

National Veteran Education Success Tracker: A Promotional Toolkit for SVA Chapter Leaders



INTRODUCTION

Dear Chapter Leader,

Student Veterans of America teamed up with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse to learn how student veterans perform using the GI Bill in higher education. The answer? You're achieving higher than your peers.

Your hard work on campus is paying off, and the data we found through the project, titled National Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST), proves it.

Now, we want to help you and your chapter to let everyone know about the successes of student veterans like you. This toolkit will help you spread the word about student veterans' achievements, and highlight your chapter's efforts to impact student veterans' lives on your campus. This can help your chapter raise its profile on campus and give you more influence with administrators and staff.

This data shows student veterans are a good investment for our nation and educational institutions across the country. By sharing this data, you will demonstrate to your school and supporters that they should further invest in student veterans on campus and continue to provide veterans with opportunities to succeed, transforming the future of higher education.

It will also help other student veterans by raising awareness about the support your chapters offer on campus and the support we offer to you.

Included in this toolkit, you will find:

- Talking points
- Fact Sheets
- Social media posts and guidelines
- Media list tips
- Customizable press release
- Customizable pitch
- Sample email for chapter members
- Sample email to school president
- Sample email to partner organizations
- Suggested events

If you have any questions regarding this kit, its contents, or putting them to use. Please email us at contact@studentveterans.org or 202-223-4710.

TALKING POINTS

Before you tell the world about the success of student veterans in higher education and on your campus, it's important to think about your key messages. These talking points can help guide your conversations with media, professors, your school's officials, and even your classmates.

NVEST talking points:

- Student veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill are more likely to graduate, to have a higher GPA, and to earn academically-rigorous degrees in fields of business, science, technology, math and engineering compared to their peers.
 - Since 2009, the Post-9/11 GI Bill has helped more than 450,000 student veterans complete a post-secondary certificate or degree.
 - Student veterans' GPA on average is 3.35 compared to the national average of 3.11.
 - Twenty-three percent of GI Bill graduates are women, representing a higher percentage than the Armed Forces population overall.
- When compared to their peers, student veterans using the Post-9/11 GI Bill represent the single best source of potential and current achievers in higher education. Today's student veterans are the rightful heirs to the millions who used the World War II-era GI Bill to create a vibrant economy for America.
- The National Veteran Education Success Tracker, or NVEST, research partnership between SVA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse is the only comprehensive study of all Post-9/11 GI Bill students' academic outcomes to show what our investment has translated to for America's workforce.

SVA talking points:

- Student veterans have been supporting each other on campus for decades. Student Veterans of America was founded in 2008 and remains at its heart a grassroots, chapter-based organization that brings together veterans, military family members, and civilians to support veterans' success in higher education and beyond.
- Student Veterans of America is a veteran success organization. We're creating better students, better campuses, better communities, and a better country through the next generation of successful veterans.
- SVA helps service members and veterans make the best choices to succeed in education. We provide the resources and advocacy to support veterans as they consider the best options for their future.

- SVA empowers veterans with the tools to be successful in school through peer networks, local activities, summits and symposiums, and countless other opportunities to develop as a leader before graduation.
- SVA fosters successful transitions into higher education, graduation, and into careers and communities by connecting veterans with our partners' resources, potential employers, and other successful veterans.
- SVA was founded on the belief in peer-to-peer support. We started as a coalition of just 20 student veteran organizations from around the country in 2008. We now proudly serve a network of just over 1,400 chapters in every state and four countries.

Other talking points for you to consider:

Speak about your experiences and how your organization positively impacts your campus.

- Think about what you think student veterans and members of your chapter bring to the table.
- Describe your military service and how you decided on your school.
- How did you get involved in your Student Veterans of America chapter?
- How do these results reflect on the success you have seen in student veterans on your campus and in your chapter?

FACTSHEETS AND RESOURCES

Please review the materials provided in this section and use them in your outreach. You can print and bring to meetings with your college administrators, use them for social media graphics, post them around campus and in your Vet Center, or use them in other creative ways. Tell us how you're using NVEST to share student veterans' success stories with the hashtag #WeAreSVA.

NVEST Fact Sheets: These fact sheets are full of great information and graphics from our report. [Access the fact sheets here.](#)

NVEST Full Report: Read through the entire report, or print out a copy to share with your campus leadership. [Access the full report here.](#)

Images: Our team has pulled out some of the best images and graphics from our NVEST report for your use on social media. [Access and download the images.](#)

SVA Logo files: If you would like to include Student Veterans of America logos in your communications, [you can access them here.](#)

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Social media is a great way to spread the word about student veterans' success. Below are some customizable posts for your chapter to use promoting NVEST and the impact student veterans are having on your campus and community. Download a Word Document of the Sample Social Media Posts by [clicking here](#).

