



Best Practices for Engaging with Student Veterans

Calvin Jensen, Student Veterans of America National HQ

SVA History

- SVA grew out the grassroots efforts of small groups of Post-9/11 student veterans who mobilized in key Congressional districts to help pass the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- These student groups worked to improve college and university support services for their student veteran communities.
- After an initial National Conference in Chicago and formal incorporation, twenty student organizations became the first SVA Chapters on January 11, 2008.



SVA Today

- SVA has grown from 20 SVA Chapters in 2008 to **1,500+ SVA Chapters today**.
- SVA's National Conference, NatCon, is the largest annual gathering of Post-9/11 veterans in the world, with **over 3,000 attendees expected in 2020**.
- SVA trains nearly **1,700 top-performing student veterans** annually at the Leadership Institute and SVA Chapter Summits each year.
- **Over \$2.1 million** has been awarded in scholarships to student veterans.
- SVA has conducted research and analysis on **millions of Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients**.
- SVA informed, advanced, and continues to defend Forever GI Bill legislation passed in 2017, which was the largest increase to the GI Bill in a decade at nearly **\$3.5 billion**.




“To, Through, and Beyond”

Veterans in Popular Culture



Misconception vs. Reality

- Less likely than their peers to persist and earn a degree.
 - Do not perform well academically in post-secondary education.
 - Prefer to earn degrees that are similar to the job they had while in the military.
 - Pursue less academically rigorous degrees.
 - More likely to graduate compared to their peers.
 - Veterans have a higher GPA than the national average.
 - Majority report that their major or field of study is not at all similar to their specialization in the military.
 - Majority pursue degrees in business, STEM, and healthcare related fields.
- 

Who Are Student Veterans?

27% are women

83% attend a public or private non-profit

46% have children

52% are married

80% are between the ages 24-35

90% were enlisted

Over 1 million are receiving G.I. Bill benefits, & 750,000 of them are on campuses with an SVA Chapter.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill Has Helped Veterans Earn Degrees in...



NATIONAL VETERAN EDUCATION
SUCCESS TRACKER



BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, MARKETING

NUMBER OF
DEGREES

96,270



SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM)

51,486



HEALTH PROFESSIONS

37,138

Over half of student veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill earned these degrees in one of these high-growth, high-demand fields that greatly contribute to the country's economy



Where to Start? Being “Veteran-Inclusive”

Understanding Campus Culture.

- What makes my campus unique? What are we known for?

Connect with all military and veteran resources across university campus(es), and educate veterans and military-connected students about these resources.

Create and host military/veteran social events.

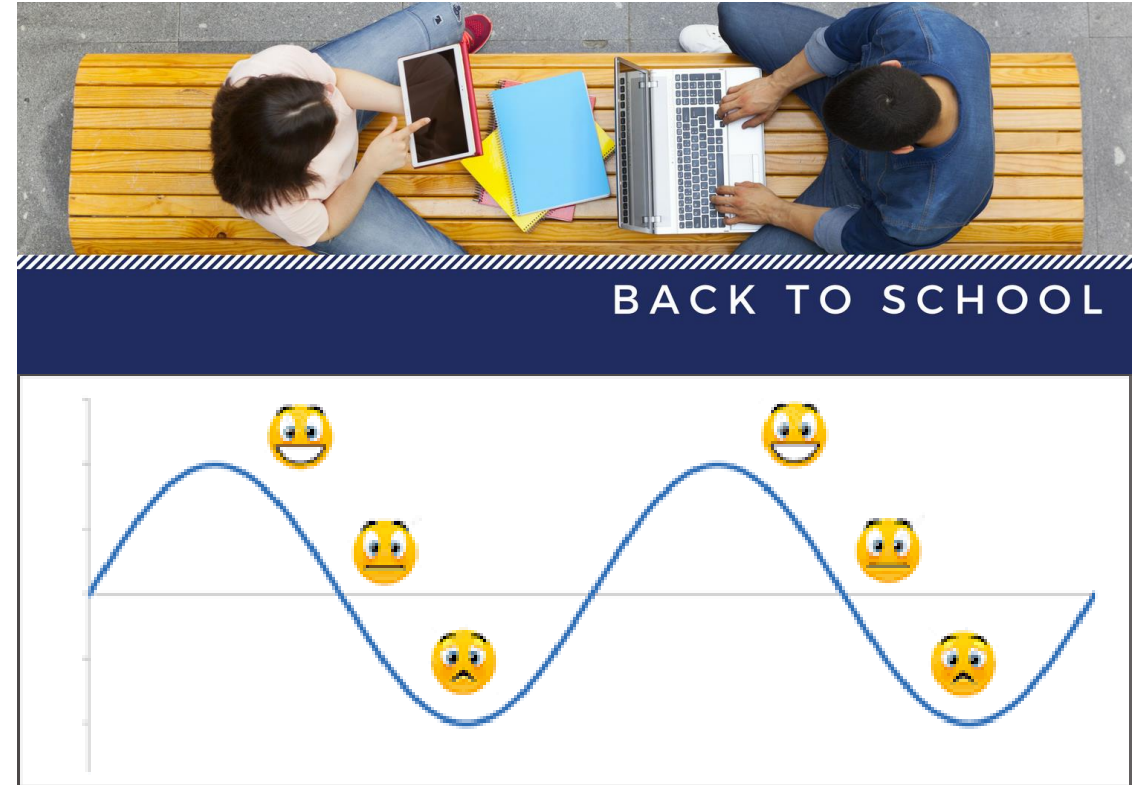
- Invite school leadership and military/veteran resource providers to these events.

