



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

APR - 1 2026

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response to 10 U.S.C. § 4361, "Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence," as amended by section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364), "Revision and Clarification of Requirements with Respect to Surveys and Reports Concerning Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence at the Service Academies," is enclosed. Per 10 U.S.C. § 4361, the Secretary of Defense is required to submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives an annual report for each Academic Program Year (APY) assessing the effectiveness of the policies, training, and procedures of the Military Service Academies (MSAs) regarding sexual harassment and violence involving personnel at the United States Military Academy, United States Naval Academy, and the United States Air Force Academy.

This year, the Department used in-person assessment visits to review the MSAs' compliance with policy and other directed actions to improve sexual assault prevention and response (SAPR). The report includes sexual assault reporting and sexual harassment complaint data, as well as an analysis of open-ended comments from prevalence surveys and organizational climate surveys conducted in 2022 and 2024 by the Office of People Analytics.

We found that the MSAs continue to conduct their SAPR programs in compliance with Department policy. In total, the Department received 128 sexual assault reports involving a cadet or midshipman as a victim and/or subject—an increase of two reports from the previous APY. However, reports involving only actively enrolled cadets and midshipmen decreased by eight (106 to 98). Additionally, the Department received a total of 17 sexual harassment complaints—unchanged from the number of complaints received in the previous APY. The MSAs completed several actions and are working to address gaps in training and staffing. In addition, cadet and midshipman comments from surveys administered during APYs 2022 and 2024 provided helpful context for why the 2024 prevalence survey showed decreases in harmful behaviors. In sum, students saw some improvement in peer behavior and in the changes made by senior leadership to address sexual assault and sexual harassment. However, long-standing concerns about stigma, social acceptance, and potential career implications continue to influence their help-seeking decisions and willingness to report misconduct.

The MSAs forge officers capable of meeting high standards and expectations. Harming or sexually harassing fellow warfighters has no place in the warrior ethos. Mission readiness

depends on military units that maintain an unwavering focus on winning the next battle. The Department and MSAs will continue to prioritize initiatives that reduce internal threats to readiness, hold those who violate our standards appropriately accountable, and provide best-in-class care and assistance to cadets and midshipmen impacted by sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Thank you for your continued strong support for our Service members. I am sending a similar letter to the House Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean O'Keefe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'O'.

Sean O'Keefe
Deputy Under Secretary of War for Personnel
and Readiness

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

APR - 1 2026

The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Sincerely,



Sean O'Keefe

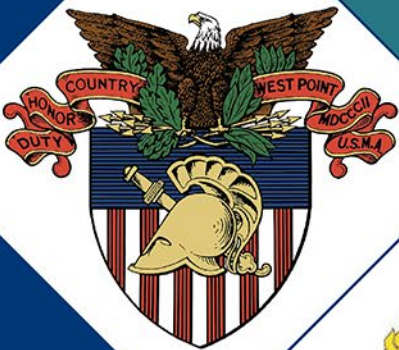
Deputy Under Secretary of War for Personnel
and Readiness

Enclosure:

As stated

cc:

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member



Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies

Academic Program Year 2024-2025





Department of War Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Academic Program Year 2024-2025

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of War is approximately \$1,173,000 in Academic Program Year 2024-2025. This includes \$807,000 in expenses and \$367,000 in DoW labor.
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What We Learned:

- This Academic Program Year, the Academies conducted Sexual Assault Prevention and Response and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response programs in compliance with Department policy.
- During this year’s in-person assessment visits, the Department noted opportunities for improvement:
 - Build a more supportive peer climate;
 - Improve clarity on Safe to Report policy;
 - Strengthen the prevention and response workforce; and
 - Increase awareness and understanding of perceived retaliation.
- The total number of sexual assault reports increased by 2, however, the number of reports by actively-enrolled cadets and midshipmen decreased by 8 (106 to 98 reports), while the total number of sexual harassment complaints remained the same at the Academies compared to the previous Academic Program Year.
- The Department cannot fully interpret the above increase in sexual assault reporting because no prevalence survey was administered during the Academic Program Year. However, there was an increase in the number of cadets and midshipmen who chose to delay reporting their academy-related sexual assault until after they graduated or left the Academy. The next prevalence survey will be conducted in Spring 2026, as required by law.
- Of the 128 total sexual assault reports, 78 were from cadets and midshipmen who made a report of sexual assault for an incident that occurred during their four years at the academies. Compared to the last Academic Program Year, this represents 25 fewer reports from cadets/midshipmen currently enrolled at the Academies.

