

Leadership Success Themes

President

- ✔ **Peer leadership.** Leading peers, especially in all-volunteer organization, is one of the more difficult leadership challenges one can face. In the military, and in many civilian organizations, it can be easy to take for granted the ability to give directions to team members who “report” to a position and expect those directions to be followed. In volunteer organizations, while there are positions of leadership, one cannot rely on any official authority that might exist in a different type of organization. Leading through relationships, influence, and shared belief is most effective. This approach is, in fact, a significantly more mature and effective path towards organizational leadership, respect, productivity, and effectiveness.

- ✔ **Overall executive leadership of a student organization.** ARCI Model of organizational management – This is a model that can help clearly define roles within a team or on a given project. It also serves to set a clear picture of expectations and deliverables for all team members. A – R – C – I are explained below and represent a decreasing level, from left to right, of ownership over a given effort. Accountable - The ultimate accountable owner of an effort, outcomes, and/or end state. This person has the authority to make all final decisions they deem necessary. If they delegate that authority on a specific decision or effort, it does not mean they are no longer accountable for the outcome of that decision. There can only ever be one “A.” Responsible – The person responsible for the day to day execution of a task or larger effort. Multiple people and/or positions can be the “R” on a given effort, but they should always align their efforts to accomplish their objective in the most effective and efficient manner possible. Those designated as “R” are ultimately accountable to the “A” on an effort. Consulted – These roles must be consulted prior to accomplishing a given body of work or making a key decision. These are primary partners and stakeholders that have subject matter expertise and/or key relational value necessary to push an effort forward in the best possible manner. Informed – Those designated as “I” are partners and/or stakeholders that either require, or would benefit from, awareness of the results of decisions or milestones on a given effort. These individuals do not provide input on an effort during its execution.

- ✔ **Delegation and Supervision.** Even with ultimate accountability over all aspects of a Chapter’s functions, the delegation of key responsibility areas to others is of primary importance. This does not, however, alleviate or change the ultimate accountability and ownership the role of President has over all functions within a Chapter. A president should not attempt to do everything themselves. Develop the relationships with peers that are necessary to create others with sufficiently high levels of ownership. Supporting the key leaders within a Chapter, namely the vice presidents and liaison roles, is incredibly important to the long-term success of the team. Those leaders must know the president supports them in the execution of their roles and will provide the necessary level of engagement to ensure their success. The president must supervise the work being done on an effort as well as key outcomes. It is recommended that the president set up recurring touchpoints with all leaders in the Chapter to ensure high quality relationships, deliverables are being met, and any roadblocks to success are removed.

- ✔ **Executive Relationships with University Leaders.** As the face of SVA at University, spending adequate time with administrators, educators, decision makers, and members of other campus organizations will be key to solidifying the brand of the Chapter as well as future growth. Relationship building is vital to the long-term success of any organization or venture. Building these relationships takes significant time and it might look like there are no direct benefits to doing so. Authentic relationship creation is, by nature, a long-term effort and must come from a place of real service to another. Seek first to help before ever asking for help. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement.

- ✔ **Strategic Thinking.** A president must look at the entire year of their tenure but also the years to come and what multi-year initiatives are in play for both current, and future, leaders. When making decisions, a president must ask themselves what the implications and second, third, fourth, etc. order

effects could be by going down a particular path. A president should be able to clearly articulate how tactical decisions support, and further, strategic initiatives.

- ✔ **Core Values-Based Leadership.** As a leader, understand the importance of making decisions, both practical and strategic, from a source of your own personal core value set. This personal core value set, which is part of the foundation that makes up your leadership ethos, is a vital element to staying on a path that leads to both personal, and Chapter, success. Core **Values-based leadership is at the heart of personal leadership development curriculum at the Leadership Institute. All Chapter presidents are encouraged to attend this premier leadership event.**
- ✔ **Self-Care.** It is possible to become burned out as the leader of a student organization. Chapter presidents must be able to finish their term with something left to give to future generations of Chapter Leaders and with a desire to still be involved as a member and a mentor. Taking the time to ensure academic and family responsibilities are taken care of both reduce the stress placed on a Chapter president, but also afford time to step away from the Chapter to focus on other things. Mental health and sleep are incredibly important to effective leadership. Chapter presidents should set a standard of health in leadership by utilizing campus services where offered, when necessary.

