United States Naval Academy Periodic Review Report

June 2011

Chapter Three

Major Challenges and Opportunities

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The current major challenges and opportunities faced by the United States Naval Academy are discussed in this chapter. This discussion is organized around the 14 Middle States Standards of Excellence.

Standard 1: Mission and Goals / Standard 2: Strategic Planning and Institutional Renewal

The United States Naval Academy enjoys a clear and well-understood purpose, captured in its mission statement, which has remained effectively unchanged since the institution's founding over 150 years ago. While the mission has remained constant, the institutional plan for achieving that mission has adapted to an ever-changing world. Since the 2005 Middle States Review, the Naval Academy has produced its latest plan for the future, *Strategic Plan 2020* (**Enclosure 2.04**).

Strategic Plan 2020 has several strengths. The broadly based, three year review process permitted input from all members of the Academy community, including the Board of Visitors and the Chief of Naval Operations. Available on the USNA website, this document starts with the institutional mission and vision statements and then clearly outlines the desired attributes of our graduates and institutional strategic imperatives. By clearly articulating objectives, the document makes possible long-term continuity in an institution that is characterized by regular military turnover in key leadership positions including the Superintendent, Commandant of Midshipmen, and Division Directors and their staffs. While this document has several strengths, ultimately its value is limited to the actions taken. Therefore, the greatest challenge is ensuring its continued use when making organizational decisions and changes. Toward this end and also partially in response to a Middle States Commission on Higher Education recommendation, the Naval Academy, in 2006, established the Academy Effectiveness Board (AEB). Charged with institutional assessment, the AEB evaluates effectiveness across all three major aspects (moral, mental and physical) of the USNA mission and monitors implementation of the strategic plan. For more information, please see the response to the MSCHE Standard 7 Recommendation in Chapter Two Section One and the discussion in Chapter Six.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources

MSCHE Standard 3 concerns the availability and accessibility of institutional resources – human, financial, technical, physical facilities, and others – necessary to achieve the mission and goals of the institution. There are three major challenges and opportunities related to institutional resources: Funding and Budgeting; Staffing; and Space and Facilities.

Funding and Budgeting. There are both external funding and internal budgeting issues that present opportunities and challenges. These are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Staffing. Due to the budget constraints described in Chapter Four, there are staffing challenges and opportunities for the entire institution—from the classroom, to lab support, to the Admissions Office, Nimitz Library, the student services groups and the financial support areas. The responses to the Self-Study recommendations related to Standard 10 Faculty in Chapter Two discuss many of these issues in detail and provide supporting documents in the enclosures. In Chapter Four, the financial background and possible ways to address current challenges are discussed as well.

In support of the Academy's core mission, the USNA *Strategic Plan 2020* identifies several key initiatives that could have an effect on staffing. These include an increased emphasis on cyber security, a commitment to enhanced opportunities for midshipmen in Languages, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC), an emphasis on project based learning in the STEM disciplines, an enhanced Academic Center able to provide a wide range of academic and personal support services to midshipmen and an expanded Faculty Enhancement Center. Some of these initiatives are well under way, supported by voluntary efforts

of the faculty and non-permanent gift funds. Specific examples include the regional forums (Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America) and STEM initiatives. A major concern, however, is that these efforts may fade without tangible institutional support. Given the opportunity these initiatives present for preparing the naval officer corps of the future, a challenge in the upcoming years will be to institutionalize their funding for staffing and programmatic activities.

Understaffing in the Faculty Enhancement Center (FEC) in particular has numerous deleterious effects. Due to a lack of technical, grant-writing support, faculty in non-technical disciplines have particular difficulty applying for outside grants. Moreover, those who do receive external funding find grant management time consuming because of the complexity of USNA financial management processes and the pressing requirements of their instructional responsibilities. The administration of outside grants is not as effective or efficient as it could be. A dedicated grants manager, working in close collaboration with the USNA Comptroller's office, could alleviate many problems that exist. The Navy's Advanced Education Review Board, at the urging of the Superintendent, is working to establish rules for indirect cost recovery in reimbursable grants which may be a major step forward in this regard.

