Mission Statement

The Northeastern University Student Veterans organization is dedicated to providing a medium for the smooth transition of active military members to successful college student. The group seeks to facilitate this vital process by building a social community with a spirit of camaraderie and charity that advocates on behalf of its members to the school’s administration on quality of life issues. Finally, the group aims to serve as a liaison between veterans and the greater student body and enable a better understanding of the experience and sacrifice inherent to military service.

Background

The SVO was founded in 2009 by a small group of veterans at Northeastern. The group met monthly and discussed ways to better the lives of veterans at the University. It tackled issues like post 9/11 GI Bill payments, The Yellow Ribbon Program, and health benefits. The members gradually became friends and by late 2011 reaffirmed their commitment to the group and began its expansion. In the last year it has grown exponentially to include more than 20 active members, a veteran’s lounge, monthly social events, and a strong relationship with the University’s administration.

The SVO has also gained particular prominence on campus as leaders. We have members who sit on the Student Government Finance Board, Student Conduct Board, and participate in other student groups on campus. This initiative has paid off for the group and it has become a trusted advisor to the University on all levels of veteran’s issues.

In the future, the SVO only has room to grow and has a number of initiatives to gain even more prominence in the Northeastern Community, State of Massachusetts, and Nationally.

At a Glance

- Represents more than 141 veterans on campus with 25 active members.
- Monthly Events / Meetings
- Student Run Veterans Resources Center
- Career Services / Admissions Tailoring
- Full media strategy
  (Website, Facebook, Twitter)
- Over $8000 Raised for Charity (2012)
- Educational Outreach Program
- Business Networking
Tools

Veteran's Success Committee
The SVO meets monthly with the school’s administration to discuss issues and plan upcoming events such as Veterans Day, veterans orientation, and fundraisers.

Software
The SVO uses programs provided by Google to collaborate and organize membership and events

- Google Docs, Analytics, spreadsheet, etc…
- Hootsuite- to schedule Tweets and Facebook posts and track usage

Career Services
We have a strong relationship with Northeastern University Career Services which was recently ranked #1 nationally. Career services provides us with a variety of valuable tools including:

- Resume workshops
- Interview tips
- Networking
- Job fairs
- Co-op Program

Student Veteran of America
The Northeastern SVO enjoys a strong relationship with the SVA and through them gains access to a variety of veterans outreach programs including recent initiatives by Google, Microsoft, and Raytheon. Our members have also traveled to SVA conferences to learn how to better run our organization and tap into the greater student veteran network.

Media

Print Media Strategy: The SVO makes an attempt to have media coverage at every major event or initiative we undertake. In the past year this has included coverage in Northeastern school newspaper, the Huntington Times, the Boston Globe, and a variety of other media outlets.

Website: The SVO website acts as a consolidation point of all the events we have going on, programs offered, and best way to get the most out of Northeastern University.

Facebook: Facebook acts as the group’s active blog and newsreel. We post information about meetings and events, upload pictures and video from the group’s activities, and provide a variety of useful online links for our members. We also use the social media program to take the pulse of the group and get feedback and input about possible issues. Social media is a revolutionary promoting and networking tool that our organization has used to the fullest advantage.

Twitter: Twitter is used for exterior communications with other organizations or charities. It’s important to tap into the greater student veteran network and Twitter is a fantastic tool with which to do this. (Throw in some of our badass followers Raytheon etc.)
Goals

Short-term

Raise $15,000 for Red Sox Foundation Run to Home Base Program to support 20 runners

- Task individuals to ask for donations at local businesses.
- Host two fundraising events at a local cooperating bar that will include auctions and raffles.

Advise the University on the creation of a comprehensive admissions website to assist in transition from the military to student.

- Work with the Student Services Coordinator and the Senior V.P. of Marketing and Communications to redesign the Northeastern University Veteran website to make it meet the requirements of the group.

Work with the university to accept credit for military service as recognized by the American Council on Education

- Coordinate with the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and persuade the school to accept military credits.

