

Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Advisory Board, and Students

of the

United States Merchant Marine Academy
300 Steamboat Road
Kings Point, New York 11024

by

A Team Representing the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Prepared after study of the institution's Monitoring Report
and a visit to the campus on March 29-31, 2017

The members of the team are:

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At the Time of the Visit:

President/Chief Executive Officer:

Rear Admiral James Helis
Superintendent, United States Merchant Marine Academy

Chief Academic Officer:

Captain Preston De Jean
Interim Academic Dean, United States Merchant Marine Academy

Chair of the Advisory Board:

Dr. Sharon van Wyk
Chair, Advisory Board, United States Merchant Marine Academy

Executive Director and (Acting) Maritime Administrator:

Joel Szabat
United States Maritime Administration

I. Content and Nature of Visit

On 23 June 2016, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) issued a warning to the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) that its accreditation may be in jeopardy because of insufficient evidence that the institution was in compliance with Requirement of Affiliation 7, and Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9. Additionally, the Commission requested further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process.

A follow-up visit was conducted on 29-31 March 2017, to monitor progress and to evaluate compliance with the five aforementioned standards and Requirement of Affiliation 7.

II. Affirmation of Continued Compliance with Standards and the Requirements of Affiliation

Based on a review of the Monitoring Report, interviews with members of the Academy's senior leadership team, faculty, administrators, students, Maritime Administration (MARAD) officials, members of the Maritime Education Training Executive Review Board (METERB), USMMA advisory board members, and a review of numerous documents supplied by the institution, the team affirms that the institution has now satisfied requirements related to four of the five standards under review. The institution remains out of compliance with Standard 2 (Planning, Resource Allocation, and Renewal) and Requirement of Affiliation 7 (Institutional Planning).

III. Evaluation overview

USMMA is to be commended for the significant effort devoted to responding to MSCHE concerns, and for the many accomplishments implemented in the relatively short time-frame spanning only eleven months. It is apparent that USMMA has come together as a team in response to the requirements for action; that team includes Academy leaders, faculty, staff, students, and MARAD officials, all working together for the common purpose of improving USMMA. Most notably, the senior leadership team at USMMA, including specifically the Superintendent, the Deputy Superintendent, the Executive Officer, and the Director of Institutional Assessment, have shown exemplary leadership in the effort to improve the Academy and resolve outstanding issues. There is no doubt that the Academy is a better institution on a good trajectory for the future, and that current Academy leaders are to be commended for their leadership in guiding that effort.

The progress to date could not have been realized without the dedication and hard work of many faculty, staff, and students who have worked in teams – both with each other and with senior Academy leaders – for the betterment of the institution. All members of USMMA should take great pride in all that they have accomplished in a very short period of time.

IV. Compliance with Accreditation Standards

Requirement of Affiliation 7: Institutional Planning.

Institutional planning integrates plans for academic, personnel, information resources and technologies, learning resources, and financial development.

Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Renewal.

An institution conducts ongoing planning and resource allocation based on its mission and goals, develops objectives to achieve them, and utilizes the results of its assessment activities for institutional renewal. Implementation and subsequent evaluation of the success of the strategic plan and resource allocation support the development and change necessary to improve and to maintain institutional quality.

The 2016 MSCHE final report to USMMA cited one Requirement with respect to Standard 2:

1. The institution must demonstrate resource allocation decisions that are directly linked to mission and goal achievement at the institutional and unit level, including Human Resources, Financial, and Procurement.

In addition, the 2016 MSCHE letter cited Requirement of Affiliation 7, Institutional Planning, as requiring USMMA to document further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process, including evidence that assessment results are shared and discussed with appropriate constituents and used in planning, resource allocation, and renewal at all levels.

Summary of evidence and findings:

In the team's judgment, the institution does not satisfy Requirement of Affiliation 7, and does not satisfy Standard 2.

At the time of this visit, USMMA has institutional level goals and objectives based on a strategic plan placed into effect in 2012. A new strategic planning process will commence in the Summer of 2017, and is designed to create a new 2017-2022 strategic plan based on an Appreciative Inquiry model. The planning process is expected to result in planning and self-improvement processes that are clearly communicated, provide for constituent participation, and most importantly, incorporate the use of assessment results in decision making. Integral to this process is the creation of a new institutional assessment framework that is expected to be effective for linking planning, resource allocation, and renewal at all levels. The implementation of this new institutional assessment framework includes the planned deployment of a software platform deemed necessary for the assessment process to be operationally effective. These plans – both for strategic planning and for institutional assessment – are excellent first steps necessary for resolving the requirement associated with Standard 2 and for satisfying the Requirement of Affiliation 7.