Space / Facilities. Several recent improvements and additions to facilities have enhanced the entire institution. The completion of Wesley Brown Field House has increased midshipman athletic and recreational facilities. Wesley Brown provides additional indoor space to promote the Academy's physical mission. The space has improved a number of varsity, club, and intramural sport activities as well as company physical fitness programming. The complete renovation of the King Hall dining area has provided a modernized, clean and healthy eating environment, as well as closed circuit audio visual resources that can be used to facilitate military and academic learning. The Athletic Department in Ricketts Hall continues to upgrade its facilities for the NAAA staff, improving both wellness of staff and efficiency in its services. Included in upgrades were reorganization of office space and ticketing services.

Currently, there are three significant challenges regarding space and facilities. One—and most prominent—is the need for a new cyber security building. The construction of a building dedicated to cyber security studies will help address the largest single national security threat of the day, and promote STEM through opportunities for new lab space and recruiting. A new cyber building will concentrate in a single facility, existing and new faculty and staff from several cyber-related fields that will now be able to teach, research and collaborate in a single, modern setting. The space vacated by these departments – most prominently computer science, electrical and computer engineering, and weapons and systems engineering—would be devoted to project-based learning and senior design projects, which in 2011have considerably outgrown our ability to house them. As noted earlier, there are also challenges related to staffing and resourcing the cyber security studies curriculum in an already constrained fiscal environment. The Naval Academy is working with the Navy leadership concerning funding for cyber securities studies.

Renewal of Rickover and Nimitz Halls, with commensurate expansion of project learning space and library collection space, are priorities two and three. The Naval Academy's comprehensive restoration and modernization plan for FY12-FY19, drawing on funds budgeted annually for USNA by the Commander Navy Installation Command, provides for the renovation of Rickover Hall and Nimitz Library. (See **Enclosure 2.08** Library and Rickover Facilities Plan.) In the library, the use of compact shelving technology will maximize space by more efficiently housing collections. This will allow better utilization of space for student seating, services and other functions in the library of the future.

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Standard 4: Leadership and Governance / Standard 5: Administration

MSCHE Standard 4 concerns the institution's leadership and system of governance, focusing on an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure responsible stewardship and fidelity to the mission. Standard 5 concerns institutional administrative structure regarding facilitation of learning, research / scholarship, quality improvement, etc.

The Navy and the Naval Academy understand and practice leadership very well. At all levels – from the Superintendent and his Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to the Faculty Senate, department chairs and the Academy to the Board of Visitors, leadership is one of the institution's greatest strengths.

Improvements are possible, however. One challenge to improved operation is to reduce the stovepiping of information and enhance communication. A second is to broaden the institutional perspective among the Superintendent's Senior Leadership Team.

Communication. The United States Naval Academy is a large command in a major metropolitan area. The Academy's interactions externally with the broader Annapolis community and the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan region and internally among the Naval Academy faculty, staff, and midshipmen are wide-ranging, complex, and dynamic. Maintaining these multitudinous relationships requires not only a full time public affairs staff, but significant engagement by everyone in a leadership position, and to some extent by every member of the Academy community.

As a military organization, the Naval Academy depends on the chain-of-command concept, by which information flows both bottom-up and top-down. Numerous USNA entities, like the Superintendent's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Faculty Senate, are organizations that help pass the word, and encourage communication both up-and-down and laterally across organizational boundaries among coaches, company officers, and academic instructors.

As described in relation to institutional effectiveness assessment in Chapter Two and academic assessment in Chapter Five, through the work of the Academy Effectiveness Board (AEB) and the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee (FSAC), the Academy is becoming more sophisticated in assessing student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Sharing the resulting information not only conveys relevant data to the Academy community, but also communicates the intent to adopt a data-based decision making approach. In this regard, to be fully successful, the strategic planning process must be data–based, transparent, and robustly communicated across the Academy.

One of the Academy's regular communications challenges is associated with the relatively frequent rotation of military personnel. These changes sometimes are accompanied by shifts in policy as well as day-to-day operations that need to be thoroughly communicated to all members of the Academy community. It order to take full advantage of the benefits of renewed leadership, it is essential that all are kept up-to-date on changes in policies and procedures. The Superintendant, the Academic Dean and Provost, and the Commandant are taking the lead in communicating such changes to the campus community.

Related communications topics, wireless networking and access to campus. Constraints related to technology infrastructure affect the Academy's ability to communicate both within and beyond the physical confines of the Naval Academy. The Information Technology Services Division (ISTD) has brought wireless networking to Nimitz Library, many academic buildings, and soon to the midshipmen dormitory, Bancroft Hall. This will enable midshipmen to use their laptop computers in most locations across the Yard, and, thereby, decrease the need for additional investments in computer classrooms.

