

**MEETING OF THE U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Capitol Visitors Center
Room SVC 201-00
23 April 2018**

ATTENDEES

BOARD OF VISITORS (BOV) MEMBERS: Sen. Deb Fisher (R-NE), Chairman; Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS), Senator Gary Peters (D-MI); Mr. Michael Morris, Director Total Force Management, Military Sealift Command; Erica Schwartz, RADM USCG Director of Health, Safety & Work Life; Mr. Gary Gilbert; Mr. Joseph Cox, Ms. Susan Hayman.

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION (MARAD) OFFICIALS: Mark H. Buzby, RADM, USN (Ret) Maritime Administrator; James Helis, RADM U.S. Maritime Service, Superintendent, US Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA or Academy); Mr. Brian Blower, MARAD – USMMA Liaison and BOV Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

PURPOSE

As required by law, the BOV met to discuss and vote on the BOV bylaws, obtain a briefing on the state of the Academy, the status of the incoming class of 2022 and Sea Year as well as an update on the 5-year Strategic Plan development, critical infrastructure projects and the events to celebrate the Academy's 75th Anniversary.

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

Senator Fischer opened the meeting by thanking the members for their participation and continued support of the Board. She mentioned that the Academy received a significant budget increase of \$52M for FY 2018 on top of approx. \$50M already appropriated for capital improvements at the Academy. She expressed concern about ongoing Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SA/SH) issues at USMMA - specifically the ongoing soccer team investigation and the recently released audit report from the Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Sen. Fischer highlighted the national security concerns and impacts of the shortage of available credentialed merchant marine officers to support U.S. shipping requirements in the event of a sustained emergency and the importance of USMMA as a source of licensed officers.

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR'S OPENING REMARKS

Maritime Administrator Buzby thanked the members and the public for their continued interest in the Academy noting that it is clear, everyone in attendance is deeply concerned about USMMA and its successful operation. He thanked the Congressional members for the additional funds provided in the FY 2018 appropriation which will be used to address infrastructure needs on campus. RADM Buzby noted that although USMMA only graduates about a quarter of the Unlimited licensed/credentialed officers in the US, all are obligated to serve the nation either in the armed forces or by sailing on their license. USMMA is the only academy where all graduates are obligated and therefore serves as a reliable source of mariners.

SENATOR PETERS' OPENING REMARKS

Senator Peters stated that it was a privilege to be a member of the BOV. He noted how important the maritime industry is to his home state of Michigan and pointed out that they have their own state maritime academy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was entered and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 2017 BOV meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

The Chairman thanked all the members for their input to the Committee bylaws noting that they will help to establish regular orders and procedures for upcoming meetings.

A motion was entered and seconded for the adoption of the bylaws which were unanimously approved.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the BOV was proposed for November 2018 at the Academy. Senator Fischer's staff will work with the other member's staffs and the DFO for the actual date.

SUPERINTENDENT'S BRIEFING

Opening Remarks: Superintendent Helis thanked the Members for their interest in the Academy. He stated that MARAD and USMMA fully understand the criticality of the national shortfall of approx. 1,800 licensed mariners needed for full surge sustainment and the critical importance of Academy graduates to supplies those mariners.

Strategic Planning Process: RADM Helis stated that a conscious decision was made to delay the start of the planning process for the new 5 yr. strategic plan until after the new Administration was in place so as to eliminate the need to restart or duplicate effort if the guidance changed. He mentioned that USMMA held a two-day Strategic Planning Summit in March 2017 and that the Academy had contacted more than 600 stakeholders for their input to the process. Within the next two weeks, the Academy will add more detail to the framework.

New Mission statement: The Academy has updated its mission statement to highlight the training of officers due to increased focus on national security; highlighted the expectation that M/N are being developed as leaders in industry and the armed forces for life, not just to fulfill an obligation; and to specify the training of officers for the armed forces. A side-by-side comparison between the old and new mission statements are included as Attachment (1).

In summary, the new mission emphasizes 1. "educate and graduate" – what we are - an institution of higher learning. 2. Develop "leaders of exemplary character" – this is what sets USMMA graduates apart. 3. "serve... the needs of the United States" - the primary purpose for having a merchant marine academy. 4. "as...officers" – how graduates serve the nation.

Vision: The vision of the Academy that emerged from the strategic planning process is a community of lifelong learners, educators, and professionals dedicated to internal and external collaboration and a desire to become a Center of Excellence (COE) for maritime innovation with a greater outward looking focus and greater industry engagement.