Vice President of Programs and Member Development

- ✔ **Establish an event planning checklist.** For every event, large or small, establish clear goals and objectives for the event, consider attendance goals, location, venue cost, food cost, and promotion and marketing. Set a realistic timeline for achieving certain benchmarks for larger events.
- ✔ **Delegate responsibilities.** Use the brainpower of the Chapter Members to handle the various tasks of event planning. Delegating will allow focus to remain on the big picture without getting lost in the weeds.
- ✔ **Leverage on and off-campus partners.** To maximize Chapter programming, relate strategic alliances with congruent student organizations, and local community-based organizations to increase Chapter visibility on campus and in the greater community, and to assist with larger, logistically challenging events. Provide programming that has broad appeal across student organizations. Veterans are a diverse cross-section of America, so it is easy to find common threads between you and other student organizations. Themes like leadership, service, and diversity are not exclusive to the military.
- ✔ **Provide a clear path from membership to Chapter Leadership.** Chapter Members should be aware of and understand each leadership position and be encouraged to pursue at least one that might spark their interest. A new member orientation, or first Chapter meeting of the year should include each Chapter Leader giving a brief presentation of what their role entails. Member development includes encouraging members to take advantage of your National Headquarters professional development opportunities such as NatCon, the Leadership Institute, Regional Summits, and the LinkedIn Professional Development Community.

Vice President of Finance

- ✔ **Trustworthiness/Integrity.** All roles in finance require personal accountability of handling money and finances as well as appropriate transparency. The Vice President of Finance must abide by all rules and regulations pertaining to management of a nonprofit organization's finances at the federal, state, and institutional levels. When mistakes are made, integrity requires that they be addressed openly and quickly.

- ✔ **Speaking truth to power.** Support Chapter Leadership as a financial advisor by balancing Chapter goals with Chapter financial capabilities. Many Chapter Leaders have impressive ideas for the Chapter but must be reined in when the finances cannot support them. Finding a balance is especially important in producing a quality Chapter with limited revenue.
- ✔ Understand the unique role of the Vice President of Finance. Within the leadership team, this role is unique in that a higher level of trust and responsibility is present to include its connection to the overall success of all Chapter efforts. Institution-specific training or requirements may be in place, and this position must adhere to each.

Vice President of Recruitment and Member Engagement

- ✔ **Establish a recruitment playbook.** The Chapter strategic plan is the road map for recruitment goals, strategies, and objectives. It will indicate how many, when, where and what type of events to host, as well as the recruitment goals for each event. Work with the Vice President of Communications and Marketing to create promotional documents, fliers and/or pamphlets for tabling and/or posting around campus in high traffic areas such as the student center, veteran resource center, commuter lounge, SCO's office, etc. Identify places where student veterans are likely working, studying, and living on campus; start by asking Chapter Members themselves.
- ✔ **Form alliances with key enrollment management administrators.** SCO have access to all students who are receiving VA benefits. Meet with the SCO to discuss sending out a welcome letter to all incoming students receiving VA benefits. The Director/Dean of Admissions is responsible for recruiting students to the college or university. Meet with the Director/Dean to see if they would be willing to provide information about the Chapter in the admissions presentation, and/or add Chapter promotional material to their recruiting table at local college transfer fairs. The Assistant/Associate Director of Transfer Admissions will likely meet all student veterans enrolling into the college or university, as most veterans are considered transfer students. Working closely with the transfer counselor can be an effective way to recruit incoming students. The Dean of Students is responsible for all aspects of student life on campus. It is important to know this individual when it comes to reaching all students on campus.
- ✔ **Establish a recruitment pitch.** An elevator pitch for prospective members should be brief and highlight all the key benefits of joining the Chapter. Ensure all Chapter Members know the pitch or talking points.
- ✔ **Cultivate an active, engaged membership.** Identify meaningful programming that members will want to take part in. Use straw polls and surveys to better understand membership needs and limitations. Leverage your knowledge of membership to identify the most impactful events. Consider the childcare needs, and other benefits, geared toward student veterans with children. Identify family-friendly events like trips to amusement parks, picnics, etc. Understanding that the purpose of enrolling in higher education is professional elevation and work with the Career Services Liaison to create professional development events. Consider virtual events for student veterans who work and attend school.

Vice President of Fundraising

- ✔ **Relationship Building.** Engage with all opportunities on and off campus to create genuine relationships, which can be leveraged for mutually beneficial outcomes.
- ✔ **Communication.** Be able to tell the compelling story of your Chapter, its members, and your engagement with the university and the community to drive people to your brand.

- ✔ **Collaboration.** Work closely with the Vice President of Finance to understand funding needs and to develop a goal for fundraising.
- ✔ **Research.** Understand the fundraising and development guidelines of the university and work to include those in the fundraising plan.

