REPORT TO THE
FACULTY, ADMINISTRATION, BOARD MEMBERS, AND STUDENTS

OF

THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY,
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

BY

AN EVALUATION TEAM REPRESENTING THE
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

PREPARED AFTER REVIEW OF THE INSTITUTION'S SELF-STUDY REPORT
AND VISIT TO THE INSTITUTION ON MARCH 6 – 9, 2016

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– AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT –

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY:

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I.   Context and Nature of the Visit

Institutional Overview
The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) has accredited the United States Naval Academy since 1947. The students represent a broad cross section of the United States, representing every state and territory. The US Naval Academy has a unique clarity of purpose, expressed in their mission, "*To develop Midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to graduate leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government.*"

Scope of Institution
The United States Naval Academy (USNA) awards undergraduate bachelor's degrees. Because of the strong technical content that is required in all majors, all graduates receive a Bachelor of Science degree. In addition to Middle States accreditation, several majors are accredited in their field. Chemistry is accredited by the American Chemical Society and all eligible engineering, computer science and information technology programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

The Middle States team visited the USNA campus in Annapolis, Maryland on March 6th–9th, 2016.

Self-Study Process and Report
The US Naval Academy's self-study was an engaged and participatory process that included a large number of faculty and staff. The self-study was comprehensive and evaluated all areas of the Academy. It was clear that the Superintendent and his leadership teams set a clear expectation of transparency that suffused the creation of the report and the team's visit.

The team notes that the Academy demonstrates commitment to its mission of developing Midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically. The USNA Working Groups worked effectively to disseminate and review evidence to support compliance with the fourteen standards enumerated in the Middle States' document *Characteristics of Excellence.*

II.   Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Eligibility Requirements

Based on a review of the self-study, interviews, the certification statement supplied by the institution and/or other institutional documents, the team believes that the institution continues to meet the requirement of affiliation in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

III.   Compliance with Federal Requirements; Issues Relative to State Regulatory or Other Accrediting Agency Requirements

Based on the separate verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 and, as necessary, review of the self-study, certification by the institution, other institutional documents, and/or interviews, the team affirms that the institution meets all relevant federal and state regulations and the requirements of other Department of Education recognized accreditors.

IV.   Evaluation Overview

The United States Naval Academy conducted a transparent, self-critical, and thorough analysis of its educational programs. The Visiting Team was unfettered in its independent review, and in fact was aided at every turn by our hosts at USNA. Our recommendations and suggestions reflect a synthesis by the Visiting Team of how to strengthen further what is clearly an exemplary and storied institution.

V.   Compliance with Accreditation

Standards Standard 1 - Mission and Goals
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishments
The USNA is to be commended on its mission statement.
- USNA has a clear and unambiguous mission to produce graduates who will serve well as junior officers and develop skills necessary to assume higher responsibilities in the Unites States Navy and the Marine Corps. Including scholarly and creative activity appropriate to the USNA, the mission and imperatives relate to external and internal contexts and consistencies. The institutional imperatives are consistent with the mission and are aimed at student learning and institutional improvement.

- It is not clear if the mission and imperatives have been reviewed consistently and collaboratively, nor is it clear if they have been regularly assessed. The mission is linked to Strategic Plan 2020, which lays out 10 Strategic Imperatives which include 25 Strategic Objectives. However, the specifics and measures do not seem to be present in the Self-Study or in other supporting documents. Members of the faculty and staff provided very few examples.

- Discussions with USNA faculty and staff indicated that one important component of the mission – the attributes of a USNA graduate – are now being evaluated using psychometrics and standardized tests. The components being measured are critical thinking, creativity or innovation, and bias towards action. Three years of analysis showed an increase of several percentage points in creativity from first-year to first-class Midshipmen. The results compared favorably to those of highly selective institutions, but discussion with members of the Visiting Team involved recognition that other institutions do not have the same flexibility in administering standardized texts. Nor was there any reliable way to ensure that the students take the exams seriously. When USNA incorporates data for a total of five years for its own students, more detailed analysis should be possible.

Further discussion of the assessment on mission and imperatives can be found in Standard 7.

Suggestion
- Consideration could be given to new approaches to helping Midshipmen cope with the high demands and stress they confront to develop morally, mentally, and physically.

Standard 2 - Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

***Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment*s**

- The imperatives and objectives for the institution are linked to the mission and clearly stated through the Strategic Plan 2020, which lays out 10 Strategic Imperatives that include 25 Strategic Objectives. However, few if any specifics and how they are measured were found in the Self-Study or during discussions on campus.

- The decision-making processes and authority seem to facilitate planning and renewal, and the assignment of responsibility is well defined. As the Self-Study reports, there is an established chain of command from departments, divisions and administrative units up through the Superintendent to the Department of Navy and Department of Defense. The process, as explained by faculty and staff, is led by the Superintendent and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and uses input from other levels, including specific cost centers.

- Institutional and unit improvements are recorded as are their results, but it is not always clear whether those results are what was desired.

- Information about the reasons for establishing the new Cybersecurity program was not present in the Self-Study, but was provided through campus discussions with faculty and staff. As a top-down decision, its establishment did not have input from the stakeholders. However, the program itself was designed by an interdisciplinary team of USNA civilian and military faculty who created the learning outcomes, designed the curricular content, and determined the sequencing of courses. This was done in consultation with an advisory board of academics and industry professionals. The final result was vetted by the Yard-wide Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee before the major was offered to midshipmen. Stakeholders have also been involved in changes in parking facilities necessitated by the impending construction of a Cybersecurity building.

- Faculty and staff appreciate the informal discussions with the Superintendent and the SLT, but would like more regular communications and announcements. They would also like more regular interactions with and transparency from the Academy Effectiveness Board (AEB).

Suggestion

- Understanding that the USNA is a military organization, it might be more in keeping with the ultimate purpose of Standard 2 for the Superintendent and the SLT, and also the faculty and staff, to have more control over the distribution of funds, particularly for facilities. For example, decision- making authority could be moved away from the Chief of Naval Installation to more local control, as apparently had been true in the not-so-distant past.

Recommendations

- USNA should develop and implement a more transparent and structured process to integrate planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal. All constituencies should be firmly entrenched in this process. Data and other direct evidence should be used regularly to inform decisions. Although the structures are outlined, periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes should occur.

  The team agrees with the recommendation in the Self-Study: *The Naval Academy should continue to refine, implement, and effectively communicate its institutional assessment plan. Along with this ongoing effort, the Naval Academy should work to foster better collaboration in both strategic planning and execution of supporting budget processes.*

- USNA should also provide implementation specifics of *Strategic Plan 2020*'s Strategic Imperatives.

Standard 3 - Institutional Resources
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

*Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment*s
The efficient and effective use of institutional resources requires sound financial planning linked to institutional goals and strategies. The USNA has demonstrated that while funding levels fluctuate, creating stress at all levels of the Academy, it does have sufficient financial resources and a financial plan to carry out its mission and execute its plans.

- The USNA employs formal procedures for financial planning and budgeting aligned with the institution's mission and goals as mandated in the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) Process. This process deals with appropriated funds, and provides for an annual budget and multi-year projections, both institution-wide and across departments. The cost centers submit a budget, including justification, for the upcoming year. The Comptroller receives the submissions and, in coordination with the Deputy for Finance, prioritizes the budget items and forwards them to the Superintendent for final approval.

- The USNA employs several strategies to measure and assess the level of institutional resources required to support their mission and goals. For example, the Comptroller's Office conducts annual and mid-year reviews of budgeting and spending. During these reviews, there is a prioritization of requirements tied to the institution's missions and goals. If additional resources are available, they are provided according to these priorities. The various cost centers also track their spending and report their upcoming needs so that funds may be reallocated within the institution as needed to optimize resource distribution. This process also helps to utilize funds that, at times, may not arrive until the end of the fiscal year.

