

# Things You Should Know about Student Service Members and Veterans




# SVA Leadership Institute 'Think Tank'


On July 20, 2012, student veteran leaders from across the U.S. collectively responded to the question:

***“What should every veteran-competent school know about you?”***


Their answers to the question and related recommendations follow.




- With appropriate supports, student veterans have better indicators of academic success than civilian students.
  - Student veterans on campus raise the bar in the classroom.
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- Despite their maturity and experience, student veterans still want to have a college experience.
  - Student veterans may be 'uneducated' in their academic major, but they are not inexperienced.
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- Many of us have been out of school for a long time.
- The first semester is critical to our academic success.


- Student veterans are focused, committed, and ‘winners,’ who will get it done.
  - Our life experiences are unique and valuable.
  - Student veterans are bright, resourceful, flexible, and resilient.
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- Student veterans give back to their communities and tend to be highly invested in service projects.
  - Student veterans have a well developed sense of humor.
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# Recommendations

- Create a mission for us. Provide guidance on how to navigate the system.
- Include us in planning programs and services... maybe even curriculum.



- Work across departments to find ways to minimize administrative burden.
  - Make critical skills training and tutoring available.
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- Raise faculty awareness.
  - Create inclusive learning environments that recognize diverse learning styles.
  - Develop policies that are consistent, transparent, and easily found.
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- Avoid requiring 'heavy duty' math, science, and other rigorous courses in the first semester.

Not everyone may be ready for the academic setting. We need to make sure people don't waste months of their GI Bill struggling with non-academic issues. It's not always the administrators' issue; it may be our obligation as SVO leaders to point this out to our members.