

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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SUPERINTENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY**

BEFORE THE

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Chairman Banks, Ranking Member Kim, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for your continued support of the United States Military Academy (USMA) and our mission to develop the next generation of leaders for the United States Army and our Nation. On behalf of the academy team, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss our mission, goals, and challenges as we work to develop highly qualified, trained, disciplined, and fit leaders of character prepared to fight and win on the 21st century battlefield.

The United States Army's transformation to deliver the Army of 2030 and design the Army of 2040 to maintain superiority against evolving and emerging threats requires a highly educated and trained officer corps able to leverage technology while simultaneously demonstrating the character and skills necessary to effectively lead our Army's greatest strength and most important weapon system - its soldiers.

USMA'S MISSION, VISION, AND LINES OF EFFORT

USMA's mission is "to educate, train and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the United States Army." We commission leaders with the foundational professional knowledge and skills and more importantly, the moral character necessary to support and defend the Constitution and serve as United States Army officers. That's what we owe the citizens of our Nation.

Our vision is to be the nation's preeminent leader development institution. This vision guides and inspires us in all we do. We know that preeminence is a continuous pursuit of excellence, and not an end state. Further, we see preeminence as being the gold standard for leader development. Being the gold standard means that this is where America should look to see what "right" looks like; therefore, the USMA team works tirelessly every day to ensure we are doing the right things the right way.

USMA maintains five lines of effort that ensure we achieve our mission and vision. They are aligned with Army priorities and the Secretary of the Army's objectives.

- **Develop Leaders of Character:** integrating our exceptional four developmental programs (character, military, physical, and academic) to develop commissioned leaders of character prepared to fight and win our Nation's wars.
- **Cultivate a Culture of Character Growth:** fostering and strengthening a culture where character development – the most important thing we do at USMA – is deliberately woven into every aspect of the cadet experience to ensure we develop them into the leaders our Army and our Nation require. This effort includes creating and sustaining a safe and secure environment built on trust, dignity, and respect, while reducing the harmful behaviors that erode trust and team cohesion.
- **Build Diverse and Effective Winning Teams:** Continuing to adapt efforts to build a diverse and inclusive Corps, staff, and faculty, to develop more effective leaders who faithfully represent the Army and the Nation we serve. Additionally, in support of the Army's ongoing recruiting efforts, we continue to reach out to all Americans from all backgrounds, talents and geographies and tell the Army story in new and creative ways, so they see USMA and the Army as a place of possibilities and opportunities through service as well as being part of something bigger than themselves: the Army team.
- **Modernize, Sustain, and Secure:** With broad and much appreciated Army and Congressional support, we continue to invest in holistic efforts to modernize the Academy's capabilities and infrastructure to enable the developmental environments necessary to develop 21st century leaders. This includes maintaining a secure operating environment through energy resilience and force protection measures. Additionally, we are working to better leverage data throughout the enterprise to better inform decision making. That work, coupled with cadet and faculty research, is contributing to the Army's efforts to become a more data-centric organization.

- **Strengthen Partnerships:** We continue to seek opportunities to contribute to the Army and the Department of Defense (DoD), while sustaining our partnerships with academe, alumni, Congress, the American people, and the international community.

EDUCATING AND TRAINING LEADERS FOR THE ARMY OF 2030

As a military academy, USMA is charged with preparing leaders of character for our Nation. As such, we are a leadership laboratory that encompasses every aspect of the developmental experience.

The West Point Leadership Development System deliberately integrates individual leader development, through our character, military, physical, and academic programs, and combines it with leadership development opportunities, all within a culture of character growth. The outcomes of the system are leaders of character who live honorably, lead honorably, and demonstrate excellence. They should be equipped with the foundational professional competence (the intellect, knowledge, skills, and abilities developed throughout their West Point experience) and the values-based character to serve our Nation as officers, grow professionally, and lead America's sons and daughters in complex and uncertain environments.

Character development is the most important component of our leader development process. We believe that character creates trust and serves as the foundation for building cohesive teams and sustaining readiness. Rooted in Army Values and the West Point motto of Duty, Honor, Country, our character program is predicated on the idea that character is caught through culture and developmental experiences, taught in the classroom, and sought by individuals seeking to improve their character. Our character development is progressive, where each activity or opportunity builds upon the previous one, requiring cadets to make decisions when faced with uncertainty or moral ambiguity.

Our military program provides cadets the foundational military competencies and skills necessary to fight and win on the battlefield, while inspiring them to professional excellence and service to the Nation. Through a blend of military science classroom instruction, summer training labs, enrichment experiences and leadership opportunities, cadets learn and practice the relevant technical and tactical knowledge and skills necessary to lead, fight, and win in complex, multi-domain environments.

Over the past two years, we significantly redesigned our military science curriculum to better prepare future officers for the range of peer threats and adversaries emerging in the global operating environment.

