

Report to the  
Faculty, Administration, Board of Visitors, and Midshipmen  
of the

United States Naval Academy  
Annapolis, Maryland

by

An Evaluation Team Representing  
the

Middle States Commission on Higher Education  
Prepared after study of the Institution's self-study report  
and a visit to the campus on February 20-24, 2006

The Members of the Team:

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This report represents the views of the evaluation team as interpreted by the Chair; it goes directly to the institution before being considered by the Commission. It is a confidential document prepared as an educational service for the benefit of the institution. All comments in the report are made in good faith, in an effort to assist the Naval Academy. This report is based solely on an educational evaluation of the institution and the manner in which it appears to be carrying out its educational objectives.

AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Superintendent: Vice Admiral Rodney P. Rempt, USN

Provost and Academic Dean: William Miller

Commandant of Midshipmen: Captain Bruce Grooms, USN

Chair, Board of Visitors: Ms. J. Bonnie Newman

## Introduction

The Team's overall impression of the USNA is that it is an excellent institution focused on quality and continuous improvement in its governance and student learning to meet the needs of the U. S. Navy and our nation. As context for our evaluation and actions taken by the Academy in the past several years, it is important to understand the following:

- Our nation is at war. There are issues in the Department of Defense and the various Services that impact seriously on resource allocation as well as important strategic issues that will have implications for defining desired outcomes for commissioning sources in the future that are not fully analyzed and understood by either the Department or the Academy.
- The Academy was severely damaged (\$100M) in the wake of Tropical Storm Isabel in September 2003. The joint response by the Academy leadership, staff, faculty, and students; the Board of Visitors; and the Department of Defense in assessing the widespread damage and preparing a rapid response to resume operations was quite remarkable. Fortunately, the Academy had previously completed a comprehensive capital improvement needs assessment and remediation plan that was used to frame a proper and fast response to restoring and at the same time improving classrooms, labs, and habitability for students.
- The current Superintendent assumed his position in 2003 which generally coincided with: the early retirement of his predecessor, introduction of new MSCHE standards, a period of major analysis and response to sexual assault issues among the DOD academies, Tropical Storm Isabel, a new Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), and the war in Iraq.

The Team submits the following from their Self-Study as an excellent summary of important work they have accomplished:

“The decade since the last accreditation visit has been one of remarkable progress, accomplishment, and recognition. In every area - moral development, academics, and athletics - the Naval Academy has made great strides. The Academy Foundation inaugurated its first Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign and, as of September 2005, had exceeded the original campaign goal of \$175M by over \$60M. Renovation of the eight residential wings of Bancroft Hall, initiated in 1994, was completed, and six of the Academy's eight academic buildings have been entirely refurbished. The Academy's first Jewish Chapel was completed and dedicated in September 2005. During 2002-2005, the Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium underwent a three-phase renewal and expansion and was rededicated in October 2005. Engineering and science laboratories underwent significant refurbishment following the damage caused by the storm surge of Tropical Storm Isabel in September 2003; these facilities now represent

some of the finest undergraduate laboratories in the country. The FY06 National Defense Authorization Act included Military Construction funds for the Wesley M. Brown Field House, the first new athletic facility on Academy grounds in nearly thirty years and the first major building at the Naval Academy named in honor of an African-American Academy graduate.

Academy admissions have continued to be highly selective. The projected percentage of midshipmen graduating in the Class of 2006 places the Academy among schools with the highest four-year graduation rates in the nation, with the highest graduation rate in recent Academy history. Historically, at-risk midshipmen continue to graduate at rates that approximate the class as a whole. Midshipmen in the Class of 2005 won three Rhodes Scholarships (out of 32 nationally), one Marshall, one Truman, one Gates, one Fulbright, one Rotary International, and one NSF scholarship. In addition, two Class of 2005 graduates were named to the USA Today Academic All America First Team (out of 20 nationally). Information regarding prestigious scholarships awarded to midshipmen in the Naval Academy Class of 2006 is just now becoming available, with last month's announcement that four 2006 Rhodes Scholarships had been awarded to current or former midshipmen, the largest number awarded this year to students from any single school in the nation. Relative to their numbers at the time of commissioning, Academy graduates continue to stay in military service demonstrably longer and achieve proportionately higher rank than those from any other commissioning source-validating the Academy's cost-effectiveness in producing career naval officers.”

The Academy's Self-Study grouped the standards into seven groups and our Team organized itself accordingly. However, we chose to list and comment on the fourteen standards separately in order to clearly focus on each one. There are numerous recommendations in the Self-Study that the Team assumes the institution will seriously consider over time. Our comments, therefore, are based on that assumption, and we chose only to add our own or to emphasize those already explained.

The Self-Study involved wide participation from all elements of the Academy and was very comprehensive. For a variety of reasons, the Superintendent decided to proceed with a very ambitious strategic planning effort at the same time the self-study was being done, but he also realizes that the Academy will have to carefully consider its recommendations for possible updates to the Strategic Plan.