- The primary source of charitable gifts is the United States Naval Academy Foundation. The Foundation operates to provide private gift support to the Academy. The Foundation's mission is centered on raising, managing, and distributing private gifts to support all facets of the development of the Brigade of Midshipmen and the activities of the Naval Academy – providing the "margin of excellence" above what can be accomplished with appropriated funds. The Naval Academy Foundation works directly with senior leadership at the Academy to identify institutional priorities from the strategic plan.

- The Naval Academy's equipment acquisition and replacement plan, referred to as the Life Cycle Management Program, is managed by the Information Technology Services Division and encompasses all educational and other command support equipment. Each cost center submits an Abbreviated Systems Decision Paper including all requests for equipment recapitalization. The requests are then prioritized, with requests directly supporting core courses rising to the top of the list. Equipment acquisitions are made with the objective of achieving the greatest value in terms of life cycle cost, quality, functionality, and other relevant factors. The "Work Force Loading Plan" is a document that captures the project work required of the Information Technology Services Division. The division's progress is reviewed on a daily basis and is easily adjusted as new priorities or mission critical projects are presented.

- The current process for faculty travel to professional conferences may, in many cases, limit access to these available resources. Conference travel requests are routed through several levels and ultimately approved at the Pentagon level by the Director of the Navy Staff. According to Naval Academy faculty members, the process is inefficient, frustrating, and time-consuming for both support staff and faculty members.

- The USNA recognizes that facilities, such as learning resources fundamental to all educational and research programs and the library, need to be adequately supported and staffed to accomplish the institution's objectives for student learning. However, the self-study reported that Nimitz Library has not been able to support new initiatives such as majors in Nuclear Engineering, Arabic, Chinese, and Cyber Operations. Adding new programs requires either an increase in funding or a reduction in other services provided. The library has recently cancelled journal subscriptions because the cost continues to rise, by approximately 8% per year, which cannot be sustained by the current budget.

- The Naval Academy maintains a comprehensive facilities master plan called the Naval Support Activity Annapolis Master Plan. It deals with the maintenance, renovation, and construction of buildings and other infrastructure. It is a comprehensive facilities and infrastructure life-cycle management plan, which is directly tied to the institution's mission, and drives the renovation and modernization of existing facilities.

- The Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Naval District Washington, controls funding for the renovation and maintenance of most facilities at the Naval Academy. The self-study indicates that funding for restoration and modernization has been reduced in recent years, leading to the continued deferment of renovations for both Nimitz Library and Rickover Hall.

- The USNA has a purchase card program used by members of the administrative and technical staff for making purchases under $3,500. There are procedures mandated by federal regulations, as well as internal policies, regarding the use of these cards. While procedures with safeguards are necessary to track expenditures and prevent abuse, the extent of the required paperwork has become burdensome on cardholders. Time spent on purchase card requirements reduces time available for other duties, exacerbating staffing shortages mentioned elsewhere in the self-study. They have learned to navigate through the cumbersome steps to obtain the equipment and supplies that are needed to support the mission, but the process clearly needs improved. USNA's Faculty Senate Finance Committee should be commended on the work conducted by the ad hoc "Purchase Card Improvement Team" in 2014.

- A study submitted in 2015 by several professors at the academy provided a comprehensive look at current non-faculty technical laboratory staffing requirements in the academic cost center. This technical support-staffing model was based on a "squad size" concept of the number of Midshipmen assigned to a given course that a single faculty member can effectively teach in a week. This provides a good example of a rational approach to allocating human resources.

- The Naval Academy has adequate institutional controls to deal with financial, administrative and auxiliary operations. The Naval Academy's financial controls are mainly governed by the Department of Defense's Financial Management Regulations. The academy has ensured that internal controls are in place with appropriate separation of duties; they are regularly audited by the Budget Submission Office, Bureau of Naval Personnel, to provide oversight regarding these controls. It appears that the controls for financial operations are extensive, especially given the relatively small size of the institution.

- While the Naval Academy does not receive a "traditional" independent audit, periodic auditing of financial responsibility at the institution does occur, and therefore meets the intent of the requirement for independent, annual audits. On an annual basis, the academy evaluates its system of management controls under the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act and reports the results of this evaluation, including any controls weaknesses, to the Chief of Naval Operations in accordance with the Department of the Navy Managers' Internal Control Program. The Command Evaluation Department tracks the status of all reported items. The status of any previously reported items (material weaknesses or controls weaknesses) is provided in the following year's statement to the Chief of Naval Operations.

Suggestion
- Relocate the Comptroller's office to the main yard to improve communication and collaboration with the cost centers.

Recommendations
- Streamline the approval process for faculty travel for professional development; this may include assigning travel approval authority to the Superintendent or his designee. The frustration and attendant inefficiencies around this issue are significant.

- Streamline the purchase card acquisition process while maintaining compliance with established law and regulation, to improve the efficient utilization of institutional resources; this may include establishing local contracting authority at USNA.

Standard 4 - Leadership and Governance
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishments
- The USNA has a well-defined system of governance executed through the Congressional Board of Visitors (BOV) and the Advanced Education Review Board (AERB). In addition to these two formal review bodies, there are other important means of oversight. This includes frequent visits by members of Congress who nominate over two-thirds of the Academy's Midshipmen and have a direct interest in the welfare of their constituents, direct involvement of the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations, and a rigorous audit by the Navy Inspector General.

- The BOV, whose members include members of Congress, reports its findings to the President of the United States and provide excellent visibility to the institution. The relatively new AERB, whose membership consists of top ranked Navy flag officers, coordinates higher education for naval officers, and provides direct oversight to the Academy as well as the Naval Postgraduate School and the Naval War College in consonance with the national Maritime Strategy. There are clear guidelines for appointing members of the two Boards whose terms are staggered, and there is also a concerted effort on the part of the Academy leadership to help orient new members to the uniqueness of the institution. This includes presentations by academy leadership, faculty, Midshipmen and staff.

- The AERB is headed by the current Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO) who also serves

on the Academy's BOV. This strengthens the framework for institutional governance and is expected to continue with future VCNOs. The AERB has been successful in effectively articulating the Academy's resource needs. An excellent testimonial to this is the USNA's leadership in setting up a cutting edge cyber-centered engineering program. There are strict Department of Defense conflict of interest policies that restrict the fiduciary activities of AERB members as well as those of the Superintendent and the SLT.

- The Academy Superintendent (who is the CEO) is a senior career Naval officer appointed by the President of the United States. The selection process is rigorous and includes multiple rounds of interviews conducted by the Secretary of the Navy and the CNO. The Superintendent is supported by the SLT, which includes the heads of all major cost centers including the Dean of Academics, the Commandant of Midshipmen, and the Athletics Director. All of the senior leaders have their own supporting administrative structures and relevant internal documentation exists that define their roles and responsibilities. The government-wide financial disclosure requirements and conflict of interest policies on procurement apply to the Superintendent and the SLT members.

- The Academy has a "primary command" status within the Navy hierarchy and accordingly, the Superintendent is summoned by the CNO for regular "yard" updates along with all other high ranked career officers. Thus he remains current on the broader strategic and tactical issues within the Navy and the Department of Defense. The Superintendent also provides biweekly email updates to the CNO and the Secretary of the Navy on key developments and survey findings at the Academy. There is evidence of periodic assessment of the institutional leadership and governance.

