

# Appendix C: DoD Assessment of the United States Air Force Academy



# Appendix C: U.S. Air Force Academy



## Summary

The Department of Defense (DoD) assessed the United States Air Force Academy's (USAFA) policies, training, procedures, and initiatives for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) and sexual harassment prevention and response programs during Academic Program Year (APY) 2016-2017. The Department used the structure of the *2017-2021 DoD SAPR Strategic Plan* to organize its assessment of SAPR and sexual harassment prevention and response programs into five strategic goals. Compliance with each strategic goal was determined by comparing USAFA's SAPR and sexual harassment awareness and response programs to the requirements outlined in the following policies that were applicable during APY 16-17.

### DoD SAPR Strategic Plan Strategic Goals

Goal	Objectives
<b>Goal 1:</b> Prevention	Prevent crime and misconduct before it occurs.
<b>Goal 2:</b> Advocacy/ Victim Assistance	Deliver consistent and effective victim support, response, and reporting options.
<b>Goal 3:</b> Investigation	Achieve high competence in the investigation of sexual assault and sexual harassment.
<b>Goal 4:</b> Accountability	Achieve high competence in holding offenders appropriately accountable.
<b>Goal 5:</b> Assessment	Effectively standardize, measure, analyze, assess, and report program progress.

- DoD Directive (DoDD) 6495.01, *Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program*, Incorporating Change 2, January 20, 2015;

- DoD Instruction 6495.02, *Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program Procedures*, incorporating Change 2, July 7, 2015;
- DoDD 1350.2 *Department of Defense Military Equal Opportunity Program*, November 21, 2003; and
- DoDD 1020.02E *Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity in the Department of Defense*, June 8, 2015.

### Overall Status of Compliance:

● **In Partial Compliance**

Additionally, the Department referenced the following military service and academy sexual harassment and sexual assault policies:

- Air Force Instruction 90-6001, *Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program*, May 21, 2015;
- Air Force Instruction 36-2706, *Equal Opportunity Program Military and Civilian*, October 5, 2011; and
- USAFA 36-3502, *Performance Measures Program for the USAFA*, March 10, 2005.

Overall, the USAFA sexual assault prevention and response is partially compliant. The Department saw substantive evidence that the Superintendent and the leadership team were fully engaged in making sexual assault prevention and response a priority for the Academy. However due to findings of non-compliance for the Victim Assistance and Advocacy Goal, USAFA is deemed to be in partial compliance.

USAFA has taken the effort to improve the academy's culture and climate, which plays an important role in the prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Leadership has committed to several long-term initiatives such as a focus on bystander intervention and teaching cadets about healthy interpersonal relationships. While benefits will take time to

come to fruition, USAFA remains committed to creating a climate that promotes dignity and respect for all.

The Department found sufficient evidence of progress to close prior action items. Previous Secretary of Defense initiatives and action items can be found in the DoD Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military

Service Academies Report for APY 15-16. The following pages capture observations on USAFA's SAPR and sexual harassment prevention and response programs by strategic goal. The observations supplement the Department's overarching observations made for all three MSAs in the body of this report.

# Goal 1: Prevention

USAFA is in compliance with the DoD and Air Force policy requirements for the Prevention goal.

A culture of prevention requires efforts throughout the community. The Department observed that USAFA's prevention work extends beyond the SAPR Program and into other organizations, departments, and individuals on campus.

## Status of Compliance Goal 1:

● *In Compliance*

USAFA's SAPR prevention program begins on day 2 of Basic Cadet Training, when they receive a short briefing about SAPR and Equal Opportunity

(EO). Then on day 10 they receive the three hour, interactive, scenario-based, small group training. This meets DoD requirements that incoming Service members receive SAPR training within their first 14 days. The training includes sexual harassment and is provided through scenario-based, interactive small group activities.

USAFA has been working to implement a new prevention program. Cadet Healthy Interpersonal Skills (CHiPs) focuses on improving personal relationships, decreasing stress, and identifying situations that might be at risk for unhealthy outcomes. In APY 15-16, USAFA conducted cadet focus groups to adapt the curriculum to a military setting. CHiPs originated from middle and high school programs, known as the Botvin Life Skills program. In APY 16-17, USAFA introduced the curriculum to a small sample of cadets in a pilot effort.

In APY 17-18, USAFA anticipates conducting a randomized control trial during which about half of USAFA 4<sup>th</sup> year (freshman) cadets will receive the CHiPs program and the other half will receive training as usual. This initiative will allow USAFA to measure the outcomes of the CHiPs intervention and

compare its effects to those of other programs currently in place.