The Academy has initiated a number of new plans and projects. The convergence of these projects, the several externally driven challenges encountered in recent years, and the fairly new MSCHE Standards actually provide a possible opportunity to use the Standards as an organizing framework for all the new efforts.

The Academy leadership, faculty, students, and staff made the Team feel very welcome and we thank everyone for their hospitality, professionalism and response to questions, interviews, etc. Professor Michael Halbig, our primary liaison, was superb throughout the entire process.

### **Standard 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

The Institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- The institution mission is clear and relevant to the purpose of USNA.
- The newly established institution visions are drawn from the mission statement and focus on developing midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically and imbuing them with the highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty.
- The recently developed Strategic Plan identifies 12 institutional goals that are appropriate and consistent with the mission and vision statements.
- USNA has core requirements; core academic courses; and academic majors, minors, and tracks that assure graduates are responsive to the needs of the United States Navy.
- There are goals to improve outcomes assessment in the Strategic Plan, but the relationships to the Middle States Commission's (MSCHE) requirements are not completely clear, universally visible, and understood. There is evidence, however, that the Academy is constructively progressing along a positive learning curve.

#### Strengths/Commendations:

- The longstanding mission statement clearly defines the Institution, delineates its scope, and explains its character and individuality.
- The mission statement is supported by a vision and reinforced by a set of goals and objectives.
- The goals are drawn from and supportive of the institutional mission.
- The Institution has clearly articulated operational and educational goals. These goals further direct the action plans to meet the needs and expectations of the Institution's mission and community.
- USNA has 12 goals and objectives in its Strategic Plan for ongoing review and refinement.
- The Superintendent sought wide participation in developing the recent Strategic Plan.
- The Strategic Plan is new and is being prepared for campus-wide dissemination. It was encouraging that faculty, administration, and staff are anxiously awaiting its details.

#### Suggestion for Improvement:

- Treat outcomes assessment, as prescribed by MSCHE, as an overarching strategy within the Strategic Plan to provide context and clear direction for the rest of the Plan. These requirements are intended to provide the overall framework for outcomes and assessment in every facet of the institution’s efforts. Everyone involved in any aspect of implementing the Strategic Plan should be familiar with and use the elements of the MSCHE requirements and associated processes, and understand the implications for accreditation across the institution, not just in academics.
- The Team agrees with Recommendation 1-2 of the Self-Study:
  - *”Linkage of mission to institutional improvement. Include in an upcoming revision of SECNAV Instruction 1531.2A, “U.S. Naval Academy Curriculum and Admissions Policy,” an explicit reference to a requirement for institutional improvement based on periodic, data-based institutional assessment of student learning and other outcomes linked to the institution’s mission, goals, and objectives.”*

Recommendation: None.

**Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal**

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:

- Like most organizations, USNA faces the continuous challenge of finding a balance among strategic goals, the expectations of DOD and other organizations to which they are accountable, and the resources available. The Team’s impression is that the Academy should be recognized for how effectively it uses its existing resources. People worked efficiently and intelligently to get the most out of the resources available to them. The library is one example. Information Technology Services is another in that they provide a high level of service and meet increasingly difficult challenges relating to system development, integration, security, etc.
- There is a significant challenge presented by the timeline of the Department of Defense (DOD) budget process because it is not aligned with either the Academy’s planning horizon or annual academic year calendar. On the one hand, budget requests need to be submitted as much as six years before the funding year, and on the other hand, the actual amount and delivery of fiscal year funding does not start until two months into the academic year (or later, if there is a continuing resolution). Hiring decisions, summer programmatic decisions, etc., are then delayed by many months, significantly hindering the effectiveness of the process. It appears that some funding shortfalls are not resolved until a predictable crisis actually occurs later in the year and often well after the need existed.

- The 2005 Strategic Plan includes as a goal identifying resource needs and working to provide the additional resources. These needs are then incorporated into the multi-year budget process with DON/DOD. The plan also includes a goal for evaluating and redesigning business processes in order to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service in 12 core Yard-wide business areas.
- A Facilities Master Plan for the academic areas was created in 1997 and updated in 2005. Facilities maintenance planning is done through the Facilities Sustainment process. The Flagship Institution Agreement with CNI provides a plan for buildings and grounds maintenance levels, differentiated by area.

Strengths/Commendations:

- Facilities planning is extensive: both master planning to identify future space needs and major capital projects, as well as facilities maintenance planning. The addition of the CNI structure is recent and will warrant ongoing assessment.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Constituent participation in the budget process appears limited to the Senior Leadership Team. Regular communication with members of the campus community about the financial plans does not seem to be a current practice. Particularly during times of tight resources and hard decisions, it would be valuable to make a concerted effort to better communicate to the larger community concerning these serious challenges and the steps being taken to address them.
- Due to the complexities of the multiple funding sources at the Academy as well as the challenges understanding the nuances of government funding; department chairs, division directors, and others who are not versed in these areas struggle to accomplish their assigned tasks should be provided appropriate training.
- This is further complicated by the growing number of vacant positions in key support areas caused by insufficient salary funds. Because of these vacancies, there is a growing sense that offices supporting, for example, comptroller and human resources function end up being a hindrance to the work being done, rather than supporting mission accomplishment. The staffs in these areas are clearly well-intended but frustrated as well. This is an area ripe for outcomes assessment in alignment with the MSCHE guidelines.

