



Student Veterans of America

Quarterly Newsletter
September 30, 2022

Welcome to the Student Veterans of America Quarterly Newsletter, Fall 2022 Edition. And, congratulations to many of you returning to campus for a new year of successes and building community!

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.

CONTENT

**PROGRAMS & SERVICES
NEWS**

**GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
NEWS**

SPOTLIGHTS

STAYING UP TO DATE

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

NEWS

Returning for the first time in person after two years of virtual life during a pandemic, SVA's Regional Summits 2022 took place in Chicago, Atlanta, Phoenix, Portland, and Providence over 5 weekends from June 15th through August 7th. Here student veterans trained on a variety of topics, from strategic planning, to opportunities for leadership, to the Campus Liaison Program, and on setting personal goals and expectations.



New to this year, Regional Summits 2022 saw the first round of DEI Liaisons trained. Every year, Regional Summits provide the tools, techniques, and tactics needed for student veterans to manage a successful and sustainable student organization before the school year begins.

After kicking off an LGBTQ+ themed reading list in June, SVA was honored to convene a Pride Panel Discussion, examining the legacy of Don't Ask Don't Tell and its effects on service members and veterans (pre- and post-repeal). The discussion was moderated by SVA Board of Directors Secretary, J. Ford Huffman, author of The End of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and joined by:

Nick Mararac

Ph.D (he, they | siya),
SVA Board of Directors,
2021 Chapter of the
Year / Georgetown
University

Joseph Rocha

(he/him), Fmr Marine
Captain, California
Senate Candidate

Josh Kinchen

M.Ed. (he/him), LGBTQ
Center Director, George
Mason University

Rebekka Eshler

(she/her), National
President Transgender
American Veterans
Association (TAVA)

Rachel Thomas

(she/her), WCAPs is
Out LGBTQIA+ Initiative
Co-founder

Summer 2022 also marked the completion of a one year project collaborating with the Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI) at Rutgers University. Utilizing the hashtag #SVAMondays, CMSI regularly shared content from SVA, featuring a member of the student veteran community. The end of this year-long social media push saw nearly 50 unique posts shared widely across Twitter and Facebook, resulting in thousands of impressions, all encouraging the SVA network to learn more about CMSI and those in CMSI's network on their own campuses. The collaboration also produced three successful podcasts that garnered hundreds of streams. SVA remains grateful for CMSI and this kind of collaborative opportunity to broaden the reach of its services for student veterans.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS NEWS



The Government Affairs team advocated for several legislative efforts that support the veteran and higher education community this past quarter. Most notably, the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our PACT Act of 2022 (PACT Act), which was signed into law by President Biden early in August. Supported by a wide coalition of veterans' organizations, including SVA, the PACT Act is one of the largest health and benefit expansions in the history of the US Department of Veterans Affairs and has been a concept, in one form or another, for nearly the last 15 years. This law directly addresses the healthcare and benefit needs of veterans, or their survivors, exposed to burn pits and other toxins. Specifically, it adds over 20 presumptive illnesses linked to burn pit exposure, adds more locations for Agent Orange exposure, and requires VA to provide toxic exposure screening for every veteran using VA healthcare. These changes will dramatically increase the number of veterans able to seek disability compensation for toxic exposure and survivors able to qualify for survivor benefits related to toxic exposure. If you're interested in learning more, please look at the VA's resources on the new law.

On the higher education front, one of SVA's top legislative priorities for 2022 is now headed to the president for his signature. The Ensuring the Best Schools for Veterans Act is an urgently needed bill that mandates a more commonsense approach to VA's 85-15 regulation. This bill will ensure VA is utilizing the 85-15 reporting requirement to ensure quality of education without creating unnecessary administrative burdens for students and schools. The 85-15 rule, on its face, is simple: No program of education may be approved for Title 38 benefits if more than 85 percent of the students within it are using VA education benefits. Last year, VA reinterpreted the 85-15 rule resulting in programs being at risk of violating the 85-15 rule without enrolling a single student veteran and drastically increasing the administrative burden of compliance on institutions. The Ensuring the Best Schools for Veterans Act of 2022 settles these complications and eliminates the negative trickle-down impacts for student veterans by requiring that VA adjust their procedures to match Congress' original intent of the law.

The Government Affairs team is planning to make the most of the final stretch of the 117th Congress by advocating for several remaining policy priorities already well along the legislative process. While not an exhaustive list, this includes:



HR 7939, which addresses some baseline issues with study abroad, ensures protections for GI Bill students during future national emergencies, among other things.



HR 6411, which would mandate a needed study on VA's VITAL program and expand Vet Center access to student veterans using VA education benefits.



HR 1836, which ensures greater GI Bill accrual parity for National Guard and Reserve service members.

SPOTLIGHTS

Student Veteran Spotlight



Ammon Bradford

SVA Chapter President, University of South Florida

Ammon attended SVA's Regional Summit in Atlanta and created a stellar recap video. On his YouTube channel, he also creates thoughtful content about the USF community as well as their SVA chapter within it.

"Being introduced to such amazing student veterans at last year's Natcon inspired me to pursue a leadership role in the University of South Florida's SVA chapter. Since then, I've helped create positive change and have become deeply connected within Tampa's local veteran community. As chapter president, I can now make decisions that will not only benefit our student veterans but encourage them to get involved as I first did during NatCon."

Partner Spotlight

Fiserv, a global leader in the financial technology industry, is a proud partner of SVA through their military and veterans engagement strategy, Fiserv Salutes. This partnership helps create pathways for student veterans and military-connected students through internships and employment opportunities in fields like Finance, Operations, Sales, Marketing, and Information Technology. Fiserv also helps to support our chapters and programs such as SVA's Annual National Conference, SVA's Business & Industry Roundtable, and SVA's Racial Justice Taskforce, part of SVA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.

fiserv.

