# SVA wants your proposals for breakouts at our 12th annual national conference

The 12th annual Student Veterans of America (SVA) National Conference (NatCon) offers opportunities for SVA chapters, military-connected students, higher education professionals, veteran service organizations (VSOs), researchers, and industry leaders to share best practices, hone leadership skills, network, and share innovative ideas, policies, and programs. NatCon 2019 hosted over 2,300 attendees that included student veterans, chapter advisors, higher education professionals, employers, veteran service organizations, stakeholders, and policy makers. The 96 breakout sessions at NatCon 2019 forged lasting connections between attendee stakeholders. NatCon is the premier annual event to engage with student veterans, higher education, and veteran communities.

The NatCon 2020 theme is **"Learn Today. Lead Tomorrow."** The theme spotlights the critical transition points in every student veteran's journey from servicemember to scholar, and ultimately to becoming a leader in their workplace and community. This theme pays tribute to an established history of student veterans and SVA chapter alumni leading the way in their communities, the national workforce, and American society.

The NatCon 2020 Proposal Committee invites your proposals for interactive and engaging one-hour breakout sessions showcasing emerging trends; new research, policies, and programs; and best practices on topics related to student veterans and their experiences through and beyond college. The committee encourages proposals that focus on the support systems that lead to greater academic success and leadership skills for student veterans.

# What would you like to share with tomorrow's leaders at NatCon 2020? Here are the four types of proposals we are accepting:

- **Presentation:** This type of session typically involves one or two individuals presenting on programming, best practices, or research in a single, standalone lecture format. In a one-hour format, typically 45 to 50 minutes is allocated for the presentation with 15 minutes for questions and discussion. This is ideal for sharing insights on development, implementation, and evaluation of programming, projects, best practices, and research.
Presentation Proposal Template

- **Panels:** Moderated panelists represent perspectives on a topic. Time is typically allotted for audience participation and questions. This is the preferred format for question-and-answer discussions or to explore aspects of a topic, challenge, or question.
Panel Proposal Template

- **Action Lab:** Hands-on activities resulting in attendees' learning new skills or improving materials (resumes, personal branding, cover letters). These sessions typically include measurable outcomes and might require attendees to BYOD (Bring Your Own Device).
Action Lab Proposal Template

- **Think Tank:** A highly interactive, attendee-participation session about an issue or question Initially, the moderator presents the issue or question, providing relevant context. Attendees break into groups and then reconvene for a moderated discussion. Proposals must succinctly identify the question or issue, its value, the context, and the roles of the breakout groups. For example, will groups each address the same overall topic or question, or will each examine a different assigned viewpoint on the topic?
Think Tank Proposal Template

## NatCon 2020 Proposal Tracks

The Proposal Committee revised and expanded this year's tracks to broaden and promote diversity while helping attendees focus on relevant topics:

- **SVA Chapter Management:** Chapter-based best practices with the goal of promoting growth, strength, activities, and sustainability; chapter-advisor development; and strategies and methods to promote peer support, collaboration, and advocacy.

- **Campus Engagement:** Student veterans' inclusion and participation on campus; support systems that promote student-veteran success inside and outside the classroom; and local, state, and federal advocacy efforts to strengthen the community.

- **Higher-Education Professionals:** The work and interests of administrators, staff, and faculty in improving their campuses for student veterans and military-connected students, recruiting more student veterans, and facilitating conversations between student veterans and campus leaders.

- **Career and Professional Development:** Increasing student veterans' readiness for the job market and the role professional development plays in career advancement.

- **\*NEW\* SVA Alumni:** Topics about life after college and developing meaningful connections as alumni – with chapters, schools, and communities.

- **\*NEW\* Diversity and Inclusion:** The positive impact a diverse student-veteran population brings to chapters, campus, community, and the workforce; and inclusive strategies and programs.

- **Data and Metrics:** Current research and program evaluations related to student veterans, military-connected students, and the larger adult student population, with the goal of expanding research and promoting data-driven discussions and decisions.