The Gender Forum is another potentially helpful practice employed at USAFA. The program focuses on helping cadets better understand gender bias and overarching gender roles. The intent of the program is to provide cadets with an improved understanding and skill base for dealing respectfully with others.

Athletes also receive three Healthy Relationship Trainings (HRT). The first session addresses communication and respect in relationships, while the second session examines boundary setting, sexual limits, and interpersonal relationships.

USAFA SAPR developed its Cadet Bystander Intervention Training (cBIT) for cadets entering their third-class year. The training is highly interactive, discussion-based, and uses a prevention scenario about a male cadet. The training prepares cadets to speak up whenever they hear disparaging or disrespectful comments or see a potentially dangerous situation. cBIT is designed to be an important component in USAFA's leadership and officer development efforts.

## Commendations

**Prevention programming plans appear consistent with prevention best practices**

USAFA's range of prevention programs appear consistent with best practices. Cadets receive prevention training when they first enter the Academy. Throughout their four years, they continually take trainings such as the Gender Forum, CHiPs, and athletes also receive HRT.

**Randomized control trial for CHiPs is a one-of-a-kind initiative within the MSAs**

USAFA ran a CHiPs trial group in APY 16-17. Next year's randomized control trial will

provide leadership with some information on the training's effectiveness. This type of intervention evaluation has not yet been done at the MSAs.

## Goal 2: Advocacy and Victim Assistance

Late in the academic year, allegations about problems within the USAFA SAPR office were reported to academy leadership. A commander directed investigation disclosed significant evidence of mismanagement and unprofessionalism that negatively impacted victim advocacy and assistance rendered to a number of cadets. USAFA took action to address these personnel related issues.

During the on-site visit, USAFA leadership emphasized their commitment to supporting

### Status of Compliance Goal 2:

● **Not in compliance**

cadets and discussed their remediation plan for victim care. A full time Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) from Peterson Air Force Base was relocated to the Air

Force Academy pending ongoing hiring actions. Furthermore, victim advocates from other supporting agencies on base have been placed in the academy's SAPR office until permanent victim advocates are hired. In addition, leadership tapped into the academy's resource network (Peak Performance Center (PPC), chaplains, and Special Victims Counsels (SVC) among others) to ensure victims receive proper support and care. USAFA and Headquarters Air Force are working to expedite a re-staffing solution for the SARC office.

Another resource is USAFA's Personal Ethics Education Representative (PEER) Program, which provides support, outreach, and referrals for cadets, by cadets. All PEER cadets volunteer and undergo a rigorous eligibility review process. The PPC clinical staff provides annual training to PEERs that includes helping and referring cadets dealing with depression, anxiety, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other problems. All cadet squadrons are equipped with two PEERs who are trained to be a referral source to cadets in need of help. A few cadets and faculty members noted in the focus groups

that PEERs are trustworthy resources, though it depends on the squadron as to whether the PEERs are taken seriously as a support resource by other cadets.

USAFA obtained a dedicated SVC and Special Victims' Paralegal (SVP) during APY 15-16 to render legal representation and confidential support to cadets who experience sexual assault. In APY 16-17, the SVC and SVP office was relocated to the cadet area from Peterson Air Force Base, giving the SVC greater accessibility to cadets seeking their services.

### Observations

**Ensure administrative records that support Unrestricted and Restricted reporting follow privacy, security, and records management policies**

Victims' privacy is of utmost importance. All Academies should ensure that records of sexual assault and harassment are compliant with laws and privacy, security, and records management policies. Any sexual assault case tracking that occurs outside of Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID), for the purposes of briefing leadership, should be maintained separately for Restricted and Unrestricted reports. To further protect privacy, all electronic files containing personally identifiable information (PII) should be password protected, encrypted, and stored in systems that appropriately safeguard PII. DSAID is the Department's official database for reporting, managing, tracking, and protecting data drawn from sexual assault reports. Alternate data tracking systems are not authorized for use unless they meet Department standards for protection of PII. The Department welcomes any recommendations to improve DSAID and increase user satisfaction with the system.

**Publicize sexual harassment reporting resources**

There is a Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) advisor assigned to the Academy that addresses discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment. However, the DoD team did not observe sufficient

advertising of instructions about how cadets are to access support from the MEO.

Posting the location and contact information of the MEO in high traffic, visible areas throughout the cadet area for the EO office and the Air Force sexual harassment toll-free, 24/7 hotline would help publicize the program.