Learn more about SVA's partnership with Fiserv at:
<https://studentveterans.org/company/fiserv/>

Chapter Spotlight



The SVA Chapter at Las Positas College

The SVA Chapter at Las Positas College has kept busy this summer. In June, they hosted a pancake breakfast for campus-wide support and then celebrated graduation by throwing a social gathering for all student veterans and family members. The chapter welcomed new students by guiding through campus and participated in Operation Dress Code where they supported women veterans transitioning by providing professional attire. June also saw participation in the Annual Bay Area Military Golf Classic and organizing a free hike through the Sunol Wilderness Regional Preserve. In July, they kept up the pace by hosting a family picnic as well as therapy dogs mid-semester for students. The chapter awarded four student veterans a \$2,500 scholarships and participated in the Celebration of Life for Pearl Harbor Survivor and friend of the LPC Veterans First Program, Mickey Ganitch (Nov. 18, 1919-May 4, 2022. R.I.P.). They closed out the summer by participating in Gateway #14, talking to student veterans and helping with benefits, hosting a career panel with mock interviews and speakers, and kicked off the next semester by hosting a welcome back event at the Veterans First Office.

Stay in touch with this exemplary chapter by visiting their website:
<http://www.laspositascollege.edu/veterans/svo.php>

Board Spotlight

SVA is honored to have a dedicated Board of Directors, committed to advancing the vision of empowering student veterans to lead and live their best lives.

Pamela Erickson

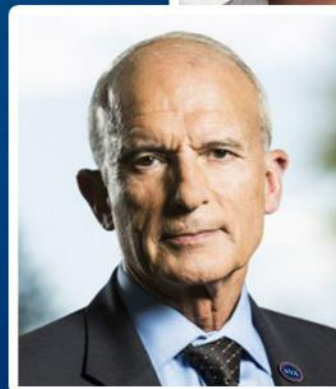
Board Member, Former Chairperson

"A hallmark of SVA is its ability to continually evolve to serve the changing needs of its community. The team stays true to its mission by addressing the real-time needs of student veterans while focusing on the long-term growth goals that will enhance and expand its ability to serve the community."

Major General Chris Cortez

Chairperson, USMC (Ret)

"SVA has distinguished itself as an organization focused on the success of an important segment of our population, our student veterans. Being a member of the SVA Board is a privilege that allows us to contribute to the success of our country's future leaders."



DEI Spotlight



Dr. Christine Quemuel, *Ph.D*

SVA is proud to announce Dr. Christine Quemuel, Ph.D, joins the team as Senior Fellow of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. She will be responsible for strategic development for the DEI initiatives throughout SVA programs, services, research, advocacy, and outreach. She manages collaborative efforts with SVA's Racial Justice Taskforce and participates in national DEI discussions on behalf of Student Veterans of America.

Dr. Quemuel is a first generation and military connected college student. Since 2015, she has served as the Interim Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Director of Student Equity, Excellence, and Diversity, at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. In this role, she is responsible for over twenty departments that provide support services for traditionally underrepresented and underserved ethnic groups, as well as for students with disabilities, women, LGBTQ+, veterans, student parents, low-income and welfare participating students, and a wide variety of students along the spectrum of academic preparedness and achievement. She brings over 25 years of professional experience in higher education and student affairs.

”

"I have been inspired by the efforts of SVA to elevate and give voice to student veterans across the country. And, at this year's NatCon, I was excited to hear Jared announce the SVA racial justice task force. Student veterans represent a very diverse population in higher education, and SVA strives to be a leader in supporting them on campuses. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve SVA in advancing their efforts to support racial justice, equity, and inclusion."

Local Chapter News

Reserve + National Guard Magazine: Student Veterans of America (SVA) chapter at Massachusetts Institute of Technology aims to build community, assist service members

Georgetown University has made significant changes and increases in Yellow Ribbon Program funding to make Georgetown more financially accessible to military-connected students, reports Wesley Wilson, MPA, Director of the Military & Veterans Resource Center at Georgetown University | Enlisted Veteran



National Conference: NatCon registration is open! Join us for the 15th Annual NatCon which will be held at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida, January 5-7, 2023. Learn more at natcon.studentveterans.org



SVA Honors: Nominations for SVA Honors are now open through October 28th. Each year at the National Conference, SVA recognizes the extraordinary student veterans, advisors, chapters, and partners who represent the very best of the student veteran extended community, as well as the epitome of service, scholarship, and accomplishment. Nominate an advisor, chapter, or student veteran now!

Join MySVA, our new online portal for chapter leaders to keep information updated, apply for programs and scholarships, and see other chapter events in your area.



Visit the SVA Career Center to view the latest job posts from our partners, explore our partner directory, access VMock, an online resume review tool, and utilize Veterati, a free mentorship platform for Service Members, Veterans, and Military Spouses to access unlimited mentors.

Scholarships

SVA and Raytheon Missiles and Defense (RMD) have partnered to provide two (2) \$10,000 scholarships to student veterans demonstrating a commitment to and passion for their chosen field of study, as well as demonstrated leadership and engagement within their community. The Patriot Scholarship is offered exclusively to U.S. Army veterans, and is named after RMD's Patriot Air and Missile Defense System.

Eligibility requirements and application located on MySVA.

1012 14th Street NW, 12th Floor Washington D.C. 20005 | Telephone: (202) 223-4710

studentveterans.org | [in](#) [f](#) [ig](#) [t](#) @studentvets | #WeAreSVA