Chapter Two Appendix

Enclosure 2.08
Further information on USNA 2006 Self-study Recommendations 8-1 to 8-5

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Recommendation 8-1 Blue and Gold Officer Assessment. When the 2005 MSCHE self-study was issued, a review of the BGO program was conducted to determine if it was feasible to have a subset of BGOs conduct the interviews. The recommendation was eventually dropped, primarily for the following reasons: (1) Conducting interviews is a core competency of a BGO, and the issue of conducting satisfactory interviews should be addressed through assessment of BGO performance and improving and enforcing training; (2) There is not a uniform distribution of Blue and Gold Officers across the nation, and a significant shortage in many areas. Precluding BGOs from conducting interviews would often remove the one person in the local community who has the ability to conduct a face to face interview with candidates; (3) Increases in completed applications in recent years have increased substantially the workload on BGOs, and eliminating many from conducting interviews would put an undue burden on the "subset" identified to conduct interviews. Nevertheless, to improve the process, the Area Steering Committee (ACSC) developed a standardized BGO interview format in 2006 that included evaluation standards BGOs are required to use in submitting BGO interviews. This change has assisted greatly toward improving the overall quality and consistency of interviews submitted.

Starting with the Class of 2010, the Naval Academy adopted an electronic application and admissions board in which application files reviewed by the Admissions Board are viewed electronically, including the BGO interview which is submitted electronically by the BGO conducting the interview. A link was included on the BGO interview portion of the electronic brief for the Admissions Board member to comment and provide feedback to the BGO Lieutenant (BGO LT) and Candidate Guidance Officer (CGO). Feedback is solicited of Admissions Board members and includes overall quality, consistency with the BGO recommendation, and relevancy of the interview considering other factors in the application file. Information provided back to the BGO LT has been used to provide feedback to the BGO and the Area Coordinator to improve overall performance. In addition, feedback from Admissions Board members is used as one of many factors in assessing BGO performance. In some cases, it has been a factor used to remove a BGO from the program.

Commencing in 2006, the Office of Admissions instituted a requirement for Area Coordinators (ACs) to submit a yearly report to the Office of Admissions. The yearly reports are the Area Coordinators opportunity to provide a self-assessment of the BGO networks in their assigned area to the Office of Admissions. Assessments are reviewed by the senior members of the Office of Admissions staff, and feedback is provided to ACs.

Changes to the BGO training program have been made to include more local (aka Hub Training) as well as increased emphasis in BGO summer training session on timeliness, quality and standardization of interviews. Initial training is required within the first two years of entering the program and refresher training is required every five years. BGO performance is reviewed at the five year mark and BGOs who have been poor performers or do not attend refresher training are removed from the BGO program.

Recommendation 8-2. Operation Information Assessment. Several changes were made to OPINFO in 2008 to better support the overall marketing strategy of the Office of Admissions. These changes included targeting areas of the country for participation by midshipmen as follows:

- Targeted cities identified in by the Office of Admissions
- Underrepresented congressional districts
- Concentration of highly qualified candidates for face to face visits

In addition, planning guidance was changed to require BGOs to submit to the Office of Admissions prior to approving each midshipman to participate a proposed itinerary which properly employs the MIDN during the program. Using EPS and other inputs, BGOs are given guidance on the schools, students, local events and other opportunities that a MIDN will visit during OPINFO with the goal of each MIDN visiting at least 4 schools and conducting a mini information night.

OPINFO has been expanded to other non-traditional times during the academic year. These have included three day weekends, Christmas and Spring Breaks and intercessional leave. The number of midshipmen used during these timeframes is normally about five or less, resulting in the loss of one day of classes. Like the traditional program, midshipmen are sent to targeted areas with specific objectives for their trips.

In 2009, the Office of Admissions submitted a budget request for a Candidate Resource Management (CRM) tool for use in marketing USNA nationwide. It has been approved for procurement this year and will assist marketing and tracking students from initial contact to admission.