The full report is available at <https://www.sapr.mil>.

Executive Summary

This report is submitted in accordance with section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364). It provides the Department of War’s annual assessment of the effectiveness of policies, training, and procedures regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment at the United States Military Academy, the United States Naval Academy, and the United States Air Force Academy from the period of June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025.

This assessment is informed by the Department’s in-person assessment visits to the Academies, the Academies’ self-assessments, sexual assault reporting and sexual harassment complaint data, and findings from the Department’s qualitative analysis of cadet and midshipman comments from the 2022 and 2024 prevalence and *Defense Organizational Climate* surveys.

Key Data and Reporting Trends

In Academic Program Year 2024-2025, the Academies saw an increase in reports of sexual assault, while formal complaints of sexual harassment remained consistently low.

- **Sexual assault:** A total of 128 sexual assault reports were made involving cadets, midshipmen, or preparatory students. This is an increase of 2 reports from the 126 reports made during the previous Academic Program Year; however, there was a decrease in the number of reports from actively enrolled cadets and midshipmen compared to the previous Academic Program Year.
 - Of the 128 reports, 78 were from cadets and midshipmen for incidents that occurred and were reported during their four years at the military academies.
 - Reporting increased at the United States Air Force Academy but decreased at the United States Naval Academy and the United States Military Academy.
 - This year, 20 reports came from cadets and midshipmen who waited until graduating or leaving the Academy to make a sexual assault report, as compared to one report in this category in the previous Academic Program Year.
- **Sexual harassment:** A total of 17 sexual harassment complaints (12 formal, 3 informal, 2 anonymous) were filed by cadets and midshipmen. This number remained significantly lower than survey-based estimates of prevalence, suggesting the potential of continued underreporting of incidents and/or resolution of harassing experiences through other means.

It is important to note no prevalence survey was administered this year to measure the underlying rate of these harmful behaviors. Sexual assault reporting cannot be interpreted without the survey results. The next prevalence survey is scheduled for Spring 2026.

Insights from the In-Person Assessment Visits

The Department conducts its in-person assessment visits to assess the overall health of Academies policies, programs, and procedures to address sexual assault and sexual harassment. Overall, the Academies continue to have robust and well-resourced response systems in place for cadets and midshipmen. Academy senior leadership are fully engaged in programs to address and reduce sexual assault and other harmful behaviors. The Academies have staff to support victim advocacy and recovery; however, the Department noted some staffing challenges described in greater detail within the body of this report. Law enforcement and accountability processes are in place to investigate allegations and take appropriate disciplinary action. As required by the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Offices of Special Trial Counsel exercise authority over reports of sexual assault and other covered offenses that involve an alleged offender subject to jurisdiction under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (including cadets and midshipmen). The Academies incorporate prevention initiatives into their cadet and midshipman character development programs.

While great progress has been made over the course of the past two decades, more work is required to reduce the occurrence of sexual assault and increase cadet and midshipman access to reporting and support services. The following additional insights reflect feedback from staff and faculty during the Department's in-person visits to the Academies:

- **Build a More Supportive Peer Climate:** Cadet and midshipman concerns (e.g., stigma and ostracism) continue to negatively impact students' engagement with support resources. The Academies have responded to these concerns by reducing the number of mandatory reporters, protecting privacy during leave requests or academic accommodations, and engaging in outreach efforts to increase awareness of and comfort with resources. Additionally, the Academies incorporate prevention focused training on sexual health, consent, and healthy relationships into their cadet and midshipman character development programs. The Department encourages the Academies to sustain such prevention focused training.
- **Improve Clarity on Safe to Report Policy:** This policy serves as a mechanism for encouraging reporting by protecting victims from adverse action related to minor collateral misconduct associated with a sexual assault report. Staff and students vary in their understanding of the policy's scope and application with misunderstanding persisting around what constitutes minor collateral misconduct and appropriate policy implementation. Although the Academies include this policy in trainings, clearer articulation of the policy's parameters may support more consistent understanding and victim confidence. The Department encourages the Academies to review training on the Safe to Report policy so that staff and students can better define what constitutes minor collateral misconduct.
- **Strengthen Prevention and Response Workforce:** Workforce constraints, such as staffing shortages, persist across key prevention and response positions. Personnel describe that staffing gaps contribute to an increased workload and on-call demand. These demands elevate burnout risk, which affect long-term workforce stability. The Academies' coordinated staffing models, cross-functional collaboration, and use of collateral or volunteer advocates, as needed, continue to sustain core response functions. The Department has recently reinvigorated hiring flexibilities and targeted Sexual Assault Response Workforce authorities to address staffing and reduce operational strain. The Department encourages the

