

RECORD VERSION

**STATEMENT OF
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SUPERINTENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY**

BEFORE THE

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**UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY
AT WEST POINT**

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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

Chairman Visclosky, Ranking Member Calvert, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the state of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and thank you for your support of the Military Academy and our programs. In 1778, George Washington called West Point, “the key to America,” for its critical geographic and strategic significance to the war. In 2019, I believe that West Point is still the key to America, but for a different reason. West Point produces the future strategic leaders for the Army and for the Nation. As the 60th Superintendent, I assure you that “your Military Academy” has achieved and continues to achieve its mission with distinction. However, we are not content with the status quo, and are continuously seeking ways to become more effective and efficient. This often requires innovation in both curriculum and resourcing. So, what follows is my current assessment of the Academy and our priorities moving forward.

The mission of the United States Military Academy is to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a 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. When our cadets graduate, they must be ready for the crucible of ground combat, where they will fight and win. They must also be leaders of character who treat everyone with dignity and respect. This mission, fully nested in the Army’s Strategy and Vision for 2028, permeates, guides, and directs everything we do at West Point and provides the primary metric to measure success.

Our vision, to be the preeminent leader development institution in the world, sets us on the right azimuth to achieve our mission and in developing the highest-quality, character-driven leaders. That is what the Nation expects of its Army’s leaders; it is therefore incumbent that West Point provide those leaders to the Army.

Through our mission, I see West Point significantly contributing to the Army’s top priority of readiness on three horizons. The first, and most important horizon is immediate: our graduates, the core of every annual cohort of new Army officers, lead platoons across the Army in every branch and in every corner of the world. In addition, our rotating staff and faculty leave West Point to lead battalions across the Army. The second horizon is

10-20 years from now when today's graduates will lead battalions and brigades and today's rotating staff and faculty will lead the Army. Finally, the third horizon is 30-40 years from now, when our current cadets will be leading our Army – and perhaps leading our nation. Clearly, our focus is on the immediate horizon, but if we are doing our job right by producing high-quality leaders of character, then the second and third horizons become second and third-order impacts on our Army. As I see it, the Army's current level of investment in West Point is testimony that it recognizes and values West Point's contribution to Army readiness.

The Academy

We must always consider the Academy's dual-nature as both a military organization and an institution of higher education. As a military organization that reports directly to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army, West Point is subject to federal laws and regulations, Army policy, and public accountability. Our planning, policies, and procedures must always address the regulatory environment and senior leader guidance that governs decision making authority, resource management, and personnel policies. As an institution of higher education, we are also subject to federal and state regulations to maintain accreditation standards that enable us to award Bachelor of Science degrees. Additionally, the Academy competes in an educational market with other top-tier universities. Changing demographic trends demand constant awareness to maintain a diverse student body that reflects the Nation. To successfully compete in this market and continue to attract the best and brightest who will be future Army leaders, we must continue to attract the students of America who are leaders, scholars, and athletes. We do this by maintaining a high-quality faculty, modern infrastructure, cutting edge technology, and diverse curriculum offerings, thus supporting our institutional requirements and program accreditations.

The Army vision calls for developing, "smart, thoughtful and innovative leaders of character who are comfortable with complexity and capable of operating from the tactical to the strategic level." At West Point, we are educating, training, and inspiring the approximately 4,400 members of the Corps of Cadets to serve as those leaders of character our Army requires, prepared to lead in a complex and continuously changing

environment, across the full spectrum of conflict. We accomplish our mission using a 47-month purposeful integration of individual leader development and leadership development experiences within a culture of character growth. The individual development includes education, mentorship, and training in the knowledge and skills across four developmental pillars: academic, military, physical, and character. Leadership development provides cadets with the necessary opportunities to practice both followership and leadership. All of this is done within a culture of character growth, so that upon graduation, they are prepared to live honorably, lead honorably, and demonstrate excellence.

Our academic program, with a robust curriculum that blends arts and humanities and the STEM disciplines, enhances critical and creative thinking. Our curriculum is adaptive to meet the needs of the Army, and, combined with a host of enrichment activities such as conferences and summer academic internships, develops the intellectual agility and adaptability necessary for our graduates to lead in a 21st Century Army.

Each year, our cadets compete for prestigious post-graduate scholarships. While it is still early in the process, we already have six cadets who have been awarded scholarships—3 Marshall Scholarships, 2 Schwarzman Scholarships, and 1 Churchill Scholarship. Following graduate school, these cadets will attend their officer basic course in their respective branch, and then report to their first unit of assignment.

Our military and physical programs provide the professional foundation and leadership training to prepare cadets for their future roles as Army officers and members of the Profession of Arms. Our summer training develops basic Soldier skills and gives cadets opportunities to serve in leadership positions as well as attend military schools such as Airborne, Air Assault, and the Sapper Leader Course. Our physical program, which focuses on preparing cadets for the physically demanding requirements of an Army officer, develops the ability to maintain personal and unit fitness, fosters the warrior spirit, builds appreciation for teamwork, and inspires the will to win.

