

“Four Years Together...”

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Intro

The Naval Academy’s mission has remained constant throughout our history—in short it is to produce combat leaders of character for the Navy and Marine Corps. Over the past four years, the Academy has stayed focused on this mission – moral, mental, physical, leadership and professional development of midshipmen—to empower them to achieve and help them learn they can excel at whatever they put their minds to. We have tried to maintain the Academy as a beacon for the nation—a beacon focused on character, values and honor. That’s what you, our alumni—and the American people—expect. We do our utmost to do the right thing, and while we don’t always achieve this standard in all midshipmen, this has been our goal. What we have been trying to do is:

- Set and maintain extremely high standards
- Educate and motivate midshipmen to meet and exceed these high standards
- Imbue and achieve the highest levels of ethical conduct, academic achievement, and teamwork and perseverance through athletics.

The bottom line is we have strived to mold young people into leaders who know how to fight and win—who are courageous in battle, but humble in victory. The purpose of this article is to review with you our approach and what we have accomplished together as an Academy family over the past four years.

Focused on Mission

Moral development remains the primary focus of our multifaceted mission. Four years ago, after a yearlong review of all our leadership efforts, we determined that, while we had many good programs, they lacked overall cohesion. To better coordinate our moral development efforts, we established the new Division of Officer Development to focus on instilling in all midshipmen the personal attributes required of successful officers.

- Values—We recognize that midshipmen bring their own set of values with them when they come to the Academy, instilled by family, religious leaders, coaches, or teachers. During this formative period of their lives, we help them reestablish and strengthen this set of personal values, so that when they graduate, they know what they believe in and have the guts to stand up for it. We want them to understand how to act as officers and have the moral courage to live their convictions.
- Revised Implementation of Honor Concept—We found that the intent of our Honor Concept had wandered off course somewhat since the early 1990s. It had become over-legalistic, and excluded most midshipmen, to the point where they rarely discussed its contents and importance.





We took steps to re-implement it in a manner which was more relevant to the Brigade, with more ownership and involvement by the midshipman chain of command, open honor hearings, and more rapid disposition of cases. Our goal was to help midshipmen better understand what honor is and how to live it daily in their lives.

- Character Development has been folded into virtually every leadership aspect of our four-year curriculum. Midshipmen practice character daily in classrooms, on the athletic fields, in Bancroft Hall, on watch and on liberty. We want it to be part of their very souls as young officers.
- Ethics—Through the study of ethics, we give midshipmen tools for moral decision-making. We help them develop into moral leaders with the highest ethical standards, integrity and the courage to stand up for what is right.
- Relevance of Spirituality—We support two objectives:
 - freedom of religion—midshipmen can worship or not as they wish, but they must respect the beliefs of others, and
 - a sense of responsibility for the religious support of their Sailors and Marines, including an appreciation for the importance of spirituality in motivating the majority of the men and women they will lead.

Values, honor, character development, ethics and the impact of spirituality are key building blocks of effective leadership. The next step is providing the means for midshipmen to exercise their leadership skills. To this end we have increased leadership opportunities such as Striper positions, skippers of Sailboats and COs of YPs, sports team captains, and presidents of ECAs. Our goal is to give all midshipmen the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility and authority, and learn by doing. We want them to take what they learn in the classroom and, through hands-on experience, begin developing practical leadership skills.

As a companion to our leadership initiatives, we have expanded the former Ethics Center. Building upon the great success of the Ethics Center's seven-year effort, we are now focusing on the broader application of ethical leadership development within the Brigade and throughout the Navy and Marine Corps. Under the direction of Vice Admiral Mike Haskins '66, USN (Ret.) who is also the Academy's Distinguished Chair of Leadership, the Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership has expanded its mission to include all leadership, but primarily focused on providing ethical leadership development in the Brigade. At the same time, the Center will continue to support high-impact ethical leadership programs in the Navy and Marine Corps, and those national programs of interest to the Academy and the naval service.



In addition to honor, the other two areas of primary concern these past few years have been preventing sexual harassment/misconduct/assault, and reducing substance abuse. We have made great progress raising the level of awareness and sensitivity within the Brigade in terms of how men and women should treat one another. Most encouraging are the results of our most recent annual values survey which indicate a large percentage of the Brigade respect midshipmen who report possible incidents of sexual assault, harassment or misconduct. We've also established new guidelines for responsible and appropriate use of alcohol, and we're beginning to see encouraging signs that the Brigade has taken this important policy to heart.

Our accomplishments in the area of Mental Development over the past four years have been noteworthy. We're still firmly focused on providing all midshipmen with a solid technical education and the ability to think critically. Many of our engineering classes now require midshipmen to actually build something from a set of specifications; we're developing "hands-on" innovators. We're continuing to emphasize the importance of writing and speaking skills.

We completed a year long Academic Program Review to ensure we're teaching what the Navy and Marine Corps require from their junior officers. Our own self assessment from this review ensured our academic program remained focused on the right things and was executing at the high level expected of a top-tier school.

As testimony to our outstanding faculty and staff, we have been certified during this period by two prestigious accrediting organizations—the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, or ABET. We have had great success with midshipmen winning competitive international scholarships, such as Rhodes and Marshalls, and have consistently led other schools in midshipmen selections to the highly competitive USA Today Academic All American team.