- **\*NEW\* Veteran Well-Being:** Veterans' physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being throughout the educational cycle – to, through, and beyond college.

## NatCon 2020 Session Levels

NatCon attracts attendees with different levels of knowledge and experience. The levels help the attendee decide if the session meets his or her needs:

- **Foundational:** An introduction. Best for attendees who are new to the field.

- **Intermediate:** Expanding an attendee's knowledge about a topic. For attendees who have been in the field for a few years.

- **Advanced:** A deep dive. For attendees who have been in the field for several years.

## Notification

SVA will inform the presenters chosen via email in August.

## Fees

Presenters and panelists are responsible for NatCon 2020 registration fees and any other expenses. They may take advantage of Early-bird registration fees and conference hotel rates.

## Where to submit your idea

Use the online proposal system: bit.ly/natcon2020cfp

## Deadline

June 7, 2019 at 11:59pm EDT

# How to submit your proposal

1. Read this document and the other linked resources.

2. Create your NatCon 2020 presenter profile at [bit.ly/natcon2020cfp](bit.ly/natcon2020cfp).

3. After you log in, complete your presenter profile.

4. Click on the "Session Information" link.

5. Select the appropriate session track, type, and level for your proposal.

6. **NOTE:** All text boxes show character limits, which include characters and spaces, and will count down as you enter information. You may copy and paste from a document but please check the character counts to make sure your pasted content fits.

7. Create a concise, engaging, and accurate title that reflects the content and entices attendees. Do not enter identifying information about the presenter in the title field.

8. Add your proposal abstract or summary, which will be the basis for NatCon 2020 program text. This is what attendees will potentially see at NatCon 2020. Be concise, clear, and tell attendees what they might learn.

9. Add your proposal description. This is what the committee uses to select proposals. Do not enter identifying information about the presenter in the proposal field. Please review the *NatCon 2020 Scoring rubric* to ensure all elements are included.

10. Click "Add Co-Presenter" to add any co-presenters or panelists. Ensure all co-presenters and panelists listed have agreed to participate, are aware of the presenter agreement, and that their contact information is completed by **June 7, 2019 at 11:59pm EDT.**

11. Click "Presentation Needs" to include any audio/visual needs. Breakout session venues will have a laptop, projector, and screen.

12. Review and agree to the Presenter Agreement.

13. Your proposal will not be submitted until you click "Submit." After it is submitted, you may edit the proposal until **June 7, 2019 at 11:59pm EDT.**

# NatCon 2020 Rubric

| | 1<br>Poor | 2<br>Fair | 3<br>Acceptable | 4<br>Good | 5<br>Excellent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How would you describe the proposed **session description?** | Underdeveloped idea, unclear, or confusing | Some development idea, major gaps, no clear focus | Developed idea, some clarifications needed, has focus | Strong, developed idea, minor clarifications, clear focus, | Well-developed idea, complete, coherent focus |
| Is the proposal's **intended audience** clearly described? | No mention of the proposal's intended audience | Intended audience implied but not described | Broad description of the intended audience | Clear description of the intended audience | Detailed description of the intended audience |
| Does this proposal provide **original content or discussion** for the attendees? | No new thought or content | Recycled content previously delivered | New interpretation or innovative look on old content | Mostly new content mixed with old content | Completely new content, never previously seen or discussed |
| How would you rate the **presenter(s) qualifications?** | Does not indicate any experience and knowledge in this field or topic | Little experience and knowledge in this field or topic | Limited experience and knowledge in this field or topic | Extensive experience and knowledge in this field or topic | Expert knowledge and leader in this field or topic |
| How well does the **proposal fit into the 1-hour breakout session format?** | No fit at all. Too much or little material for 1-hour breakout session | Difficult fit. Major changes needed to fit within the format | Good fit. Some changes may be needed to fit with the format | Strong fit. Presenter may not have enough time for audience engagement | Perfect fit. Time to cover proposed material with time for audience engagement |
| How **beneficial** will this proposal be to the audience? | None. The presenter benefits more than the audience | A few audience members will benefit from the proposal | Many audience members will find the proposal beneficial | Most audience members will find the proposal beneficial | All audience members will benefit from the proposal |
| What level of **impact** will this proposal have on the conference attendees? | Will have no impact on conference attedees | Minimal impact on conference attendees | Some impact; some discussions and new ideas may occur | Large impact; highly likely will lead to future discussion and generate ideas | Extreme impact; certain to lead to future discussions and changes in the field |
| Would you **recommend** this proposal be included in NatCon 2020? | Definite No. I would fight not to include it in the conference | Leaning No. I would rather not see it in the conference | Maybe. Include only if there is room | Yes. I would like to see it in the conference | Definite Yes. I would fight to have it in the conference |