Academies to address prevention and response workforce staffing gaps with their Military Departments.

- **Increase Awareness and Understanding of Retaliation:** Allegations of retaliation that are formally reported remain infrequent, potentially leading to limited opportunities for staff and students to identify behaviors that may constitute retaliation in the academy setting and how to navigate appropriate reporting channels. The Academies include retaliation policies in trainings for staff and students, monitor the social media platform, Jodel, for retaliatory behavior, and display information on retaliation around campus. The Department encourages the Academies to review retaliation training so that staff and students can better identify improper behavior.

Departmental Actions and Strategic Initiatives

Department-wide focus remains on deterring and reducing harmful behaviors and reinforcing healthy command climate across the Academies. The Department employs both a collaborative leadership approach and policy evaluation and refinement to support sustained improvements in survivor support, recovery, and reintegration.

- **Military Service Academy Climate Transformation Task Force:** Operated between 2023 and 2025, the Task Force was a body of senior leaders assembled to drive transformational actions to reverse negative trends in harmful behaviors. Through regular executive meetings, the Task Force provided oversight and ensured that the Academies implemented and institutionalized best practices for improving command climate and prevention. The Task Force met its goals and held its final meeting in August 2025.
- **Policy Evaluation and Refinement:** Policy evaluation focuses on alignment of survivor support frameworks, clarity of implementation guidance, and sustained accessibility of survivor care options. In 2025, the Department and the Academies continued efforts to implement and refine the following policies:
 - **Return to Health Policy:** Enables cadets and midshipmen to obtain confidential accommodations and academic flexibility to balance recovery with academic demands and reduce the risk of disruption following an assault. The Department assesses that the Academies have fully implemented this policy.
 - **Physical Separation Policy:** As required by law, this policy provides victims with physical separation, whenever practicable, from alleged offenders to support safety, well-being, and continuity of academic participation. The Department assesses that the Academies have demonstrated full implementation of this requirement.
 - **Academy Expedited Transfer Policy:** Establishes an option for eligible cadets and midshipmen who are victims of sexual assault to request a transfer to another Academy or enrollment in a Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program affiliated with another institution of higher education. The Academies have implemented processes to comply with requirements in law.

Together, these actions reinforce a foundation for sustained improvement while informing continued focus areas for the year ahead.

Service Academy Experiences Survey Analysis of Cadet and Midshipmen Using Comments from Surveys Administered in 2022 and 2024

The Fiscal Year 2007 National Defense Authorization Act requires a qualitative assessment this Academic Program Year to better understand each Academy's culture and climate around sexual assault and sexual harassment. For this effort, the Department's Office of People Analytics analyzed cadet and midshipman open-end comments from sexual assault and sexual

harassment prevalence surveys and organizational climate surveys conducted in 2022 and 2024. Cadet and midshipman open-end comments provide insight into students' experiences with sexually harassing behaviors, sexual assault prevention efforts, reporting and response to victims, and academy leadership support of prevention and response initiatives.

Way Forward

The Department and the Military Service Academies are committed to creating an environment where future officers are forged in a climate of dignity and respect, free from sexual assault and sexual harassment. These behaviors are antithetical to the warrior ethos and degrade military readiness.

Introduction

Congressional Reporting Requirement

The Department of War (DoW) annually assesses the Military Service Academies' (MSAs) programs that address sexual harassment and sexual assault per section 532 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 (Public Law 109-364). This report fulfills the statutory requirement by reviewing the effectiveness of the Academies' policies, training, and procedures regarding sexual assault and sexual harassment for cadets, midshipmen, and military and civilian staff at the United States Military Academy (USMA), the United States Naval Academy (USNA), and the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).