Heightened force protection conditions for the Naval Academy and other DOD facilities world-wide may be an enduring condition which makes it difficult to host individual civilian visits as well as larger academic conferences. The Academy continues to adjust to these conditions. The Academy's new Special Events coordinator has provided invaluable assistance in gaining timely approval of visits and conferences that place demands on access to the Academy as well as on-campus parking.

SLT Membership. The Superintendent's senior leadership team (SLT) consists of the Commandant of Midshipmen, the Academic Dean, the Athletic Director, the Dean of Admissions, the Command Master Chief, the Deputies for Finance and Information Technology, the Chief Diversity Officer and the Director of Governmental Affairs. Three of these, the Commandant of Midshipmen, the Command Master Chief, and the Chief of Diversity Officer are active duty military personnel. The others are a mix of civilian and prior military personnel, all leaders in their respective areas of responsibility and all selected from highly competitive fields of candidates. Each of these positions is enormously influential in shaping the future of the Naval Academy. We urge the Command to sustain a Senior Leadership Team that not only embodies extraordinary, specific subject matter expertise demanded by each of these separate portfolios, but also represents the broadest range of perspectives and experiences within higher education.

Standard 6: Integrity

The Naval Academy fosters a learning environment committed to integrity in every dimension of institutional activities and is committed to developing leaders of character to serve the nation. The future presents enormous potential to build on several important past successes particularly in the area of student integrity. Within the last year, with guidance from the Commandant the Brigade of Midshipmen adopted a new honor concept built on the tradition of a simple yet essential ideal, *"Midshipmen are persons of integrity: We stand for that which is right. We tell the truth and ensure that the full truth is known. We do not lie. We embrace fairness in all actions. We ensure that work submitted as our own is our own, and that assistance received from any source is authorized and properly documented. We do not cheat. We respect the property of others and ensure that others are able to benefit from the use of their own property. We do not steal."* Formal guidance has added depth and clarity in the area of plagiarism and opportunity exists to continually educate students and faculty on the increasingly complex task of research, writing and publishing in a technologically sophisticated information domain.

A recent reorganization created a division for midshipman character training and a division for leadership education and development. These two organizations coordinate the character development experiences for midshipmen across the spectrum of their daily lives.

Standard 7: Institutional Assessment

Since 2005, USNA considerably increased its focus on institutional assessment. There are ample past successes that USNA has built on to strengthen its assessment efforts as described in response to MSCHE Standard 7 Recommendation in Section One of Chapter Two. There remain several opportunities USNA can seize upon to further improve the assessment process. At the institutional level, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) should convey to the Academy Effectiveness Board (AEB) what institutional level analyses are needed. For example, USNA recently implemented a mechanism to regularly obtain formal data from the Fleet and Marine Corps on the specific skills sets USNA graduates require, as well as whether USNA graduates are performing at the required level. Each warfare community (primarily submarine, aviation, surface ships, and Marine Corps) is providing USNA details on graduate performance during initial training. The Academy Effectiveness Board, in turn, needs to continue to develop the appropriate assessment tools to analyze how well USNA's undergraduates are progressing toward those goals throughout their time at the institution. This includes asking the correct questions; collecting appropriate and measurable short-term and long-term data; using the data to provide guidance; and putting the guidance into action. USNA's current leadership has used this approach to address NAPS performance and achievement of Navy STEM goals, but the SLT and AEB could make the institution even more effective by applying this plan of action more widely.

USNA has put into place a USNA Commissioning Continuum Implementation and Assessment Model (**Enclosure 2.06**) to measure student progress. Further work is needed as is discussed in Section One of Chapter Two. In addition to examining in detail how USNA midshipmen are recruited, retained, and perform post-graduation, it may be meaningful to determine whether or not policies directed from the U.S. Navy, such as the mandated 65/35% technical/ non-technical major split, have unintended consequences on student behavior, like the choice of majors. This information can better help the Academy to allocate its resources effectively and understand the best ways to meet the needs of the Navy and Marine Corps. Data on the effectiveness of the Academic Center and tutoring programs are also necessary so that appropriate resources are allocated to those programs.