However, the requirement associated with Standard 2, and the closely associated Requirement of Affiliation 7, is specific in that it states that the institution “must demonstrate resource allocation decisions that are directly linked to mission and goal achievement at the institutional and unit level, including Human Resources, Financial, and Procurement,” and that “assessment results are ... used in planning, resource allocation, and renewal at all levels.” The current institutional assessment processes do not provide actionable data that can be used to link mission and goal achievement, nor can they be used effectively in planning, resource allocation, and renewal. The new plans and processes, both for strategic planning and for institutional assessment, while excellent in concept and likely to resolve the requirement, are early stage efforts that largely remain under development, with some committees established and operating, but others not yet in effect and operational.

In short, USMMA is making excellent progress, but the actions taken remain in an early stage, and the requirement associated with Standard 2, and the Requirement of Affiliation 7, are not yet satisfied.

In support of these findings, evidence cited in the monitoring report as well as that revealed during the on-site visit includes the following:

- In early 2017, USMMA began the planning process for how to develop the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, but the actual strategic planning process has not yet commenced. The approach to developing the strategic plan is based on the Appreciative Inquiry model.
- Once the strategic plan is finalized, academic departments and other administrative units will create aligning plans with goals and performance measures that will help in assessing progress towards stated goals.
- Departmental plans will address personnel, information resources and technologies, learning resources and other resources necessary to achieve their goals.

- The Office of Institutional Assessment has started developing a new Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) in parallel with the development of USMMA's Strategic Plan to articulate exactly how USMMA will evaluate the success of the Strategic Plan.
- The Office of Academy Financial Management has adopted a Strategy, Execution, and Assessment process to guide each fiscal year planning cycle. This process is expected to ensure that spending aligns with USMMA's new strategic goals and that the budget is executed accordingly.
- Beginning in April 2015, the Academic Outcomes Assessment Committee began the process of developing Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), previously lacking for USMMA. It was decided that since the new strategic planning process will begin in Summer 2017, the ILOs should remain in draft form until the Academy's strategic goals are developed. Nevertheless, some of the draft ILOs are certain to be on the finalized list and those will be the ILOs used to develop the learning outcomes assessment process. Those ILOs relate to Leadership, Professional and Technical Skills, and Communications, and they will be assessed for the 2017-2018 Academic Year.
- USMMA plans to acquire an integrated software platform to facilitate sustainable planning, assessment, and institutional effectiveness processes. USMMA anticipates funding this project in the current fiscal year (pending budget allocations after the current Continuing Resolution period concludes on 28 April 2017).
- To better integrate information technology into USMMA's mission and strategic plan, the Office of Institutional Assessment recommended the creation of a Technology Strategic Planning Committee with representatives from all Academy departments. The Technology Strategic Planning Committee will begin its work once the Strategic Plan is underway.

Standard 2 and Requirement of Affiliation 7:

Requirement:

1. The institution must (a) demonstrate resource allocation decisions that are directly linked to mission and goal achievement at the institutional and unit level, and (b) document further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process, including evidence that assessment results are used to inform decision-making.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources.

The human, financial, technical, facilities, and other resources necessary to achieve an institution's mission and goals are available and accessible. In the context of the institution's mission, the effective and efficient uses of the institution's resources are analyzed as part of ongoing outcomes assessment.

The 2016 MSCHE final report to USMMA cited two Requirements with respect to Standard 3:

1. The institution does not have access to its approved annual budget in a manner that supports the effective, efficient, and timely use of financial resources at the institution level. The

Secretary of Transportation must initiate and lead an effort to ensure statutory and regulatory change is made by Congress so that the annual budget is available to the institution at the start of the fiscal year.

2. The Superintendent does not currently have direct control over the hiring process for faculty and staff. The Superintendent must have the authority and responsibility, assigned or delegated from DOT and/or MARAD as appropriate, to ensure adequate faculty, staff, and administration to support the institution's mission and outcomes expectations.

Summary of evidence and findings:

In the team's judgment, the institution satisfies Standard 3.

