



Student Veterans of America

Spring '24 Newsletter

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NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“As another term end approaches, it’s essential to take a moment to recognize and celebrate your academic achievements.

Transitioning from military service to academia is no small feat; it requires dedication, resilience, and a commitment to personal growth. Your journey to the classroom is a testament to your determination and adaptability. By pursuing education, you not only expand your knowledge and skills but also set an inspiring example for others – perhaps your children or those veterans who will follow you out of uniform.

To those of you completing your studies in just a few short weeks, celebrating your graduation is not just about receiving a diploma; it’s about honoring yet another sacrifice you’ve made and the challenges you’ve overcome. It’s a moment to reflect on your growth, both academically and personally, and to celebrate the future that lies ahead. So, as you don your cap and gown, remember not to downplay your achievements. You’ve earned this moment, and your success deserves to be celebrated. Then, after you’ve settled into your next journey, find a local SVA chapter to support through mentorship and guidance as proud alumni. Congratulations, and may your future be filled with continued success and fulfillment.”

- Jared S. Lyon, National President & CEO



The quarterly newsletter is a place to learn about the behind-the-scenes work of SVA Headquarters, review SVA’s most recent programming, shine a light on stellar people and chapters in the community, and remain closely informed on the months ahead. As always, SVA is here to see student veterans to, through, and beyond their higher education journey.

WASHINGTON WEEK RECAP

Student Veterans of America (SVA) hosted its annual Washington Week program in the heart of our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., during the first week of March. SVA invited chapter members from across the country to D.C. to participate in the annual program to experience the democratic process and make their voices heard in the chambers of Congress and in the offices of their elected officials.

During Washington Week, a couple days are dedicated to allowing SVA chapter members the opportunity to meet with their elected officials. While in D.C., these chapter members were encouraged to schedule meetings within the Capitol Hill buildings (with their members of Congress and congressional staffers) to advocate on their behalf.



Also, as part of Washington Week programming, student veterans had the privilege of witnessing SVA National President & CEO, Jared Lyon, testify before a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs. Lyon presented on behalf of SVA our 2024 Legislative Policy Priorities, and in his verbal testimony he mentioned: VA Modernization, GI Bill Improvements, Transparency and Accountability, Strengthening Higher Education, and Post-Traditional Student Success.

Throughout the three-day program, SVA also provides student veterans joint organizational networking opportunities and receptions, which allows them to engage with fellow veteran-serving organizations (VSOs). These receptions are essential because VSO policy priorities, at times, align and can positively effect student veteran and military-connected student advocacy. The final reception, hosted at The Boeing Company's headquarters served, as recap of student veterans' successes and to inspire them to continue their advocacy when they return to their campuses and within their local communities.



WASHINGTON WEEK AWARDS



During Washington Week, Student Veterans of America (SVA) recognized and commended the efforts of congressional representatives and public servants fighting for them at the state and national level. For several years, SVA has presented congressional representatives with service awards for their advocacy on behalf of the student veteran community; these awards serve as a token of appreciation for their commitment and as a reminder of the population in which they serve.



SVA's National President & CEO, Jared Lyon, and Vice President of Government Affairs, Tammy Barlet, presented the Sonny Montgomery Student Veteran Champion Award to U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Representative Bost and U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Ranking Member Representative Takano. Titled after U.S. Army Second Lieutenant and later congressman, Sonny Montgomery, this award recognizes the selfless dedication a person has provided in time and resources to changing the lives of student veterans in a meaningful way, and to their diligent efforts on behalf of student veteran issues and their unique needs on and off campus.



Also, Lyon and Barlet had the privilege to present the Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Public Service Award to Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary for Benefits at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Maureen Elias. The Dwight D. Eisenhower Distinguished Public Service Award honors the continuation of service in addition to an individual's military service to develop and execute solutions addressing national challenges.

These prestigious awards showcase the exceptional commitment and service shown by both lawmakers and public servants in advancing the educational prospects of our

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Vantage Point Consulting partners with SVA to launch the SVA Career Center.



Student Veterans of America (SVA) has partnered with Vantage Point Consulting to launch the all-new SVA Career Center, tailored specifically to meet the needs of veterans. Offering personalized assistance and advanced job search capabilities, this collaboration is dedicated to empowering veterans to pursue their career aspirations with confidence.

SVA's Career Center provides the expertise and tools to translate military experience and academics into meaningful career opportunities for student veterans and their families. SVA is enhancing efforts through upcoming future-oriented events, onboarding a specialist focused on aiding campus career centers in supporting veterans, establishing relationships with employers seeking military background and leadership, and relaunching our personalized SVA job board with a focus on tailored opportunities for veterans.

We invite you to explore the Career Center's new job board where you can create a profile to upload your resume and start searching for internships, fellowships, and part-time and full-time opportunities right away. Beyond job hunting, tap into our suite of resources such as career readiness programs and partner talent acquisition teams, positioning yourself for future employment prospects.

RESEARCH

The Veterans Integration to Academic Leadership (VITAL) Program

The VITAL program is offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and is designed to address the specific needs and challenges faced by student veterans during their academic pursuits. The program aims to provide world-class healthcare, improve mental health, and support successful veteran integration into college and university campuses. It offers a holistic approach that encompasses academic support, mental health services, career development, and community engagement. By combining these elements, the VITAL program aims to foster an environment where student veterans can thrive both academically and personally.

On campuses, VITAL can assist colleges in building a more veteran-inclusive culture by “Improving understanding of Veterans’ unique strengths and challenges through education and training delivered to the campus community.”