Recommendations: None

**Standard 3: Institutional Resources**

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:

- The funding received by the Academy in recent years appears to not support its mission-critical needs. In particular, there are unfunded billets at the faculty

- level, both civilian and military (36 positions, plus 10 expected retirements), among the staff (63 positions), and in the Library (25% vacancies). In technical lab areas, these shortages require faculty to act as technicians, etc. This exacerbates the impact from the already difficult shortage in faculty.
- The Team has concerns about the impact that the resource issues mentioned above will have on the long-term viability of the institution and its ability to maintain its accreditation. Furthermore, they appear to be “sufficiency” needs requiring appropriated support rather than “margins of excellence” supported by non-appropriated sources.
  - Quarterly and annual reports from the DON review the appropriate use of financial resources at the Academy, at a very detailed level. The Academy also participates in several benchmarking processes in order to review its financial position compared to peer institutions.

### Strengths/Commendations

- The creation of the Naval Academy Foundation and the successful \$275 million fundraising campaign are laudable, and can provide a “margin for excellence” for the Academy. Although endowment fundraising has not been a focus to date, the Academy is to be commended for fundraising for maintenance endowment funds when using gift funds for capital projects. For the long term financial stability of this “margin”, enhanced focus on endowment fundraising will be important.
- The Academy leadership has managed to make critical budget-reduction choices, with a goal of reducing in areas that minimize the impact on mission-critical functions. However, they are reaching the end of those options and continue to have concerns about future funding.

Suggestion for Improvement: As outlined in the Self-Study recommendations, additional funding streams, such as gifts and research funding, provide valuable flexibility in the budget, but they also dramatically increase the complexity of the financial management structure. Since these funds represent an important and growing area of additional budget flexibility, the Academy could consider additional training for faculty and staff so that these funds can be most effectively managed.

Recommendation: Frame the funding problems using the MSCHE guidelines for outcomes assessment and other requirements to clearly outline the issues to the DON so that short and long term accreditation requirements and issues are clear.

### **Standard 4: Leadership and Governance**

The Institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- The Naval Academy receives directions and instructions for overall governance from the Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy.

- Rules of the Board of Visitors (BOV) in terms of membership, term of service, officers, committees and BOV reports are aligned to provide oversight and guidance in achieving the goals of the Academy.
- The Board of Visitors report to the President of the United States dated 27 January 2004 shows strong engagement of the Board on issues important to the success of the Academy mission.
- The BOV Report of January 2004 recommends improving staffing levels and providing adequate funding for faculty and staff.
- Commandant's criteria and selection procedures for Midshipmen positions and leadership opportunities are well defined.
- Faculty Senate Bylaws describe the composition of the Executive Committee, eight Standing committees, and Ad Hoc Committees.
- The faculty handbook provides guidance on the appointment of the Academic Dean and Provost, the Vice Academic Dean, and Associate Deans.
- The organization and primary functions of Academic Standing Committees issued in 1992 clearly describes the constitution and charges of the Academy's committees.
- The process of selecting department chairs is consultative, with clear instruction for appointments and reappointments.
- The Conduct System provides a clear chain of command from the midshipmen leadership to officer leadership with means of maintaining good order and discipline.

Strengths/ Commendations:

- Leadership and governance roles and responsibilities are specific from the highest levels of leadership through midshipmen. It is an all-inclusive system.
- The leadership and governance structure for the Academy is clearly described and documented.
- The Board of Visitors is actively engaged in Academy oversight of the state of morale and discipline, curriculum, instruction, physical equipment, fiscal affairs, and academic methods.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- The Board of Visitors, in its good stewardship, is encouraged to become more familiar with the Middle States accreditation standards and requirements.
- The team suggests a periodic review of the composition and charges of the Academy's faculty standing committees to determine each committee's effectiveness in developing and implementing the Institution's assessment plan.
- The Team agrees with all the recommendations in this part of the Self-Study.

Recommendations: None

## **Standard 5: Administration**

The Institution meets this standard.

### Summary of evidence and findings:

- The Institution follows the U.S. Naval Academy Organizational Manual that describes the roles and responsibilities of the Superintendent of the Institution.
- The CEO position is designated to be filled by a USN Vice Admiral (0-9).
- The Institution has clear and understandable procedures for faculty selection and appointment.
- Interviews with the Academic Dean and Provost confirmed solid administrative structures and clear lines of organization and authority.
- In meetings with department chairs and division heads it was clear that they were anxiously awaiting the roll-out of the finalized Strategic Plan.