Q: Will the COEs be looking to do research?

A: We have not yet reached a consensus as to what a USMMA National COE will look like. It may require the establishment of a separate, standalone institution co-located at Kings Point, or may leverage the expertise of the existing faculty.

Q: Will certain aspects of the maritime industry be “farmed out” to State Maritime Academies (SME’s) or other training facilities or will USMMA be the COE for all aspects of the industry?

A: MARAD/USMMA are still working on a plan to become a National COE, but some schools have already developed areas of expertise and are already considered to be “centers of expertise.”

Q: Is it acceptable (to MARAD/USMMA) for other schools to be COEs for some subjects?

A: State Maritime Academies will have a role to play in the overall Research and Development construct, but that is still being mapped out at MARAD. The Academy is envisioned to be the COE hub of any R&D efforts.

RADM Helis noted that Congress granted research authority to USMMA in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Academy is now working to develop processes and procedures to take advantage of the new authority.

Strategic Plan: The new Institutional Learning objectives established as part of the strategic planning process are: 1. Leadership 2. Professional expertise. 3. Lifelong learners 4. Global understanding

The strategic priorities that emerged from the planning summit are: 1. Academic and Regimental programs. 2. Strengthening institutional culture. 3. Improving infrastructure (which will be supplemented by the additional funding) 4. Improving governance (how USMMA is managed). 5. Improving communications and relationships (be collaborative, build external relationships and educate about the industry.) 6. Athletics as a vital part of M/N development (not only team sports, but clubs and intermural sports).

The next step in the planning process is to draft and finalize the plan by June 2018. This will be followed by development and implementation of action plans for each of the six priority areas. This process will include a review of the overcrowded curriculum and the structure of sea year. It will require review and cooperation of both the Regimental and Academic departments as the two programs are tightly inter-related.

Q: Does the current curriculum contain any cyber security components?

A: No, but we do have interest and a cyber security club. We need to add this to the curriculum, but we also need to create the facilities and identify the faculty for this effort. Samuels Hall renovation plans include the addition of a cyber laboratory for instruction.

The American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) has developed a cyber security curriculum and offered it to MARAD/USMMA, so this is being explored.

Q: How much celestial navigation and old school training do M/N receive?

A: Celestial navigation training is very thorough at school and at sea. There is a license exam test module to examine proficiency. In 2016, during sea year, our cadets were asked by the skipper of a naval vessel to teach his crew celestial navigation.

Q: How do you add training such as International Safety Management (ISM) Code without dropping something or keeping the students longer?

A: That will be very challenging as there are gaps that exist that need to be filled. New subjects cannot be additive, so it may require a “white board” approach to the requirements. We recently added 3 credits of leadership training without increasing the course load. It may require no credit training periods or non-credit courses for credentialing competencies which cannot be reduced as they are required by the Coast Guard.

SA/SH: The safety and wellbeing of the M/N remains our number 1 priority. During the past year, the Academy has made significant progress in addressing SA/SH issues both on campus and at sea. On campus, the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator’s (SARC) office has gone from 1 position to 4. The program office is staffed by a SARC/program manager; a Victim Advocate Prevention Educator (VA), and a sea year coordinator who is a recent graduate with sailing experience serving as a mobilized Navy Reserve Strategic Sealift Officer. We have made an offer to a second Victim Advocate/Prevention Educator who is in the background check process. We have trained 5 more faculty as volunteer victim advocates who can accept restricted or unrestricted reports. We have a contract for 24 hour worldwide hotline coverage from the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN). We are in the process of hiring a special victim advocate (SVA) attorney. We have successfully tested and are in the process of procuring electronic texting devices with world-wide coverage for all Midshipmen to use during sea year.

During April -Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) the Academy hosted numerous speakers and held numerous events addressing SA/SH.

OIG report: The recently released OIG audit report had 10 recommendations. One is complete and the other 9 are “resolved” meaning we have a plan to address them and that the OIG is satisfied with the plan.

Q: Why is the SVA not in the SARC office?

A: That position is an attorney in the counsel’s office with primary duty of providing support to victims.

Q: Can you compare USMMA’s staffing to other Service Academies and State Maritime Academies (SMAs)?

A: The DoD Academies have much larger student populations so it is difficult to make comparisons in staffing levels. USMMA is comparable to the Coast Guard Academy (USCGA). We don’t have information to compare to SMAs.