Encourage student veterans to self-identify during the admissions process.


Promote opportunities for student veterans to volunteer or take up campus leadership roles.

Drive and encourage sustainable growth.

- personal, academic, professional development
- Normalize the concept of asking for help (mentorship)



Key Design Elements for SVA Chapters

- **Campus Culture** – what are the things that make your campus unique?
 - **Mission** – your SVA Chapter's reason for existing.
 - **Goals** – “big picture” things you would like to achieve in the short-term and long-term.
 - **S.M.A.R.T. Objectives** – the specific ways you will execute your goals.
 - **Strategies** – your actions; details about how you will work on our objectives.
 - **Records & Budgeting** – funding and keeping track of your events and programming.
 - **Elections & Leadership Transition** — ensuring sustainable growth.
- 

What is Campus Culture?

- Institution Type
- Residential vs. Commuter
- Student Population
- Student Veteran Population
- Athletics, Greek Life, Other Factors



Creating a Community Culture

- Campus / Community Advocates
- Chapter History
- Chapter Accomplishments
- Membership Demographics
- Family-Friendly Programming
- Engagement with Your Campus
- Engagement with SVA Headquarters



Developing Partnerships

- **On-Campus Community**
 - Student Government Association
 - Career Services
 - Disability Services
 - Alumni Association
 - Clubs/ organizations/ societies with a focus on professional development.
- **Off-Campus Community**
 - Localize SVA's Business and Industry Roundtable.
 - Rotary Club
 - Local Chamber of Commerce
 - Campus Recruiters
 - Professional Societies
 - National Associations (support, grants, network, etc.)



Sources of Income & Donor Cultivation

- Event Tickets
- Merchandise Sales
- Donations
- In-Kind Donations
- Funds for student organizations
- Grants and awards



Thinking about donor cultivation:

- Finding the appropriate donors and matching their interests with the needs of the chapter requires a unique combination of skill and perseverance.
 - Many potential donors want to support your cause because they already believe in your mission.
 - Alumni who have directly benefited from your SVA Chapter are a great place to start.
 - People invest in people they believe in.
 - Always follow up and maintain your relationships.
-

Marketing & Communications

Consider your audiences:

- Chapter Members
- Campus & Student Body
- Local Community & Media

Develop a Brand:

- A name, term, design, symbol or other feature that identifies your organization as distinct from another organization on campus.
- This should be consistent with SVA's national branding.

Leverage Social Media:

- Shares pictures and videos, and tag SVA HQ, campus news, and respective partner orgs so they can share your content.




Marketing & Communications (Continued)

Talking Points:

- Before you tell the world about your SVA Chapter, it's important to think about your key messages.
- These talking points can help guide your conversations with potential members, reporters, community partners, and more.
- Be sure to share these talking points with all of your Chapter Leaders.
- Each one of us can be a spokesperson for our organization at any time!