### Strengths/Commendations:

- Faculty and department chairs are clearly hard-working and dedicated to the Academy and the well-being and success of the students.
- The Dean/Provost and Superintendent are dedicated to fostering a culture of inclusion, empowerment, and participation in all aspects of the development of the Academy, including the strategic planning process.
- Administrative processes and procedures are clearly documented.

### Suggestions for Improvement:

- The Academy's Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment appears to be an excellent data collection and analysis center, but there is little evidence that the office, as currently designed and staffed, has the capability to develop and implement a comprehensive, integrated, and holistic institutional outcomes assessment plan as required by the MSCHE standards. An Assessment Plan is needed, and a careful analysis is needed to determine the best organizational structure and staffing to design and implement it.
- Periodic assessment of the effectiveness of administrative structures and services is required as a fundamental MSCHE element of an accredited institution. This element needs to be clear in the USNA's Assessment Plan when developed. The self-study implicated that a five-year assessment cycle would be appropriate, but the MSCHE philosophy focuses on continuous improvement, and this should be required explicitly in the Strategic Plan and other related directives.

Recommendations: None

## **Standard 6: Integrity**

The Institution meets this standard

### Summary of evidence and findings:

- Processes for a fair and impartial hearing of grievances against faculty members are clearly described.
- A separate procedure in the USNA Instruction prescribes the grievance procedure and institutional expectations regarding sexual harassment or assault.
- Processes in the hiring, evaluation and dismissal of employees are subject to federal law and regulation.
- All employees are evaluated in writing at least annually via the Personnel Appraisal Review System.
- Processes for equitable and appropriately consistent treatment of constituencies are in place.
- The Academy subscribes to the major tenets of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) guidelines on academic freedom.
- The instruction of “Performance Appraisal of Civilian Faculty Members” provides processes to evaluate a grievance stemming from the annual faculty Performance Rating Report.
- The National Education Association’s Fair Use Guidelines for Educators and the National Association of College and University Attorneys’ Guide to Copyright Issues in Higher Education serve as guidance for an institutional commitment to principles of protecting intellectual property rights.
- A Faculty Indoctrination Program sponsored by the Associate Dean for Information provides training for new faculty members on all aspects of fair use of copyrighted material.
- The Multimedia Support Center staff ensures that all customers observe fair use of copyrighted digital images, music, and video segments.
- The Academy’s Administration Officer manages the Freedom of Information Program at the Academy with legal oversight by the Superintendent’s Staff Judge Advocate. The Freedom of Information Act requirements are governed by USNAINST 5720.5A.

### Strengths/ Commendations:

- The Academy has made continuous effort to sustain a diverse faculty, staff and student body.
- The Academy provides a wide variety of information on its website for public access and for prospective students.
- The Academy has an extensive Intranet for clear and precise communication of activities, events, policies, and procedures within the Institution
- The Academy has clear policies on fair use of copyrighted materials as evidenced by a commendation from the Recording Institute Association of America for exceptional efforts in controlling and restricting downloading of copyrighted materials from the Internet.

### Suggestions for Improvement: None

Recommendations: None

### **Standard 7: Institutional Assessment**

The Institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- The last PRR, the recent Institutional Self-Study, the Strategic Plan, and the data gathered during the Team's visit confirms that work in this area is still needed, but there is also evidence that a good faith effort is being made to learn about and develop appropriate methods to comply.
- Specifically, the Self-Study is very clear about this issue and the Team strongly agrees with the two elements of Recommendation 7.1:
  - the inadequacy within the structure and staffing of the highly centralized Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment, and
  - the need for an integrated, institution-wide Assessment Plan (explicitly required by MSCHE) that has been institutionalized so that it is not dependent solely on incumbency in the top military leadership positions.
- As mentioned in the Introduction, the new Strategic Plan and the Self-Study were accomplished during the same time period, but were not as linked together as the Standards expect. The Academy plans to review the Self-Study and update the Strategic Plan as appropriate.
- Although Goal 11 of the current Strategic Plan is explicit regarding Assessment in its title, it appears that the strategies and techniques outlined are very centralized and focus primarily on data warehousing and external agencies instead of developing desired outcomes across the institution first and then designing and executing associated assessments. The Team's assessment is that it doesn't fully meet the letter and spirit of Standard 7, albeit a good faith effort has been made to a degree. As the Team suggested in Standard 1, outcomes assessment needs to be considered a strategy more than a goal, and an Assessment Plan should be the vehicle for executing that strategy.
- Some progress is being made in the academic divisions, but too much reliance is also on their centralized staff. The recent ABET visit noted the same issue. Developing desired outcomes, especially when they apply across the curriculum or the organization is usually more successful when embraced by all hands.

