



2015-2019 Review

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SVA National President and CEO Jared Lyon and Vice President of Government Affairs Lauren Augustine, center, stand with the 2019 class of Leadership Fellows in front of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on September 10, 2019.

2015–2019: Formative Years for Inspiring Tomorrow’s Leaders

Dear Friends,

Since our founding in 2008, more than one million veterans have returned home to pursue a postsecondary degree or certificate using VA education benefits. To meet this need, SVA’s presence at the local and national levels has grown to include more than 1,500 chapters, private and nonprofit partners, and an expanding list of impactful programs and services for student veterans, military-connected students, survivors, caregivers, and others.

In reviewing the 2015-2019 period for SVA, it is abundantly clear how many crucial developments occurred over this time, which is why we felt it more appropriate to recap these years in one report rather than five separate ones. These were formative years for SVA, which began as only a handful of student veterans connecting over social media fifteen years ago.

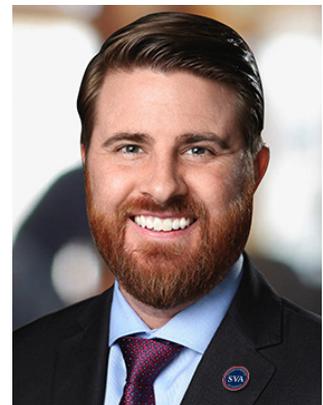
SVA played a key role in a historic moment as Congress passed the Forever GI Bill in 2017, improving the lives of millions of veterans not only in the moment but for generations to come. Though bills are living promises, and may require revisions to endure, we could not be happier that we are finally able to say that the GI Bill is here to stay forever, thanks to our efforts, our partners’ efforts, and our community’s support.

SVA’s growth from 2015 to 2019 also reflects the solidification of our annual programs and events, including Washington Week, Regional Summits, the Leadership Institute, and our annual National Conference. The thread woven throughout all of these programs is meeting people where they are, forging new paths and relationships along the way.

In building this report, we’ve enjoyed reviewing how far we’ve come and being reminded of all those who have helped, including our esteemed Board of Directors, our dedicated partners, everyday champions across the country, and, most importantly, our student veterans and military-connected students who make all of our efforts worthwhile.

Jared Lyon, MPA

National President and CEO



Mission

Act as a catalyst for student veteran success by providing resources, network support and advocacy to, through, and beyond higher education.

Vision

Empowering student veterans to lead and live their best lives.

Who are student veterans?

More than 1 million Americans are currently receiving GI Bill benefits and 754,000 of them are on campuses with an SVA Chapter. Being a veteran is an experience, not an identity, and SVA seeks to foster a spirit of inclusion at every campus we engage with. This also includes welcoming military-connected students to join our community, including but not limited to military spouses, dependents, caregivers, ROTC students, supporters, and allies. We strive to be one of most inclusive organizations in America.

- Student veterans have delayed their goals in higher education and career to first serve all Americans.
- Two-thirds of student veterans are **first-generation graduates**, so graduating from college is often decades in the making for their families.
- **Women veterans are the fastest-growing population in the veteran space** and women student veterans make up more than half of our campus chapter leaders nationwide.
- Compared to traditional students, student veterans are **likely to be older, married, have children, have a disability, be working full- or part-time**. Often, they will identify with more than one of these scenarios.

80% are between the ages 24-35

31% are women

46% have children

19% are single parents

52% are married

90% were enlisted

74% work full- or part-time

96% voted in the 2020 election

Five Years of Growth

May 27, 2015

Raytheon (now Raytheon Technologies) expands its partnership with a \$5 million commitment to SVA



October 2015

SVA opens its new National Headquarters in Washington, DC

January 4, 2016

Jared Lyon is appointed National President and CEO

February 27, 2017

SVA publishes the National Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST)

August 16, 2017

Thanks to advocacy by SVA and its allies, Congress passes the Forever GI Bill



SVA's Vice President of Government Affairs Lauren Augustine speaks at a press conference following the Senate's unanimous vote to pass the Forever GI Bill.