Calendar Pulse Moments:

- Memorial Day
 - Graduation
 - Back-to-School
 - Veterans Day
- 

Choosing a Chapter Advisor

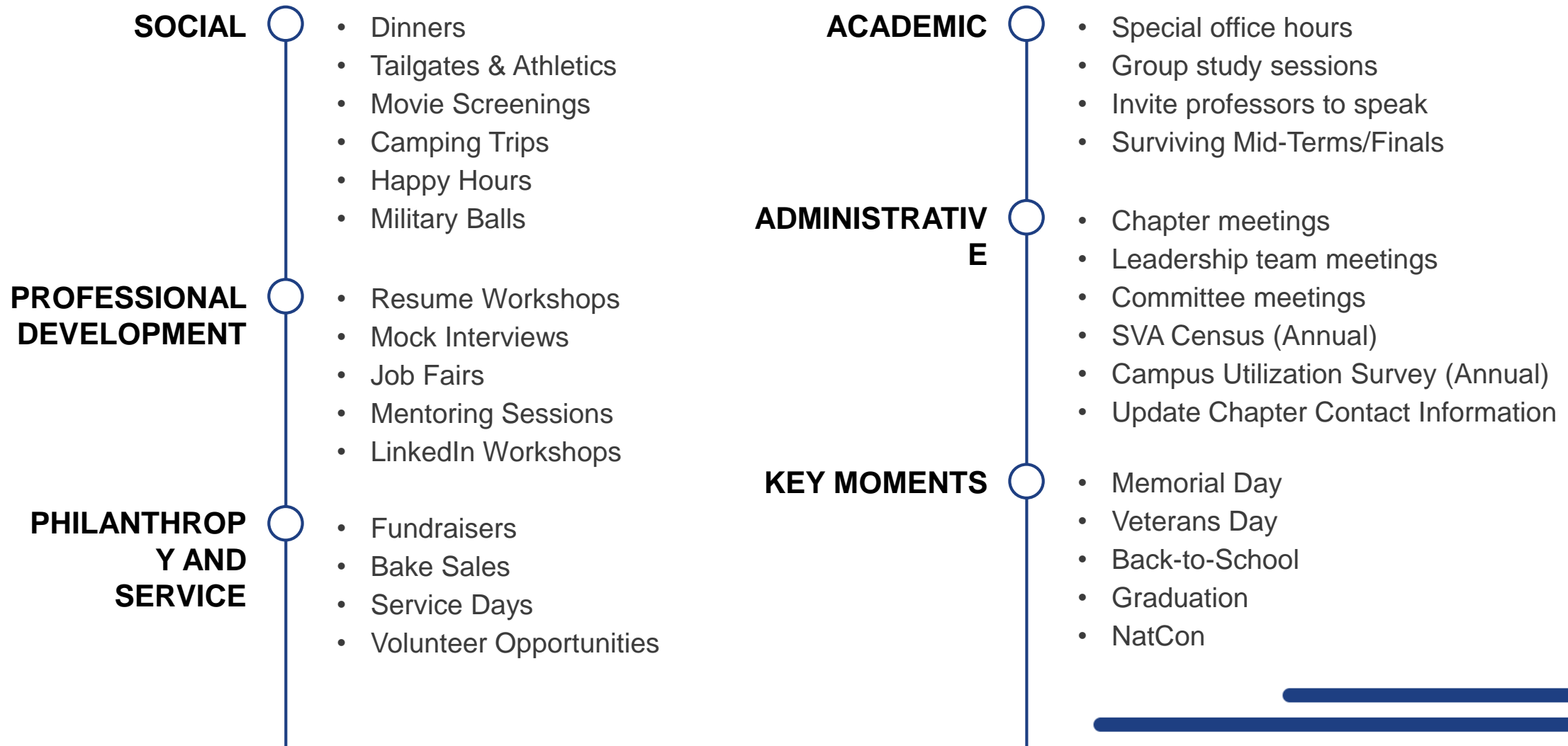
- The Chapter Advisor is a full-time staff or faculty member who has agreed to mentor, support, and advocate for the SVA Chapter at their school or campus.
 - Chapter Advisors are not members of the Chapter leadership team, 'in-charge' of the Chapter, or employers.
 - A Chapter Advisor is invited into the role by the SVA Chapter and serves at its discretion.
-
-

Creating Valuable Programming


- Your SVA Chapter's strategic plan will lay the framework for the types of programming to offer.
- Programming may cover a broad range of topics – everything from service opportunities to a Military Ball.
- A variety of activities will ensure all members and spouses/families maintain interest and feel included.
- A clear understanding of your campus culture and your membership will serve you well.
- Solicit ideas and gauge interest for potential activities at meetings and through other mediums.