#### Strengths/Commendations:

- The Academy does an excellent job meeting the reporting requirements of their chain of command in all areas across the institution.
- Academic assessment by departments is evident in curricula as directed by Academic Dean and Provost Instruction 5400.1 dated 6 January 2005.
- The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment produces outcomes that are significant for the U.S. Navy in terms of math, science, and engineering graduates; minority graduation rate; and 4-year graduation rates.

- A Faculty Senate Assessment Committee exists to facilitate assessment.
- An Office of Academic Assessment was established in the fall of 2002.

Suggestion for Improvement: As mentioned elsewhere, the Team agrees with Recommendation 7-1 of the Self-Study report.

Recommendation Requiring Follow-Up Action: Establish a comprehensive, integrated, and institution-wide written institutional assessment plan as a both a framework and goal for the current Strategic Plan to meet the criteria of MSCHE Standard 7 (and 14) and report progress in developing and implementing that plan to MSCHE no later than 1 April 2007.

### **Standard 8: Admissions**

The institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- The admissions policies of the institution have been developed and implemented in a way that accurately supports and reflects the mission.
- Admissions and programmatic information is available to prospective students through catalogs, view books, candidate packages, websites, and an on-line application forms. In addition, every year over 2,000 volunteers and 500 midshipmen work to inform and encourage prospective students, supplementing information available through summer seminars, candidate weekends, and admissions forums.
- Some information on student learning outcomes is available to prospective students, but at this point the process of identifying and assessing learning outcomes in a comprehensive manner is still in the formulation stage.
- The policies concerning financial aid and transfer credit are clear and publicized thoroughly.
- The institution should be commended for its extensive data collection on student success. Even more impressive is the fact that these data have already been used to revise admissions procedures in order to improve the performance of accepted students.

#### Suggestions for improvement:

- The process of identifying and assessing learning outcomes should continue. Once it has been formulated, the results should be made available to prospective applicants.
- While the assessment of many of the admission procedures is ongoing, a critical element appeared to the team to have received less attention in the strategic plan and self-study. This is the consideration of more subjective attributes of applicants by the Admission Board when judging whether or not candidates are “qualified.” If this is not already being done, the team suggests that data should

be collected that describe the success of those candidates judged “qualified but with some misgivings” in order to inform future Admission Boards.

- **There is strong evidence that all the categories of admitted students (regular, prior enlisted, “blue chip” athletes, prior college, etc.)** perform well once at the Naval Academy. The Naval Academy should continue to monitor closely the admissions procedures and success of the different categories of admitted students to ensure that the best procedures remain in place.
- Since such a large fraction of incoming midshipmen attend summer seminars, candidate weekends, and admissions information forums, increased efforts should be made to pay the travel and registration costs for those students with financial need.
- It was the Team’s impression that the Strategic Plan and Institutional Self-Study for admissions appear to have been developed independently. For reasons of clarity and efficiency, a more obviously coordinated approach would be beneficial in the future.
- Seventeen recommendations concerning admissions were listed in the Self-Study, and they warrant serious consideration.

Recommendations: None

### **Standard 9: Student Support Services**

The institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- There was a palpable sense of pride and honor exhibited among midshipmen, faculty, and staff. It is clear there is respect for this distinctive learning environment.
- There are strong indicators that a vibrant and engaging co-curricular program allows midshipmen to experience community building and development of personal connections in a structured, organized, and responsive fashion both on and off campus. Additional availability of funding for “institutional value-added” organizations and activities was recently instituted and appears to be effective.
- An integrated academic support network for students in need of remedial and adjunctive work exists. A review of National Survey of Student Engagement data suggested that these support services, as well as the interactions among students, faculty and staff, were indicators of excellence within the living/learning community. The Team met with Naval Academy Prep School (NAPS) graduates to discuss these issues and they were quite effusive with their praise of the system. One NAPS graduate in attendance is a Rhodes Scholarship selectee.
- A wide array of support services is readily available for midshipmen. Increases in the scope of amenities provided help contribute to the academic, athletic, and character-building mission of the living/learning environment.
- The recently completed renovation of the primary living facility, Bancroft Hall, has contributed to the quality of community life on campus. Additional

renovation plans are scheduled for both Bancroft Hall and King Hall. Investments of this nature are critical for community building and enriching the overall quality of life experience for midshipmen.

- The scope and quality of health care services are commendable. The clinic structure and outreach programs, as well as support for athletic teams, ensure that student medical needs are addressed. Likewise, the Midshipman Development Center (MDC) provides substantive programs and services to meet the psychological and counseling needs of students. A review of evaluation data suggested that these services are well received.
- The value of the athletic and recreational programs as part of the total learning experience cannot be overestimated. It is clear that the athletic and recreational experiences afforded midshipmen are outstanding. Recent efforts to improve facilities and ongoing review and evaluation of program offerings suggest continued emphasis will be placed in these critical areas of student development.
- A comprehensive and supportive community life and co-curricular program buttresses the vigorous academic regimen of classes and scholarly activities. The Academy continues to focus attention on community life enhancement and leadership development as a hallmark of the total educational experience for midshipmen.