June 22, 2019

SVA celebrates the 75th anniversary of the GI Bill

SVA National President and CEO Jared Lyon with the family of Don A. Balfour, the first GI Bill recipient in 1944, at George Washington University.



Programs & Services

SVA acts as a catalyst for student veteran success by providing resources, network support and advocacy to, through, and beyond higher education. Our Programs and Events team supports that mission by providing an educational experience that goes far beyond the classroom. Every year SVA's events convene student veterans and serve our more than 1,500 chapters nationwide, delivering chapter-centric tools and training.

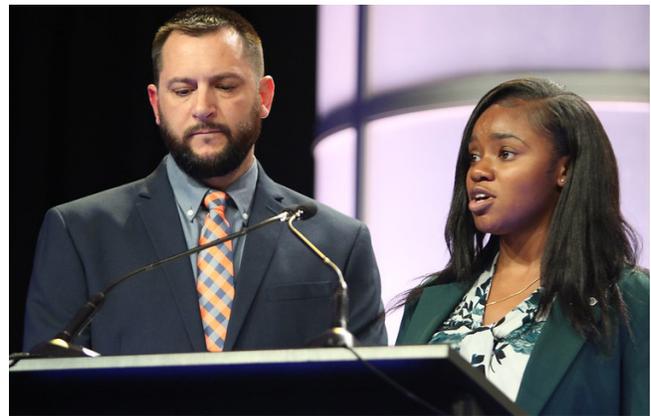
**Learn more at
studentveterans.org/programs.**

National Conference

SVA kicks off every year with its National Conference, or “NatCon,” which is the largest annual gathering of student veterans in the country. From daily general sessions featuring compelling speakers, to breakout sessions focused on dozens of topics, to the SVA Honors ceremony recognizing outstanding student veterans, mentors, chapters, and partners from the year prior, NatCon embodies SVA’s goal of empowering student veterans.



Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden speaks at NatCon 2015 with Vice President Joe Biden and Student Veteran of the Year Sherry Shi.



Student Veteran of the Year Finalists Kyle Venable (Auburn University) and Chanel Powell (University of Buffalo) speak on the main stage at NatCon 2019.

Year	Location	Student Veteran of the Year	Chapter of the Year	Advisor of the Year
2015	San Antonio	Sherry Shi, Stony Brook University	Marywood University	N/A
2016	Orlando, Fla.	Brian Adam Jones, Columbia University	University of Houston	Greg Scargall, Santa Fe Community College
2017	Anaheim, Calif.	Kate Tillotson, University of Tulsa	Washington University in St. Louis	Ross Bryant, University of Nevada Las Vegas
2018	San Antonio	Chris Rolph, Queens University of Charlotte	Western Oregon University	Rosalynn Johnson, UWT
2019	Orlando, Fla.	Alexandria Sawin, University of Nevada Las Vegas	Louisiana State University	Jeremiah Gunderson, University of Texas at Austin

Washington Week

Each March, SVA’s policy and advocacy priorities are formally published through a series of events around Capitol Hill, the White House, and executive branch departments and agencies. Between testimony, a higher education policy panel, and happy hours with the Government Affairs team, student veterans in attendance get a glimpse into legislative intentions and can share their own feedback with the team. SVA remains a credible and reliable go-to resource for Capitol Hill and for federal agencies because of our organization’s interaction with student veterans in higher education.



Student veterans Morgan Torres (Purdue University) and Joshua Johnson (Colorado State University) at Washington Week 2019.

Regional Summits

Throughout the summer, SVA’s Regional Summits take place across the country for all chapters, new and established, to come together and explore sessions that will help grow chapter success strategically. These Summits offer the tools, techniques, and tactics for greatest impact throughout the academic year. The topics covered include finances, communication, disability services, recruitment, professional development, leadership workshops, and more.