Through recent congressional actions, the allotment and funding restrictions within the MARAD Operations and Training Accounts have been significantly relaxed. These restrictions when previously in place, had a direct negative bearing on the budgeting process at the Academy. But as of December 2016, the proviso restricting the release of 50% of the Academy budget pending the submission and approval of a spending plan has been removed, giving the Academy leadership greater flexibility in the budgeting process. This contributes to a more effective and efficient use of financial resources at the institution. However, the allotment holder status continues to reside with the Secretary of Transportation, even as a request for transfer of that status to the Superintendent has been made by the Secretary. Everyone – from Academy leaders to MARAD administrators to the Secretary of Transportation – believes that such a transfer is an important step that would add further efficiency and effectiveness in the deployment of financial resources. This issue notwithstanding, Requirement 1 related to Standard 3 has been satisfied.

In addition, the MARAD Executive Director has recently delegated significant control over the hiring process to the Superintendent at USMMA. This action will allow the Superintendent to ensure that adequate faculty, staff, and administrative leadership is deployed to support the mission of the institution and to attain the expected outcomes for the students. To this extent, Requirement 2 related to Standard 3 has been met.

In support of these findings, evidence cited in the monitoring report as well as that revealed during the on-site visit includes the following:

- The allotment and funding restriction provisions within the MARAD Operations and Training account have been removed. In particular, the proviso restricting the release of 50 percent of the Academy budget until a spend plan is submitted, has been removed in the Continuing Resolution passed by Congress in December 2016. Additional changes are being pursued that would ensure removal of the language preventing the Superintendent from being the allotment holder for Academy funds.
- A request to assign direct reporting authority for the Office of Human Resources to the Executive Officer at USMMA has been approved by the MARAD Executive Director.

- A request to delegate authority for the administration of faculty appointments to the Superintendent instead of the MARAD Director of Human Resources has been approved by the MARAD Executive Director.
- USMMA Office of Institutional Assessment Work Group on Procurement has proposed a number of steps to improve procurement services including granting the Superintendent direct authority over the Office of Procurement, establishing a permanent Procurement Advisory Group, developing increased training for employees on procurement processes and systems, streamlining the purchase card process, and developing adequate staffing levels in Procurement and Finance.
- USMMA Office of Institutional Assessment Work Group on Financial Management has proposed steps to train department heads on budgeting and financial management processes, and to formalize and document details of the internal budget formulation process and operating plan development.
- USMMA Office of Institutional Assessment Work Group on Human Resources has proposed steps to improve the recruitment, development, and retention of Academy personnel. The training of department heads in position management and HR budgeting is a key area of emphasis that includes a focus on retirement projections, succession planning, training up staff, and professional development plans for Academy staff.

Standard 3:

Recommendation:

1. In order to strengthen the link between strategic planning and budget allocations, it is important to remove uncertainties related to the budget allocation process to the greatest extent possible. The delegation of allotment holder status to the Superintendent is an important step in this direction and should continue to be pursued with diligence. As the framework for Institutional Assessment is developed and implemented, an explicit focus should reside on measuring the impact of the allocation of institutional resources on achieving the goals of the strategic plan and on fulfilling the stated mission of the Academy.

Standard 4: Leadership and Governance.

The institution's system of governance clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision-making. The governance structure includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.

The 2016 MSCHE final report to USMMA cited one Requirement with respect to Standard 4:

1. The Superintendent does not currently have direct control over the institutional functions of personnel hiring, financial planning and management, and procurement. The Superintendent must have the means, authority, and responsibility, assigned or delegated from DOT and/or MARAD as appropriate, over the institutional functions of personnel hiring, financial planning and management, and procurement required to effectively and efficiently accomplish the Academy's mission.

In addition, the 2016 MSCHE letter to USMMA cited the need for USMMA to demonstrate evidence of “a governance structure that includes an active governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure institutional integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development, consistent with the mission of the institution.”

Summary of evidence and findings:

In the team’s judgment, the institution satisfies Standard 4.

The USMMA monitoring report includes a memorandum from the Superintendent requesting revisions to Maritime Administrative Orders (MAO) 150-1 and 710-181-0-A3. The requested amendments now have been approved by MARAD, which has issued new MAOs in March 2017. Human Resources, Procurement and Finance now report directly to the Superintendent of USMMA, and faculty-hiring authority also is transferred to the Superintendent. These revisions fully address the requirement.