# NatCon 2020 Proposal Submission FAQs

**Who can submit a proposal?**
This is an open call for proposals. Anyone may submit a proposal for consideration. Individuals in the veteran or higher education fields are encouraged to submit a proposal. You do not need to be associated with a school that has an active SVA chapter to submit.

**Can an SVA partner or vendor propose a session?**
Yes. We understand that individuals associated with our partners often have important information and expertise to share. Our proposal committee will evaluate in the same context as other proposals, specifically to assess the value to student veterans.

**Do I need to submit the full presentation (e.g. slides)?**
No. All we need are the speaker bios, abstract, and a description for a complete submission. You do not need to have the entire presentation completed to submit a proposal.

**Can I edit my proposal after it has been submitted?**
Yes. The submission site allows the ability for proposals to be saved for completion later. You may also edit any information on the proposal. However, all edits or changes must be completed before the submission deadline, **June 7, 2019 at 11:59pm EDT.** You may also completely withdraw an incomplete or submitted proposal before the deadline.

**Can I submit more than one proposal?**
Yes, you may submit more than one proposal and participate on more than one panel. However, the NatCon 2020 Proposal Committee will be considering the diversity of the panelists in its final selections.

**What if I'm not sure which track to select?**
Select the track you think most closely matches. The committee may recommend placing your proposal in another track if they feel it is stronger and more appropriate, so don't worry too much about choosing one!

**Can my proposal be placed in a track other than the one I selected?**
Yes. As the committee receives proposals, they may decide to amend or adjust the parameters of tracks and reassign your proposal to a different track. The committee will inform the primary presenter of the change prior to the conference.

**Who reviews the submitted proposals?**
Volunteers score the proposals through an annual call for reviewers. Each proposal is reviewed by an SVA staff member, a student veteran or chapter advisor, and a member of the veteran or higher education community.

**If I submit a proposal, can I also volunteer as a reviewer?**
Yes. You will still need to list any potential conflicts of interest when you sign up to review, and you will not be reviewing or scoring your own proposal. To volunteer to be a reviewer please follow this link: bit.ly/natcon2020cfp.

**Are the proposals blind reviewed?**
Proposals undergo a half-blind review process in which reviewers are not revealed to the session presenters, but session presenters are revealed to reviewers. A successful session requires strong content and organization, as well as a presenter who has the background and experience to discuss the topic. The half-blind review process allows presenters to share their backgrounds, affiliations, and any other evidence of their expertise with reviewers. The half-blind review puts all presenters on a level playing field to build the case for their expertise.

**Are there ever conflicts of interest between reviewers and presenters?**
When reviewers volunteer, they are asked to note any potential conflict of interests or have a close connection with a potential presenters or proposal. Reviewers are first randomly assigned to specific proposals but are checked to eliminate any potential conflict of interests before the review process begins. There is the potential for a reviewer to be assigned a proposal in which they have a vested interest or close connection. In these cases, reviewers declare conflicts of interest and are reassigned to other proposals. NatCon 2020 Proposal Committee trusts reviewers to determine what constitutes a conflict of interest that would create an unfair review environment and to recuse themselves from evaluating such proposals.

