PROVOST INSTRUCTION 1531.39A

From: Provost, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: ACADEMIC ADVISING AND MENTORING

1. **Purpose.** This instruction describes the policies and responsibilities for advisers and midshipmen regarding academic advising and mentoring at the Naval Academy. Subsequent semester notices will contain pertinent dates for pre-registration and registration.

2. **Cancellation.** PROVOSTINST 1531.39

3. **Background.** Academic advising and mentoring are central to the education of every midshipman at the United States Naval Academy. The relationship between faculty adviser and the midshipman is an ongoing and active process where students should be mentored to make well-informed and purposeful educational plans. Midshipmen will collaborate with their advisers to create a meaningful education for themselves using the various resources provided by the United States Naval Academy (including the academic departments, the International Programs Office, and the Center for Academic Excellence). Faculty advisers should be knowledgeable about these resources and the various opportunities available to the midshipmen. Advisers should actively mentor midshipmen in decisions about their education.

4. **Policy.** Upon arrival in Annapolis, each midshipman is assigned a faculty member who serves as their plebe academic adviser. In March of 4/C year, each midshipman is reassigned a faculty adviser based on the choice of major. Major changes, therefore, often result in a new academic adviser. Periodic adviser changes may occur as military faculty rotate and/or permanent faculty take sabbaticals, or for other reasons. Advisers are expected to provide their advisees with helpful and timely counsel and serve as a mentor for the midshipman. If an academic adviser is not responding in a timely manner, the midshipman should contact the department's Senior Academic Adviser (SAA) and/or the chair for the department that administers the major. If needed, the midshipman could also contact the SAA for the appropriate School or Division. Furthermore, the Dean of Student Academic Development (DSAD), the Student Academic Development Specialists, and the Registrar are also resources for the midshipman and their adviser. Graduating from the Naval Academy is a responsibility that belongs to the individual midshipman and the midshipman must comply with all academic regulations and must meet the requirements of their assigned majors and/or any special programs in which they are engaged. The Naval Academy uses faculty for advisers rather than hiring staff or professional advisers. This is done intentionally; it helps faculty understand the non-academic demands on a midshipman's time while cultivating a mentorship opportunity. Because students
must graduate in 4 years, a faculty member's role as an adviser is especially critical at USNA. Therefore, academic advising is directly supporting the Naval Academy's overall mission:

“To develop Midshipmen morally, mentally and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor and loyalty in order to graduate leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government.”

a. **Midshipman responsibilities:** Midshipmen are responsible for fulfilling major and degree requirements; therefore, they must be aware of core requirements, class sequencing, and major requirements. Midshipmen must take an active role in developing their academic plan as well as scheduling and meeting with their adviser; specifically, consulting with the academic adviser at least once before the pre-registration process and as needed if schedule conflicts mandate schedule changes, or as directed by the adviser. The midshipman should inform the adviser of any health or family issues directly affecting academic performance. The midshipman must be familiar with the published academic rules and regulations of the Academy; this includes pre-registering and registering on time as promulgated by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs (APAA). The adviser can suggest, recommend, and remind the midshipman of rules and requirements; but the advisee has the primary responsibility for meeting these requirements. The midshipman should be aware of any special academic opportunities and discuss with their adviser to determine if these opportunities can be part of their academic plan. These opportunities include graduate education, internships, semester abroad, service academy exchange, and honors programs. Finally, the midshipman must discuss unsatisfactory academic performance and the potential implications of unsatisfactory performance with their academic adviser to develop a plan for improvement. The midshipman must be aware of the differences between being UNSAT, on probation, and being an Academic Board case.

b. **Faculty Adviser responsibilities:** Faculty advisers must take an active role mentoring and advising their assigned midshipmen. Advisers will provide midshipmen with information on academic policies, procedures, and programs at the Naval Academy, and provide midshipmen with accurate academic advice. The adviser should emphasize the midshipman's responsibility for satisfying degree requirements and planning their own education, while assisting the midshipman in choosing educational objectives commensurate with their interests and abilities. Faculty advisers must be familiar with published academic rules and regulations of the Academy and/or actively seek out information if the adviser has questions. Faculty advisers must make midshipmen aware of the wide range of educational services and opportunities available at the Naval Academy that may be pertinent to their educational objectives. Faculty advisers will establish adequate availability throughout each semester and discuss pre-registration, to solve schedule conflicts, and to check each advisee's matrix before the start of each semester to determine timely progress towards a degree. Advisers should not knowingly permit a midshipman to fall behind their matrix or fail to complete a graduation requirement in an attempt to minor in a language or pursue Medical Corps. Falling behind a midshipman's matrix can be defined as a deficiency in the number of courses completed/required; it is not defined by the obligation to take the course in the semester designated by the matrix. Faculty advisers should check grades after each grading period (6-week, 12-week, and final), read MAPRs, and refer the
advisees to support programs (such as the Center for Academic Excellence, the writing center, math lab, and other course specific resources), if needed. Faculty advisers cannot permit a midshipman to drop a course if the drop would result in the student falling behind their matrix without consultation from the DSAD or the APAA. Faculty advisers should encourage midshipmen to view their education as valuable to their future success as officers and, ultimately, to instill in midshipmen a desire to be lifetime learners.

c. Additional advising resources/Sources of help: Academic Advising at the Naval Academy falls under the APAA. The DSAD and the Student Academic Development Specialists can answer questions regarding plebe advising, and assist with majors advising, summer school, and when midshipmen study at other service academies and/or abroad. The Registrar is a point of contact regarding course enrollment and official academic records for all midshipmen. Each department has a Senior Academic Adviser who should be the first contact for questions.

5. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of media and format, must be maintained and dispositioned for the standard subject identification codes (SSIC) 1000 through 13000 series per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at https://portal.secnav.navv.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact USNA records manager or the DON/AA DRMD program office.

6. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.71A, the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs will review this instruction annually on the anniversary of the effective date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, DoD, SECNAV, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction.

Releasability and distribution: This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically via the Provost Instructions internet website: https://www.usna.edu/Academics/Provost/Rules-Regulations/Instructions.php