USMMA has also acted to strengthen on-campus governance in other ways: the Superintendent’s cabinet has been formalized and faculty are actively discussing the move to a faculty senate model. In addition, in October 2016 MARAD created a new advisory board for USMMA: the Maritime Education and Training Executive Review Board (METERB). METERB is composed of senior MARAD executives and chaired by the Deputy Maritime Administrator. METERB is meant to provide high-level strategic guidance to USMMA and advice to the Maritime Administrator. The board is not a decision making body, but can advocate within MARAD and the Department of Transportation (DOT) for the Academy’s mission. The existing Advisory Board, consisting of representatives from higher education and the maritime industry, also plays a valuable role and will continue to function in parallel with METERB.

In support of these findings, evidence cited in the monitoring report as well as that revealed during the on-site visit includes the following:

- MARAD has issued revised Maritime Administrative Orders 150-1 and 710-181-0-A3 that restore USMMA’s authority and responsibility over institutional functions.
- USMMA has formalized the Superintendent's Cabinet, a body of senior leaders that advise the Superintendent on USMMA matters. Their role is to provide advice and guidance to the Superintendent on all matters, strategic and operational. It serves as a forum to build and align USMMA leadership through high-level coordination, collaboration and engagement.
- The USMMA Advisory Board is an actively engaged, independent body that provides feedback to the Secretary of Transportation and advises the Superintendent and Maritime Administrator to ensure the best possible educational atmosphere for all Midshipmen.
- The Faculty Forum, via an Ad Hoc Committee, has proposed to revamp the Forum into a proactive body that takes greater responsibility for academic matters that lie outside of personnel issues. The purpose of this new Faculty Forum is to support the mission of USMMA by communicating faculty concerns and recommendations to the Superintendent, Academic Dean, Commandant, and Executive Officer. One aspect of the

proposal is the creation of a Senate, which will be the deliberative and voting body on almost all issues brought before the Forum.

- MARAD chartered a new oversight board, the Maritime Education and Training Executive Review Board (METERB). At the November 2016 Board of Visitors (BOV) meeting, the Deputy Maritime Administrator explained, "The purpose of the METERB is not to manage the Academy operations, but to provide strategic guidance and facilitation within DOT."

Standard 5: Administration.

The institution's administrative structure and services facilitate learning and research/scholarship, foster quality improvement, and support the institution's organization and governance.

The 2016 MSCHE final report to USMMA cited one Requirement with respect to Standard 5:

1. The Director of Institutional Assessment, Director of Admissions, Academic Dean, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resources Officer, and other key administrator positions are all currently vacant or occupied by interim staff. While some of these positions, such as the Academic Dean, are filled on an interim basis with highly qualified, skilled and dedicated individuals, the Academy must move forward with permanently filling these critical positions with administrative leaders who possess the appropriate skills, credentials, and training.

In addition, the 2016 MSCHE letter to USMMA cited the need for USMMA to demonstrate evidence of an administration characterized by (a) a chief executive whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and with responsibility for administration of the institution; (b) administrative leaders with appropriate skills, degrees and training to carry out their responsibilities and functions; (c) qualified staffing appropriate to the goals, type, size, and complexity of the institution; and (d) adequate information and decision-making systems to support the work of administrative leaders.

Summary of evidence and findings:

In the team's judgment, the institution satisfies Standard 5.

USMMA continues to be effectively led by a chief executive, the Superintendent, whose primary responsibility is to lead the institution toward the achievement of its goals and has responsibility for administration of the institution. The institution has made significant progress in filling vacant positions with permanent, highly competent individuals, including a new Director of Institutional Assessment, a new Director of Admissions, a new Chief Financial Officer, and a new Executive Officer in the Superintendent's Office. In addition, USMMA has improved their information and decision-making systems supporting their needs.

However, two key leader positions, the Academic Dean and the Commandant, are filled on an interim basis and several other important positions either remain unfilled or have been vacated recently and are not yet filled.