- There is faculty input into the governance process and also opportunity for student inputs. However, these need to be seen in the context of the institutional mission. Accordingly, Midshipmen may raise issues of concern through their chain of command as specified in the Midshipman Regulations. As to be expected, the process is highly structured and progresses to higher levels of authority within the brigade and then, as required, to the Commandant's staff, the Commandant being roughly the equivalent of a Dean of Students. The USNA faculty is composed roughly evenly of naval officers and civilians. All civilian faculty members are also civil servants and hence, the rules of engagement are quite different from those typical at a traditional civilian university. Their engagement in institutional governance is through the Faculty Senate and the various Standing Academic Committees chaired or co-chaired by members of the Senate.

- There are no recommendations related to this Standard. However, readers should be cognizant of the uniqueness of federal service academies, and their governance structure and institutional leadership in particular. It is highly unlikely that these institutions will ever have a "fully collegial" shared governance environment by the very nature of their mission and the hierarchical military culture prevalent therein. Furthermore, the possibilities of the AERB or even the Three Star Superintendent being fully well versed in the nuances of higher education are unlikely. Similarly, the likelihood of a rigorous internal debate on issues that one would expect in a civilian university is unlikely at a federal service academy. These should not be perceived as weaknesses of these institutions; on the contrary, they are highly mission-driven and focused on educating and graduating future military leaders.

- The moral, mental, and physical development of the future officers requires a certain level of

centralization and control. The challenge for the institution and its leaders is finding that fine balance between complete centralization and a mission-appropriate shared governance structure. The current USNA leadership appears to demonstrate a genuine commitment toward facilitating that dialog and should be encouraged to do so. This will help boost faculty and staff morale and their institutional commitment and ownership, and also build a comfort factor for the civilian faculty and staff.

Standard 5 - Administration
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

*Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment*s
- The USNA has an organizational and administrative structure that is appropriate for the institution in fulfilling its core mission of moral, mental, and physical development of future Naval officers. As discussed under Standard 4, a highly decorated Navy leader is appointed as the chief executive of the institution and his or her primary responsibility is to provide inspirational leadership to the institution. The current USNA Superintendent is highly qualified by experience and temperament; he was previously the Head of the Naval War College and also headed that institution during its last New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) reaccreditation visit.

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) mentioned in Standard 2, comprises the leaders of all cost centers support the Superintendent in leading the institution. Among those are the Commandant, the Academic Dean and Provost, and the Athletic Director who each provide leadership for the three core institutional pillars, viz., the military bearing and leadership skills, a rigorous STEM-oriented curriculum, and physical development to condition the future Navy leaders.

- The Academic Dean and Provost has a faculty appointment and serves on renewable four-year terms. The academic chain of command includes a Vice Dean, Associate Deans, Division Directors, the Academic Assembly and the Faculty Senate. Faculty Senators are elected by the academic departments and divisions in accordance with the Senate's Charter and Bylaws that are transparent and readily accessible. Faculty members participate in the governance process by serving on Academic Standing Committees, chaired or co-chaired by the Senators, and make recommendations to the Academic Dean and Provost.

- The Commandant is responsible for the military immersion and leadership development of Midshipmen. Similar to the Dean and Provost's support staff, the Commandant is also assisted by a team of senior officers who oversee the Brigade. The Commandant's tenure at USNA is usually about two years, which results in frequent turnovers in that vital pillar of leadership.

- The Naval Academy Athletic Association (NAAA), a 501c(3) organization, and the USNA Physical Education department are charged with executing the physical mission. The Superintendent appoints the Athletics Director (AD), but neither he nor his staff are federal employees. A Board of Control, appointed by the Superintendent, provides oversight to the NAAA. A small number of the coaches and assistant coaches teach physical education classes and are federal employees. The AD and his team work with the rest of the Academy in integrating their members into the Academy community and provide vital institutional services including assessment data on athletes.

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- The institution has sufficient staffing to meet its educational goals although some key shortages are becoming apparent. A case in point is the shortage of about 40 military faculty members. As the Navy has delayed creating those additional billets, the required courses are taught by adjunct instructors, hired using the Academic Dean's operating funds. While an occasional use of those funds for hiring adjunct instructors would not be problematic, regular use of approximately
$1,000,000 of the Dean's annual operating funds for the purpose will negatively affect other programmatic areas. Similarly, faculty members highlighted insufficient administrative support (e.g., a department having one support staff for seventy faculty members) and also a shortage of IT support staff.

- The institution maintains an extensive database on Midshipman information. It provides a variety of useful holistic data on Midshipmen performance and their long-term career progression. The Office of Institutional Research keeps the Superintendent aware of key statistics, and relevant metrics are monitored by the SLT. The data has been used by the Center of Academic Excellence in providing excellent student support services that has led to the Academy's outstanding retention and 4Y

  graduation rates. As will be discussed in Standard 7, there is a concern that the IR data are not readily available to those outside the Superintendent's Office. The reporting chain of the IR Office is worth a fresh review for enhancing institutional effectiveness.

- Similarly, the Information Technology and Services Department (ITSD) also came under criticism from the faculty and staff who are advocating for more transparency and better customer service. They articulated a serious shortage among ITSD technical support staff.

- Other than the issues listed above, the institution appears to have effective administrative structures and services. The military leaders at the academy are evaluated annually, however there was no evidence of similar annual evaluation of civilian leaders except within the Academic Dean and Provost's Office.

Suggestions
- The team suggests that the Superintendent evaluate all his direct reports annually, including all civilian direct reports to help build an environment for open dialog and discussions.

- Review the organizational structure, in particular the IR and the ITSD Offices that report directly to the Superintendent. A change in the reporting chain to the cost center that most makes use of these services may be a suitable realignment.

- Seek to enhance continuity in the Commandant's office by whatever means possible.

Standard 6 - Integrity
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

*Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment*s
As the Self-Study affirms, the integrity standard as it applies to USNA is complicated by the fact that the institution is "a federally funded university and military command, populated by a diverse

workforce and student body from every state in the Union and across the globe, civilian employees, and members of the Navy and Marine Corps." Nonetheless, the Visiting Team believes USNA to be fully compliant in adhering to ethical standards and its own stated policies, and in providing support for academic and intellectual freedom.

- Student grievance policies allow Midshipmen to seek resolution through the Informal Resolution System or the Formal Complaint Process. Informal student complaints can be aired at "Dant calls," ("Dant" is shorthand for Commandant) meetings during which the Commandant of Midshipmen meets with the Brigade to respond to student questions or to hear grievances. The command also employs confidential online surveys through which students can anonymously raise issues or register complaints. Procedures for student grievances against faculty are currently under revision, with an interim process having been implemented routed through department chairs or through the office of the Academic Dean. The administration of these processes is communicated via notices posted widely in the student dormitory, Bancroft Hall, and through online sources.

  Academic and intellectual freedoms at USNA are ensured via three Academic Dean instructions that articulate the Academy's formal policies relating to the preservation of a climate of academic/ intellectual freedom in teaching and scholarship among USNA faculty. These instructions cover the institutional assurance of the protection of academic freedom in course content and pedagogical techniques in the classroom, and the preservation of academic freedom through the enforcement of research and scholarship ethical principles among USNA faculty. A recent canvassing of department chairs indicated that the instructions are widely disseminated and that their faculty is well acquainted with USNA policies on academic freedom. The USNA Faculty Handbook affirms, "The Naval Academy subscribes to the American Association of University Professors 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments."

- A survey of Midshipmen reveals that 91% agree that USNA faculty are respectful of student perceptions in the classroom, while 84% affirm that the faculty appear to feel free to express their opinions and offer their scholarly views on the subjects they teach.