Ensuring improvement, a significant part of our military program is summer training, which instills the Warrior Ethos and develops and hones military and leadership skills across three signature and progressive training events (Cadet Basic Training, Cadet Field Training, and the capstone Cadet Leader Development Training) and various developmental schools and opportunities throughout the Army. Summer training is modeled on current Army training events and schools: for example, a crucible event of Cadet Basic Training for New Cadets is modeled after the Army Infantry School's "First 100 Yards" event, while Cadet Leader Development Training is modeled after Army Ranger School. Summer training continues to evolve to ensure our graduates are prepared for the multi-domain environment.

Our nationally recognized academic program is designed to educate leaders capable of mastering the challenges of modern warfare. Approximately 20 percent of officers entering the Army each year are West Point graduates, equipped with the discerning and creative thinking skills necessary to lead, thrive and win on a 21st century battlefield.

Cadets explore a wide breadth of subjects through a robust liberal arts, scientific, and engineering education designed to provide them the intellectual foundation necessary to be critical, adaptive, and innovative thinkers who are prepared to lead Army formations

in the complex, multi-domain battlefields of 2030 and beyond. All USMA graduates receive a Bachelor of Science degree, with around half each year majoring in a science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) subject. Each year, approximately 40 percent of all newly commissioned Army officers with an undergraduate STEM degree are USMA graduates.

USMA's curriculum is underpinned by the United States Constitution. In addition to the required courses focused on the Constitution, every Cadet takes an oath to the Constitution three times throughout their 47 months at USMA (R-Day, Affirmation Day, and graduation).

Academic topics are presented in an environment where debate is encouraged, ideas are challenged, and honest feedback is expected. USMA's faculty, all of whom take oaths to the Constitution, does not advocate for one perspective, and avoids the "us" versus "them" mentality that often dominates these discussions. Rather, they focus on the "we," the shared commitment to their oath to the Constitution and the shared commitment to serve and protect the American people.

Above all else, USMA teaches cadets how to think, not what to think. As a result, we build readiness by developing the agile, resilient, and critical thinkers needed to lead on today's complex and uncertain battlefields.

In the uncertain contemporary combat environment, West Point must push its cadets beyond their comfort level and we cannot afford to intellectually coddle them. As future officers who may have to make life and death decisions under the stress of combat, cadets must critically evaluate competing perspectives through well-reasoned analysis and be prepared to have honest and difficult conversations with both the soldiers they will be entrusted to lead and the American people they have committed themselves to serve and protect.

Enhancing the curriculum are annual intellectual themes, designed to bring the Academy community (cadets, staff, faculty, and coaches) together around a common interdisciplinary focus. Last year's theme focused on civil-military relations and the role of military officers in a democratic republic. This year's theme, aligned with Army priorities and Secretary of the Army objectives, is dedicated to exploring innovation and technology, and how they are shaping warfare and the National Defense Strategy.

Our physical program challenges cadets to develop and maintain optimal levels of strength, endurance, mobility, agility, speed, power, balance, and coordination required to meet the demands encountered during military service while also building cohesive teams that are highly trained, disciplined, and fit that can win on any battlefield.

The physical program is an integral part of character development and is foundational to the military development of future officers who consistently demonstrate excellence. As part of their physical development, all cadets are required to participate in competitive athletics at the intercollegiate or intramural level. Athletic competition teaches grit, resiliency, discipline, mental and physical toughness, will to win, and other traits crucial for leadership in the crucible of ground combat.

INSPIRING LEADERS TO SELFLESS SERVICE

While the educating and training aspects of our mission focus on developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve, "inspiring" focuses on the aspects of why we serve. Through every aspect of our developmental experience, and through the interactions and examples of our staff, faculty, coaches, alumni, and others, cadets are exposed to the ideals of duty, selfless service, honor, integrity, and other qualities necessary to live honorably, lead honorably, and demonstrate excellence. A significant aspect of inspiring future leaders is reinforcing the shared commitment to Army values (Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage), as well as the shared commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United

States. We inspire cadets so that they will aspire to these values, and to be part of something greater than themselves.

USMA ADMISSIONS PROCESS

In our mission to educate, train, and inspire future leaders of character, we desire to build a Corps of fully qualified candidates whose makeup reflects the overall Army officer corps. We do not, and will not, sacrifice quality for quantity.

USMA remains committed to inspiring and admitting best qualified candidates from all backgrounds across our Nation to become leaders of character prepared to lead a diverse force that reflects the American people. Our admissions process, which is codified in Title 10, U.S. Code, requires that all candidates be fully qualified by our Admissions Committee to receive an offer of admission. As part of the qualification process, all candidates must receive a nomination from a member of Congress or another official nominating source. Through their respective Service Academy Nomination Boards, members of Congress submit candidates for consideration whom they deemed qualified.

Our Admissions Committee considers each fully qualified candidate in a holistic manner, looking at a variety of factors before deciding whether to offer a letter of acceptance for admission.

We are aware of the recent Supreme Court decision regarding collegiate admissions. While the decision does not explicitly address military academies, USMA is awaiting higher authority review of the decision and evaluating what implications, if any, it may have on our selection process.