Engage more professors for Educational Outreach Program

- Targeted e-mails going through specific departments with professors that may find the perspective of veterans useful to their curriculum

Support the newly created Massachusetts Governors Student Veteran Advisory Board in establishing precedent in assisting veteran’s transition out of the military to university life

- Use our own experiences in building and nurturing a student veterans organization to lay the foundation for a greater statewide organization. The SVO enjoys an intimate relationship with the group including a position a board advisory position.
Long-term

Recruit all veterans who attend Northeastern University to become active members in the group

- Orientation Plan, admissions, school website improvement, media strategy, welcome dinner,

Create an environment conducive to active engagement by members

- Social events, member investment, utilize individual strengths, improve group collaboration

Establish a network of local and national veteran friendly companies that will help members in the job search post-graduation

- Work with the school Career Services to hone every member’s job-finding skills. Establish strong and lasting relationships with local and national companies. Utilize the SVA and other student veteran networks.

Create a self-sustainable group that will last longer than the current leadership and be an example for other groups on campus

- Diffuse responsibilities and organizational involvement so that newer members take ownership in the group. Establish a strong foundation with guidelines and traditions that will sustain the group for years to come.
# Budget

## Expenses

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<td>Ski Trip SGA Finance Board</td>
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## BALANCE

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Media Strategy

Social media is our primary means of spreading information about the various events and activities the group is involved with. To manage our social media initiative, we use Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com) to send out scheduled posts and tweets, analyze reports, and network with external organizations.

The SVO recently partnered with the Northeastern University Athletic Department to conduct an auction of Camouflage Jerseys worn by the Men’s Hockey Team for Veterans. As part of our campaign, the SVO sent 3 tweets per day and advertised on Facebook and the group’s website. This campaign helped the auction to raise more than $8,000 for the Red Sox’s Run to Home Base Foundation on behalf of our group. The tangible results of our twitter campaign, which occurred between November 10th and November 18th can clearly be seen in the metric below:

Twitter Analysis

The above chart depicts a targeted summary of how many times our generated link was clicked for our fundraising efforts.

The same analysis can be - and is - being conducted on other campaigns. We will use this data to fine tune future strategies for even greater success.

Hootsuite has been a valuable resource to increase our organization’s presence with Student Veterans groups nationwide. The ability to set up an automatic schedule for Twitter and Facebook posts has allowed us to create a comprehensive and seamless media strategy.
Educational Outreach Program

One of the key functions of the Northeastern University Student Veterans organization is to better educate the general student body about military and veterans issue. We’ve recently begun a program that reaches out to professors who are interested in having a veteran speak in their class about issues as diverse as the psychology behind suicide bombers to the effectiveness of the military’s Tri-Care health system.

Before any veteran goes and speaks in front of a class the SVO approaches a professor and asks a series of questions. The purpose of these questions is to gauge what the professor’s intent is for having a veteran speak. The also act as a baseline to gauge how successful the veterans presentation was and how we can improve the presentations in the future. Questions asked before a veteran speaks:

- Course:
- Course Description:
- What do you hope to get out of a veteran coming to class to speak?
- How will a veteran coming to class tie in to your curriculum?
- Have you served or do you have family who has served in the military (do not answer if you feel uncomfortable doing so)?
- Are you willing to have Photographers come to your class the day of the event?
- Any other concerns or comments?

After the veteran speaks the SVO immediately sends a thank you and another set of questions. These questions are designed to assess how the Veteran did while speaking and make adjustments if need be.

- Did the veteran meet your expectations?
- Did the veteran dispel any prior held beliefs?
- What did you personally learn from this experience?
- In your opinion, did the students receive the intended lesson? If no, how could we improve?
- In a few sentences describe how successful the EOP was, or ways we can improve (or both).
- May we use your comments in any future reports?

Professors have complied with this policy and have been happy (see ‘Program Descriptions’). However, if a professor does not comply, then they will not be considered again in the future.
Educational Outreach Program

The Educational Outreach Program is an opportunity for professors to utilize current Student Veterans attending Northeastern University to enhance their curriculum. Student Veterans are available to speak about a wide array of topics and will give students the opportunity to ask questions of Veterans that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to.