- USNA strives to perpetuate a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration for the range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives at the Academy. This imperative is supported by offices charged with ensuring respect for all members of the community, including the Equal Employment Office, the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer and Diversity Directorate, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, and the Command Managed Equal Opportunity Offices. A total of 86.1% of Command Climate respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the Academy demonstrates a climate that fosters respect among students, faculty, staff, and administration for the range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives.

- USNA ensures that required and elective courses necessary to students' majors are sufficiently available to allow students to graduate within the published program length of forty-seven months. Faculty advisors keep close track of their advisees' requirements, and the fact that plebes declare majors in March of their first year allows department chairs to plan for the rising majors in their departments.

- Reasonable, continuing student access to paper or electronic catalogs. When catalogs are

available only electronically, the institution's web page provides a guide or index to catalog information, and the institution archives copies of the catalogs as sections or policies are updated: this Recommendation # 8, Standard 6, from the Self Study: *The Naval Academy should archive its electronic course catalog each year.* However, archives have not been maintained since the transition to electronic catalogs in Academic Year 2013.

- Intellectual property rights: guidance on the protection of intellectual property rights by USNA faculty, staff, and Midshipmen is found in ACDEANINST, including a detailed explanation of "Fair Use." Additionally, guidance on plagiarism intended primarily for Midshipmen (but applicable to all community members) is published electronically on the USNA Library website. Recent departmental surveys indicate that the faculty is aware of and familiar with the content of these policies.

- Availability of factual information about the institution (including MSCHE annual data reporting) accurately reported and made publicly available to the institution's community. USNA meets all internal and external reporting requirements related to this responsibility and periodically assesses the policies, processes and practices pertaining to integrity through vehicles such as Command Climate Surveys, student and faculty surveys, as well as individual program-related accreditation efforts and command-wide Inspector General inspections. The presence of outdated "Instructions" and "Notices" on the USNA Intranet inspired the Self-Study suggestion that "the Naval Academy should strive to establish and maintain the currency of its inventory of instructions and notices."

- Human subjects research: USNA subscribes to ethical practices and mandates that all activities related to human subject research be guided by three basic ethical principles for the protection of human subjects involved directly or indirectly in research studies. Those principles include (1) respect for persons, (2) beneficence, and (3) justice. The Institutional Review Board is responsible for enforcing the standards of subject research.
(See Recommendation #1.)

Suggestion
- USNA should be applauded for striving for honesty and truthfulness in public relations announcements, advertising, and recruitment and admissions materials and practices. Accordingly, the Visiting Team suggests that illustrations in all Academy media, e.g., the strategic plan, should include more diversity in pictures of "active" or "traditional" Midshipmen-type activities. Subtle biases are important to recognize so we especially commend a regular review of all relevant media.

Recommendation
- We recommend that human subject research protocols be reviewed with regard to best practices in the academic community.

Standard 7 - Institutional Assessment
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

The institution continues to develop and implement an assessment process that evaluates its overall effectiveness in achieving its mission and goals and its compliance with accreditation standards.

*Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment***s**
The institution is to be commended for its openness to continue to assess the processes in place and to modify them as necessary to better measure its effectiveness as an institution. The staff and faculty have truly embraced the concept of "continuous improvement" and are to be commended for their numerous efforts in this regard. The self-study and visit with USNA faculty and staff demonstrate that the Academy uses assessment to inform planning and improve institutional effectiveness and processes, and that it exhibits a culture that values and encourages self-reflection and improvement. As described in the self-study, "institutional assessment at any large, diverse institution is challenging and should be continually evolving, and this is certainly true at the Naval Academy." The USNA provides a candid assessment of where it stands and challenges that still need to be addressed.

USNA has established an institutional assessment structure centered on the Academy Effectiveness Board (AEB) and the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee (FSAC). The FSAC focuses on student learning through the academic program activities, while the AEB has a broader focus on the institutional as a whole. Despite this structure, institutional assessment has been a challenge for the Academy since when it was identified in 2006 in its self-study process.

- The AEB was first established immediately following the November 2006 MSCHE visit.

- The PRR reviewers in 2011 recommended that the Academy "accelerate development of a comprehensive institutional effectiveness program with a view to producing a dashboard of key indicators across all major goals and initiatives of the institution."

- USNA acknowledges that its soon to be developed institutional assessment plan will address this with outcomes that are specific and measurable with targets set for levels of attainment, and that it must ensure the process is transparent and results shared with stakeholders.

- The self-study concludes that the Academy "lacks the organizational structure required to develop and implemented a sustained institution wide assessment plan."

- Indeed, there is a tremendous amount of assessment being performed at this Institution. Although several examples of assessments performed by the AEB were given in the self-study, there was not an explicit connection with the institution's mission areas and strategic imperatives, and how they contribute to an institutional effectiveness plan, which has yet to be developed. Members of the AEB were able to articulate the connection of these assessments to the strategic imperatives.

USNA is addressing the above challenges head-on as evidenced by the following:

- The Associate Dean for Planning and Assessment (ADPA), hired in 2012, works closely with both the AEB and FSAC but is primarily focused on coordinating academic assessments and does not have the authority to make decisions necessary to integrate the work of the two committees. To address this void, USNA hired in June 2015 the Executive Director of Strategy, which is equivalent to a Vice President with faculty status at other institutions.

- To facilitate and promote the effectiveness of the AEB, in the spring of 2015 quarterly meetings between the AEB and the Senior Leader Team (SLT) were introduced.

- The 2009 strategic plan describes 10 imperatives, each of which includes approximately five

objectives, and closes with 25 strategic initiatives. The AEB has the responsibility for implementing and assessing each.

- A variety of ongoing measures and tools have recently been inventoried by the AEB to explicitly measure institutional, program, and service effectiveness. The AEB is currently developing a plan on how to utilize effectively these tools for strategic planning and institutional effectiveness.

- Academic leaders have held effective assessment workshops and seminars, and developed materials to educate faculty and administration for a successful and sustainable assessment process.

- Every Academy "cost center" or critical unit, to include all support programs and units are assessed annually by the Command Evaluation Office. For this report each cost center, program, and unit assesses itself based on several factors to include mission accomplishment.

- The admissions and retention processes have been assessed and, where necessary, have resulted in modifications of practices. Especially important, the reorganization of the Academic Advising operation, with the addition of a staff member, strengthened advising.

In conclusion, USNA has a strong culture of continuous improvement. The culture for the assessment of student learning, which will be described in Standard 14, is strong throughout the community. For assessing strategic and operational planning, Naval Academy leaders conduct numerous assessments; however, they are not fully organized nor fully documented to facilitate institutional improvement.

Appropriate structures to improve exist but need to continue defining, clarifying, and communicating the roles and the responsibilities of each to all stakeholders. The team reiterates that assessment is being performed throughout the institution at all levels; however, there is room to improve by following through with the recommendations below.

Suggestions
- Consider integrating elements of the annual Command Evaluation assessment reports into the institutional assessment plan.

- Consider including Midshipmen on various assessment committees.

- Develop a plan for assessing the effectiveness of USNA committees and consider how their work might be integrated into annual planning and assessment.

Recommendations
- All of the stakeholders of the USNA should work collaboratively to measure the effectiveness of its mission and goals with respect to the accomplishments and characteristics not only of its Midshipmen as graduates, but also in their service as officers in the United States Navy and the Marine Corps.

- Continue to develop and implement a documented, organized, systematic, and sustainable institutional assessment process that is transparent and has clear and realistic guidelines to

evaluate and improve institutional effectiveness of the Academy, the total range of cost centers, the Naval Academy Prep School, and all programs and services. The implementation of this plan should inform and facilitate institutional planning, budgeting and resource allocation, and include a plan for routinely evaluating the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's assessment processes.