Q: Are you looking at victim recovery?

A: Recovery is part of response.

Q: What long term efforts do you make for victims?

A: The SARC maintains long term contact without being too intrusive. Every case is different and we watch different indicators such as falling grades or quitting athletic teams.

SENATOR WICKERS’ OPENING REMARKS

Senator Wicker thanked the members for their ongoing participation. He mentioned that he attended the commencement ceremony at USMMA last year and was impressed by the caliber of students.

Senator Wicker referenced a letter from Mr. Grasso, Esq. to the members of the Board regarding an alleged sexual assault involving soccer team members in 2016.

Q: What can you tell us about the status of this matter?

A: It is an ongoing investigation and we cannot discuss it.

Q: Are the soccer coaches still on the staff?

A: Yes. But for the spring season the soccer team is coached by CDR Andrew McCarthy, the Deputy Commandant.

Q: Have the BOV members seen the 2-page letters from the Secretary of Transportation to Senator Thune? (these are transmittal letters for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 reports to Congress on Sexual Assault and Harassment.)

A: No, the letter was not provided to the DFO and was not distributed to the members.

Senator Wicker asked that the letter be included in the Minutes for the record Attachments (2).

Discussion ensued regarding the percentage of reported assaults/harassment which take place at sea vs. on campus or other locations. The reports from 2012, 2014, and 2016 indicate that historically 30-40% take place at sea.

Q: How do some cases of SA/SH end up with the OIG and others do not.

A: RADM Helis explained the process in great detail. It depends on whether the report is restricted or unrestricted, where the alleged offence took place, to whom the report was made, and other factors. For all cases the Director of Public Safety notifies the OIG of a report of sexual assault. If after completing its investigation the OIG determines that there is sufficient evidence of criminal activity, the case is referred to the US Attorney's office. The Academy works with the OIG to ensure that the actions taken by the Academy do not interfere with or compromise the OIG's criminal investigation. When the OIG feels that the Academy can launch its own administrative investigation without interfering with the criminal investigation, they notify the Academy and the Director of Public Safety conducts the investigation.

He noted that for unrestricted reports, as soon as the report is received, the Commandant and Dean jointly take action deemed appropriate to separate the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator such as change class schedules or changing berthing assignments.

Q: Who pursues the case first?

A: OIG has the right of 1st refusal for a case.

Q: If the event takes place off campus, does USMMA wait for local law enforcement to take action?

A: USMMA has limited experience with off campus incidences. It is up to the victim to contact local law enforcement. Our limited experience with local law enforcement is that they are reluctant to share information with the Academy.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Superintendent Helis provided an update on the status of ongoing Critical Infrastructure Projects (CIP) along with a plan to spend the additional funds appropriated in the FY 2018 budget. Rather than wait for sequential completion of ongoing projects which will take 7-8 years, the Infrastructure Planning Committee has developed a plan to concurrently begin working on stand-alone projects. The projects identified will focus on improving M/N quality of life and include Patten Hall health clinic 2. Vickery (main) gate vehicle access control. 3. Campus lighting. 4. Sea wall repair and replacement. 5. Campus wide drainage improvements. 6. Architectural and engineering design and construction for a new student center 7. Architectural and engineering design for a new field house to supplement O'Hara Hall.

Q: How is the gift process working with the Alumni Association and Foundation (AAF)?

A: It is working well. AAF gift funds were used for the recent refinishing of the gym floor and the plan to upgrade and develop Lower Roosevelt Field. The Superintendent will meet with the AAF chairman soon to discuss changes in the needs and priorities based on the FY 2018 supplemental funding.

Q: Do you allow transgender M/N and have you had to make changes to accommodate them?

A: USMMA follows the directives of the armed forces. Presently we have no M/N who identify as transgender and none who have applied for the incoming class of 2022.

CLASS OF 2022

Final deadline for individuals to accept or decline an offer of appointment is 1 May 2018 after which, offers will be made to qualified candidates from the national pool. The full roster of 280 plebe candidates is expected to be filled. As of the morning of 23 April, 199 candidates had accepted offers of appointment, including 57 women. 108 offers are pending and 207 fully qualified candidates are on a hold status pending action in the outstanding offers.

Q: How do the demographics compare to the other Service Academies?

A: USMMA presently enrolls fewer women than the other federal service academies particularly USCGA which has the highest number of females at about 37%. USMMA has increased the percentage of women in recent years.