Report Contents

This report assesses MSA programs and response actions from Academic Program Year 2024-2025 (APY 24-25) that address sexual assault and sexual harassment. Self-assessment reports by each Military Service are enclosed in Appendices A, B, and C. Detailed statistical data and analysis from APY 24-25 can be found in Appendices D and E. A list of the acronyms used in this report can be found at Appendix F.

Per Title 10, United States Code, Sections 7461, 8480, and 9461, DoW assessments beginning in odd-numbered years include OPA's quantitative (survey) assessment, which monitors the past-year prevalence of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sex discrimination among cadets and midshipmen, and assesses any progress made to prevent these behaviors at the MSAs. DoW assessments beginning in even-numbered years, as with this year's report, include a qualitative data collection. This year's qualitative data collection aims to provide greater context to past survey findings to better understand each Academy's culture and climate around sexual assault and sexual harassment. Combined, these qualitative and quantitative assessments aim to assist academy leaders in assessing their programs' progress and identify opportunities for improvement.

As initially reported last year, results from the 2024 prevalence survey indicated the estimated rate of sexual assault significantly decreased as compared to the rate in 2022. In 2024, an estimated 13.3 percent of MSA women (down from 21.4 percent in 2022) and an estimated 3.5 percent of MSA men (down from 4.4 percent in 2022) indicated they experienced sexual assault. While sexual assault estimates decreased in 2024, they remained high compared to

estimates from prior years. As a result, the Department chose to review cadet and midshipman open-end comments from past surveys to obtain greater context concerning these harmful behaviors. To that end, the Department's Office of People Analytics (OPA) analyzed cadet and midshipman open-end comments from the 2022 and 2024 prevalence survey and *Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS)* to provide greater context for past survey results. Insights gleaned from this effort are intended to provide Department and academy leaders with cadet and midshipman feedback on training, policies, programs, and actions related to sexual assault and sexual harassment. OPA's executive summary is at Appendix G.

Assessment Process and Report Focus Areas

This report provides the Department's assessment of the Academies' current sexual assault and sexual harassment programs and response efforts from June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025. The Department's assessment was informed by the following sources:

- MSAs response to programmatic self-assessments regarding response and related programmatic activities;
- Assessments of academy compliance with Department and military response policy conducted by the Military Departments;¹
- Sexual assault reporting and sexual harassment complaint data;
- In-person assessment visits at each MSA conducted by Department representatives to assess the effectiveness of policies, training, and procedures concerning sexual harassment and sexual violence involving academy personnel;² and
- Qualitative comments from 2022 and 2024 surveys from cadets and midshipmen.

This year's report is organized by the following areas:

- Insights from the in-person assessment visits to the Academies;
- Enhancing the academy environment;
- APY 24-25 sexual assault reporting and sexual harassment complaint data;
- Strengthening response and recovery policies for cadets and midshipmen who experience sexual assault; and
- Themes from SAES qualitative analysis of midshipman and cadet comments from surveys conducted in 2022 and 2024.

¹ The MSAs are compliant with the following policies outlined in then-Secretary of Defense's March 2023 "Actions to Address" memorandum: DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6495.02, Volume 3, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases," June, 24, 2022; DoDI 6495.02, Volume 2, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Education and Training," April 9, 2021; then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Updates to Department of Defense Policy and Procedures for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program and Adult Sexual Assault Investigations," November 10, 2021; and Military Service regulations implementing Safe-to-Report policies.

² Department representatives determined compliance with the assessed sections of DoDI 1020.03, "Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces," December 20, 2022.

Insights from the In-Person Assessment Visits to the Academies

Department representatives interviewed academy personnel at the MSAs to assess Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)³ and Harassment Prevention and Response⁴ training, policies, and programs, as well as barriers to help seeking. The following section describes four insights from this year's in-person assessment visits.

Insight 1: Build a More Supportive Peer Climate

MSA personnel express that multiple barriers, including cadet and midshipman concerns about stigma, ostracism, privacy, and ramifications to students' academics and future careers, continue to negatively impact cadet and midshipman engagement with support resources. Cadets and midshipmen may be hesitant to ask about sexual assault or engage with SAPR resources out of concern for what other students may think. Cadets and midshipmen also commonly have concerns about falling behind in their academic schedule by using leave options or a transfer or experiencing future career impacts from seeking support. The Department acknowledges these may be longstanding challenges, as similar concerns have been consistently voiced in past in-person assessments and academy surveys.

