

# How to Start an SVA Chapter on Your Campus



**Student Veterans of America**

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**[www.studentveterans.org](http://www.studentveterans.org)**

# Purpose

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**The aim of this guide is to facilitate the process of initiation and formation of student veteran groups at U.S. colleges and universities, both public and private. Student veteran groups serve to assist veterans transition from military to campus life and to serve as an outreach mechanism for student veterans, school administrators & faculty, and the campus community.**

**Student veterans may find the college environment foreign to their needs and concerns. A student veterans group can help alleviate these issues & concerns and create a positive military community on your campus.**

# Steps to Form an SVA Chapter

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## **1. Contact the VA Certifying Official at Your University**

- A college/university designated to receive GI Bill benefits by the Department of Veteran's Affairs will employ a VA certifying official. The Office of the Registrar or Financial Aid will be able to help you communicate with the student veteran community on-campus.
- The certifying official has access to student veterans on your campus and will be able to help you form the foundation of your organization.

## **2. Find a Faculty Advisor**

- Locate a professor and/or faculty advisor willing to help you and your classmates form a student veteran group. Most faculty and professors are more than happy to be an advisor to student veterans

## **3. Set-Up an Initial Meeting**

- Set-up an initial meeting date
- Spread the word throughout campus with flyers, posters, and word-of-mouth

- Send an e-mail to the entire student veteran community on campus (the VA certifying official will have access to all student veteran emails on campus).

#### **4. Hold an Initial Meeting**

- Hold a meeting and deliberate the needs and goals of the student veterans on your campus and gauge the participation the group is likely to have.
- Elect the officers of the group such as president, vice-president, secretary, social chair and any positions your group desires.

#### **5. Contact Student Activities to Formally Create a Group**

- Contact your student activities office as each university will have specific procedures and guidelines for initiating a club on campus.
- If a charter or constitution is required (which lists the purpose and bylaws of the organization), see [SVA Campus Kit for Student Veterans](#) for a sample constitution or contact your State or Regional Director.

#### **6. Establish your Group**

- Develop your group's process for helping student veterans on your campus

- As an official university group, you can request funding from the student activities office and utilize university space to meet and conduct monthly business.

## **6. Become an SVA Official Chapter**

- Upload your group's by-laws and contact information at: [http://studentveterans.org/chapterinfo/member\\_signup.php](http://studentveterans.org/chapterinfo/member_signup.php)

## **7. Conduct Chapter Operations**

- Social Events
- Fundraising Events
- Networking
- Advocacy
- Contact your State Director or Regional Director

# Things to Consider

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## **1. Start a Mentoring Program**

- Both veterans new to college and those returning after a short or extended absence can benefit from the experience and expertise of student veterans on their campus.

## **2. Create a LISTSERV/E-Mail Account & Online Site**

- A LISTSERV can be utilized by multiple members to send e-mail notifications of group meetings as well as important events concerning the veteran community on your campus. A group e-mail account will centralize e-mail for access by the president, vice president and secretary. A Facebook Group or online blog (e.g. WordPress, BlogSpot) can serve to inform and educate your student veteran members on your campus at no cost to your group.

## **3. Be Aware of Scheduling Conflicts**

- Student veterans are often older than typical college students and frequently have families. Be conscious of possible conflicts when scheduling meetings.

Additionally, many of your members may be actively drilling during the semester and would be unable to attend weekend gatherings.

#### **4. Just for Veterans?**

- Consider including non-veterans receiving VA educational benefits and military dependents as members in the club. The veteran community on some campuses is small, increased membership can result in increased services and benefits.

#### **5. Other Veterans Organizations**

- Consider an affiliation with other veteran service organizations (e.g. VFW, American Legion) for fundraising and participation in community service projects

## **Student Veterans of America**

The Student Veterans of America is a not-for-profit coalition of student veterans groups from colleges and universities across the country. To qualify a group need only be recognized by their university and requires no monetary contributions. SVA advocates for veteran issues on the local, state, and national level and connects groups to a nation-wide network of student veteran groups. To join SVA please visit the website: [www.studentveterans.org](http://www.studentveterans.org).



**Yesterday's Warriors  
Today's Scholars  
Tomorrow's Leaders**