Messaging for SVA chapter social media channels:

Twitter: (Since photos no longer count toward Twitter character counts, please feel free to post a photo of your chapter members in SVA gear or use some graphs from the materials provided. Please be mindful of how your photos will be viewed by SVA donors, your school administrators, and others.)

- Did you know that student veterans are more likely to graduate than their peers? #WeAreSVA Learn more:
 - Insert website link to report
 - Insert a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief
- Student #veterans at <<SCHOOL TWITTER HANDLE>> & nationwide are succeeding! We have higher GPAs than average. #WeAreSVA
 - Insert website link to report
 - Insert a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief
- As student #veterans, we're thriving in #HigherEd. We're pursuing STEM degrees & much more. #WeAreSVA:
 - Insert website link to report
 - Insert a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief
- Why should you support <<SCHOOL TWITTER HANDLE>>'s student veterans? Because we're succeeding:
 - Insert website link to report
 - Insert a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief

Facebook:

- New research shows that student veterans are succeeding in higher education. We're graduating at rates higher than our peers. We're pursuing STEM degrees and other rigorous courses of study. We have higher GPAs than the national average. Check out the link below to learn more. #WeAreSVA:
 - Insert website link to report
 - Change link photo to be a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief

- Student veterans here at <<TAG SCHOOL PAGE>> and across the nation are succeeding! New data shows that we have higher GPAs than average. We are proud to say that #WeAreSVA.
 - Insert website link to report
 - Change link photo to be a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief
- What is SVA? #WeAreSVA. We're student veterans at <<TAG SCHOOL PAGE>> and across the nation, and we are thriving in higher education. We're pursuing STEM and business degrees, graduating at rates higher than our peers, and earning higher GPAs than the national average.
 - Insert website link to report
 - Change link photo to be a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief
- Why should you support <<TAG SCHOOL PAGE>>'s student veterans? Because we're succeeding, and the data proves it:
 - Insert website link to report
 - Change link photo to be a photo of chapter members, or a NVEST graph from fact sheets/brief

MEDIA TIPS

Sharing student veterans' success stories with your campus and local newspapers is a great way to showcase your chapter. The next few pages of this toolkit provide some great advice on helping get the word out effectively to the media and reporters. These steps will help you make a media list and get in touch with some reporters that just may want to tell your story.

- First things first, jump on Google and search <<your town>> news. Don't forget your school newspaper. If you're on a large campus, there may even be two, an official one and an independent one.
- Then, use your findings to make a list of all the TV stations and newspapers that cover your area.
- Once you identify the publications you want to target, you'll need to find the right reporters or editors to reach out to.
- For TV news, we recommend reaching out to the assignment desks and newsrooms. You can find the assignment desk email often by visiting the 'Contact Us' section of the news station's website.
 - If all else fails, give the news station a call and simply ask for an appropriate contact. They will likely provide you with the newsroom email address, or an assignment editor.
- For newspapers and online sources, you want to do a little searching in the publication's archives to see who covers higher education, veterans, or community news and feature stories.
 - If you aren't sure after some researching, give the newspaper a call and ask them for an appropriate contact for your story. They will likely provide you with the email address or transfer you to a reporter.
 - Pro tip: If the paper is relatively small, don't be afraid to send your pitch to the newspaper's news editor.
 - Don't forget your school's blog or newsroom, too!
- Once you've made your list, fill out the sample email pitch below and send individual emails to the contacts you've found.
- Try to send your pitch Tuesday – Thursday during business hours. This way, your email won't get lost in the Monday and Friday shuffle.
- Don't bcc all of the reporters you want to email. Take the time to send each one a fresh email, addressed with their name at the beginning.

- If you don't hear back right away, follow up with the reporter by sending them an email two-three days later.
 - Replying to your previous message and making sure that the reporter's email is in the "to:" line is a great way to make sure your email content stays.
 - Keep your follow-up short and sweet. Let them know you're following up to see if they'd be interested in learning more and give them a one or two sentence recap of your previous email.
 - Don't forget to let them know that you'd love to invite them to a chapter event or meet them for an interview.

CUSTOMIZABLE PRESS RELEASE

Please replace the highlighted items in this customizable press release to encourage media to cover the success of student veterans in your SVA chapter. Download a Word Document of the Customizable Press Release by [clicking here](#).