While winning the commander's in chief trophy two years in a row in football was a great tribute to the hard-work and winning attitude of our football team, we have many

examples of cadets demonstrating excellence in all aspects of cadet life. Cadet Kate Sanborn had a superb performance in her marathon debut, earning a bronze medal finish at the 2018 Richmond Marathon while also qualifying her for the 2020 Olympic Trials. She accomplished this while achieving a 3.7 GPA. Cadet Kenneth Brinson, a member of our football team was 1 of 13 finalists for the most prestigious and desirable “academic” award in college football. The Campbell trophy recognizes an individual as the absolute best in the country for his academic success, football performance, and exemplary leadership. Both of these cadets embody the true meaning of cadet-athlete, working hard on the field or track, while also excelling the classroom.

Developing character is the most important component of our leader development model. West Point graduates may be gifted thinkers, excellent tacticians, and physically fit athletes, but only if they also demonstrate strong character, will they earn and maintain the trust of the American people and the Soldiers they lead as while serving as stewards of the Army Profession. With the Honor Code as its foundation, the goal of our character development program, which encompasses everything we do here, is for graduates to live honorably 24 hours a day, seven days per week and to internalize our Army Values as well as our motto of Duty, Honor, and Country.

Academy Priorities

Since assuming command as the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy and West Point in July 2018, I have engaged with my team, supporting commands on West Point, HQDA staff, adjacent commands, the Academy’s Board of Visitors, and Members of Congress. These engagements, coupled with my personal observations, have allowed me to gain understanding and develop a comprehensive assessment of the state of the Academy with which to gauge West Point’s ability to accomplish its core mission, consistent with the Army Strategy and National Defense Strategy.

To move the Academy forward during this “Army Renaissance,” in an age of persistent conflict, we have developed five priorities to focus our efforts and enable us to achieve our mission: we must (1) **develop** leaders of character; (2) **strengthen the** culture of character; (3) **build** the team of cadets, staff, faculty, and coaches; (4) **modernize**,

secure, and **reform** West Point; and (5) **strengthen** our partnership with the Army, our international partners, academia, our alumni, and America.

(1) Develop Leaders of Character. As the core of the Army's annual cohort of accessed second lieutenants, our graduates are expected to be combined arms, joint, coalition fighters, and leaders, who are intellectually adept and physically fit, immediately upon entry into the force. Pursuant to this expectation, West Point's 47-month course of instruction allows us to develop the team in four critical domains: academic, military, physical, and character development. Holistically, I am firmly satisfied that our programmatic efforts in these domains reflect what anyone would expect from the world's preeminent leader development institution. As evidenced by our accreditation efforts, feedback from Army units, and the top rankings bestowed on West Point by numerous sources, they are all top-tier programs and performing exceptionally well. Additionally, they are all forward-looking to ensure West Point's leader development efforts evolve with the Army's future demands. However, we must continuously ensure that we remain connected to the Army and higher education to provide the most current, state of the art curriculum necessary to develop future leaders.

(2) Strengthen the Culture of Character. As the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, I am personally responsible for creating a safe and secure environment that enables our cadets' personal and professional growth as leaders of character. I am concerned about the *prevalence of sexual assault and harassment*. Cadets internalize the Army Values through rigorous and challenging experiences tailored to their individual developmental needs. This system would not work without the leadership and mentorship – a community of support - that is vital to character growth. We are committed to empowering our people and revamping our programs to foster a community-wide culture that works to prevent sexual assault and harassment. We are committed to ensuring that our programming impacts the cultures and values of all 4,400 cadets as well as the thousands more that constitute the West Point community. It is paramount, today more than ever, to ensure that our policies, programs, and personnel develop and reinforce these outcomes in our graduates.

Culture change does not occur overnight, but I am heartened that we are moving in the right direction given some of the more recent changes we have made.

(3) Build the Team. Our team is made up of cadets, staff, and faculty. Included in the staff are coaches, tactical officers, NCOs, and DA Civilians. We seek diversity in all areas of the corps of cadets as it strengthens the organization and the Army. West Point has made and continues to make enormous strides on this front and is leading the Army in many regards. We are in a good place, but it must be sustained – and there is always room to improve. In the end, all cadets here are measured on their talent, performance, and potential to serve as an officer in the United States Army.

Staff and faculty members with diverse perspectives from all backgrounds promote a culture of excellence at West Point that reflects the diversity in our Army and contributes to the collective strength of the Academy as well. Preeminent leadership development begins with attracting, recruiting, and hiring exceptional, high-potential, and diverse professionals from the military, government, industry, and academia, to serve as staff and faculty. I am satisfied with the extent to which West Point continues to draw only the highest quality military and civilian talent for its staff and faculty and enables their professional development while assigned here. I am confident West Point will continue to lead the Army in this domain.

(4) Modernize, Secure, and Reform. Our ability to draw the most qualified cadets, faculty, and staff is significantly influenced by the quality and condition of the facilities and capabilities that comprise the cadet development environment. To date, USMA has been resourced very well. Aligned with the Army's modernization priority, we have developed and are executing a holistic modernization plan that the Army has supported with two major upgrade programs and MILCON projects, for which we are immensely grateful. These efforts go far to reinforce our mission execution and maintain our competitive edge in attracting the best and brightest cadet and faculty talent. This current investment in our barracks and academic facilities will go far to set West Point on the right trajectory for the future.