In support of these findings, evidence cited in the monitoring report as well as that revealed during the on-site visit includes the following:

- USMMA hired a Director of Institutional Assessment, a Director of Admissions, a Chief Financial Officer, and an Executive Officer in the Superintendent's Office.
- Both the Academic Dean and Commandant positions are filled with interim personnel.
- USMMA has several newly vacated positions, including the Director of Information Technology, the External Affairs Officer, and a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC).
- The SARC position was repurposed into a Sexual Assault Prevention Response Office (SAPRO) Program Manager position, but that position is not yet filled.
- The Human Resources Supervisor is currently encumbered by an individual on long-term medical leave, and his duties continue to be performed by others on an interim basis.

Standard 5:

Recommendation:

1. The institution should fill the Academic Dean and Commandant positions with permanent, appropriately qualified individuals to provide more stable leadership; further, the institution should fill the SAPRO Program Manager and other key positions with qualified permanent personnel to provide essential support to the Midshipmen.

Standard 9: Student Support Services.

The institution provides student support services reasonably necessary to enable each student to achieve the institution's goals for students.

The 2016 MSCHE final report to USMMA cited two Requirements with respect to Standard 9:

1. To improve the safety and climate of respect that all midshipmen encounter during the Sea Year experience, the institution must take demonstrable steps in preparation for and upon return from the Sea Year experience.
2. The pervasiveness of sexual harassment on campus must be addressed as a pressing and substantial concern that has fostered a hostile environment for many cohorts of midshipmen. The institution must implement specific steps to build a climate of mutual respect and trust among midshipmen, faculty, and staff with respect to sexual assault and sexual harassment.

In addition, the 2016 MSCHE letter to USMMA cited the need for USMMA to demonstrate evidence of steps taken to build a climate of mutual trust and respect on campus and during the Sea Year.

Summary of evidence and findings:

In the team's judgment, the institution satisfies Standard 9.

USMMA has made very substantial progress in order to meet both of these requirements. In June 2016, the Secretary of Transportation ordered a Sea Year Stand Down and convened a Call-to-Action meeting attended by shipping company representatives. MARAD then formed a Shipboard Climate Compliance Team (SCCT) to develop and implement policies for certifying that commercial shipping companies met appropriate standards for Sexual Assault / Sexual Harassment (SASH) policies and training. Following that, the SCCT implemented certification via a company-by-company review process, and the Academy began a reintegration program for students returning from sea.

The April 2016 Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) Service Academy Gender Relations (SAGR) survey results and the Logistics Management Institute (LMI) consulting report confirm that there is a significant problem with SASH. The LMI report identifies cultural barriers as significant impediments to effectively dealing with SASH, and it makes a series of recommendations. The USMMA Culture Campaign and the Sexual Assault Prevention Response (SAPR) Framework 2017-2021 constitute significant institutional responses to the ongoing issues identified in the LMI report. It is noted that the Culture Campaign is at an advanced stage of development, and is scheduled for imminent launch. Concurrently, USMMA has actively engaged in SASH training and education, and has allocated additional resources to respond to SASH issues by expanding from a single SARC position to a four-person SAPRO office.

The actions taken to date are appropriate, and all additional steps contemplated by USMMA personnel are encouraging. One of these additional actions, the reintroduction of regular ship visits by USMMA Training Representatives, should be given the highest level of consideration for support through appropriate funding. The Sea Year Coordinator in the SAPRO office may also be included in such visits, to both evaluate shipboard climate on a regular basis and to consult with midshipmen as necessary.

In support of these findings, evidence cited in the monitoring report as well as that revealed during the on-site visit includes the following:

- The Department of Transportation Secretary directed a Sea Year Stand Down in response to reported incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment SASH, hazing, bullying, coercion, and retaliation involving Midshipmen during their time at sea.
- MARAD established the Shipboard Climate Compliance Team to develop and implement guidelines to determine eligibility of companies for carrying USMMA Midshipmen aboard their ships. The Academy has begun work immediately to return Midshipmen to sea aboard vessels that are compliant with established guidelines.
- In November 2016, USMMA delivered its first Reintegration Program workshop for Midshipmen returning from sea. In March 2017 USMMA completed a review of the Sea Year Guidebook and identified revisions for the next edition.
- In December 2016, LMI delivered its Final Report, including a Culture Change Action Plan.