SEA YEAR UPDATE

Former Secretary of Transportation Foxx ordered a stand down of Sea Year (SY) for all M/N in 2016 which was resumed in March 2017. There are presently 17 shipping companies vetted by MARAD's Shipboard Climate Compliance Team (SCCT) which are rated as Sea Year Eligible (SYE) to take USMMA cadets. The ratio of commercial sea days to sea days on government owned vessels is back to where it was prior to the stand down with tanker companies being the most recent additions.

Q: Prior to stand down, there were more than 55 companies taking M/N, have any been denied SYE status?

A: All major shipping companies are SYE. We are still working to get more companies qualified. State owned ferry systems must meet standards similar to those for SYE, so MARAD and the Academy are sending a team to the West Coast to certify the Alaska and Washington State Ferry systems for compliance with standards. We are not satisfied with the number of available companies.

USMMA 75TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

September 30th, 1943 was the official dedication of the Academy so we are celebrating throughout the year. Previous events included the dedication of the gym floor and presenting awards at the Battle Standard dinner for winners of a logo design contest. Upcoming events include Merchant Marine Night at the Movies – “Action in the North Atlantic” - at the Navy Memorial in DC on Thursday, 19 July, and a joint band concert with the US Navy Band and the USMMA Regimental Band also at the Navy Memorial, tentatively set for 28 August. Members of the USMMA band will spend a full day with the US Navy band for mentoring, lessons rehearsals, and the joint performance at the Navy Memorial. The principal 75th Anniversary events will take place at the Academy during Homecoming weekend September 21 – 23.

M/N SPOTLIGHT

Engineering major, M/N 1/c Grove explained how she came up with the “Be KP” concept to encourage pride in the Academy and promote the core values of Respect, Honor, and Service. She explained how she ended up choosing USMMA for her education with no maritime background and how it was one of

the best decisions she ever made. She entertained questions from the members about her experiences and her pending graduation.

Mr. Cox pointed out there is often a lack of awareness of how the regimental system, run by midshipmen for midshipmen, provides good leadership training. He suggested this effort is a good example of leadership training and trusted the accreditation personnel were aware of it.

RADM Helis stated that M/N Grove made a conscious decision to leave the Academy a better place than she found it.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Fong, assistant math and science professor, provided an overview of his research projects for the last 4 years using mathematical modeling for biological research related to 1. Tissue Damage 2. Tissue Growth 3. Membrane filtration. Without explaining the mathematics, Dr. Fong demonstrated the type of research faculty members do to expand the universal body of knowledge and contribute to their fields.

Dr. Fong explained how the Kings Point Scholar program works to allow M/N to do independent research with a faculty advisor to encourage them to engage in research and learning not offered as part of the standard curriculum.

RADM Helis pointed out that the KP Scholar program is done every year on a broad range of topics. MN Grove and Dr. Fong are reflective of the great work of our Midshipmen and faculty every day.

Q: Does USMMA have an Institutional Review Board (IRB)?

A: Now that USMMA faculty can access research grants with the possibility of research involving human subjects, the Academy will need to establish one.

MR. MORRIS'S COMMENTS

Mr. Morris stated that he liked the changes to the mission statement – specifically the emphasis on military officers since the commissioning requirement is what sets USMMA apart from the SMAs.

He noted that MSC recently hired ABS to help identify vulnerabilities to cyber threats on MSC vessels. He noted that ship's officers need to understand the vulnerabilities and that cyber security is an important part of the curriculum.

Mr. Morris noted that increasing reporting of SA/SH indicates an increased confidence in the system.

FINAL COMMENT

Q: What is the status of the Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) training being developed at USMMA?

A: A 5 -week course has been developed which is transferable to the Navy. Navy is still working on accession plans.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman offered an opportunity for final remarks from any members.

There being no further questions or discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 1735.

Submitted by:
Brian Blower
Designated Federal Officer to the Board of Visitors
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Brian.Blower@DoT.gov

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Senator Deborah Fischer
USMMA BOV Chair

These minutes will be formally considered by the Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

Attachment 1

Comparison between the old and new USMMA mission statements



COMPARISON



To educate and graduate
licensed merchant
mariners and leaders of
exemplary character who
will serve America's
marine transportation
and defense needs in
peace and war.

To educate and graduate
leaders of exemplary
character who are
inspired to serve the
national security, marine
transportation, and
economic needs of the
United States as licensed
Merchant Marine officers
and commissioned
officers in the Armed
Forces.