#### Suggestions:

- While there is evidence of planning and assessment in student life areas, the ongoing development and refinement of a strategic plan for student support services that links to a broader institutional strategic plan, particularly related to desired student outcomes, will strengthen the efficacy of programs and services offered.
- As noted in the Self-Study and reinforced in interviews, mentorship at the Academy is one of the “true tested” traditions that transmits an “esprit de corps” among midshipmen and faculty/staff. The team suggests that additional efforts be further identified to institutionalize this initiative and enrich the educational experience.
- As articulated in the Self-Study and noted in interviews, the team suggests that additional space requirements for the athletic, recreational and extracurricular programs be addressed.

Recommendations: None

### **Standard 10: Faculty**

The institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- USNA is fortunate to be able to attract and retain a very highly qualified faculty. The mix of junior officers from the Navy and Marines and civilians from a variety

of professional fields and academic backgrounds provides the Academy with a diverse faculty that not only provides the students with a superior education, but role models for their future careers as commissioned officers. The low student-to-faculty ratio (7.5 to 1) permits small class sizes and enhances faculty-student interaction. The number of women and minorities in the faculty has gradually increased in the ten years since the last Middle States self-study. Of particular note is the increase in the number of women faculty in the technical departments. Salaries are good, especially for junior civilian faculty in comparison to peer institutions. The increase in funding for full-year sabbaticals has greatly increased the use of this option by faculty.

- The number of support staff for faculty, particularly technicians in the engineering and science laboratories and library staff concerns the faculty and our Team. The number of support staff has declined 11 percent over the last ten years, departments are having difficulty in filling open positions due to the lack of funds and local competition, and there are a number of technical staff that are approaching retirement eligibility and are expected to leave soon. These factors combined have the potential to make the current situation much more serious in the future.
- USNA has a goal of maintaining a 50-50 ratio between military and civilian faculty. The faculty is currently 58% civilian and 42% military, and for a variety of reasons, the Academy has been unable to increase the percentage of military faculty. Some of these reasons include the demands on the military of the war on terror and the negative impact a tour at the Academy can have on the career of a junior officer. A number of programs have been developed to address this problem such as Graduate Education and Teaching (GE+T) and an expansion of the Permanent Military Professors (PMP) program, but it is not clear at this point if other initiatives are needed to reach the goal.
- While civilian faculty salaries are quite competitive, the Institutional Self-Study raised a number of concerns related to pay. Issues raised in the self-study include the need for increased funding for the summer period, lack of sufficient funds for merit steps or annual bonus awards, and the need for increased support for sabbaticals for non-technical faculty. These are all resource related issues that affect the ability of the Academy to attract and retain the best people in the future.
- Two related issues that concern many faculty members, but particularly the increased number of women, are the need for childcare and the need for a consistent policy regarding family leave. The childcare issue is reported to have been discussed for twenty years, but no action has been taken. The federal Family Medical Leave Act is reported to be applied inconsistently from department to department due to the lack of a detailed policy.

- Faculty shortages due to inadequate funds is forcing the Academy to assign junior officers to instruct in the core courses offered by the Department of Leadership, Ethics and Law, but they often do not have the requisite academic preparation.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Continue to monitor the programs to increase percentage of military faculty and investigate better ways of reducing the negative impact a tour at the Academy can have on the career of a junior officer.
- Continue to investigate the possibility of starting a daycare center at the Academy and develop a detailed policy regarding the application of the Family Medical Leave Act.
- Revise the procedures for assignment of military faculty to ensure they hold appropriate credentials for instruction in core and elective courses.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the Academy study the current situation for the library and other support staff, particularly for technicians in the engineering and science laboratories, and develop a long-range plan for adequate staffing into the future, including replacements resulting from retirements and resignations.

**Standard 11: Educational Offerings**

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:

- The Naval Academy confers upon its students the degree of Bachelor of Science. Midshipmen complete a robust core curriculum and may choose from among one of 19 majors programs. Additionally, midshipmen complete the requirements for physical fitness and military development. This curriculum is congruent with the institutional mission and the Department of the Navy.
- The curriculum is designed to foster coherent student learning experiences consistent with higher educational best practices and professional development as a commissioned officer in either the United States Navy or Marines.
- A set of professional core competencies have been developed by the USNA faculty; goals have been established for each of the resourced programs at USNA, which integrate these acknowledged competencies. Furthermore, each of the academic departments has articulated goals for their majors programs.
- All academic majors programs are subject to periodic evaluation of curricular experiences; programs in the engineering and chemistry fields are accredited by their corresponding professional boards.
- Learning resources including facilities, instructional equipment, and library services/staff, currently provide adequate support to the institution's educational programs. The Team's concerns about the Academy's dwindling financial resources and outlook for future accreditation, articulated in its evaluation of the institution's compliance with Standard Three, above, remain.