As the institution more actively recruits underrepresented student groups, data should continue to be gathered on the success of particular recruiting efforts (e.g., Candidate Visit Weekends, and outreach to specific high schools), such as that described in relation to Self-Study Recommendations for Standard 8 Student Admission, in Chapter Two above. Moreover, detailed retention and attrition data must continue to be collected in order to understand the most effective ways to facilitate the success of a diverse population once enrolled at USNA.

Standard 8: Student Admissions and Retention

The Office of Admissions continues to support the United States Naval Academy's overall mission to be "accountable, responsive, and adaptive to the needs of the Navy and Marine Corps." (Standard 1: Mission and Goals). Primary challenges are: (a) the recruitment, matriculation, persistence and graduation of a diverse population that will enhance the learning environment at the Naval Academy and produce leaders who can effectively lead the enlisted population of the Navy and Marine Corps; (b) the recruitment of STEM majors; and (c) geographic diversification of the student body.

As discussed in relation to Self-Study Recommendations for Standard 8 Student Admission in Chapter Two, the Office of Admissions has effectively used resources and opportunities to better serve the Academy's mission. They have employed regional and national recruiting strategies to increase the applicant pool. In the 2015 admissions cycle, the number of applications reached an all-time high, above 19,000, for an incoming freshman (Plebe) class of 1220 students. Within this applicant pool, the proportion of geographically, culturally and ethnically diverse applicants has grown. The Office of Admissions continues to present the weeklong USNA Summer Seminar for rising high school seniors and the USNA STEM camp for other junior and senior high school students. These two programs provide motivational and mentoring opportunities for prospective candidates during their formative junior and senior high school years.

Through a need based program, the Naval Academy Alumni Association and Foundation provide scholarships for one year of post-high school education to qualified young men and women who need further academic preparation before they enter the Naval Academy. Through an increased use of the Foundation Program, potential does exist to provide an additional academic year for at-risk candidates with extraordinary leadership potential and motivation to attend the Academy. With the integration of women into the submarine community and the advent of the cyber security studies curriculum, there may be a further increase in the applicant pool of those interested in STEM. In order to support the matriculation and graduation of an increasingly diverse Brigade of Midshipmen, there is a need for faculty development and student academic services that exceed current institutional resources.

Standard 9: Student Support Services

The mission of the Naval Academy concerns the development of students morally, mentally and physically. In this regard the Naval Academy supports and promotes the following student support services:

- Writing Center (English Department)
- Chemistry Resource Room (Chemistry Department)
- Theodore J. Benac Mathematics Lab (Mathematics Department)
- Class of 1963 Center for Academic Excellence
- Athletic Department Academic Office (NAAA)
- Chaplain Services

Staffing of these labor-intensive student support services is a collective challenge for the Academy due to general Yard-wide budgetary constraints. If a department is understaffed, it is difficult for them to work one-on-one with students. The following are opportunities, unique to student support services: (a) continue to strengthen governing supervision at the institutional level; (b) institute a common reporting system; (c) improve follow through with regard to support for underrepresented students.

There exists an excellent opportunity to create a Support Services Advisory Board that would provide a link among these units. This would create efficiencies in service delivery by closely tracking which services are used, the amount of time dedicated to services, and reduce redundancy of effort. Currently, each support unit has a unique method of tracking student usage. Some units maintain data electronically while others do not. This lack of a common reporting system directly affects both midshipmen individually and administration. At the institutional level, there is currently no way to

determine what support services are used or the amount of time an individual midshipman spends in any one unit. Therefore, when an academically deficient midshipman record is reviewed for separation, the administration has limited ability to determine if the midshipman has made use of available resources. This challenge presents an opportunity for the institution to create a uniform, electronic reporting system that would benefit both students and administrators.

This academic year, the institution capitalized on an opportunity to strengthen one of the academic student support units, the Class of 1963 Center for Academic Excellence. In September 2010, an external, visiting review team spent three days on campus to review the services offered. The Academic Dean and Provost has reviewed the findings of the visiting team with the Academic Center and developed a plan of action with milestones to act on the recommendations. The Office of the Academic Dean and Provost has added the Center for Academic Excellence to the departmental rotation for external review and the Dean is proactively seeking additional funding to support the center. A search for a new Center for Academic Excellence director has just been completed. All of these activities provide unique opportunities to strengthen USNA student support services.