- Evaluate the structure of the IR office to ensure maximum support for appropriate stakeholders for assessment activities being performed at the Academy.

- Provide appropriate institutional support to Academy personnel for organizational assessment efforts to conduct assessments that are systematic, sustainable, and well informed.

Standard 8 – Student Admissions and Retention

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishments

The admissions process is organized and implemented to attract, admit and retain Midshipmen who are qualified to meet the rigorous demands of USNA. The entry requirements support and complement the USNA's goals and provide the breadth and depth to appropriately inform applicants regarding the distinctive nature of a USNA education and continuing career commitment in the US Navy or Marine Corps. The Admissions Committee utilizes myriad data sources including the Whole Person Multiple, the STEM predictor, and an array of screening data to make informed decisions when offering admission to USNA. With an approximate 86% persistence rate from enrollment to the degree, USNA is admitting the appropriate cohorts to achieve success. Additionally, the tracking of graduates for a 10-year persistence rate in the military has demonstrated a retention rate of more than 50% with a 20-year retention rate above 30%. The various data points used by the admissions process seem to be accurate and reliable predictors of a Midshipman's success. USNA should be proud of its efforts and success in admitting the right students who have the potential to succeed as Midshipmen and officers in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps.

- The availability of regional counselors who are assigned to every applicant in the admissions process is a commendable approach that more institutions should consider. Combined with the Blue and Gold Officers who are available to serve as admissions ambassadors, answer questions and interview potential candidates, applicants have many opportunities to gather information about whether USNA is the right fit for them.

- The View Book and Class Profiles are available on-line and are informative in guiding prospective applicants regarding USNA's mission, the role of the Midshipman in the Navy and the expectations for all students who enroll.

- Information gleaned from the USNA's websites is also useful and provides applicants with an additional method of gathering current information about the application process and USNA's requirements. Data were available about the requirements, the student experience, and what an applicant would need to know about USNA.

- The Team commends the USNA for the quality and comprehensive nature of admissions

materials and the publication of its academic requirements and policies, including the specificity of the USNA View Book. Academic details are made clear to applicants and the information pertaining to finances, including health benefits and post-academy career requirements, is documented clearly.

- The policies and procedures for addressing students' individual academic goals are appropriate. For example, the assignment of "V" grades for those whose transcripts document competencies in particular courses facilitates some flexibility in course enrollments and enables motivated Midshipmen to develop a double major or focus on a minor field or even enroll in the Voluntary Graduate Education Program (VGEP). Given the curricular requirements, these policies are "Best Practices" and should be encouraged for those students who could benefit from and succeed in such an academic endeavor.

- Even the best admissions practices and careful vetting cannot guarantee that all students will be able to successfully juggle and meet the academic demands of their curriculum without additional assistance. To achieve their learning goals, the USNA encourages students to work with instructors for extra instruction. For those needing more help, there are multiple opportunities for Midshipmen to participate in supplemental study including non-credit classes in specified STEM fields, peer- facilitated study programs, professional tutoring, exam reviews and general learning skills programs.

- The admissions and retention processes are reviewed and assessed. The addition of staff to help with early intervention Academic Advising for those students needing assistance is a direct result or assessment efforts; assessments have resulted in modifications of practices.

- The Plebe Advising and Intervention Programs are important initiatives that contribute to retention and, with the creation of the position of Deputy Director of Academic Advising, it will be important to track the impact of these programs on the success rates of at-risk students. The MSCHE Team applauds the USNA for its efforts to assist Midshipmen in meeting their academic requirements.

- Based on the Class of 2019 *Snapshot*, the entering class did have representation from diverse groups. Based on our on-site interviews, proactive efforts are being made to further diversify the USNA.

- Diversity at USNA has a number of dimensions, including gender, ethnicity, race, and military/civilian status. The Academy devotes considerable effort to assuring that diversity goals are consistently pursued. The role of the chief diversity officer is both internal and external, and involves efforts with respect to retention of Midshipmen at the academy and at NAPS. These efforts include awareness, training, intervention, and personal counseling. The office has recently developed an assessment rubric in the form of a checklist.

Suggestion
- The Team suggests that USNA faculty and staff continue to work on enhancing the enrollment of underrepresented populations and women and continue to provide the support needed to enhance opportunities for these groups to advance to the degree.

Standard 9 - Student Support Services
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team

that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

***Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment*s**
A fundamental aspect of academic and college success is the accuracy of one's expectations and whether those expectations are met upon enrollment. At an institution like USNA, the "expectations factor" is particularly important given the multiple levels of rigor both in and outside the classroom. The fact that prospective students are thoroughly informed about the expectations and vetted prior to enrollment (as noted in the comments regarding Standard 8), helps students from the outset in their adjustment to the USNA experience and, eventually, the Navy or the Marine Corps. Assigning approximately 10 Plebe advisees to volunteer faculty members, of which there are about 100, is a "best practice" that more institutions should consider. Concomitantly, having Senior Advisors in every academic program helps to guide students in choosing and completing their required courses in four years. Having dedicated professional staff who are committed to developing and leading student support services is also critical for student success The Team was impressed with the faculty and staff's involvement in advisement and the "whole person" mentoring philosophy; we commend the USNA for its emphasis on student advising and mentoring.

- The Midshipmen with whom we met reported that their advisors were available and helpful and that their questions and concerns were addressed adequately. The high rate of persistence to the degree indicates that this system is working.

- The information reported by the Director of Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) and from the Women's Network indicated that the Annual Climate Survey provided data to help inform and change program development. These assessment practices are important models that should be continued and monitored annually.

- There are multiple programs and support services that seek to facilitate students' academic and professional success at the USNA. From academic support staffing to professionals who deal with behavioral, honor and emotional issues, including chaplains and psychologists, the appropriate staffing patterns have been developed to meet the needs of the Midshipmen. Especially important, the nature of the services that are provided are linked to the USNA's mission and goals, and the staff works collaboratively to meet students' needs.

- The myriad support operations provided for students are staffed by qualified professionals who are hired and trained to meet the needs of Midshipmen. The procedures for assignments, promotions and participation in professional development programs are in keeping with contemporary practices across US higher education.
-
- Information regarding USNA's policies, regulations and support services is widely disseminated and, specifically, is made available to Plebes when they first arrive. Additional information is provided at the beginning of every semester.

- The Center for Academic Excellence has programs to help students improve their academic performance; there are group study opportunities and tutoring as well as opportunities to participate in voluntary courses, particularly in the STEM fields.

- The VADM Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership provides educational opportunities to address both leadership and ethical issues related to decision-making by leaders within the parameters of a moral compass. Serving both the USNA and external communities, the Center is a fabulous resource and "best practice group" for the training of future leaders. The Team

congratulates the USNA for this exceptional initiative.

- The athletics program, at the intercollegiate, club and intramurals levels is organized in keeping with the USNA's mission. The activities are well organized, participation is mandatory in at least one level of activity, and are in keeping with USNA's expectations for involvement in extracurricular activities. These activities are monitored by designated officers with participation limits established based on class year and academic progress. These activities, while referred to as "extracurricular," are very much an integral part of the USNA experience and help to build a service commitment for future officers.

- The Plebe Sponsor Program is another "best practice" of the USNA. With careful vetting of volunteers, Plebes are provided with the opportunity of meeting and socializing with "adult others" outside of their command structure who are interested in hosting new students and helping them in their transition to their new lives.

- The USNA's records systems are in keeping with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well as the specific requirements of the Navy. The Midshipmen Information System includes the data regarding grades and students' progress. Midshipmen are informed about the signatory requirements for the release of their records and the various privacy requirements pertaining to students' records were assessed in the summer of 2014.