The VITAL program is a crucial support in enhancing the return on investment for student veterans in the following ways:



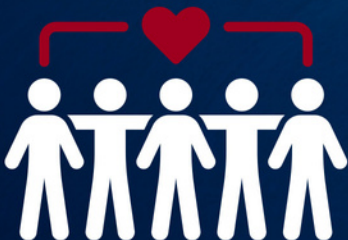
Enhancing Campus Diversity:

The VITAL program’s integration would contribute to a more diverse and inclusive campus community, where the experiences and perspectives of student veterans are acknowledged and valued.



Improving Success Outcomes:

By providing the necessary support and resources, the VITAL program can positively impact student retention and graduation rates among veterans, helping them complete their degrees and achieve their educational aspirations.



Strengthening Communities:

Through school and after graduation, student veterans become leaders, professionals, and advocates within their communities, utilizing the skills acquired through the VITAL program to positively influence society and their communities.

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

Oregon Technical Institute Visits Washington D.C. for Washington Week

In early March, student veterans from the Oregon Institute of Technology visited Washington, D.C. to participate in Student Veterans of America's (SVA) annual Washington Week program. This program gives student veterans the opportunity to visit the nation's capital, Washington D.C., and advocate on behalf of themselves directly to congressional representatives.

During the week, the Oregon Tech group along with several student veterans from Oregon had the opportunity to meet with Congresswoman Val Hoyle and speak on issues that affect veterans and service members both on and off-campus.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship

Several VFW-SVA Legislative Fellows attended Student Veterans of America's (SVA) Washington Week, which coincided with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Washington Conference. The Legislative Fellows had the opportunity to meet with key staffers and congressional members who serve on the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs. During these meetings, the Legislative Fellows voiced support for H.R. 4157/S. 928, Not Just a Number Act, which aims to improve veteran suicide prevention.



BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Josh Jones

Student Veterans of America Board Member

Josh Jones, 2022 SVA Student Veteran of the Year and SVA Leadership Fellow, has been a member of the board since 2023. In the fall of 2021, Jones began serving as Chapter President of the Student Veterans of America Loyola Chicago, and has since transitioned from the chapter president role. In his term as president of the organization, he grew the chapter from a social club with only two members to an organization of over thirty members who were focused on guiding veterans through higher education and providing professional opportunities.

While Jones was leading the chapter, SVA Loyola had a track record of “firsts.” Some examples of these initiatives include spearheading the first-ever student-initiated student-veteran career fair in Illinois; the first student-veteran panel at the 2022 American Legion National. Presently, Jones has created a student-led non-profit in Chicago which bridges student veterans in Chicago together to provide them with professional development opportunities.



STUDENT VETERAN SPOTLIGHT

Landon Waters

Graduate Student at Tulsa University / SVA Leadership Fellow U.S. Army veteran

The University of Tulsa recently hosted its TEDxUTulsa, an independently organized TED event, which is designed to facilitate discussions, presentations, and videos that spark conversation, imagination, and inspire people to action. Graduate student veteran and SVA Leadership Fellow, Landon Waters, had the distinct privilege of presenting during the event.

Waters', “Be all you can be,” TEDxTalk presentation dives into the topic of pursuing your dreams and goals while constantly striving to be the best version of yourself. While speaking on his motivations to embark on this journey to self-improvement, Waters talked about his transition from the U.S. Army back into civilian life.

“Be all you can be” is an old Army slogan that had existed, and had been retired from use, prior to Waters' service, however, the slogan he remembered from his youth has served as a constant reminder throughout his life. Deeper into the talk, Waters spoke about the profound effect the having a community has on veterans, and how veterans can utilize community to continue to inspire, lead, and serve.



LOCAL CHAPTER NEWS

Purdue University Northwest SVA Chapter

Student veterans from Purdue University Northwest recently partnered with the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana over Easter weekend. This partnership helped to deliver food and resources to locals and residents within the community who may be experiencing food insecurity. With the rising cost of commonly purchased foods, efforts to combat food insecurity has increased which inspired these student veterans to participate in the collective action of distributing supplies.



University of Nevada, Las Vegas (RebelVETS) SVA Chapter

University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) RebelVets, a chapter of Student Veterans of America, recently hosted a morning workout with Merging Vets and Players (MVP). These morning workouts are intended to facilitate a peer-support network and promote physical fitness. Bringing together professional athletes and military veterans, MVP workouts are an excellent way to establish a community of individuals who can share experiences and continue to serve while advancing the efforts to build resiliency through fitness.



Howard University SVA Chapter

Student veterans and the faculty advisor from Howard University had the privilege to attend an open house and tour event at the White House during Black History month. This was an amazing opportunity for the group to view the interior of the White House and take in all the historical artifacts located within.



SCHOLARSHIPS

General Eligibility Requirements:

- Honorable Discharge (including honorable under general conditions)
- Minimum 3.0 GPA (proof of transcript required)
- Planned enrollment at a 4-year University for the full 2024/2025 academic year)
- Have already completed at least 1 full year of college/university (unofficial transcript required)



Google-SVA Scholarship

Accepting Applications on MySVA from March 26, 2024 – April 23, 2024

As part of Google's commitment to military veterans, the company partners with SVA each year to fund scholarships. The scholarship provides assistance to student veterans who are pursuing university degrees in the field of computer science in the U.S. Selected students will receive \$10,000 for the upcoming school year.

Apply for open scholarships from SVA's Partners. These are distributed to top student veterans in a manner that doesn't interfere with the G.I. Bill or other financial aid and total over \$100,000 annually.

<https://studentveterans.org/programs-events/scholarships/>



Through a network of nearly 1,600 on-campus chapters, Student Veterans of America® ensures that student veterans and military-connected students achieve their greatest potential.

Student Veterans of America

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