Standard 10: Faculty

USNA has continued to ensure the instructional, research, and service programs are developed and monitored by qualified faculty. The faculty and technical support staff face significant opportunities and challenges in the coming years. Issues such as the impact of episodic decreases in mission funding from the Department of the Navy and the steady increase in the size of the student body (the Brigade of Midshipmen), without a commensurate increase in funds, has resulted in the increased reliance on adjunct faculty. These issues are discussed in the responses to the Self-Study Standard 10 Recommendations regarding Faculty in Chapter Two and in Chapter Four.

Another challenge is the schedule of faculty compensation. By federal statute, the pay for civilian USNA faculty members is capped at that of the Senior Executive Service (SES Level IV). In highly competitive disciplines where starting salaries are relatively high, faculty members with a normal career progression will find themselves at the maximum salary in ten to fifteen years. Even in less competitive fields, senior faculty will have capped out their salary well before the end of a typical 30-year career. This presents a management challenge for the Academic Dean and Provost–how to recognize and reward these pay-capped faculty who continue to contribute to the various administrative and service requirements of the institution. As described in Chapter Two, the Naval Academy leadership has worked closely with the Navy Personnel staff (N1) to help faculty salary and compensation packages remain competitive. The salient aspects of those efforts are contained in **Enclosure 2.14**, a brief reviewed by senior USNA leadership and prepared for the Chief of Naval Personnel in December 2010.

Humanities and Social Science faculty have embraced the Navy / Marine Corps directive to expand midshipman exposure to foreign cultures by (a) globalizing the sequence of core history courses formerly devoted to Western Civilization; (b) initiating a series of regional studies groups (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, and Asia, Eurasia); (c) broadening the focus of the language courses to also include culture; and (d) capitalizing on external funding to lead groups of midshipmen abroad. Similarly, faculty members in the STEM disciplines have embraced project-based learning as a way to recruit and retain technical majors. As a result, significant increases in the number of majors have been observed in some STEM departments.

While there have been increases in faculty in the Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) program, some concern remains about how long faculty members can sustain their level of effort in promoting both STEM and LREC related initiatives while continuing other teaching, professional development, and institutional service activities.

USNA civilian faculty members face unique challenges as a result of employment by the Federal government and the Department of Defense. They are required to notify the Academy of any foreign travel, even personal travel while on leave. While only slightly burdensome, the major objection is the appearance of intrusiveness.

Growing dialogue between the USNA Faculty Senate and USNA leadership has had tangible benefits in recent childcare and parking initiatives, and suggests that further constructive engagement is possible and should be encouraged.

Standard 11: Educational Offerings

There are several opportunities related to the expansion of academic programs. The International Programs Office (IPO) is positioned to contribute tremendously to the Navy's strategic imperative of developing culturally competent officers in the naval profession, an imperative consistent with the Naval Academy's graduate attributes. Several IPO programs are growing in scope and reach and are improving their effectiveness relative to their midshipman learning goals and objectives. These experiences develop midshipman cultural awareness and global perspective. Each summer more midshipmen can participate on cruises with foreign navies worldwide. This program enables more midshipmen to experience life on a foreign naval vessel, to work with officers and enlisted men and women from dozens of countries and, in many cases, to develop better language proficiency. It is hoped that USNA faculty members can continue to be funded to lead small groups of midshipmen to strategic locations around the world relevant to the faculty member's area of expertise.

The Languages and Cultures Department organizes the Language Study Abroad Program (LSAP). More travel opportunities could be identified for each of the languages taught at USNA: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish. In addition, an opportunity exists to grow the language offerings to include three critical language majors; Farsi, Russian and Japanese. While still in its infancy, a pre-study abroad cultural immersion program has been tested and has the potential to better prepare all study abroad students before their departure. This program can provide a longitudinal support and assessment component that engages the students throughout their immersion experience and after their return. An elective course in leadership, culture and global human terrain has been successfully taught during the past two summers and is now seeking permanent listing status. This course has the potential to reach a larger student enrollment if it can be taught during the academic year. In particular, the USNA Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies serves to enhance midshipman educational opportunities through supporting international and regional study, curricular innovation, community outreach, and as a center for resources on all aspects of the Middle East and Islamic Studies. The Center has the potential to expand its lecture series and broaden its dialogue and partnerships with external academic institutions as well as with governmental, non-profit and non-governmental agencies. The requirement for increased numbers of midshipmen who are able to participate in international travel and language/cultural immersion experiences articulated by the Department of the Defense and Department of the Navy has been met by a significant augmentation of resources.

