2.b:** Meet with University President bi-annually to provide an update on the challenges, needs, and successes of the veteran/military student population.

*Strategy i:* Identify shortfalls and offer solutions for veteran programs based on best practices found in the ACE Veteran-Friendly Toolkit.

*Strategy ii:* Reinforce programs and resources that are supporting veterans on campus.

**Objective 2.c:** Represent the military community during monthly Student Government Association meetings.

*Strategy i:* Design and implement a survey to better understand the needs/challenges of the military community on campus.

*Strategy ii:* Present the findings to the Student Government Association at least once every semester.

Generate awareness of veterans and current service members on the SSU campus

**Objective 3.a:** Deliver one campus event that will generate awareness of the veteran/military community each semester.

*Strategy i:* Negotiate with the University for the creation of an official “Military Awareness” month during the month of November.

*Strategy ii:* Invite guest speakers who specialize in helping faculty members and students understand the special hardships and challenges of military life.
**Objective 3.b:** Perform one service project each semester that will update locations on campus to represent the military contributions made by the SSU community.

*Strategy i:* Update Veterans Hall with military décor, plaques, and branch of service emblems/flags in order to reflect the multipurpose room’s official title.

*Strategy ii:* Create a Veterans Hall of Fame to recognize faculty members, community leaders, and students who have demonstrated great service to the military community on the SSU campus.

### BUDGET

#### SSU Student Veteran Organization - 2013-2014

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**BALANCE**

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