**How are the proposals scored?**
Reviewers use a standard rubric to evaluate submissions for the presentation formats offered. Criteria are evaluated on a scale of 1–5 (1 = poor; 5 = excellent). Some tracks or types of proposals have more specific scoring questions. Please see the NatCon 2020 scoring rubric.

**How are proposals selected for acceptance?**
Proposals are ranked based on reviewer ratings. Because there are usually far more high-quality proposals than space available, additional screening is required to reduce the number of presentations and balance the overall program in terms of topics and levels. Space limitations usually mean that some high-quality sessions are not accepted.

**What is the acceptance rate for proposals?**
Due to space and time limitations, not all proposals can be accepted each year. For NatCon 2019, the acceptance rate was 38% of all complete submissions. This acceptance rate maintains a high level of programming quality—and it's a primary reason NatCon is so successful.

**When will I know if I've been accepted?**
Notifications will be emailed in August to the primary presenter connected to the proposal.

For additional information about submitting a proposal for presentation at NatCon 2020, please email: natconcfp@studentveterans.org.

# Potential Topics of Interest

Below is a partial list of potential topics to submit a proposal for NatCon 2020. The list was collected from feedback and comments from NatCon 2019 attendees and student veterans. This list is not comprehensive and should be used only for inspiration and idea generation. The committee encourages anyone with an idea that fits in one of the tracks to develop and submit a proposal. The topics below will not be given special treatment or higher consideration by the NatCon 2020 Proposal Committee.

**SVA Chapter Management**

- Chapter advising
- Chapter business plan
- Chapter communications: members, campus, community
- Chapter fundraising
- Chapter innovations
- Chapter leadership pipeline and continuity
- Chapter member recruitment, engagement, outreach, and retention
- Chapter partnerships: On-campus and in the community
- Chapter relationships: members, campus, community
- Leadership styles
- On-Campus advocacy
- Peer-support: development and systems
- Chapter development: forming, growing, and sustaining
- Veteran center advocacy, planning, and operations

**Campus Engagement**

- Campus services and resources
- Community organizations and SVA chapters
- Financial Aid (Dept Ed-Title IV funding, FAFSA, etc.)
- Local, state, and federal advocacy efforts
- Academic major topics (STEM, Healthcare, Social Sciences, etc.)
- State, local, and private financial resources
- VA education benefits (GI Bill, Voc Rehab, etc.)

**Higher Education Professionals**

- Campus veteran centers
- Higher education and veteran policies
- Military transfer credits
- Veteran campus recruitment
- Veterans and student affairs
- Veteran-specific campus programs and services

## Career and Professional Development

- Campus career centers
- Career planning and preparation
- Changing careers
- Corporate culture
- Entrepreneurship
- Graduate school planning and success
- Industry-Specific topics
- Internships
- Networking
- Salary and benefits negotiation
- SVA chapters and corporate partners
- The hiring process

## SVA Alumni

- Becoming a mentor
- Campus alumni associations
- Home buying
- Retirement, investment, and financial planning
- SVA alumni networking
- VA benefits
- VSO memberships

## Diversity and Inclusion

- Current topics on diversity and inclusion
- Diversity and inclusion: SVA chapters, campus, and workforce
- Employee resource groups
- Leadership, diversity, inclusion
- Military and veteran discourse
- Military-civilian divide
- Subject-Specific: LGBT+, Women, Disability, Mental Illness, etc.

**Data and Metrics**

- Adult learner outcomes and experiences
- Campus program, policy, or services evaluations
- Data collection and resources
- Data-Driven decision making
- GI Bill impact
- Student veteran persistence, completion, retention
- Veterans' impact on higher education and workforce

**Veteran Well-Being**

- Accessing healthcare
- Finding and accessing community resources
- Fitness & nutrition
- Peer & community support
- Preventative care
- Resiliency skills
- Self-advocacy