As part of our barracks upgrade program, we recently completed the newest barracks building (the first since 1964), Davis Barracks named after Gen Benjamin O. Davis, a

1936 graduate of USMA. Despite being silenced during his four years at West Point, where no cadets, faculty or staff members befriended or spoke to him except on an official basis, he persevered to become the fourth African-American to graduate from West Point, ranking 35th in his class of 276. He had the grit and determination to persevere through a challenging cadet experience and achieve a storied military career. His dedicated service included command of the all-black 332nd Fighter Group, “Red Tails,” and becoming the first black general of the Air Force. He retired as a three-star general in 1970 and was awarded a fourth star in 1998 by President Bill Clinton. It was very fitting to name our newest barracks Davis Barracks, as Gen Davis Jr. exemplifies the West Point values of Duty, Honor, and Country, and he exemplifies what it means to be a leader of character.

In any given year, millions of visitors – Americans and non-Americans alike – pass through West Point’s gates to experience its historic past and to see and be inspired by what it is preparing for the future in our Cadets. Force protection here is particularly critical given the continuous tradeoffs we face between being accessible to the public and sustaining safety and security for our cadets, staff, and faculty. From my position, the force protection risks to the institution are real and numerous, and they necessitate operating within the prescribed regulatory framework and a constant focus from all on the individual and organizational responsibilities to prevent, protect and respond.

Between our garrison service providers and our mission directorates, our annual budgets have provided sufficient levels of resources, and the Army and Congress have done much to invest in West Point’s future. We must sustain this over the next 15-17 years to ensure we remain postured to provide the Army with the highest quality officers.

(5) *Strengthen Partnerships.* As both a military command and an academy, West Point is a unique institution of higher education that can meet the Army’s intellectual needs and effectively contribute to the Nation’s ability to sustain its position as a global leader. As such, West Point connects, collaborates, and contributes to partnerships at home and abroad to develop the requisite skills and abilities of our cadets, leverage the institution’s intellectual capital, exchange knowledge with others, and remain connected

to the higher education community. Close connection to the Army ensures that West Point continues to align with both current and future needs, not only by commissioning graduates, but also by serving as an intellectual and research focal point for the future. Synchronizing our engagement efforts ensures stakeholders are well informed of major, positive changes at West Point in all domains that reflect adaptation, innovation, and a culture of excellence and winning.

West Point develops appropriate synergistic partnerships across the Army, the Department of Defense, with allies and partners, the civilian sector, and with academe. Partnerships provide an innovative approach that West Point leverages to allow agility in providing preeminent educational opportunities for our cadets and faculty in an era of fiscal uncertainty. The faculty and staff leverage these partnerships to enhance cadet education and faculty development by providing relevant, project-based educational opportunities within the current curriculum that add intellectual capital back to the Army and the Nation. Our international partnerships provide cadets and faculty with the cultural exposure and immersion opportunities that foster the collaborative advancement of interoperability within a dynamic international operating environment.

Our partnerships also facilitate the exposure and immersion of cadets and faculty into the intellectual and technological challenges that our Army and Nation face as we modernize both equipment and doctrine to support the future fight. These educational opportunities are developing the intellectual readiness our graduates and rotating faculty require to lead and win in the complexity, ambiguity, and isolation associated with tomorrow's battlefield. Moving forward, I envision the intentional leveraging of these partnerships in an effort to strengthen our contributions to the Army profession and amplify the educational collaborative potential of West Point. The facility modernization efforts I previously described will enable the long-term viability of our partnerships by providing the educational infrastructure necessary to continue adding value to the Army and our partners.

Conclusion

For over 217 years, West Point graduates have honorably and courageously led Soldiers in the defense of our great Nation. Through the years, despite the challenges and the scale of the threat to our country, they have led with distinction and overcome the crucible of ground combat. They have demonstrated cultural competence, professionalism, and mission command leadership while partnering with our allies, host nation armies, government officials, non-governmental organizations, and local leaders. They have lead units that conduct missions spanning the spectrum of conflict including defeating adversaries in high intensity combat, conducting irregular warfare, providing stability and security operations, supporting humanitarian assistance, integrating new warfighting technologies, and addressing emerging cyber threats. I am fully confident that we are preparing our cadets for all of the challenges they will face in the near and distant future. In 2018, our Chief of Staff stated that “Readiness means we have the right people who are psychologically and intellectually prepared to outthink, outfox and outlast our enemies with rapidly adaptive organizations and tactics....it means we are physically hardened to endure unspeakable stress and hardship under the most brutal conditions, day after day, month after month.” I can assure you that the developmental experience at West Point empowers cadets to further develop their character, presence, and intellect, and their ability to lead, develop, and accomplish any mission.

I invite each of you to West Point to see first-hand our greatest strength, the Corps of Cadets. You will see first-hand the 47-month immersive experience that makes this place unique. We are excited about the future of the Academy and hope the Army and Congress continue to see West Point as a strategic asset and to value our critical contribution to future readiness of the Army.