Acknowledging the growing cyber threat to our military's technological systems, the Naval Academy has the opportunity to leverage the interdisciplinary qualifications of our teaching faculty to deploy an educational program to prepare our 21st century war fighters to meet the cyber threat. The plan to build a Cyber Security Studies Center at the Naval Academy holds great promise for the educational and research future of this institution. Engaging an increased number of promising students in STEM majors at the Naval Academy will similarly require a commensurate investment of both human and fiscal capital.

The above opportunities are aligned with the Naval Academy mission and are articulated within the context of higher education (Standard 1 Mission and Goals). Additionally, all of these opportunities are explicitly outlined as institutional priorities in the USNA *Strategic Plan 2020* **(Enclosure 2.03)**. Even so, there remains a significant challenge in prioritizing enhancements to the educational mission. As requirements emerge, the institution must methodically assess the educational and training continuum so that requirements are not just added on top of an already condensed, challenging 47 month-long program of instruction.

Standard 13: Related Educational Activities

The Naval Academy Athletic Association (NAAA) is one of the Academy's notable strengths. NAAA is responsible for carrying out the physical mission, including physical education courses and the athletic program. The USNA Board of Visitors has routinely praised NAAA in its annual reports to the President of the United States.

What makes NAAA special as a major college athletic program is that it understands its role as part of the overall USNA mission. Thus, while it tries to hire the best coaches, it only wants those who understand NAAA's mission. Similarly, the coaches recruit athletes who want to be at USNA and become officers in the Navy or Marine Corps. In this regard, NAAA has been quite successful: 85% of recruited athletes graduate and are commissioned. Academy teams routinely rank near the top in academic achievement among peer institutions nationally. The challenges that face NAAA in the next five years are as follows:

1. Enhance its internal organization, success of teams, and fund raising efforts
2. Remain competitive and respected athletically, and in compliance with all NCAA rules
3. Hire the best coaches, who understand and support the overall USNA mission and who remain connected to that mission. (Given the ever rising salaries of coaches, this will require finding increasing sources of revenue, which is a challenge, since USNA is not a member of a major conference.)
4. Continue renovation of athletic facilities where needed.
5. Construct a Physical Mission Center and Athletic Hall of Fame on the second floor of Ricketts Hall.
6. As athletic teams become more competitive, make sure that the consequent increase in travel does not occur at the expense of student academic performance.

Meeting these challenges not only enables NAAA to continue fulfilling the physical mission, but also gives USNA a strong recruiting tool. Each time Navy football plays an away game, the Admissions Office holds Saturday morning information meetings for high school students in the local area that are very well attended.

Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning

Efforts to assess student learning have gained momentum since 2005. As with assessment at the institutional level, these efforts can be refined to make them more effective. In 2010, academic departments and divisions began to map course, major, and divisional objectives to USNA's seven Attributes of Graduates **(Enclosure 2.02)**, and demonstrated timelines of administering formal assessment tools such as final exams, papers, presentations, standardized tests. Nevertheless, interpreting data from given assessment tools often proves subjective, and departments vary in the degree to which they incorporate different tools into their assessment methodology, making it challenging to collect USNA-wide data. More rapid feedback from the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee on previous assessment reports and detailed guidance from the AEB could make assessment at the department and division levels more effective.

USNA joined the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Initiative. This enables USNA to make educational changes to achieve a set of essential learning objectives necessary to continue to achieve educational excellence. USNA has continued to set national standards across their applied science, computing, engineering, and technology programs as evidenced by their continued accreditation by the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC), the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the American Chemical Society (ACS).

A final opportunity that USNA can seize to improve its assessment of student learning is to formally integrate assessment of information and library literacy into departmental and divisional assessment plans. Information literacy is critical to several of USNA's graduate attributes. Understanding how well midshipmen can differentiate between objective and subjective information is also important.

Including formal assessment at the institution level would also benefit the library staff, which could more effectively allocate their resources to focus on any areas in information in which the midshipmen need more practice.

The Faculty Senate Assessment Committee has done meritorious work in standardizing and aligning departmental assessment efforts with the Attributes of Graduates (**Enclosure 2.02**) as discussed in Chapter Five. USNA has made marked progress in the assessment of student learning over the last five years, but further improvement in this area would make midshipmen learning and development even stronger.