But academic success is more than earning competitive scholarships and accolades, it's about helping all midshipmen realize their academic potential. Thanks to the success of our Academic Center in helping struggling midshipmen, we've had fewer Academic Board cases, and as a result, have reduced academic attrition.

Finally, the most significant measure of our academic success is our graduation rate. Our graduation rate for all midshipmen—as you would expect—has averaged above 80 percent and, for the past two years, the Academy has led all NCAA Division I/IA schools in graduation rates.

Our physical development achievements have been equally impressive. We have some 65 sports programs, and while the success of our varsity programs has been obvious to many followers of the Academy, our physical development mission is more than winning events and championships. It's about developing teamwork, perseverance and determination. It's about teaching



midshipmen what it takes to win, and that preparation and readiness are keys to success and victory, both on the athletic field and in life. Brigade physical readiness test scores have improved each year, providing convincing evidence that midshipmen have developed an appreciation for the importance of lifelong personal fitness.

Under professional development, we've clarified and strengthened our graduation requirements. For instance, all plebes must be qualified in our 26-foot sailboats before they become Midshipmen Third Class. In order to graduate, midshipmen must participate in a fleet cruise aboard a ship or submarine, and qualify as a Local Area Skipper aboard our sail craft or as an Officer of the Deck aboard YPs. We've initiated a renaissance of our sailing program, where we've gone from approximately 250 midshipmen participating annually in sail training, to more than 2,300 who participated this past summer. Likewise, we've revitalized our YP program to make greater use of them during both summer cruise and the academic year in support of classroom efforts. Our goal is that every midshipman leaves here with basic understanding of maritime operations, weather, watch standing, small boat handling, and seamanship. We've established incremental qualifications so that over four years they build in their knowledge of fundamentals which will help them succeed in the Fleet.

Tying this all together is our revitalized Strategic Plan, which validated our mission, vision and guiding principles, and provided us with the way ahead to ensure

we continue to succeed in producing leaders for the 21st century Navy and Marine Corps. We identified 12 strategic goals which, all together, consist of close to 1,200 individual action steps, most of which are ongoing. We've pushed implementation down to the lowest level to empower virtually everyone in the Yard to complete a specific step and help move the Academy forward.

One of our key focuses is helping midshipmen, faculty and staff to want to do their best and strive to excel. We find that most midshipmen rise to the challenge of doing their best and improving themselves. With this in mind, we reinstated a sense of duty within the Brigade to emphasize loyalty to the Academy and to one another. We also reduced the amount of liberty and weekends rated by each class to ensure midshipmen are present here on the Yard to support their shipmates and are doing things that further enhance their leadership and professional development. We've seen this sense of duty extend to achieving higher standards of cleanliness and maintenance through a sense of ownership in their rooms and company areas in Bancroft, as well as throughout the Yard.

A key part of this sense of belonging and striving to excel is the quality of people we admit to the Academy each summer. We've worked hard to streamline our admissions process so that we rapidly identify those who will never be able to gain admission, but focus on the 3,000—4,000 candidates in the “crunch” zone who are all qualified, but can not all be admitted. We're striving

to increase applications from minorities in response to the Navy's desire for increased diversity within the officer corps. Finally, we've automated and gone on-line with most of our admissions process to ensure efficient and accurate evaluation of all candidates.

We've done a lot to improve the physical plant at the Academy. Urged on by Hurricane Isabel, we've made significant improvements to our infrastructure, spending nearly \$100 million in upgrades to our electrical grid and air conditioning plant—which will benefit the Academy for the next 50 years. Equally impressive has been completing renovations to 7 of our 9 academic buildings, refurbishment of Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium, significant improvements to Max Bishop Baseball Stadium, and the construction and dedication of the Commodore Levy Center and Jewish Chapel. During this period we completed the 30 year refurbishment of Bancroft Hall with the dedication of Memorial Hall and began significant upgrades to the Protestant/Catholic Chapel in preparation for a planned centennial expansion. Additionally, we have ongoing improvements underway in King Hall, and major new construction projects such as the Wesley Brown Field House, our Brigade Sports Complex and new squash courts.

An Honor

It has been an honor to serve as your 59th Superintendent. Ours is a Naval Academy of which you should be extremely proud. We have an extremely high quality faculty and staff, and wonderful midshipmen who come

here and work so hard. The past four years have been a wonderful opportunity to touch the lives of more than 8,000 young men and women, helping them grow and develop into motivated midshipmen and officers. It has also been uniquely rewarding to be part of an outstanding faculty and staff who are dedicated to making the Academy better and better.

When I was asked to come to the Academy, I considered this assignment to be more than a "duty"—it was a privilege. It has been challenging—as I expected—but moreover, it has been an extremely satisfying experience. Whatever the issue, I tried my best to do my duty and do what is right. I've welcomed the comments and suggestions from many alumni that helped us understand all perspectives. We didn't shrink from tough issues, but rather brought them into the light of day to ensure they were addressed forthrightly. In fact, one of the most positive outcomes of recent high visibility issues is the discussion they've generated among our alumni, faculty and staff and our midshipmen. It has been a privilege to join with you in moving the Academy another four years ahead.

Pam and I will always cherish the memories of our years at the Academy, particularly the interaction we've enjoyed with midshipmen. Their talent, enthusiasm, and dedication never ceased to amaze us. It's been a privilege to work with all of you to fulfill our mission and keep us on the leading edge of progress. You will always have our interest, enthusiasm and best wishes for every continued success here on the banks of the Severn. ⚓