- The grievance structure for academic issues is typical of models employed at most higher education institutions and the system seems to work. For matters beyond academics, the students, faculty and staff indicated that the procedures are disseminated and systems are in place to address concerns. The various procedures are assessed in the annual climate survey and from information gleaned through the Office of the Commandant.

- The Women's Network provides important opportunities for building collaborations to help students persist to the degree and pursue successful careers. We applaud their efforts. At the same time, the turnover in this Network is significant given changes in duty assignments. The Team suggests that the USNA consider the development of an office to further the consistency of service and leadership in this area.

- The Team noted that some faculty raised concerns about the reporting process and adjudication of the Honor Concept. Concomitantly, the Team learned that efforts were underway to review and modify, as needed, aspects of the system. The Team suggests that the USNA implement the results of their review and work to build greater understanding across constituencies regarding the consistent implementation of regulations pertaining to the Honor Concept.

- The Team was pleased to learn of the emphasis placed on training related to sexual assault and harassment. Both the SAPR and SHAPE programs are model programs that have become a part of the institutional culture. Both programs are assessed as part of the annual climate survey and by external agencies as well. The Midshipmen with whom we met considered it an honor to become a peer educator with SAPR. Thorough reports are prepared for the *The Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies.*

- The Information Technology Services Division is routinely assessed by its Naval chain of command, as well as by Fleet Cybercom. Assessments are also implemented by the Inspector

General's Office as well as by Midshipmen liaison officers. As evidenced by the Visiting Team, Wi-Fi connections can be troubling (we were routinely knocked off the network). While Wi-Fi is not yet available across the yard, plans are in place to expand Wi-Fi capabilities to non-USNA issued equipment. Similarly, the Team suggests that efforts should be directed to provide students with computer access when they are off-site. Students reported significant satisfaction with computer support and equipment repair.

Suggestions
- The Team suggests that the USNA consider the development of an office to further the consistency of service and leadership to serve the Women's Network.

- The Team suggests that the USNA implement the results of its review of the Honor Concept and work to build greater understanding across constituencies regarding the consistent implementation of regulations pertaining to the Honor Concept.

Standard 10 - Faculty
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishments
- USNA has three categories of military professors. First, senior military officers with doctoral degrees assigned to the Academy for a minimum of three years. Permanent Military Professors (PMPs) are a subset of this senior group and are permanently assigned to the Naval Academy until they reach statutory retirement at the end of their military careers. These PMPs not only conduct research in their field of expertise, but also pursue academic promotion. Second, Rotational military instructors hold master's degrees. Third, the Junior Permanent Military Professors (JPMPs), represent a hybrid of the first two groups. The PMP professorships were initiated in 1997 and JPMP professorships in 2010 in an attempt to remediate a shortfall in military faculty. The PMP program currently provides about 50 faculty members and is reaching steady state. The JPMP program, more recently added, currently provides 25 faculty members with a target of 40.

- Over the course of the past decade, the Academic Dean's office has developed and refined a model to predict the required faculty size as a function of student body size, majors distribution, and the goal of a 50/50 military/civilian balance. That calculus dictates aiming for 294 each of civilian and military faculty. Because USNA is short scores of military professors, approximately 41 adjuncts are being used to fill instructional needs. Continued engagement by the Superintendent with Navy leadership has ensured a roadmap to get close to 294 by 2017.

- The Faculty Handbook and Academic Dean and Provost prescribe that a national search be undertaken to fill all tenure track positions, ensuring that no internal candidates will be quietly inserted into tenure-track slots.

- Faculty participation in governance: faculty have a direct voice in the selection of department chairs, and they are able to communicate their concerns and recommendations to the senior leadership via their department chairs through the Academic Assembly. The Superintendent and Academic Dean and Provost meet regularly with faculty both in meetings of the entire faculty and in department meetings. The Academic Dean and Provost also meets once monthly with

department chairs. Faculty members also participate directly in the hiring of new faculty by reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, and offering recommendations as to which should be hired. Faculty are involved in governance as well through Academic Standing Committees and the Faculty Senate.

- Effects of increased project-based learning: "The FTE number for the institution," the Self-Study states, "is currently 854 civilian faculty and staff. That number will drop by about 1% through the end of FY 2017 but is projected to fall 4.3% to 819 in FY 2018. The 2006 report already showed a shortfall of non-faculty technical staff of 21% in Engineering and 60% for Math and Science so a 4% further decline will make it difficult to maintain all current activity, let alone make improvements. The shortfalls are due to both the increased emphasis on project-based learning (and the associated laboratories) as well as the significant increase in research both by professors and students. The 2006 report documents a 260% increase in research active faculty from 1991 to 2006, yet there has not been a requisite increase in technical staff to support this work." Faculty are very much aware of this circumstance, noting how often they find themselves undertaking tasks once completed by support staff.

- Educational curricula: USNA has revised the procedures for updating their core curriculum by amending its bylaws regarding the curriculum review process. The Senate Curriculum Committee has been charged with ensuring the academic integrity and applicability of the core curriculum such that it provides every Midshipman with the educational foundation for any type of Naval service.

- USNA provides appropriate institutional support for the advancement and development of faculty, including teaching, research scholarship, and service. We commend the Faculty Enhancement Center, which supports faculty via individual consultations, classroom observations, teaching effectiveness workshops, and the Instructional Development Support Center, which introduces instructors to emerging educational technologies and facilitates their integration of appropriate technologies into the teaching, learning, and assessment process.

- A serious impediment for faculty development is the issues of travel budgets and their effect upon professional growth. Among other impacts, the loss of professional development opportunities can be significant. Travel budgets for each tenure track, tenured, and PMP faculty member amounted to roughly $1,500, although the Self-Study suggests that this figure, when combined with external funds, was sufficient to cover travel needs, it also acknowledges that, "While recent improvements have made the process [of applying for travel funds] somewhat more manageable, it remains inefficient, frustrating, and time-consuming for the support staff and faculty alike, to the point that faculty members sometimes choose not to travel. Travel is often approved only a few days before departure, resulting in added cost and uncertainty for the faculty members who do not know until the last minute if they will be able to honor their commitment to appear at a conference and present their work.

- Faculty travel to professional conferences became very difficult in 2013 due to changes in DoD regulations and budget cuts." Thus Standard #10, Recommendation #2 from the Self Study: Faculty access to travel for professional development should be improved by establishing a baseline faculty travel budget for normal years (years without continuing resolutions or sequestration), stabilizing funding levels, and streamlining approval processes."

- The Naval Academy Faculty Handbook explicitly embraces teaching, scholarship, and institutional service as the core activities for Naval Academy faculty. The team especially

commends the commitment of the faculty, and the provision of required facilities and infrastructure to engage the Midshipmen in academic research.

- Evaluation of faculty to ensure their continuing growth and development as professors: USNA faculty are evaluated regularly to ensure their continuing teaching effectiveness. Peer and supervisory visitations occur regularly within departments each semester, while faculty being considered for promotion and tenure receive separate visitations by members of the Naval Academy- wide Promotion and Tenure Committee. Longer-term faculty (Civilian and PMP) members are expected to maintain discipline currency through scholarship and research. All military faculty are also expected to maintain their professional currency, as appropriate.

- Evaluation of part-time and adjunct faculty: criteria for the supervision and review of teaching effectiveness for part-time and adjunct faculty are very similar to those for full time faculty. Adjuncts and part-time faculty, like military faculty, are expected to possess a master's degree or Ph.D. in a related field as well as teaching experience. Their resumes are normally evaluated by department chairs, associate chairs, and course coordinators. Because of USNA's proximity to community colleges, graduate schools, and many other employers of people with the requisite backgrounds, there is an ample supply of talented candidates.