~Feedback~

“The speakers themselves were polished, confident and very professional in their approach. I couldn’t have hoped for better speakers. I also applaud their effort of actually taking time for this. I know they did a lot of preparation and even read our course material”

~Professor Natalie Bormann

“His presentation was thoughtful, informative, and inspiring. He had some keen insights about the needs of veterans in the health care system. The feedback from my students was unanimously positive.”

~Prof. Ann Polcari

MA Governors Student Veteran Advisory Board

The Massachusetts Governors Student Veteran Advisory Board (S-VAB) is an initiative started by the State of Massachusetts to ensure that Student veterans in Massachusetts are able to maximize the benefits owed to them. They also assist in the transition process from military to university life, offer guidance on how to start a Student Veteran Organization, and provide current Student Veteran Organizations networking resources. The (S-VAB) also acts as a bridge to high level representatives to address issues raised by the greater student veteran population.
Huskies for Heroes

Since 2011, the Student Veterans Organization has participated in the Run/Walk to Home Base at Fenway Park through its Huskies for Heroes team. Team members have included SVO members, Northeastern students, Northeastern alumni, and New England veterans. In 2011, Huskies for Heroes raised over $5,000 for the Home Base Program, and over $6,000 in 2012. With the continued support of the Northeastern community, Veterans Service Organizations (VSO’s) and local businesses, the SVO hopes to increase fundraising capacity each successive year.

The Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital Home Base Program serves New England by identifying, motivating, and clinically treating wounded service members and veterans with combat stress and traumatic brain injury and their families. The Home Base Program serves the nation as a model for private-public collaborations as an educational resource about the invisible wounds of war that now effect an estimated 30 percent of those who served or are serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. We are also working on the development of new treatments for post-traumatic stress (PTS) and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

TBI Research Initiative

The SVO is partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as area schools to compile data on the effects of Traumatic Brain Injury as a result of explosion or blast. For participating in the study compensation will be provided. The research being conducted will not only help the current generation of veterans, but will also give the VA the tools necessary to help veterans of the future.

Book Stipend Booster

The expensive and ever increasing cost of books and academic material at Northeastern University led to shortfall between the G.I. Bill’s book stipend and the actual expense of books for student veterans. To solve this problem, the SVO successfully led an initiative with the school’s administration to cover any book expenses in excess of the G.I. Bill’s yearly stipend. This program began this past fall and has been highly lauded by veterans camps wide.

Corporate Outreach

The SVO has recently started an effort to transform our extensive and valuable networks and outreach programs into employment opportunities for our members. Our group has since met with different companies including; Wellington Management, Google, Microsoft, the Kostas Institute for Homeland Security, and several others to make this happen. SVO leadership is currently compiling a database of contact to share with members of the group to augment out Career Services Page on our website.

http://nuweb9.neu.edu/svo/resources/career-services/
Northeastern University

Accomplishments Recap

• Established the Veterans Resource Center

• Advised officials on the creation of a Veterans Coordinator at Northeastern University

• Founded the Educational Outreach Program - To bring students, professors, and veterans together

• Created a comprehensive website (www.neu.edu/svo)


• Successfully Advocated for and established a 'Veterans only' incoming student orientation (http://bit.ly/vetswelcome)

• Established the Book Stipend Booster to cover extra cost that fall outside the post 9-11 G.I. bill stipend

• Envisioned and Finalized the creation of a Logo to be used in any media type

• Raised approximately $20,000 since 2011 to go towards veteran related charities

• Established the Veterans Welcome Dinner to welcome new and returning student veterans

• Reached out to and created working relationships with area schools (Boston University, UMASS, Harvard, Suffolk University, Mass School of Pharmacy, Mass school of professional psychology)

• Created a working relationship with the VA Mental Health Department

• Created the MA Governors Student Veteran Advisory Board
Student Veterans Organization
124 Forsyth Building
360 Huntington Ave
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 373-2612