REDUCING HARMFUL BEHAVIORS

USMA remains committed to reducing harmful behaviors, most prominently sexual assault and harassment within our ranks, while creating and sustaining a climate of dignity and respect. As an Academy charged with developing our Nation's future leaders, and as the "gold standard" for leader development, we must set the example for honorable and respectful behavior, as the American people expect us to do.

Both the DoD-wide military justice reforms and the implementation of the new Army Office of Special Trial Counsel will apply to USMA and to our cadets. Furthermore, and in coordination with Army staff, USMA continues to strengthen education, identify risk factors, mitigate the root causes of sexual violence, and leverage the entire West Point team as part of a comprehensive integrated prevention system. More importantly, we emphasize the concept of honorable living throughout the Corps to reduce the harmful behaviors that are contrary to Army Values and to being a leader of character. To date, we have implemented most of the actions directed by the Secretary of Defense in his "Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault at the Military Service Academies" memo of March 10, 2023. We are on track to be in full compliance with all directives by the end of this year. Of note, USMA's "Return to Health" policy was cited by the Secretary as a best practice for their other military service academies to model their policies upon.

Last year, we implemented a comprehensive and integrated prevention approach that addresses the underlying risk and protective factors of all harmful behaviors. This program is modeled on the acronym ACT:

Addressing Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment

Creating Healthy Climates

Tackling Holistic Health

We created ACT, a peer-led prevention initiative of cadets assigned throughout the Corps, specially trained in prevention techniques to help fellow cadets. These initiatives complement other prevention programs and events, such as bystander intervention training, prevention deep dives, and follow-on small group discussions. Additionally, USMA has implemented a dedicated Violence Prevention Program Integrator, comprehensive primary prevention policy, and primary prevention council.

The most important component of our prevention efforts is commitment and engagement by the entire USMA team. Our leadership continually reinforces the importance of preventing harmful behaviors and creating trust and healthy climates and is actively involved in prevention efforts and events. Additionally, cadet leadership has taken greater ownership in this space, through the planning, execution and leading of various prevention efforts with dedicated themes throughout the year. Ultimately, each member of the team is accountable for their actions, as our personal behavior defines our character.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE ARMY

Our primary, and most important contribution to the Army is the cadre of trained, disciplined, and fit leaders of character who graduate and commission each year. In May, 941 new leaders of character graduated with the Class of 2023, prepared to assume the mantle of leadership as Army officers. More than three-quarters of the class (to include 123 women) commissioned into the Combat Arms branches. Additionally, the class included nine international graduates who will return to their own nations to serve in their respective armed forces.

We also support Army readiness and its transformation efforts through our “second graduating class” of rotating faculty and staff who return to the operational force and apply their USMA experience as senior staff officers and future battalion and brigade commanders.

As one of the Army's centers of intellectual capital, we continue to contribute to Army readiness and its efforts to build the Army of 2030. Cadet project-based learning and cutting-edge faculty research, coupled with our robust partnerships with DoD agencies, academia, and industry, support the Army's transformation to meet the challenges of the complex and uncertain future battlefields.

In support of Army recruiting efforts and the Secretary of the Army's objectives, we continue to reach out to young Americans from all backgrounds, talents, and geographies to inspire them to see both USMA and the United States Army as places of endless opportunities and possibilities through service. The West Point Band, the Army's oldest active-duty band, helps us connect with and inspire potential recruits through performances across the country. Army Athletics, particularly away contests, are also prime opportunities for us to connect with America and share the Army and West Point stories. Additionally, we leverage our vast network of alumni – West Point's "Long Gray Line," and encourage them to share their stories of service within their spheres of influence.

Through West Point's Leadership, Ethics and Diversity in STEM Workshops, we engage with middle and high school students in select cities nationwide, exposing them to both USMA and the Army.

Additionally, USMA hosts outreach events at West Point for middle and high school students, such as sports camps and Summer Leaders Experience (SLE). This Admissions outreach event offers approximately a thousand rising high school seniors each year a taste of the West Point experience and cadet life. SLE exposes candidates to all aspects of our leader development programs. Historically, almost half of SLE participants are accepted to USMA, with many also joining the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. SLE and other summer outreach events also provide leadership development opportunities for cadets.

CONCLUSION

Since 1802, USMA has provided our Army and Nation with leaders who have led honorably and courageously in peacetime and war, guided by the values of our Army and the West Point ideals of Duty, Honor, and Country. Our graduates have the professional competence needed to fight and win, but more importantly, they possess the tremendous character that leadership demands. This legacy of excellence continues today, embodied in the thousands of graduates who are selflessly serving our Nation and leading America's soldiers around the world as Army officers. We continue to strive to be the "gold standard" of leader development, preparing and inspiring the next generation of officers to lead, fight and win in a 21st Century Army.

While we are grateful for the opportunity to discuss the excellence taking place at USMA, we invite you to visit West Point and see first-hand these outstanding future leaders in action. We are confident they will inspire you.

Thank you for your continued unwavering support for your Military Academy and the United States Corps of Cadets.