Types of Programming

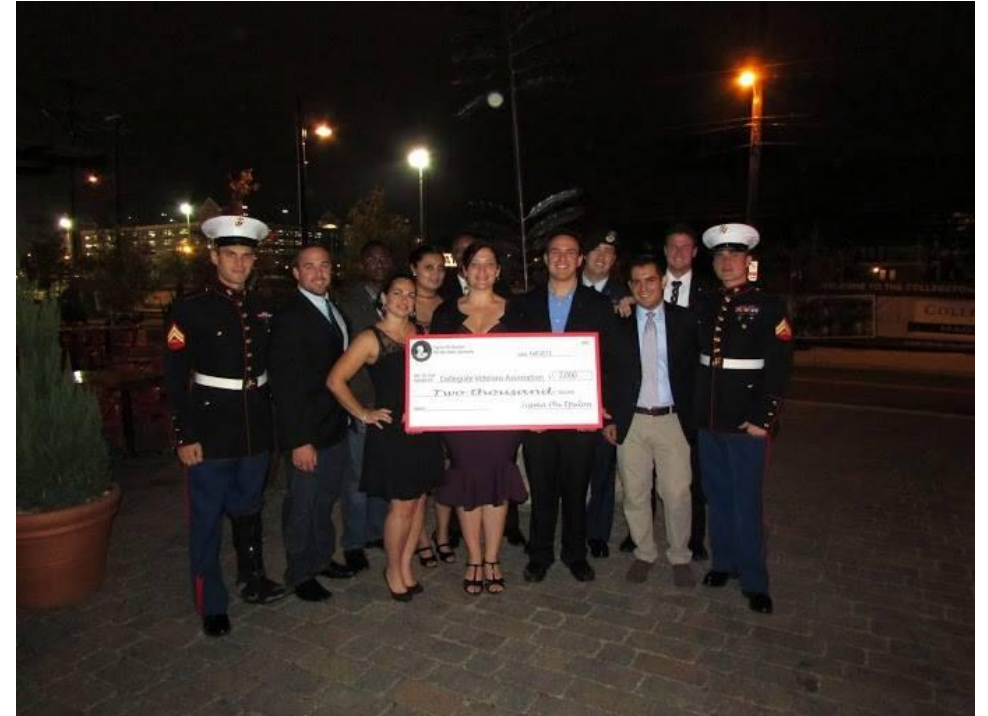


Chapter Meetings

- **Establish a consistent time/location**, determined by members (Then promote!)
 - **Build camaraderie, increase learning, and advance the mission** (Save operational details for leadership meetings.)
 - **Invite speakers** (professors, career services, support staff, alumni)
 - **Hold virtual meetings at busy times** with Skype, Facebook Live, or another platform.
 - “If you feed them, they will come”
- 

Event Planning and Adding Support

- **Goals:** audiences, type of event, when and where, resources needed, etc.
- **Logistics:** Date, time, location, catering, etc.
- **Communications:** Getting the word out and inviting guests.
- **After-Action:** Post event evaluations and follow up.



Example: Annual Seminole Military Ball

- **Goals:** Celebrate the integration of student veterans into all areas of campus life, fundraiser, connect different audiences.
- **Logistics:** Date (April 4th), time(6:30pm-12am), location (Mission San Luis-Mission Ballroom), catering (Madison Social), resources needed (tables, chairs, dance floor, music, food, lighting, Flag, Cake, etc.).
- **Communications:** Invitations to student leaders, campus administration, student government, local media, local community leaders, etc.
Leveraging social media and the school newspaper.
- **After-Action:** Follow up with guests, share photos and stories.



Building Sustainable Chapters

Managing and engaging your membership

- How do we define membership?
- Does this match our campus and Chapter culture?
- What proportion of our members attend events?

Recruitment and retention

- Consistent communication
- Follow up with potential members
- Engage new members immediately
- Set up future Chapter Leaders for success
- Deliver relevant value

Records management

- Transparent records, meeting minutes, budgets
- Cloud storage and share drives



Building Sustainable Chapters (Continued)


Elections

- Are we hosting regular, fair elections?
- Are multiple contenders running for positions?
- Have we identified the next generation of Chapter Leaders?