Year	Location(s)	Attendees Trained
2015	Tucson, San Francisco, Charlotte, New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, Orlando, Denver, Indianapolis	390
2016	Providence, Atlanta, Houston, Washington, D.C., Seattle, San Diego, St. Louis, Phoenix, Chicago	121
2017	Online	234
2019	Washington, DC, Boston, Seattle, New York	318

The Leadership Institute

Each fall, the top performing student veterans and military connect students from around the country are invited to the Leadership Institute, where they complete an immersive experience exploring their own individual success. Upon graduating, attendees become part of an exclusive class of Leadership Fellows. In 2018, SVA moved the Leadership Institute permanently to Washington, D.C., to facilitate a closer connection to its National Headquarters and lawmakers and government leaders.

The Institute is designed to equip tomorrow’s leaders to serve and create a lasting community of impact. After student veterans have been selected from a rigorous application process, the program guides them through the practice of understanding their own core values in order to create a personal leadership vision and action plan, with the end result being the development of their personal leadership ethos—that “force” that guides beliefs, behaviors, and actions. Participants graduate from the program having developed a tight-knit community of fellow chapter leaders and mentors to support their continued growth.

Year	Location	Leadership Fellows Trained
2015	Savannah, Georgia	85
2016	Dallas, Texas	94
2017	Dallas, Texas	95
2018	Washington, D.C.	100
2019	Washington, D.C.	121



The 2019 Class of Leadership Fellows and their mentors at their graduation ceremony at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC.

Campus Liaisons

Campus Liaisons are chapter leadership positions focused in one of three key areas in support of student veterans and military-connected students: policy, disability services, and career services. SVA's National Headquarters supports students in each of these roles with training, outreach materials, connections to partners and decision makers, and other resources.

- **The Policy Liaison Program (PLP)** is a community providing educational resources for student veterans on advocacy and policy best practices at the campus, local, state, and national levels.
- **Disability Service Liaisons (DSLs)** are student veterans who help their peers connect to underutilized campus resources.
- **Career Services Liaison (CSLs)** are responsible for the engagement and development of a chapter's relationship with the Career Services office on campus.

Scholarships

Every year, SVA works with its partners to provide scholarships to deserving student veterans and military connected students. Since 2008, SVA has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships.

VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship

In keeping with its shared commitment to student veterans' success, every year the VFW teams up with SVA to host the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program, providing an opportunity for 10 exemplary VFW members who are student veterans to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and in their community. During 2015- 2019, we trained 50 VFW-SVA Fellows.



Student Veterans at Arkansas State University celebrate the opening of their renovated campus veteran center funded by the Vet Center Initiative.

Vet Center Initiative

SVA and The Home Depot Foundation launched the Vet Center Initiative in 2014 to award SVA Chapters with grants to help build or renovate dedicated on-campus veteran centers. By the end of 2016, 111 campuses in 40 states were awarded more than \$970,000 benefiting more than 53,600 student veterans.

**Research**

Student Veterans of America works to inform the public, stakeholders, policy makers, and others on the concerns of student veteran and military connected students through empirical research. By investing in research, SVA is filling the void in data collection showcasing student veteran success. We also use surveys and program evaluations for data collection and improving programs. SVA's research team conducts an annual SVA Census to better assess the academic performance and needs of student veterans, military connected students, and their families.

**Learn more and
explore our research at
studentveterans.org/research.**

Million Records Project

SVA, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Student Clearinghouse, published the Million Records Project in 2014. The historic research initiative provided near real-time data that policymakers, service providers, institutions of higher learning, and the public have used to support student veterans. Findings included the rate at which student veterans complete college compared with traditional students, how long it takes them to complete higher education, the highest degree attained, and their degree fields.