- Academic freedom: the USNA Faculty Handbook affirms that "The Naval Academy subscribes to the American Association of University Professors 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure with 1970 Interpretive Comments." Additional guidance re academic freedom is contained in "Content Issues In Teaching," "Integrity In Research And Scholarly Activity," and "Complaints Against Faculty Members"(*Fundamental Element 10.9*). The Self-Study affirms "The Naval Academy leadership works closely with Navy leadership to ensure that academic freedom is maintained while meeting the spirit of unique Defense Department and U.S. Government guidelines on publishing."

- Consistency/equivalence of pay scales: most Naval Academy civilian faculty are paid for ten months each year and those professors who wish research support for the two intercessional months must apply for additional funding. Civilian faculty pay is based on a federally mandated ladder of 69 "pay steps." The in-hiring step has increased over the decades, and now ranges from about step 17 in the humanities to around step 37 in some of the engineering and computer disciplines. Based on available funding and the annual performance reviews, faculty members are awarded, on average, about one pay step per year, with additional increases in the years of academic promotion. Faculty pay is limited by the federal pay cap, which has not increased as fast as the cost-of-living. The Self- study recommends, "that the Naval Academy should continue to advocate to DoD leadership for changes to the faculty pay system with regard to the cap on civilian faculty salary."

The faculty with whom we met were highly enthusiastic about the Academy and extremely complimentary towards both their students and their teaching colleagues. Many of them expressed sincere pride in teaching Midshipmen. The major reservations about the Academy they articulate involve the highly inconvenient access to travel, and the p-card and the "terms and conditions" policy. The Visiting Team believes the travel situation and purchasing difficulties adversely affect the faculty's teaching and professional development, and we sympathize with some faculty's complaints that they have received insufficient advocacy on such issues from the administration.

Suggestion
- It seems unavoidable that the Academy experiences friction between its status as a federally-funded university and as a military command; nonetheless, the Visiting Team suggests that every effort should be made to minimize as much as possible the perpetuation of obstacles to professional development experienced by academics teaching at this military installation.

Standard 11 - Educational Offerings
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

*Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment***s**
The United States Naval Academy offers 25 majors, each tied to a Bachelor of Science degree. The majors range from highly technical and quantitative disciplines, e.g., Physics and Aerospace Engineering, to verbally analytic and qualitative disciplines such as History and Arabic. Each major program is composed of courses from core, major, and professional subjects, where core courses serve as the General Education portion of the curricula. Each degree program requires approximately 140 credits.

Given the mission of the Academy, the breadth of the program offerings is in keeping with the breadth of issues faced by modern leaders and commanders. However, to offer twenty-five majors to approximately 1,000 annual graduates, and a nominal average of only 40 graduates per major, could be construed as over-extension, but the Naval Academy maintains small class sizes, enabled by an exceptionally low student/faculty ratio. Also, the variety of majors offered serves the additional service-imposed constraint that at least 65% of all Navy-option graduates receive degrees in technical majors.

At a total of 90 credits, the core courses represent a larger portion of the total curriculum than would normally be found within the general education component at other universities, and include more technical and quantitative content than is usual. In discussion it was found that the core courses are seen to be supportive of:
1. The fundamental mission of USNA, in that every graduate must be capable of serving in every warfare community, thus relating to Standard 7.
2. The individual major programs, in effect serving as the "backbone" of each, thus relating to Standards 11 and 14.
3. The general rounding out of a student's educational breadth, thus relating to Standard 12.

Such an arrangement would significantly endanger rigor within the students' majors if the students were not exceptionally well prepared before matriculation, and if an exceptional level of academic support was not provided to the students after enrollment. In the case of the Naval Academy both of these conditions appear to be met.

Other significant achievements include:
- As additional evidence of satisfactory rigor, all eligible majors, approximately half of those offered, have received specialized accreditation from ABET or ACS.

- A remarkable degree of coherence between objectives and outcomes.

- An admirable melding of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular experiences through such activities as lectures, summer experiences, exchange programs, study abroad programs, leadership

development experiences, and athletics.

- A remarkable four-year degree completion rate, in the order of 85% to 90%, due in no small part to excellent admission results, a faculty focus on teaching, and the level of academic support to Midshipmen, as mentioned above.

Issues found to be of concern, but not warranting suggestions or recommendations, were:

- Renewal of aging facilities, especially the Nimitz Library and Rickover Hall; although this is a serious issue, especially from the point of view of faculty and library staff, they do not appear to impede educational success.

- Staffing shortfalls in the library and engineering labs; again, these are of significant concern to those directly affected, but Midshipmen appear to be receiving an outstanding educational experience nonetheless.

- A shortfall is the overall proportion of military faculty compared to authorized levels.

Standard 12 - General Education
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

***Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment*s**
General education is a key element of the core curriculum, a body of coursework comprising approximately 90 credits over a breadth of subjects ranging from Chemistry and Electrical Engineering to Ethics and Rhetoric. In conversation it was revealed that the core curriculum is seen to serve three distinct purposes, as described with respect to Standard 11.

From the materials reviewed, it seems that two elements make this arrangement work well for the Naval Academy:

1. **Balance,** in that the core curriculum is equally distributed over a spectrum of material from quantitative to qualitative, much as was represented by the original seven liberal arts, thereby providing a constructive basis for each major normally thought of as being part of that major.
2. **Flexibility,** in that the framework of the core allows substitutions that are appropriate to a variety majors, such as substituting statistics for differential equations, and that the nature of the core supports the ultimate career path of the officer graduate, e.g., a history major who later finds it necessary to study underwater acoustics.

Of special mention are several elements of the core curriculum that represent best practices:
- The emphasis on developing excellence in written communication. Although many universities have developed writing-across-the curriculum programs, the USNA approach of allowing any faculty member to refer a student for remedial help in writing, and the implementation of a capstone writing course within each major are particularly notable.

- The integration of the leadership portion of the professional courses with the humanities, history, and social science, including the enrichment provided by conferences and special lectures.

- Strong assessment practices for the individual courses, just as assessment of courses is described with respect to Standard 14.

Recommendation
One issue of some concern is the fact that, although the individual courses are assessed for effectiveness as discussed in Standard 14, the effectiveness of the core curriculum is not assessed in a holistic manner to determine effectiveness as a general education effort under this standard.

After discussions on campus, it is clear that the data available to the Office of Institutional Research offer a rich and remarkable source for analysis, and that USNA has developed a detailed plan to conduct such assessments, and an implementation plan. Therefore, it is recommended that:

- The Academy should further implement the plan for the assessment of the general education program.

Standard 13 - Related Educational Activities
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishments
The 47-month Naval Academy experience speaks to the three domains of the mission, via three roughly co-equal components: (1) academics, (2) leadership and professional development, and (3) physical training. From the materials reviewed, it appears that these activities, although not all credit-bearing, are arranged to be mutually supporting, assessed and evaluated, provided with extensive supports to assist students failing to achieve the desired norms, and offer a significant breadth of experiences and enrichment opportunities to the students.

USNA has no distance learning programs, adult learning obligations, or certificate programs. The Naval Academy does engage in a considerable amount of non-credit and experiential education, and is affiliated with the Naval Academy Preparatory School (hereinafter NAPS) in Newport, Rhode Island.

Of note are:
- As mentioned with respect to Standard 11, the thorough and intensive nature of the programs provided to identify and address at-risk students is admirable.

- USNA's relationship with NAPS is key to serving academically under-prepared applicants prior to enrollment. The materials provided indicate a high degree of collaboration between the faculties of both institutions to achieve effective assessment of teaching and learning and curriculum design.

- That USNA and NAPS faculty and staff participate in frequent and detailed considerations of pedagogical and administrative practices with a goal to improve outcomes.