- An interdepartmental committee, including faculty, staff and Midshipmen, is developing a campaign to influence USMMA culture in a positive way. The vision for the Culture Campaign is to create and maintain a culture at USMMA that embodies its Core Values and unites the campus community with a shared vision.
- USMMA approved in March 2017 a comprehensive and integrated Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Framework, which outlines the Academy's strategic approach to sexual assault prevention and response.
- USMMA is in the process of expanding the one-person SARC office to a four-person Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO) that is responsible for overall program management and integration of the program across all Academy stakeholders. USMMA will hire a SAPRO Program Manager/SARC who will provide strategic planning, oversight, and daily management of all SAPRO programs. The office will have two Victim Advocate/Prevention Educator positions and a Sea Year Coordinator.
- A group of 12 USMMA faculty and staff who attended the Military Service Academy Summit on Sexual Assault Prevention learned how separating prevention efforts from response and framing the prevention message in terms of human dignity and respect elicited a much more positive response from students. Inviting Midshipmen to join them, this group has taken the lead in developing a campaign to influence the Academy's culture in a positive way.

Recommendations:

1. USMMA should focus on ensuring the Sea Year Compliance Program is sustainable and carefully assessed with appropriate modifications based on assessment. The Sea Year Program should be funded at a level sufficient for the program to provide a safe environment for the Midshipmen.
2. The SAPRO office should be fully staffed as quickly as possible.
3. USMMA's new approaches to SASH education and prevention should be implemented this year. The SAPRO office should review existing sexual harassment policies with a focus on how those policies foster a positive campus climate. The SAGR survey should continue to be used as a benchmark against peers and to measure progress; internal assessment data also should be collected and used to inform decisions in an ongoing basis.

V. Summary of Recommendations for Continuing Compliance & Requirements and Conclusion

Summary:

Requirement of Affiliation 7: Institutional Planning, and Standard 2: Planning, Resource Allocation, and Renewal.

Requirement:

1. The institution must (a) demonstrate resource allocation decisions that are directly linked to mission and goal achievement at the institutional and unit level, and (b) document further development and implementation of an organized and sustained institutional assessment process, including evidence that assessment results are used to inform decision-making.

Standard 3: Institutional Resources.

Recommendation:

1. In order to strengthen the link between strategic planning and budget allocations, it is important to remove uncertainties related to the budget allocation process to the greatest extent possible. The delegation of allotment holder status to the Superintendent is an important step in this direction and should continue to be pursued with diligence. As the framework for Institutional Assessment is developed and implemented, an explicit focus should reside on measuring the impact of the allocation of institutional resources on achieving the goals of the strategic plan and on fulfilling the stated mission of the Academy.

Standard 5: Administration.

Recommendation:

1. The institution should fill the Academic Dean and Commandant positions with permanent, appropriately qualified individuals to provide more stable leadership; further, the institution should fill the SAPRO Program Manager and other key positions with qualified permanent personnel to provide essential support to the Midshipmen.

Standard 9: Student Support Services.

Recommendations:

1. USMMA should focus on ensuring the Sea Year Compliance Program is sustainable and carefully assessed with appropriate modifications based on assessment. The Sea Year Program should be funded at a level sufficient for the program to provide a safe environment for the Midshipmen.
2. The SAPRO office should be fully staffed as quickly as possible.

3. USMMA's new approaches to SASH education and prevention should be implemented this year. The SAPRO office should review existing sexual harassment policies with a focus on how those policies foster a positive campus climate. The SAGR survey should continue to be used as a benchmark against peers and to measure progress; internal assessment data also should be collected and used to inform decisions in an ongoing basis.

VI. Conclusion:

The team's overall evaluation is that USMMA is an institution that is fully dedicated to successfully carrying out its mission to educate and develop leaders to serve in the global maritime environment. USMMA was very cooperative making faculty, staff, Advisory Board members, METERB members, MARAD representatives, and students available for interviews and meetings. When the team requested any further information not in the Monitoring Report, USMMA leaders were quick to comply. We hope that the institution will be open to the ideas contained in this report, all of which are offered in the spirit of collegiality and peer review.

As a reminder, the next steps in the evaluation process are as follows:

- The institution replies to the team report in a written response addressed to the Commission;
- The team chair submits a confidential brief to the Commission, summarizing the team report and conveying the team's proposal for accreditation action;
- The Commission staff and the Commission's Committee on Evaluation Reports carefully review the institution's Monitoring report, the evaluation team report, the institution's formal response, and the chair's brief to formulate a proposed action to the Commission; and
- The full Commission, after considering information gained in the preceding steps, takes formal accreditation action and notifies the institution.