Postsecondary Degrees

The Million Records Project's initial results showed strong postsecondary outcomes for the current generation of student veterans. **A majority (51.7 percent) of student veterans in this sample earned a postsecondary degree or certificate.** At both the two- and four-year degree level, the majority of veterans who graduate do so within four and five years respectively—a rate similar to the traditional student population.

Public vs. Private

The majority of student veterans enroll in public institutions (79.2 percent), with the remaining population enrolling in smaller but fairly even percentages from private nonprofit (10.7 percent) and private for-profit (10.1 percent) schools. The large majority of student veterans who graduate do so from public schools (71.7 percent), with the remaining population graduating in much smaller but fairly even percentages from private nonprofit (15.5 percent) and proprietary (12.9 percent) schools. Of those who completed, approximately 9 out of 10 (89.7 percent) initially earned degrees at the associate level or higher.

Continuing Education

Many student veterans achieve higher levels of education: **31.3 percent of the sample who initially earned a vocational certificate, 35.8 percent of the sample who initially earned an associate, and 20.8 percent of the sample who initially earned a bachelor's degree went on to also earn a degree at a higher level.** Results also indicate that a high percentage of student veterans are pursuing degrees in business, public service, health, and STEM fields.

NVEST

The National Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST) Project was a research partnership between Student Veterans of America, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse. Published in 2017, it was the first study to look at Post-9/11 GI Bill usage and degree completion, building on the foundation of the Million Records Project. The report examined the first 850,000 users of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and their enrollment and degree completion data through 2015.

- Student veterans were found to have a **72% success rate** in higher education.
- The most common degree fields for veterans are **Business** (27%) and **Health & STEM** (24%).
- Student veterans are persistent completers. Even though they may withdraw from school prior to the end of term, **overwhelmingly they return and complete the academic degrees.**
- Between 2009 and 2015, the Post-9/11 GI Bill helped **student veterans earn more than 453,000 degrees and certificates.**



SVA's Vice President of Research Dr. Chris Cate presents findings from NVEST on Capitol Hill.

“The information from this important study highlights the fact that the GI Bill continues to be a life changing benefit for veterans as they transition into the workforce. It shows that Veterans are not only capable, but that many of them truly excel in an academic environment.”

**CURTIS L. COY,
FORMER VA DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY
FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

SVA Census

The SVA Census is an annual survey focused on collecting demographic data on student veterans and SVA alumni for use in discussions with policy makers, partners, and the public. The SVA Census is conducted via a web survey sent out to SVA's network, SVA chapters, veteran points of contact on college campuses (e.g. veteran certifying officials), and social media channels. The survey is in the field during October of every year.

Academic Success

According to the 2019 SVA Census Survey, **nearly two-in-three student veterans were enrolled as full-time students.** On average, they took on 13-credit hours per semester. Four-in-five student veterans attend 4-year public and private institutions, and their cumulative average GPA is 3.39, on a 4.0 scale.

Nearly two-thirds of student veterans are first generation college students.

Education Debt

Approximately one-in-four student veterans use some form of GI Bill education benefit. A large number of veterans also file for federal student aid; seven-in-ten student veterans completed and submitted a 2018-2019 FAFSA. Not all student veterans graduate debt free, however. Of the individuals that graduated with educational debt, one-in-three graduate with debt ranging from \$1 - \$29,999.

Military Specialty and Academic Concentration

One-in-four students veterans stated they enrolled in college or university classes in order to change their career, while one-in-five wanted to be more competitive in the job market.

Job promotion and keeping their knowledge and skills fresh ranked among the lowest primary motivations for enrolling in classes. As with their academic concentrations, student veterans are often employed in fields that are unrelated to their military specialization

Disabilities

Nearly two-in-three student veterans state they have a VA disability rating. Of the student veterans who shared that their disability impacts their academics, nearly one-in-four say the impact is little.

Government Affairs

The mission of SVA's Government Affairs Department is to shape policy proposals and regulations on behalf of veterans in pursuit of career advancement through higher education. Our team works closely with Congress and the federal government to promote forward-looking policies that will help veterans acquire the education they need to thrive in the modern workforce.