- USNA relies on benchmarks with comparable types of institutions and programs, which are evident from a review of strategic planning and institutional research documentation.
- Policies and procedures are in place to manage course validation.
- A review of a sample of course syllabi did not reveal the presence of learning outcomes, though many did include course goals and objectives.
- The library's climate control system needs to be replaced because students will not be able to take full advantage of the library if the temperature is uncomfortable.
- The library is not adequate for the type of computer interface and networking required by the midshipmen.
- Lighting conditions in the library are poor.
- At the present rate of growth of the library collection, available space is likely to be exhausted by 2011.
- The reallocation of authorized expenditures for the library have resulted in a shortage of 10 authorized staff positions, a number equal to 25 percent of the library staff.

Strengths/Commendations:

- The Naval Academy is to be commended for the development of a program of study that prepares students for the challenges of commissioned military service. The Academy develops students as well-rounded individuals with the propensity to be leaders of character. One demonstrable measure of the Naval Academy's success in this area is evident through the students' placement in competitive national scholarships.
- USNA has developed an impressive utilization of teaching portfolios, which direct attention toward and underscore the value of teaching and learning. This focus is most evident in the voluntary submission of a teaching portfolio by a very high proportion of faculty who seeking promotion and tenure. It also bodes well for the continual focus faculty place on instructional quality and student learning.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- In order to assist midshipmen in the learning process and to inform them about their achievement of articulated learning outcomes, we suggest that USNA faculty consider incorporating the use of formative assessment methods in courses. Presently, the use of evaluation results is department and discipline-specific. Many USNA departments do not routinely employ assessment results to inform program improvement. The most common method readily available to students to understand their own educational progress is grades. There is little evidence of formative assessment methods to assist students in their educational development.
- Integrate learning outcomes throughout programs of study, including general education and the majors programs. Specifically, the curriculum, particularly the general education program, ought to be developed around a set of well-articulated

and demonstrable learning outcomes, which are congruent with the institutional mission and corresponding professional competencies.

- The Team endorses all eleven Self-Study Recommendations.

Recommendation: The library, which was constructed in 1973, is in need of extensive renovation. A facility plan to upgrade the facility must be undertaken soon or USNA risks undermining its strong educational offerings.

### **Standard 12: General Education**

The Institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- USNA maintains a well-defined, implemented, and coherent general education program, which is supportive of the institutional mission and consists of 96 semester credit hours.
- While USNA has identified many professional core competencies, which are presumably embedded or reflected in the general education program, only three capacities have been articulated as learning outcomes. These include *Critical Thinking, Communication, and Geopolitical Awareness*. These three learning outcomes are consistent with the institutional mission, but they don't include those required by MSCHE.
- The general education requirements are clearly and accurately described in official publications of the institution, most prominently in the catalog and on the USNA website.
- The Faculty Senate Assessment Committee has developed rubrics for the three areas defined by its learning outcomes. Initial efforts have been undertaken to assess these three areas. However, it is not evident that the learning outcomes have been purposefully embedded within the core curriculum or systematically assessed. Moreover, it is not evident that faculty have collectively accepted ownership of these learning outcomes or their subsequent assessment for purposes of managing and improving the curriculum.
- The organization and management of general education appears to be department-centric rather than driven by demonstrable learning outcomes; i.e., general education seems to be somewhat stove-piped by department and divisional interests rather than around learning outcomes reflective of commissioned officers.

#### Suggestions for Improvement:

- The comprehensive review of the core curriculum that is currently underway at USNA provides a unique opportunity to identify a set of learning outcomes that define an educated person who is prepared to assume the responsibilities of a commissioned officer. These learning outcomes ought to be developed

collectively by the faculty and used to justify the structure of the curriculum shared in common by all midshipmen.

- Create and publish standards that articulate the faculty's expected learning outcomes of midshipmen. The list of general educational outcomes in the MSCHE standards should also be included. Integrate these standards in the curriculum, beginning with the core curriculum and, where applicable, extending into the majors programs. The learning outcomes ought to be referenced in the syllabi of courses that directly support them.

Recommendations: none

### **Standard 13: Related Educational Activities**

The institution meets this standard.

#### Summary of evidence and findings:

- Leadership and professional development initiatives share many commonalities. Efforts to better integrate and synthesize these developmental programs into academic curricula are underway.
- The creation of the Division of Officer Development is one example of the efforts to provide cohesive and responsive programming in the area of leadership, ethics, and character development.
- The "Waypoints" project clearly delineates responsibilities for midshipmen in each of the four years at the Academy. This leadership model reflects the core issues inherent in officer development and appears to address emerging needs impacting officer development.
- The Academy values the contributions of midshipmen in the surrounding communities. A number of significant community outreach initiatives have been documented. The fact that community service opportunities for midshipmen exist outside the traditional academic classroom is notable.
- As noted in the Self-Study and reinforced in interviews, the team supports a review of the Division of Officer Development to assess the overall coordination and effectiveness of educational activities.
- The incidence of sexual assault and sexual harassment at the Academy has recently undergone significant review. Efforts to improve communication and knowledge regarding unacceptable behaviors related to sexual assault and harassment among all constituencies merit priority attention. The Academy recognizes that anything less compromises its overall image and integrity.
- The Academy had just finished an analysis and lengthy set of recommended actions for themselves to mitigate problems with sexual harassment and assault, and submitted it to DOD.