FOR RELEASE ON:

<<Month>>, <<Day>>, 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<<First & Last of Contact>>

<<Phone number>>

<<Email>>

Student veterans are succeeding at <<School>> and across the nation

New National Veteran Success Education Tracker report shows that student veterans are thriving in higher education

<<City>>, <<State>> – The modern veteran is either broken or a superhero, or at least that's what's presented to us in the movies we watch or articles we read. But a new report, titled the National Veteran Success Education Tracker shows that student veterans are succeeding, including those at <<school>>.

According to the data, compiled in partnership by Student Veterans of America, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse, student veterans are outperforming their peers when it comes to GPA, degree-types, and graduation rates. Research shows student veterans have an average GPA of 3.35 compared to the national average of 3.11.

This trend can be seen on <<school>>'s campus, too. <<provide some specific or general examples from student veterans in your chapter. Ex. You can discuss chapter members that have received a new internship, made the dean's list while managing a part time job or children, or recently received a new degree and went on to get a great new job. Try not to make this section more than 2-3 sentences>>.

<<2-3 sentences with information about your student veterans organization. When it was founded, how many veterans participate, its goals, and how it impacts students on campus and improves the lives of veterans>>.

“<<Quote from a chapter leader about how this data reflects the impact of student veterans on your campus>>” said <<First Name>> <<Last Name>>, <<Chapter title>>.

To learn more about the data and Student Veterans of America, visit [INSERT LINK].

ABOUT STUDENT VETERANS OF AMERICA:

SVA is a veteran success organization. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is a grassroots coalition of more than 1,400 student veteran-led chapters, representing more than 550,000 veterans in higher education, across the country and around the world. Our mission is to provide veterans with the resources and tools to go from successful service member to successful veteran by helping them make the best choices for their education and their future. We're helping create the most successful generation of veterans in American history. For more information, visit us at www.studentveterans.org and follow us on Twitter @studentvets.

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CUSTOMIZABLE PITCH

Please use a variation of this email to reach out to reporters about the success of student veterans in your chapter. Please copy and paste the press release into the email at the bottom. Download a Word Document of the Customizable Pitch by [clicking here](#).

Email subject: Student veterans at <<school>> and nationwide are succeeding at rates higher than peers

Hi <<first name of reporter>>,

The Student Veterans of America chapter here at <<School name>> is thrilled to share new data pointing to the success of student veterans not only at our school, but across the nation.

The research, known as the National Student Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST), conducted in partnership by our parent organization Student Veterans of America, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse proves that student veterans are thriving. We're graduating at high rates, earning GPAs higher than the national average, and much more. It's certainly a trend that we see here on our campus, too.

For example, <<provide some specific examples from student veterans in your chapter. Ex. You can discuss chapter members that have received a new internship, made the dean's list while managing a part time job or children, or recently received a new degree and went on to get a great new job>>.

Please let me know if you'd like to learn more about how the student veterans here at <<school name>> are leading by example and how this data is a reflection of our chapter. I'm happy to arrange interviews with the folks over at SVA or meet with you for an interview.

<<Your name and title>>

SAMPLE EMAIL FOR CHAPTER LEADERS

Don't forget to tell your chapter members about the data and how their success can be seen across the nation. This customizable email blast is a great way to let them know. Download a Word Document of the Sample Email for Chapter Leaders by [clicking here](#).

Email Subject: Student veterans are thriving in higher education, and new data proves it

Hi <<Your organization's name>> members,

We wanted to reach out and enlist your help in spreading the word about our combined success, not only of student veterans here at <<School Name>>, but across the country.

New research, conducted in partnership by our national organization, Student Veterans of America, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the National Student Clearinghouse, has proven that student veterans are thriving in higher education. We're graduating at high rates, earning GPAs higher than the national average, and much more. It's certainly a trend that we see within our own student veteran population here on campus and in our chapter, too.

For example, <<provide some specific examples from student veterans in your chapter. Ex. You can discuss chapter members that have received a new internship, made the dean's list while managing a part time job or children, or recently received a new degree and went on to get a great new job>>.

Help us spread the word about this success, and our chapter's efforts, by sharing this link (INSERT LINK) on your social media accounts, and following along with the national hashtag, #WeAreSVA.

