Georgia Southern University named a finalist for Student Veterans of America ‘Chapter of the Year’ Award

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Col. George Fredrick, Ed.D., director of Georgia Southern’s Military and Veteran Services (center) receives a finalist award on behalf of the University’s Student Veterans of America chapters.

Georgia Southern University was selected as a finalist for the Chapter of the Year awarded by Student Veterans of America (SVA), an organization focused on advocating for and advancing resources for veterans in higher education.

The University has SVA chapters on the Statesboro Campus and Armstrong Campus in Savannah, both of which were recognized with the award.

“I am so proud of both of our SVA Chapters,” said Col. George Fredrick, Ed.D., director of Military and Veteran Services. “They offer truly outstanding support to our military-connected student population at Eagle Nation.”
While this is the first time Georgia Southern has been a contender for this acknowledgement, the University has a tradition of being recognized for its investment in the military community.

The Army ROTC program was established in 1980, and has won the MacArthur Award four times since 2009 for being one of the nation’s top ROTC programs. The Military Times publication named Georgia Southern as a Top 15 Best for Vets 4-year school for five consecutive years, including in 2019 when the University was ranked No. 1.

Because the University operates near Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah and Fort Stewart in Hinesville, a number of students, faculty and staff are enlisted, retired or spouses of military members.

Richelle Keilholz, Ed.D., is the staff advisor for SVA-Armstrong, and she believes this makes the campus community and military community deeply intertwined.

“They become part of the campus culture, and I think that’s where you start to see that excellence comes when you have that kind of devotion,” said Keilholz. “You want to see our military service members, our family members and our spouses succeed in the military community and in higher education.”

Georgia Southern’s relationship with veterans isn’t common among other universities, said military veteran project coordinator Rudy Duero. Many veterans feel overlooked and are an “untapped resource,” but not at Georgia Southern.

“It’s awesome to have a group of individuals at the executive level who care and respect the opinions of the veteran students,” Duero said. “Veterans are being heard and they know that they’re being heard when they have good leadership representing them. The communication is always open.”

Georgia Southern is one of five schools to be named a finalist for the award. The University sent a delegation to Orlando to attend the awards ceremony on Jan. 7.

Academic and financial resources for veterans looking to pursue a degree can be found here.

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