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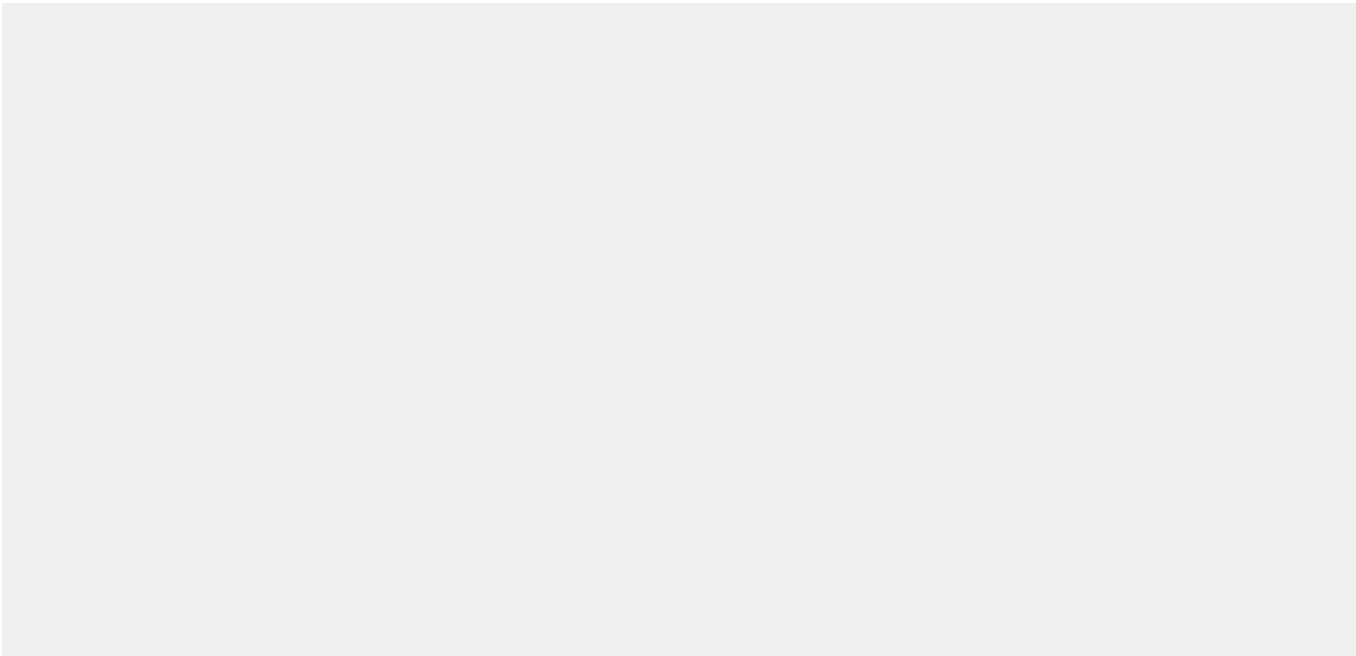


Cal State LA graduate, Navy Veteran on Track for Business Success

By **Veterans Today Network** on May 26, 2016



Veterans Resource Center at Cal State LA is committed to ensuring that all qualified veterans and their dependents have equal access to an affordable, quality university education and experience.





Thomas Lawson, expected graduation date June 2016. Photo by J. Emilio Flores/Cal State LA

Los Angeles, CA — After serving in the Navy for six years and traveling around the world, Thomas Lawson found a home with other veterans at Cal State LA. The 28-year-old Lawson will be graduating in June with a Bachelor of Science in business administration.

He served as a fire control man on the USS Halsey, a guided missile destroyer. He was deployed to the Seychelles, off the coast of East Africa, as well as Singapore and Hong Kong, and Bahrain in the volatile Persian Gulf. He received the award of Fleet Letter of Commendation for his technical expertise on deployment and success in operating radar systems.

After leaving the Navy, Lawson attended several community colleges in San Diego before moving to Los Angeles. He soon found himself at Cal State LA, where he was assisted by the Veterans Admission Program and the Veterans Resource Center.

The Veterans Resource Center at Cal State LA is committed to ensuring that all qualified veterans and their dependents have equal access to an affordable, quality university education and experience. The center supports veteran student success on campus, and prepares veterans to achieve their career and life goals.

Lawson found support and a welcoming community in the University's Student Veterans Association, a student club of which he served as president. Lawson says he enjoyed "being able to contribute and be an impact" while serving as president of the group.

Last year's highly successful Veterans Day ceremony at Cal State LA was directed by Lawson, who saw the ceremony as an opportunity to both acknowledge all veterans and to promote student veterans on campus. The ceremony opened an opportunity for Lawson to work with Congressman Xavier Becerra to start a Cal State LA student veteran internship program in the congressman's district office. Lawson also traveled in March with Cal State LA President William A. Covino and other students to the Capitol in Sacramento, where they met with lawmakers to advocate for continued support of the California State University system.

Raised by his mother in a small Colorado town, Lawson didn't have much money growing up, which limited his prospects and chances of attending college. He enlisted in the Navy to create an opportunity to receive a college education. Learning firsthand the importance of financial literacy both in youth and through life as an enlisted service member, Lawson decided to pursue business and finance after leaving the service.

Lawson started a small financial consulting firm while attending Cal State LA. His goal is to help veterans and under served communities.

"A lot of people lack financial literacy," Lawson says. "It really affects the decisions they make in life and their ability to pursue the things they want to pursue and to become financially successful."

Lawson eventually hopes to move to New York and start a career in corporate finance, as well as create financial literacy initiatives for under served communities like the one he comes from.

Lawson credits Cal State LA for being a crucial stepping stone on his journey to success. Attending the University, he says, "allowed me to continue utilizing my leadership abilities to provide things for other students and continue to grow in my leadership."

Cal State LA is a university dedicated to engagement, service, and the public good. Founded in 1947, the University serves more than 27,000 students and 240,000 distinguished alumni, who are as diverse as the city we serve. Located in the heart of Los Angeles, Cal State LA has long been recognized as an engine of economic and social mobility. Led by an award-winning faculty, the University offers nationally recognized programs in science, the arts, business, criminal justice, engineering, nursing, education and the humanities.

Cal State LA is home to the critically-acclaimed Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs, Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center, Hydrogen Research and Fueling Facility, Billie Jean King Sports Complex, TV, Film and Media Center and the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good. For more information, visit www.CalStateLA.edu.

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