



WAVES

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER MAY 2026



MISSION

To serve School Certifying Officials (SCOs) by promoting professional standards, ethical practices, and collaboration with government partners. WAVES aims to enhance Veteran Education Services by unifying all stakeholders in the exchange of knowledge and best practices that support our military-affiliate learners.

VISION

To promote greater cooperation among all School Certifying Official stakeholders in jointly supporting Education & Training Institutions to addressing the unique needs of military-affiliated learners.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello WAVES Partners,

I'm proud to share that the WAVES Board has been hard at work advancing our [vision](#) of promoting greater cooperation across the School Certifying Official community. This year, we have supported State SCO conferences across each region, including California, Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana. It has been an honor to witness the incredible work taking place in Veterans Education Services nationwide.

To further strengthen these connections, I'm excited to announce the addition of an [SCO Association page](#) on our website. This new resource will provide contact information and highlight upcoming activities for more than 10 state-specific associations, helping to better connect SCOs and foster collaboration across all regions.

Looking ahead, planning for WAVES 2026, our 30th Annual Conference, is in full swing. This year promises to be more engaging than ever **with in-person support from US Department of Veterans Affairs trainers**. We are proud to partner with outstanding organizations such as Student Veterans of America, the American Legion, and Higher Military Education, among others. These partners will join us as presenters and exhibitors, bringing valuable resources and insights directly to you. I encourage you to review our [tentative agenda](#) for a full list of participating organizations.

I would also like to remind everyone that nominations for the [John Murray Education & Training Award](#) remain open through May 15. This award recognizes excellence among students and trainees from member institutions. SCOs are encouraged to nominate deserving individuals for this \$500 non-tuition award, which can be used to support educational expenses and supplies.

Finally, 2026 is a WAVES Board election year. SCOs from member institutions are encouraged to learn more about open board positions and the responsibilities outlined in our [association bylaws](#). If you are interested in running, please submit your intention along with a short bio and headshot to info@uswaves.org.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you July 20–24 in Hollywood, California, as we celebrate 30 years of impact in Veterans Education.

Warm regards,

Jason T. Garcia, MBA, U.S. Army Retired
WAVES President



We are thrilled to announce in-person support from VA Approvals, Compliance, and Liaison trainers!



A special thank you to VA Education



for your training and support



throughout the years!

Check out the agenda here:
<https://uswaves.org/agenda/>





Early Bird Registration

DON'T MISS OUT – ENDS MAY 31, 2026!

In celebration of WAVES's 30-Year Anniversary, all Early Bird registrants receive \$150 off the regular registration rate. Discount applies to both members and non-members during the Early Bird period only.

**2026 Membership Dues:
\$100 per institution**

All 2025 Institutional Memberships have **expired** and **must be renewed** to receive member benefits. 2026 Membership begins the day dues are paid and ends **February 1, 2027**.

Exclusive Benefits of WAVES Membership

- Member Education and Training Institutions (ETIs) receive a \$125 discount on conference registration for all SCOs employed by the institution.
- SCOs employed by member ETIs are eligible to submit education award nominations on behalf of students or trainees enrolled at the member ETI.
- SCOs employed by member ETIs are eligible to seek election to the WAVES board.
- Member ETIs will be listed in the WAVES member directory published on the association website.

Early Bird Pricing:
Members: \$575
Non-members: \$700

Registration Link: <https://uswaves.org/registration/>

2026 WAVES BOARD ELECTIONS



2026 is an election year for WAVES, and we encourage eligible members to consider serving our community by running for a board position.

Members interested in learning more about eligibility and responsibilities are encouraged to review the WAVES bylaws at www.uswaves.org/bylaws.

In addition, a Board Orientation Session will be held during the conference to provide valuable information for all interested School Certifying Officials.

If you are interested in running, please submit your intention along with a short bio and headshot to info@uswaves.org.





Proposed Bylaw Amendment

We are providing the following proposed amendment to the bylaws, which will be discussed during the annual business meeting, July 23rd.

Article IV Section 4 Reads:

“Section 4. Annual dues for membership shall be established by the Executive Board during the annual conference. (Set at \$100.00 to run July 1–June 30.)”

Proposed Amendment:

Institutional membership dues and membership periods shall be established annually by the Executive Board.