- The breadth of summer experiential learning opportunities, mostly provided by Department of Defense training establishments is remarkable, and suggests that tremendous synergies exist between academic, professional, and physical components of the USNA curriculum.

- Significant changes are currently in progress to re-align the curricular and co-curricular aspects of Character Education and Leadership Education. This has led to what appears to have been a serious and fruitful consideration of the intellectual, experiential, and practical aspects of this material, which represents a unique aspect of the USNA educational experience. A concern is the role of the Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS). It Serves as a major point of USNA admissions, providing as much as 20% of each incoming class,

- Has a significant role to play in assuring the academic performance of many future Midshipmen whose leadership potential may not be entirely matched by their academic achievements,

- Some college-level material is being covered at NAPS for some midshipman candidates, and

- As mentioned above, a high degree of collaboration exists, but we are uncertain whether NAPS should be treated as a branch campus or additional instructional site under this Standard.

Recommendation
- It is stated in the Self-Study report that no stand-alone assessment of experiential or non-credit learning experiences is completed by USNA, although this is required under this Standard. Given the special relationship of NAPS and the USNA, the Team recommends that a plan be provided, with implementation details, to assess the effectiveness of non-credit and experiential programs offered by NAPS.

Standard 14 - Assessment of Student Learning
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

*Summary of Evidence, Findings and Significant Accomplishment***s**
The Academy has a documented, organized, and sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning, a process overseen by the FSAC. The team commends the faculty for its use of a variety of assessment measures, both direct and indirect, to measure Midshipmen development at the course and program levels.

- The Academic Dean and Provost has established a comprehensive assessment program that includes expectations for all divisions and department templates for annual reports.

- The team commends the institution for establishing clearly articulated statements describing expected student learning outcomes at all levels, all of which are thoroughly mapped to the core learning outcomes and USNA graduate attributes.

- Each division/department assesses student learning in the core courses within its division/department. Assessments of the core learning outcomes across departments and divisions is currently being discussed.

- Departments conduct comprehensive annual assessment of the academic majors, minors, and tracks within a department.

- The FSAC has developed a simple yet effective template for annual reports from the divisions and

departments to support continuous improvement of Midshipmen learning and development. Each fall members of the FSAC, to include the ADPA, meet with every department to review assessment reports based on a completed rubric. The FSAC is commended for the feedback it provides to the departments using its established rubric.

- The FSAC actively pursue the development of assessment methodologies by planning and implementing a series of assessment workshops and seminars held each spring. Numerous assessment reports were provided in the self-study and on-site dating back multiple years consisting of outcomes, assessments, and actions taken which were informed by the assessments.

A concern of the team is in regard to how all of these assessments are managed effectively from an institutional perspective.

Currently the Academy does not systematically assess its institution level learning outcomes, or its seven attributes of naval graduates. Work has been undertaken to assess two of the attributes, however, concerns exist amongst Academy leaders that these attributes as written are not measurable with respect to knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Additionally, several senior leaders have discussed potential plans for either revising these attributes or incorporating them directly into the strategic imperatives in the new strategic plan. The AEB has acknowledged its responsibility for determining the appropriate structure and plan for assessing the institution level learning outcomes that ultimately will integrate all Midshipmen development throughout the 47 month experience.

In January of 2014, a Core Learning Outcomes Task Force (consisting of members of the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee) was formed to generate a draft list of broad student learning and general education outcomes. The FSAC reviews core course assessment reports and meets with departmental assessment committees and divisional leadership to discuss assessment results. In conjunction with the academic divisions, the intent of this committee is to promote cross-division discussion and coordination of assessments. The committee will report annually to the senate on the state of core program assessment at the academy.

Suggestions
- That members of the AEB build on the policies, procedures, best practices, and lessons learned identified in the academic program.

- That the academic programs continue the implementation of the exceptional academic assessment plan to ensure all departments and programs meet expectations and best practices.

Recommendations
- Continue to develop and implement a documented, organized, systematic, and sustainable institutional assessment process that results in changes to improve student learning, and includes the assessment of outcomes in the majors, the core curriculum, and the institution level learning outcomes. These processes and assessments should be transparent, easily accessible to appropriate stakeholders, and communicated to stakeholders so as to inform and facilitate all levels of planning,   budgeting, and resource allocation.

- Simplify and streamline documentation of assessment of student learning across the multiple levels of student learning: Academy, core, division, department, major, and course.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Visiting Team.

John C. Bravman
Team Co-Chair

Standard 1 - Mission and Goals

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- None.

Standard 2 - Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- USNA should develop and implement a more transparent and structured process to integrate planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal. All constituencies should be firmly entrenched in this process. Data and other direct evidence should be used regularly to inform decisions. Although the structures are outlined, periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes should occur.

- USNA should also provide implementation specifics of *Strategic Plan 2020*'s Strategic Imperatives.

Standard 3 - Institutional Resources

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- Streamline the approval process for faculty travel for professional development; this may include assigning travel approval authority to the Superintendent or his designee. The frustration and attendant inefficiencies around this issue are significant.

- Streamline the purchase card acquisition process while maintaining compliance with established law and regulation, to improve the efficient utilization of institutional resources; this may include establishing local contracting authority at USNA.

Standard 4 - Leadership and Governance

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- None.

Standard 5 - Administration

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- None.

Standard 6 – Integrity

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendation
- We recommend that human subject research protocols be reviewed with regard to best practices in the academic community.

Standard 7 - Institutional Assessment

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- All the stakeholders of the USNA should work collaboratively to measure the effectiveness of its mission and goals with respect to the accomplishments and characteristics not only of its Midshipmen as graduates, but also in their service as officers in the United States Navy and the Marine Corps.

- Continue to develop and implement a documented, organized, systematic, and sustainable institutional assessment process that is transparent and has clear and realistic guidelines to evaluate and improve institutional effectiveness to include the total range of cost centers, including the Naval Academy Prep School, programs and services. The implementation of this plan should inform and facilitate institutional planning, budgeting and resource allocation, and include a plan for routinely evaluating the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the institution's assessment processes.

- Evaluate the structure of the IR office to ensure maximum support for appropriate stakeholders for assessment activities being performed at the Academy.

- Provide appropriate institutional support to Academy personnel for organizational assessment efforts to conduct assessments that are systematic, sustainable, and well-informed.

Standard 8 – Student Admissions and Retention

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- None.

Standard 9 - Student Support Services

Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

Recommendations
- None.

Standard 10 - Faculty
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

   Recommendations
   • None.

Standard 11 - Educational Offerings
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

   Recommendations
   • None.

Standard 12 - General Education
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

   Recommendation
   • The Academy should further implement the plan for the assessment of the general education program.

Standard 13 - Related Educational Activities
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

   Recommendation
   • It is stated in the Self-Study report that no stand alone assessment of experiential or non-credit learning experiences is completed by USNA, although this is required under this Standard. Therefore, it is recommended a plan be provided, with implementation details, to assess the effectiveness of non-credit and experiential programs.

Standard 14 - Assessment of Student Learning
Based upon the evidence provided and the meetings with staff and faculty, it appears to the team that the United States Naval Academy meets this standard.

   Recommendations
   • Continue to develop and implement a documented, organized, systematic, and sustainable institutional assessment process that results in changes to improve student learning, and includes the assessment of outcomes in the majors, the core curriculum, and the institution level learning outcomes. These processes and assessments should be transparent, easily accessible to appropriate stakeholders, and communicated to stakeholders so as to inform and facilitate all levels of planning, budgeting, and resource allocation.

   • Simplify and streamline documentation of assessment of student learning across the multiple levels of student learning: Academy, core, division, department, major, and course.