**Learn more at
[studentveterans.org/
government-affairs](https://studentveterans.org/government-affairs)**

The Forever GI Bill

H.R. 3218: Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017

This bill enacted the largest expansion of GI Bill benefits in history with 34 broad-ranging provisions to improve the lives and educational experiences of student veterans and military connected students. It designated almost \$1 billion for STEM scholarships and removed the benefit's expiration date.

- Removed the 15-year limitation on veterans' use of their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit
- Restored lost GI Bill benefits entitlement due to school closures
- Expanded benefit coverage for Purple Heart recipients
- Expanded Yellow Ribbon coverage to Fry Scholarship and Purple Heart recipients
- Increased Ch. 35, Dependents Education Assistance payments
- Created the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship program
- Created the VET TEC pilot program
- Expanded popular VetSuccess program
- Increased eligibility for National Guard and Reservists
- Mandated training for School Certifying Officials who administer veterans' education benefits at institutions

Improving Mental Health Care

H.R.203: Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act of 2015

This bill required an annual independent third-party audit of VA's mental healthcare services. It also established a three-year pilot program to repay student loans for psychiatrists that agree to work for VA for at least two years, and a three-year pilot program to aid transitioning veterans in acquiring mental health services. Finally, it authorized VA to collaborate with nonprofit mental health organizations to improve mental healthcare efficiencies.



SVA's Chief of Staff Will Hubbard speaks at a press conference following the Senate's passage of the Forever GI Bill.

Adding Flexibility and Correcting Issues

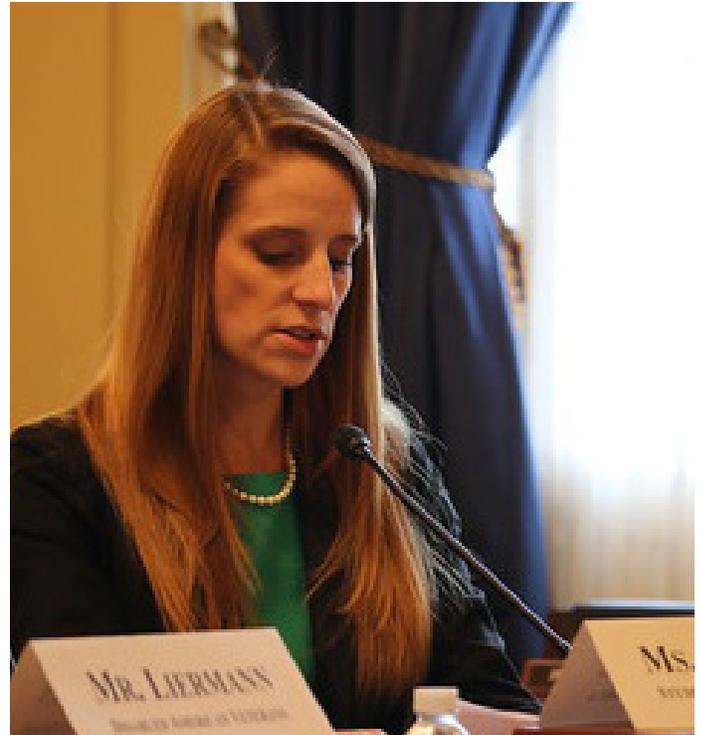
S.2248: Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018

This bill authorized new flexibilities for servicemembers and surviving spouses to determine their legal residence for tax purposes. It also enacted several “quality-of-life” provisions for student veterans, such as prohibiting schools for charging late fees or denying them access to school facilities due to unpaid bills due to VA delays, and allowing students to use GI Bill funds for independent study across all GI Bill programs, not just Post-9/11 programs.