Visiting candidates at home has been an important new development in OPINFO. Midshipmen assist in answering questions about the admissions process and application, and encourage highly qualified candidates (i.e. those candidates who are also applying to Ivy League/Hi Tech schools) to complete the application for admission. For candidates who already have a letter of assurance or offer of appointment, contact with candidates is intended to get them to complete the outstanding letter of assurance requirements and/or accept their offer of appointment. These efforts have contributed to a 33% increase in completed applications, an 18% increase in fully qualified candidates for admission, and a 2.3% increase in acceptance rate of the incoming class.

Strategies to target specific areas and local venues have created a tremendous efficiency in the management of the program. It has contributed to a nearly 60% increase in applications over the last three years, and a decrease in congressional districts *not* nominating candidates for admission from an average of 15 per year to just five last year. Equally important, the number of midshipmen required to support OPINFO has decreased from a yearly average than continually exceeded 500 each year, to 336 midshipmen this year.

Recommendation 8-3 Summer Seminar Assessment. Summer Seminar was expanded in 2008 to approximately 2,250 to provide greater opportunity for high quality candidates to participate in one of the 3 week-long programs. Additional emphasis has been placed on targeting top candidates residing in areas not within close proximity to the Naval Academy; this is often the only exposure they may to USNA due to geographic distance. This has increased interest and acceptance rates among qualified candidates in areas not typically close or well known to USNA. The proven measure of its effectiveness has been the percentage of those candidates who complete the application for admission. The 5-year history of NASS attendee application completion rates is provided below.

Over the past five years, financial assistance has been provided to candidates accepted to the program, but who demonstrate some financial need in order to attend. Additional funds have been placed in the summer seminar budget the last three years to provide assistance, and Office of Admissions has also worked closely with the Naval Academy Alumni Association to solicit support from local chapters. The Summer Seminar brochure was changed to include information about obtaining financial assistance, and information is provided to the Blue and Gold network. Working together, an average of 50 candidates per year have received all or part of their travel and/or tuition paid covered by the Alumni Association or the Office of Admissions.

Impact of Naval Academy Summer Seminar

class applied for	total attendees	board actions	% of NASS attendees that completed application and received board action
2014	2235	1417	63%
2013	2235	1467	66%
2012	1830	1268	69%
2011	1899	1194	63%
2010	1843	1209	66%

Recommendation 8-4 Candidate Weekend Assessment. In 2007 and 2008, several changes to the Candidate Visit Weekend (CVW) program were made to include a parents program that includes briefings, question and answer panels with midshipmen, parents of midshipmen/former midshipmen, and alumni, and tours of the yard/engineering & lab facilities. Additional changes include orientation briefings, a full day of classes on Friday, candidate evaluations, and participation in Saturday morning training to provide candidates and their parents more information about the Naval Academy to help them make a better decision about attending. Since all of these changes were made to classes that have yet to graduate from the Naval Academy (i.e. Class of 2011 and later), the impact on retention is not well understood.

Recommendation 8-5 Assessment of Admissions Information Forums. Over the last three years, the focus of Admissions Forums has changed dramatically as the marketing program in the Office of Admissions has become more robust. In addition to away football games, Admissions Forums are scheduled strategically to target underrepresented areas of the country, and are often scheduled as part of a week-long "blitz" that includes several school and local venue visits by admissions staff, midshipmen, and other USNA assets such as the USNA Band "Electric Brigade" or USNA "Choirs." Attendance at Admissions Information Forums has increased (see below).

Anecdotally, it appears the impact of these changes is reflected in increased applications for admission, particularly when compared to the other service academies. While both USMA and USAFA have both experienced increases in applications of approximately 8% over the last three years, USNA's application increases have more than doubled when factoring applications received from the NROTC program. In addition, feedback from congressional districts in Ohio during the 2010 admission cycle indicate the number of candidates applying for a nomination has more than doubled following Admissions Blitz's conducted prior to the 2009 Ohio State football game. While tracking the impact of forums/blitzes empirically has been difficult due to the lack of a robust IT system (Constituent Resource Management (CRM) system) we expect that to improve with its implementation in the coming years.

Major Admissions Information Forum History

Admissions Cycle	# of Admissions Forums	Average # of student attendees	Average # of total attendees
2010-2011*	3	225	561
2009-2010	15	109	290
2008-2009	16	107	255
2007-2008	16	47	129

* As of September 30, 2010