Visit our website for more information:

<https://uswaves.org/bylaws-and-documents/>



Call for Workshop Presentation Proposals

Make a difference at WAVES 2026 by sharing your knowledge, best practices, and ideas with your fellow School Certifying Officials. We're looking for innovative, diverse, and engaging workshop presentations to inspire and support our community.

Submit your proposal here:



[WAVES Workshop Proposal Application](#)

We look forward to your contributions!

NOW EXTENDED TO JUNE 1, 2026

Pin Design Contest Winner

Congratulations to Basma Kenaya from University of San Diego!



Looking for Photographers!

If interested, please contact us at

info@uswaves.org



Volunteers Needed!

If interested, please contact us at

info@uswaves.org

WAVES is proud to announce the launch of our new **SCO Association Directory!**

UPCOMING SCO CONFERENCES:

Join us in Salem!



OrAVSCO 2026

May 27-29 | State Capitol

May 27-29: Oregon Association of Veterans School Certifying Officials (OrAVSCO)

Registration is now open for the 2026 Conference, happening May 27–29 in Salem, OR. This year's conference will feature training sessions from the VA National Training Team and Debt Management Center, updates from ODVA and Oregon SAAs, a Q&A with the ELR, and a special session with . Attendees can also take advantage of networking opportunities, including an optional evening social event. Learn more and register at [OrAVSCO Conference Page](#)

June 1-4: Florida Association Of Veterans Education Specialists (FAVES)

Registration is now open for the 2026 Regional Conference, taking place June 1–4 in St. Pete Beach, FL. Designed for School Certifying Officials working with military and veteran education benefits, the four-day conference will feature training and updates from VA and State Approving Agency representatives on topics including Enrollment Manager, compliance visits, debt management, NCD schools, and 85/15 requirements. The event also offers networking opportunities with SCOs from across the country and a lively “Las Vegas” themed social experience. Learn more and register at [FAVES Conference Page](#)

June 11: Missouri Organization of Veteran Education Specialists (MOVES)

MOVES will host its 4th Annual Training Day as a virtual event on June 11. The meeting consist of training from different organizations which equip School Certifying Officials and school representatives with training that they need to navigate the different benefits and programs needed for military-affiliated students. To register or learn more, please contact Courtney Swoboda at cswoboda@ucmo.edu or Raleen Ziegler at RZiegler@missouristate.edu.

Learn about upcoming SCO training opportunities near you by visiting

<https://uswaves.org/sco-association-directory/>

WAVES MAKING WAVES



WAVES President Jason Garcia attended Louisiana Association of Veterans Education School Certifying Officials (LAVECO) Conference with LAVECO President Susan Stakes and LAVECO Treasurer Robin Semien.



WAVES NCD Member-at-Large Chelsea McElroy attended Texas Association of College Veterans Program Officials (TACVPO) Conference (pictured with Ken Smith, Executive Director, Education Services)



WAVES board members Renee Montilliano and Firdaus Yusuf at CCME.



WAVES President Jason Garcia and Secretary Rose Tarazi supported California Department of Veterans Affairs (CSAAVE)'s SCO training in San Diego, CA.



WAVES board member, Chelsea McElroy, supporting Oklahoma Veteran Education Specialist Association (OVESA) Spring 2026 Conference.





Exhibitor Spotlight

Empowering Veterans for
Professional Success



From Military Excellence to Professional Success

Veterans bring leadership, discipline, and real-world experience, but translating those strengths into civilian careers isn't always straightforward.

MyCareerCloset partners with colleges, SVA offices, and veteran-serving workforce organizations to support that transition, helping veterans move from service to sustainable careers with confidence.

Our approach focuses on:

- Professional Identity – access to interview-ready attire that supports strong first impressions
- Career Readiness – preparation for interviews, networking, and navigating the civilian job market
- Insight & Outcomes – visibility into engagement and career impact
- Flexible Delivery – supports remote and distributed populations
- Scalable Model – requires little to no administrative burden

By combining practical resources with career readiness support, we ensure veterans are not only qualified—but fully prepared to step into their next opportunity with confidence.

Connect With Us

To learn more or explore partnership opportunities:

✉ Rachel@mycareer Closet.org

🌐 www.mycareer Closet.org

Visit our table at WAVES 2026!



Thank you to our partners!



American Legion Jackie Robinson Post 252



Contact president@uswaves.org for partnership opportunities