Vice President of Communications and Marketing

- ✔ **Plan and tell the story.** Use the Chapter calendar and school's academic calendar to help design a communications plan for the year, including key dates, key messages, and communications tactics. Use the communications plan to schedule and guide the written content, photos, and videos that the Chapter will share. Decide on members of a communications committee to help meet these goals. Consider the following skills to seek for your committee: writing ability, photography, videography, social media, graphic design, and web design.
- ✔ **Stay organized and make history.** Taking detailed notes in all official meetings, managing event attendance and rosters, and sharing meeting minutes with the Chapter are all essential to healthy Chapter management. The history of student veterans on campus and the Chapter are worth preserving and sharing. Take an active interest in honoring the student veterans who came before while also documenting current history in the making.
- ✔ **Collaboration.** Work closely with other vice presidents to determine how communications can support their goals. For example, pitching a news article before Veterans Day about the Chapter's upcoming event may help generate attendance at the event and grow awareness. Did someone in the Chapter get elected to student government or receive a prestigious scholarship? Stay in touch with Chapter Members and work with them to help share their achievements. Seek out ways to partner with and support other student groups on campus.
- ✔ **Engage with peers and community.** Seek out ways to insert the Chapter into ongoing events and conversations on campus in relevant ways, such as diversity recognition months, graduation, Veterans Day, or campus-specific moments throughout the year. If there were to be a crisis on campus or a sensitive situation, stay calm and serve as a voice for your Chapter. Work with National Headquarters to share your successes with a larger audience.

Policy Liaison

- ✔ **Identify key policy issues impacting Chapter, campus, and community.** The Policy Liaison helps guide leaders through the policy landscape, knowing the issues that impact you as a Chapter is key to success.
- ✔ **Support the connection to National Headquarters for Chapter Members.** Joining regularly scheduled calls and communicating with SVA Government Affairs will help ensure issues and roadblocks are addressed and overcome. Sharing across fellow Policy Liaisons and with the Government Affairs team will also inform the policy work for the larger network and National Headquarters. ***COVID-specific measures were passed almost immediately after the first university made the decision to go virtual due to a conversation with a Chapter Policy Liaison.**
- ✔ **Build relationships with university leaders.** Many policy issues are best resolved at the university level. Developing strong, positive relationships, alongside fellow Chapter Leaders, is critical to addressing policy needs.
- ✔ **Build relationships with local elected leaders.** Policy issues that require legislation, either at the local, state, or federal level, require strong working relationships with elected officials and their staff; a

willingness to communicate and meet with all levels of elected officials is important to gain momentum on policy issues.

- ✔ **Interact with fellow Policy Liaisons.** There is strength in numbers in building advocacy coalitions. A willingness to share best practices, shared experiences, and ideas with fellow Policy Liaisons across other Chapters will grow the success of all in the network. ***The Policy Liaison Program (PLP) offers consistent and scheduled communications that facilitate this coalition building and best practice sharing.**
- ✔ **Supporting other Chapter Leaders.** Policy needs and concerns can be shared or experienced by many. Hearing from other Chapter Leaders and members and identifying potential needs from more than a single perspective will create an inclusive space for all to access, and succeed in, higher education.

Career Services Liaison

- ✔ **Leverage National Headquarters and network for professional development opportunities.** Learn about the wealth of programs and available resources and channels for student veterans to seek professional guidance and advice. Understand the importance of being involved in SVA programming (e.g., Regional Summits, Leadership Institute, NatCon, professional opportunities from SVA partners, workshops, internships, access to mentors, employment opportunities, etc.). Connect with SVA relevant platforms and partners including LinkedIn, Indeed, Hiring Our Heroes, and through The Business and Industry Roundtable to provide the Career Services Liaison with updated opportunities.
- ✔ **Implement VA Work Study as a Career Services Liaison.** Understand VA Work Study program and how to implement it as a Career Services Liaison.
- ✔ **Encourage help-seeking behavior of student veterans in your Chapter.** Most students do not leverage Career Services or the breadth of services that they provide; student veterans are even less likely to leverage these resources while on campus.
- ✔ **Engage student veterans in career focused aspects of their education.** Encourage employment and internships during college and in career and professional development opportunities and resources throughout a student's academic journey and near graduation.

Disability Services Liaison

- ✔ **Make the connection between service-connected disability and academic support services on campus.** The military does not provide information about how a service-connected disability translates to an academic disability, and VA does not diagnose a veteran's disability, they only determine a level of compensation. Colleges understand learning disabilities of traditional, incoming first-year college students, but are not familiar with military service-connected disabilities.
- ✔ **Encourage help-seeking behavior among student veterans.** Student veterans attend college with the "suck it up and drive on" mentality instilled in them by military training, this works well in combat, but can be detrimental in the civilian world. Normalize disability services representatives as well as other assistance-service representatives in the veteran space.
- ✔ **Learn how to conduct a conversation with student veterans with service-connected disabilities.** Student veterans may not feel comfortable disclosing their disability, the Disability Services Liaison should not ask a student veteran, "Are you disabled?", they should ask, "Do you have a VA rating?" or "Have you filed a disability claim with VA?"

- ✔ **Implement VA Work Study as a Disability Services Liaison.** Understand VA Work Study program and how to implement it as a Disability Services Liaison.

- ✔ **Understand how you can help student veterans and your college or university.** Colleges and universities are focused on students performing at a high level and graduating on time. When a student “slips through the cracks,” it hurts the college by decreasing graduation and retention rates. As the Disability Services Liaison, you are helping the college retain and graduate students by ensuring accountability for all student veterans.