Leadership Transition

- Transition Meetings
- Transfer of records and documents
- Keeping contact records up to date with campus and SVA HQ

Fundraising

- How will our SVA Chapter maintain enough revenue in the future?
 - Are we keeping donors and supporters engaged?
- 

Leadership Transition & Elections

- Define leadership positions and responsibilities in writing.
 - Continuously recruit and grow new leaders.
 - Recruit your replacement from day one.
 - Use chairmanships as intermediate leadership positions to empower Chapter Members.
 - Find the balance between leader entrenchment and smooth succession.
 - Formalize your elections and transition processes.
 - **Build future leaders—make them want to be in your shoes!**
- 


Evaluation Methods

- **Outputs** indicate counts and activity and answer the question, “What did we do?”
- **Outcomes** show benefits, influence, and effect and answer the question, “What difference does it make?”


TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF OUTPUT VS. OUTCOME


Output	Outcome
Membership grew from 10 to 15 in one month.	The number of peer mentors in the Engineering Technology program increased by 50% with the addition of five new members from that department.
We conducted two activities with other student organizations.	SVO members collaborated with the student senate and the student newspaper on initiatives to raise awareness of military issues on campus.
The SVO hosted a seminar attended by 12 SVO members.	We connected with campus support services to familiarize our members with on-campus resources they might need for college success.


Practices in Student Veteran Career Development

- **Begin by targeting specific student veterans based on field of study.** Focusing resources to help develop student veterans early in degree field preps them for internship and jobs where veterans are best suited for success.
 - **Leverage a targeted outreach strategy** to match the types of veterans you're looking for, rather than a shotgun approach to just get more veterans at the top of the funnel.
 - **Make self-identification a priority and easy to do for veterans.** Survey and assess how they are contributing in the workforce will support your ability to build an internal business case for how veterans add to your bottom line.
 - **Leverage veteran employee resource groups to mentor veterans** through everything from the application process to onboarding to long-term career development. This will make it more likely veteran candidates will succeed and veteran employees will stay and develop into corporate leaders.
- 

Leverage the LinkedIn Community


 **University of Arizona Alumni** ...

 Standard group

 **Mary Frances Kuper** • 2nd
Associate Director, Career Education at University of Arizona
1mo

UA's Office of Student Engagement & Career Development is currently looking for alumni to host students this spring break through our Job Shadow Program! This is a relatively new program where students can shadow a professional in a field of interest for one day. It is low-commitment, but makes a huge difference in helping our students discover what they want to do for a career.


Our next session will take place during Spring break, March 4-8th. To participate, we ask that you fill out the host application form by January 21st (but will accept host applications through January 31st.) We will be in touch shortly after. Students will apply to shadow opportunities starting the end of January and we will be communicating placement information to both students and hosts around mid-late February. The students will be required to reach out and connect with you to decide a date and time within the session for the student to shadow. If you have any questions, please let us know!


Job Shadow Program: Host a Wildcat 


career.arizona.edu

The Job Shadow Program is an opportunity to host a student at your organization for jus...

- Use LinkedIn Groups to build networks and for professional development.
- Mobilize and invite **student veterans, alumni, mentors, industry experts, community partners, and employers.**
- Optimize Group experience by sharing professional opportunities and events happening on campus and local community.

 **Fordham Veterans Association** ...

 Standard group

 **Steven Hellman** • 1st
Relationship Manager at Fordham University Student Veteran Association
6mo

Fordham University's Veteran Association will be hosting a student veteran internship fair September 24th.





ALL NYC STUDENT VETERANS are welcome and encouraged to attend.

To register: bit.ly/Internship-Fair-2018

List of companies and employers: bit.ly/Internship-Fair-Homepage

Hosted by Fordham Veterans Association

[#business](#) [#marketing](#) [#education](#) [#internship](#)

 
**STUDENT VETERAN
INTERNSHIP FAIR**
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2018
11:00 AM- 3:30 PM
FORDHAM LAW, COSTANTINO ROOM
150 WEST 62ND STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10023
Open to all student veterans
To register and additional details:
bit.ly/Internship-Fair-2018
List of companies and employers here:
bit.ly/Internship-Fair-Homepage
 **FORDHAM
VETERANS
ASSOCIATION** 



Can you
help get
our
student
vets
here?

#SVALEADS

Get in touch with SVA:



www.studentveterans.org



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/student-veterans-of-america>



facebook.com/StudentVets



[@studentvets](https://www.instagram.com/studentvets)



[@StudentVets](https://twitter.com/StudentVets)



contact@studentveterans.org



202-223-4710