Suggestions:

- The team concurs with the Self-Study recommendation that the Academy examine related military-professional educational activities with regard to collaboration, coordination, and resource allocation. Recognizing the frequency of military officer changes, the team suggests increased communication between military and academic officers related to educational program planning, delivery, and assessment processes.
- While there is evidence of ongoing evaluation of programs and services in support of the educational mission, the team encourages the Commandant to better articulate linkages among data collection, assessment, and resource allocation.

Recommendations: None

### **Standard 14: Assessment of Student Learning**

The Institution meets this standard.

Summary of evidence and findings:

- Since the 2001 PRR, USNA has added structural components within the Academic Program that have resulted in enhanced opportunities to assess student learning. These include the creation of a position as Director of Academic Assessment as well as the creation of the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee.
- USNA has articulated expectations of student learning at various levels throughout the educational experience, which are congruent with the institution's mission and higher educational standards. Academic Program learning outcomes have been established for Communication, Critical Thinking, and Geopolitical Awareness. Professional Core Competencies have been developed for students' achievement of sailing and navigation and physical fitness.
- Rubrics have been created by the Faculty Senate Assessment Committee for the Communication and Critical Thinking learning outcomes.
- Critical Thinking is assessed primarily through the use of the *Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal*. First administered in 2003 to members of the Classes of 2004 and 2007, the Academic Program plans on using this instrument again in 2006 when the Class of 2007 approaches graduation.
- A planned logical progression of coursework and the application of sailing and navigation skills provide the framework through which assessments are collected on students' navigation of waterways.
- Many course and major-specific assessments are evidently occurring within departments, though much of this effort appears to be dependent on the independent initiative of various faculty and not systematically incorporated across departments.

Strengths/Commendations:

- The Naval Academy has taken the steps necessary to make progress in assessing student learning in the military, physical, and academic programs.

### Suggestions for Improvement:

- Incorporate planned assessments using multiple measures of students' achievement of desired learning outcomes and proficiencies within disciplines, including the use of embedded indicators in both the core and majors programs.
- An assessment of student learning will require the purposeful integration of learning outcomes throughout the curriculum, beginning with the core and extending into the majors programs where applicable. We suggest that the present opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of the curriculum be used to develop learning outcomes that provide justification for the core curriculum. Furthermore, we suggest that the faculty implement a plan that describes student learning assessment activities, including the specific methods to be used to validate articulated student learning outcomes. The results of these assessments ought to be used to improve teaching and learning and to routinely inform decisions about strategic planning, institutional renewal, and the allocation of institutional resources.
- All Self-Study Recommendations are endorsed by the Team.

Recommendations: None.

### Summary

The team opted to list all MSCHE Standards separately instead of following the groupings used in the self-study in order to emphasize each one individually. It is our hope that this assists USNA in looking at the feedback holistically instead of by groupings. Furthermore, we supported a great deal of the excellent work and the recommendations in the self-study.

The recommendations we provided are:

- Standard 3: Frame the funding problems using the MSCHE guidelines for outcomes assessment and other requirements to clearly outline the issues to the DON so that short and long term accreditation requirements and issues are clear.
- Standard 12: It is recommended that the Academy study the current situation for the library and other support staff, particularly for technicians in the engineering and science laboratories, and develop a long-range plan for adequate staffing into the future, including replacements resulting from retirements and resignations.

We provided one recommendation requiring follow-up action:

- Standard 7: Establish a comprehensive, integrated, and institution-wide written institutional assessment plan as a both a framework and goal for the current Strategic Plan to meet the criteria of MSCHE Standard 7 (and 14), and report progress in developing and implementing that plan to MSCHE no later than 1 April 2007.

In brief, these recommendations capture two themes:

- First, although USNA has recognized a need for improving their outcomes assessment efforts, we wanted to point out that a broader framework was needed and to emphasize that outcomes assessment is a strategy that frames and encompasses all that they do to accomplish their vision and mission. Accreditation is, therefore, not just an academic issue, it is an institution-wide issue for all that they do. There appears to be too much reliance on two centralized staffs to make this strategy come to life instead of having everyone understand and embrace the principles and techniques involved.
- Second, it is our opinion that the USNA, their Board of Visitors, and their Chain of Command should come to some agreement regarding budgetary matters that allows USNA to plan for both the short and long term in a way that avoids the problems associated with “mission creep” and last minute annual budget decisions that don’t coincide with the USNA’s annual school year schedule. One element of planning that is especially critical is in the area of hiring faculty, technical expertise for labs, and library support that is aligned with both student loading for a given school year and mandated curriculum changes.