The bill required VA to provide electronic proof of income for those student veterans receiving a housing stipend, which helps the student veterans when looking for housing. Further, it required VA to send standardized debt notices to veterans and allow them to opt into electronic or physical notification preferences. Finally, it also suspended entitlement charges for activated Reservists using Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E).



SVA's National President and CEO Jared Lyon testifies before the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs on March 7, 2019.



SVA's Vice President of Government Affairs Lauren Augustine testifies at a 2019 budget hearing for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Ethics Reform

S.3479: Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2018

This bill prohibited any VA or State Approving Agency employee from receiving any “wage, salary, dividend, profit, gift, or service” from any for-profit educational institution. It established a penalty for noncompliance as immediate funding suspension.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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J. Ford Huffman, BS

Board Member

*Independent News-Media Strategist
Washington, D. C.*

2015

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2015**ASSETS**

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,805,845
Grants and Contributions Receivable	\$4,453,986
Investments	\$296,397
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$124,085
Property and Equipment, Net	\$531,662

2015 Total Assets	\$7,211,975
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LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$160,499
Deferred Revenue	\$164,413
Deferred Rent	\$356,181

2015 Total Liabilities	\$681,093
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NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	(\$449,584)
With Donor Restrictions	\$6,980,466

Total Net Assets	\$7,211,975
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2016

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2016

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$699,842
Grants and Contributions Receivable	\$3,021,667
Investments	\$301,410
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$160,330
Property and Equipment, Net	\$452,518

2016 Total Assets	\$4,635,767
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LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$53,507
Deferred Revenue	\$113,925
Deferred Rent	\$413,408

2016 Total Liabilities	\$580,840
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NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	(\$620,298)
With Donor Restrictions	\$4,675,225

Total Net Assets	\$4,635,767
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2017

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2017

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,654,055
Grants and Contributions Receivable	\$3,389,867
Investments	\$302,529
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$182,976
Property and Equipment, Net	\$366,690

2017 Total Assets	\$5,896,117
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LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$58,210
Deferred Revenue	\$219,196
Deferred Rent	\$384,794

2017 Total Liabilities	\$662,200
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NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	(\$398,407)
With Donor Restrictions	\$5,632,324

Total Net Assets	\$5,233,917
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2018

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2018

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$2,587,992
Grants and Contributions Receivable	\$1,574,559
Accounts Receivable, Net	\$27,075
Investments	\$303,963
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$416,449
Property and Equipment, Net	\$320,675

2018 Total Assets	\$5,230,713
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LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$84,723
Deferred Revenue	\$736,015
Deferred Rent	\$348,973

2018 Total Liabilities	\$1,169,711
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NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	(\$175,380)
With Donor Restrictions	\$4,236,382

Total Net Assets	\$4,061,002
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2019

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2019

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,422,075
Grants and Contributions Receivable	\$855,419
Accounts Receivable, Net	\$61,904
Investments	\$306,651
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	\$632,966
Property and Equipment, Net	\$309,995

2019 Total Assets	\$3,589,010
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LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$44,366
Deferred Revenue	\$676,780
Deferred Rent	\$305,728

2019 Total Liabilities	\$1,026,874
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NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	(\$70,483)
With Donor Restrictions	\$2,491,653

Total Net Assets	\$2,562,136
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For more information, visit studentveterans.org/about/financials

SVA and our student-veteran-led chapters have convened a diverse network of corporations, foundations, and nonprofits that support our shared mission to act as a catalyst for student veteran success by providing resources, network support and advocacy to, through, and beyond higher education. This collaborative effort has enabled our chapter leaders to build inclusive communities on their college campuses that empower student veterans to achieve their greatest potential. We thank our partners for their many years of dedication in support of student veterans, military-affiliated students, their families, and allies.

Champions



Partners

*Rockwell
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Through a network of more than 1,500 on-campus chapters, SVA has been inspiring tomorrow's leaders since 2008 to ensure they achieve their greatest potential.

STUDENTVETERANS.ORG

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