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Saint Leo University Honored as a 2024 *Military Times* *Best for Vets: Colleges*

ST. LEO, FL – With a long history of educating the country’s military personnel, veterans, and their families, Saint Leo University is being honored by in the 2024 *Military Times Best for Vets: Colleges*.

Today (November 4), *Military Times* released its list of the top colleges and universities for military servicemembers and veterans, and Saint Leo earned rankings of No. 120 among all schools in the United States, No. 34 among schools offering both in-person and online degrees; No. 27 among all private, nonprofit schools in the United States, No. 32 among schools in the Southeast, and No. 9 in Florida.

More than 900 of Saint Leo’s student population is affiliated with the military, and this includes members of the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard, National Guard members, retired military officers and enlisted veterans, military spouses, dependents, and others.

Each year, *Military Times* surveys colleges and universities nationwide to evaluate their veteran-focused programs. These survey responses, along with public data from the Department of Education and Department of Veterans Affairs, undergo a rigorous analysis by the *Military Times* data team to produce a trusted, unbiased ranking.

“Saint Leo University recognizes the special needs of our veterans, those serving in the military, and their families, and strives to provide the best educational opportunities for them,” said Dr. Ed Dadez, university president. “It is an honor to be recognized by *Military Times* for the work we are doing to support the success of our student-veterans, helping them transition into civilian life and continue their education. Saint Leo advocates for its military-affiliated students and student-veterans whether they study at University Campus, online, or at one of our education centers.”

In addition to its residential campus in St. Leo, FL, north of Tampa, students are educated at teaching locations in Florida and Georgia, including at Naval Air Station Key West and MacDill Air Force Base, as well as through the university's online program throughout the world.

“Saint Leo University stands as a beacon of support for our military community, fostering an environment where service members and their families thrive both academically and personally,” said Dr. Anthony DeSantis, associate vice president of Student Affairs and director of the Office of Military Affairs & Services. “As a son of a deceased U.S. Navy Vietnam veteran, I am grateful to be part of a university that provides a welcoming and supportive environment that values our military-affiliated students' service and fosters their success.”

Programs for Students

Part of that support includes special programming for student-veterans and military-affiliated students. Saint Leo University hosts several signature events for these students and the community including *Conversations About Success Beyond Service*. This online monthly webinar provides features speakers who share their personal journeys or discuss opportunities to find resources. The webinars offer students a chance to make connections and discuss topics that are important to their personal and professional development.

Other programming includes the 22 Push-Up Challenge for Veteran Suicide Prevention; Welcome Back "We've Got Your Six" events; and Veterans Appreciation Month events which include virtual 1-mile, 5K and 10K races to support the university's Military Excellence Fund; a chili cookoff, a Quilts of Valor ceremony, and the annual Veterans Appreciation Month ceremony on campus.

Student-veterans also are supported through a Military Resource Center on campus, a Veterans Affairs work-study program, a Student Veterans of America chapter, a Military Excellence Fund, and several veteran and military-affiliated endowed scholarships.

Veteran Studies Degree

In 2021, Saint Leo created the first undergraduate degree in the United States devoted to veteran studies, and in 2024, Devon Wilson of Riverview, FL, became the first Bachelor of Arts in Veteran Studies Degree graduate. In the fall, the university expanded the program, and the degree now is offered online, in addition to being taught on campus. A veteran studies minor also is available in this emerging field.

Students in the program study the distinctive lives and cultures formed by military service and by retirement from service — a part of American culture that is often not understood. The degree program is open to all students, not only those who have a military background.

More information about the 2024 rankings can be found on *Military Times'* Best for Vets [website](#).

Photo Cutlines:

Saint Leo University's For Those Who Serve sculpture was unveiled at the university's residential campus on Veterans Day in 2010 and honors the branches of the military as well as students and staff.

Student-veteran Josh Thornsberry receives a Quilt of Valor in 2022. Thornsberry earned a bachelor's in psychology in 2023 and is in Saint Leo's psychology graduate degree program.

About Saint Leo University

Saint Leo University is a Catholic Benedictine university dedicated to helping learners of all backgrounds and ages gain the competence and courage to be more. Offering more than 55 degree programs to more than 13,000 students each year, the nonprofit university is known for providing a values-based education in the liberal arts tradition and a community of belonging for those who seek a greater purpose in life. Saint Leo is regionally accredited and offers a campus in the Tampa Bay area of Florida, regional education centers, and several online programs. The university is home to more than 106,000 alumni. Learn more at saintleo.edu.

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