# Goals 3 and 4: Investigation and Accountability

## Investigation

This assessment addresses how well the SAPR program and other sexual assault response elements at the Academy and in the local community support and integrate with the criminal investigative process. USAFA has a policy in place to address informal and formal sexual harassment complaints. USAFA is in compliance with the Investigation strategic goal.

Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) Detachment 808 provides investigative support to USAFA. AFOSI agents are fully prepared to work on sexual assault cases. They also work closely with the Judge Advocates (JAs), SARCs and other SAPR personnel, and others to ensure that the process flows as smoothly as possible.

### Status of Compliance Goals 3 and 4:

● **In Compliance**

USAFA also employs a JA Victim-Witness Assistance Program (VWAP) Coordinator to ensure victims receive regular updates on the status of the investigative process. The VWAP Coordinator also regularly shares information with the victim's commander and SARC as appropriate.

## Commendation

### Excellent preparation of AFOSI agents

USAFA and AFOSI have prepared their investigative personnel to support sexual assault investigations. Currently, nine of 11 assigned agents have been trained via AFOSI's advanced sexual assault training course at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

## Observations

### Update Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Memorial Hospital

USAFA should update its MOU with Memorial Hospital to include language addressing timely SAFE kit transfer to AFOSI.

## Accountability

This assessment addresses how well the SAPR program and other sexual assault response elements at the Academy and in the local community support and integrate with the military criminal justice process. USAFA is in compliance with the Accountability strategic goal.

The on-site assessment found that SAPR program was well integrated with the criminal justice process. The SVC and SVP receive extensive training and serve as a resource at the Academy. All SVCs attend the Special Victims Counsel Course, an eight day training focused on victimology, the brain's response to trauma, self-care, and details on the SVC program. At the Academy, they provide training to commanders, SAPR personnel, volunteer VAs, and paralegals.

At USAFA, the JA office and SAPR program work together to train incoming commanders and other parties in victim care and response in cases involving an allegation of sexual assault. For example, JA developed a scenario-based training for new commanders, which included issues that a commander would face if a sexual assault occurred in their squadron.

Throughout an investigation, SVP and SVCs communicate with AFOSI and JA to ensure that victim's needs are being addressed.

## **Commendations**

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### **JA support to AFOSI Interviews**

USAFA's investigative and legal organizations maintain a close working relationship. JA works closely with AFOSI agents, and regularly provides them with an attorney for quick consultations during interviews and other investigative activity.

### **JA identification of alternative means for offender accountability**

In appropriate cases, the JA uses the Board of Inquiry process to address some sexual assault allegations that do not proceed to court-martial. This approach provides due process and addresses misconduct that does not rise to a level of being a court-martial offense.

# Goal 5: Assessment

USAFA is in compliance with the DoD and Air Force policy requirements for the Assessment strategic goal.

## Status of Compliance Goal 5:

### ● In Compliance

USAFA uses the following activities to obtain data on sexual assault and sexual harassment:

- DSAID
- Academy Defense Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (DEOCS)
- SAGR Survey
- SAGR Focus Groups

Along with utilizing DoD resources, USAFA conducts its own surveys. For example, the Cadet Wing Research and Assessment Committee plays an important role in assessment. It focuses on wing culture and climate as well as sexual harassment. The Commandant also sends out the Commandant's Special Issues Survey every semester, which frequently contains questions about the SAPR program effectiveness and the cadet's perceptions of the program.

## Observation

### Provide Academy DEOCS results to Air Officers Commanding (AOC) and prepare them to understand results and prepare action plans to address challenges

Although USAFA has tools in place to address command climate, USAFA should expand preparation provided to AOCs and Academy Military Trainers to incorporate them into efforts to address sexual assault and

sexual harassment prevention. Leveraging AOCs to help apply leadership lessons within cadet squadrons can lead to greater understanding of officership lessons. AOCs can also facilitate regular activities that emphasize cadets' roles in creating a positive unit climate both at USAFA and one day in the active force. Sharing how results of the surveys and focus groups inform the academies' decisions conveys that cadet voices are being heard and may lend itself to greater participation in future research endeavors.

In addition, USAFA should work with the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute to provide DEOCS results in the same semester as the survey's administration or as expeditiously as possible.

### Create a centralized data and decision resource

The Department acknowledges that USAFA has its own administrative section responsible for collecting and analyzing data. As USAFA moves forward with its plans to address the four improvement areas directed by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, collection and analysis of data will become even more important to USAFA's progress. The Department notes that USAFA would benefit from an identified resource responsible for regularly briefing data and other programmatic outcomes to the Superintendent. This resource's responsibilities includes assembling data from a variety of sources, considering this information in the overall program evaluation, and making recommendations to the Superintendent based on that data.