Attachment 2



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20590

April 2, 2018

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed is the 2016 – 2017 Academic Year Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault at the United States Merchant Marine Academy (Academy), which covers the Academic Year of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017, and is submitted to meet the requirement of the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (P.L. 110-417), Title XXXV-Maritime Administration, Section 3507 (Act).

The Act requires the Academy to prescribe a policy and conduct an assessment during each Academic Year (AY) to determine the effectiveness of its policies, training and procedures with respect to prevention of and response to sexual harassment and sexual assault involving Midshipmen and other Academy personnel. For each Academic Year beginning in an even-numbered year, the Academy conducts focus group sessions.

As in past years, the Academy contracted with the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of People Analytics (OPA), formerly the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), to administer the focus groups in 2017. In May 2017, OPA conducted ten focus group sessions with 81 randomly selected Midshipmen, faculty and staff. The primary purpose of these focus groups was to evaluate current Academy programs addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment and to provide a qualitative measure of those programs to complement the quantitative assessment resulting from the 2016 Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) Survey. The Academy received OPA's final report on December 4, 2017.

OPA found four overarching themes that emerged from the focus group discussions. First, students are heavily influenced by their peers and pay attention to Midshipmen in leadership roles. For sexual assault and sexual harassment to be taken seriously at the Academy, student leaders and groups need to take an active role in setting the tone on campus. Second, there is a protectionist mindset among Midshipmen; they are protective of the Academy and its culture, with Sea Year identified as a significant part of the school's identity. Fear of a second Sea Year stand down could emerge as an additional barrier to reporting. Third, students, faculty, and staff lack trust in the system and sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention policies are regarded with suspicion. Midshipmen do not trust that the restricted reports they make will remain private. They claim that they trust one another, but they consider a fellow student who reports misconduct to be "untrustworthy" or a "snitch." Finally, Midshipmen, faculty and staff see many opportunities for improving training, especially training provided by facilitators who are familiar with the Academy environment and understand life at sea.

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The Honorable John Thune

During AY 2016-2017, the Academy had nine reports of sexual assault involving Midshipmen compared to four reports received in AY 2015-2016, a 225 percent increase in one year. During this same period, there were no reported formal complaints of sexual harassment.

OPA's findings from the focus group sessions provide valuable information on perception of the Academy's sexual harassment and sexual assault policies, training, and procedures, as well as the climate that exists on campus. The Academy is using this information to refine its Plan of Action for AY 2017-2018 and to ensure it addresses focus group themes as well as data-driven concerns derived from the 2016 SAGR Survey. Separately, the Academy is tracking completion of recommendations made in the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Accreditation report and the Logistics Management Institute's culture audit of the Academy to ensure there is a holistic approach to continuous improvement of the learning and living experience on campus.

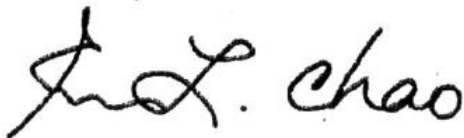
The Plan of Action comprises five areas:

- Climate: Engage Midshipmen leaders in building a culture intolerant of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and the behaviors that enable it;
- Prevention: Involve members of the maritime industry to discuss sexual assault and sexual harassment onboard ships; teach bystander intervention techniques; develop leaders of moral character who stand against sexual harassment and sexual assault; communicate that shipping companies have taken positive action to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct, eliminating the need for another Sea Year stand down;
- Response: Build trust among Midshipman, faculty, and staff by maintaining the confidentiality of sexual assault and sexual harassment victims; teach Midshipmen that the benefits of receiving medical and counseling services outweigh the stigma of reporting;
- Accountability: Complete revision of policies that address sexual assault and sexual harassment, including the Midshipman Regulations, and communicate them clearly to Midshipmen, faculty, and staff; and
- Assessment: Conduct a program self-evaluation and modify objectives, if necessary.

The Department, the Maritime Administration, and the Academy take seriously the safety and well-being of every one of our Midshipmen, faculty, and staff. The Academy is committed to eradicating sexual harassment and sexual assault, in keeping with its values of respect, honor, and service to the Nation.

Similar letters have been sent to the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Chairman and the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elaine L. Chao". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Elaine" written in a stylized script and the last name "Chao" in a more legible, slightly cursive font.

Elaine L. Chao

Enclosure