<<In this paragraph, let your members know that you will provide handouts at the next meeting, or tell them about your efforts to spread the word to the chapter.>>

Thank you for helping us spread the word and for all of your hard work. We're thrilled to share the news that we are all doing amazing things here on campus, and beyond. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best,

<<Your Name>>

<<Your Leadership Title>>

<<ATTACH NVEST BRIEF TO EMAIL>>

SAMPLE EMAIL/LETTER TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

You may want to reach out to your school president or another official to discuss the results and how they show the success of student veterans on your campus. This is an email template that you may use as a guide. Download a Word Document of the Sample Email/Letter to School Leadership by [clicking here](#).

Hi <<School President name>>,

<<Your chapter's name>> wanted to reach out and share some great news about the success of student veterans, not only here at <<School Name>>, but across the country.

New research, conducted in partnership by the national Student Veterans of America organization, has proved that student veterans are thriving in higher education across the board. We're graduating at high rates, earning GPAs higher than the national average, and much more. It's certainly a trend that we see here on our campus, too.

For example, <<provide some specific examples from student veterans in your chapter. Ex. You can discuss chapter members that have received a new internship, made the dean's list while managing a part time job or children, or recently received a new degree and went on to get a great new job>>.

Here on campus, we're working to continue empowering our student veterans to be the best that they can be. You can help us spread the word about this success, and our efforts, by reading the report here (INSERT LINK) and following along with the national hashtag, #WeAreSVA.

We would also like to invite you to <<Invite them to a sit down meeting in your students lounge if you have one. Invite them to attend a meeting. This part is up to you, but be sure to have a call to action>> to discuss these trends.

Thank you for your continued support of student veterans here on campus! Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best,
<<Your Name>>

<<Your Leadership Title>>

<<ATTACH NVEST BRIEF TO EMAIL>>

SAMPLE EMAIL TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Other organizations on your campus can be powerful allies to your chapter in student veteran success. This includes VFW and Legion posts, local Team RWB chapters or The Mission Continues platoons, other campus organizations, etc. Reach out to them to discuss and share the results and activate them as partners. You may use this email as a guide. Download a Word Document of the Sample Email/Letter to Partner Organizations by [clicking here](#).

Hi <<Partner organization title/or group leader's name>>,

<<Your groups name>> wanted to reach out and enlist your help in spreading the word about the success of student veterans, not only here at <<School Name>>, but across the country.

New research, conducted in partnership by the national Student Veterans of America organization, has proven that student veterans are thriving in higher education across the board. We're graduating at high rates, earning GPAs higher than the national average, and much more. It's certainly a trend that we see here on our campus, too.

For example, <<provide some specific examples from student veterans in your chapter. Ex. You can discuss chapter members that have received a new internship, made the dean's list while managing a part time job or children, or recently received a new degree and went on to get a great new job>>.

Here on campus, we're working to continue empowering our student veterans to be the best that they can be. You can help us spread the word about this success, and our efforts, by sharing this link (INSERT LINK) on your social media accounts and following along with the national hashtag, #WeAreSVA, or sharing this information with your members.

We also invite you to join us for <<invite them to an event you're having, ask them for a meeting – this part is up to you but make sure your email has a definitive call to action etc>>.

Thank you for helping us spread the word and supporting our organization here on campus! Please let us know if you have any questions.

Best,

<<Your Name>>

<<Your Leadership Title>>

<<ATTACH NVEST BRIEF TO EMAIL>>

SUGGESTED EVENTS

Student Veterans of America would like to encourage you to host an event on your campus to promote student veteran success and break down barriers and stereotypes that say otherwise. This list contains general ideas for events. If you have questions or would like to explore further ideas, please feel free to contact us at contact@studentveterans.org or (202) 223-4710, and we would be happy to help.

- Attend your campus' student government organization association meeting, and ask for the opportunity ahead of time to hand out NVEST briefs or fact sheets, and present on some of the data and what this means for your chapter.
- Host an open house at your student veteran lounge or office. Invite other student organizations, frats, sororities, ROTC, and offer free food or another incentive to help encourage attendance. At the open house, give a quick presentation on how student veterans are succeeding on your campus.
- Host a panel on campus to discuss how student veterans are succeeding in higher education and on your campus. Invite a school employee who is a veteran, involve some outstanding chapter members, and include members of your school's veteran support team.
- Reach out to your school's communications department and ask if they would be open to hosting a member of your chapter for a Twitter chat about student veteran success.
- Invite a prominent member of the community to speak to student veteran success to a group of students at your school.
- Table at your campus' student organization fair. Bring print outs of the NVEST briefs or fact sheets along with your organization's promotional materials. Be ready to speak with interested students about what your chapter brings to the table.