The MSAs engage in efforts to reduce barriers to resource use. Cadet and midshipman peer groups support initial engagement with SAPR resources by providing a safe space and help guide other students to SAPR staff. The MSAs also use 24/7 SAPR response lines, which enable cadets and midshipmen to quickly reach SAPR staff regardless of time or location, protect cadet and midshipman privacy during leave requests or academic accommodations, and engage in outreach efforts to increase cadet and midshipman awareness of and comfort with SAPR and recovery resources. The MSAs additionally address cadet and midshipman concerns by reducing those personnel designated as mandatory reporters. This expands opportunities for cadets and midshipmen to seek help from a variety of sources without triggering mandatory reporting rules that would jeopardize reporting options.

The MSAs additionally provide prevention focused training to cadets and midshipmen. Several MSA personnel recommend continuing and expanding on prevention-focused training to address sexual health, consent, healthy relationships, and actions that comprise the continuum of harmful behaviors. These personnel share that such preventive education is a valuable way to address disparities in cadet and midshipman knowledge of sexual education that exist upon their arrival at the Academies.

³ Department representatives determined academy compliance with the following SAPR policies: DoDI 6495.02, Volume 3, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases," June, 24, 2022; DoDI 6495.02, Volume 2, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Education and Training," April 9, 2021; then-Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Updates to Department of Defense Policy and Procedures for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program and Adult Sexual Assault Investigations," November 10, 2021; and Military Service regulations implementing Safe-to-Report policies.

⁴ Department representatives determined academy compliance with DoDI 1020.03 "Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces," December 20, 2022.

Next Steps: The Department encourages the MSAs to sustain prevention focused training on sexual health, consent, and healthy relationships.

Insight 2: Improve Clarity on Safe to Report Policy

The Safe to Report policy serves as a mechanism for encouraging reporting by protecting victims from adverse action related to minor collateral misconduct associated with a sexual assault report. The in-person assessments indicate varying levels of familiarity among staff, cadets, and midshipmen regarding the policy's scope and application. In particular, misunderstanding persists around what constitutes minor collateral misconduct and appropriate policy implementation. Although the Academies include the policy in trainings delivered to staff and students, clearer articulation of policy parameters, decision authorities, and roles of their respective Offices of Special Trial Counsel (OSTC) may support more consistent understanding and confidence in execution across academic, command, and support communities.

Next Steps: The Department encourages the MSAs review training on the policy so that staff and students can better define what constitutes minor collateral misconduct.

Insight 3: Strengthen the Prevention and Response Workforce

Workforce constraints, such as staffing shortages, persist across key prevention and response positions, including Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs), Victim Advocates (VAs), and licensed clinical providers (i.e., mental healthcare providers). Personnel describe that staffing gaps contribute to an increased workload and on-call demand. These demands elevate burnout risk, which affect long-term workforce stability. The MSAs coordinated staffing models, cross-functional collaboration, and use of collateral or volunteer advocates, as needed, continue to sustain core response functions. Integrated coordination among SAPR personnel, commanders, medical providers, chaplains, and academic leadership support timely access to care, accommodations, and command engagement.

DoW force shaping efforts in FY 2025 impacted both hiring and numbers of available staff at the Academies. The Department created hiring flexibilities, including authorizing an exception to the hiring freeze for sexual assault response positions, and use of other targeted workforce authorities to increase staffing and reduce operational strain to support victim recovery and care.⁵ However, ongoing uncertainty in the federal workforce continues to impact effective execution of these authorities essential to sustaining prevention and response workforce capacity.

Next Steps: The Department encourages the MSAs to address prevention and response workforce staffing gaps with each Military Department (MILDEP).

Insight 4: Increase Awareness and Understanding of Retaliation

MSA staff describe infrequent reporting of allegations of retaliation cases. The Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database (DSAID) confirms this, indicating that, in APY 24-25, the MSAs received zero formal reports of retaliation in the SAPR program through Defense Department

⁵ The SARW exemption is found in Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (USW(P&R)) memorandum, "Reinforcement of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Priorities," issued September 29, 2025.

Form 2910-2.⁶ However, retaliation remains a concern with cadets and midshipmen. In the most recent Academy survey, approximately one-quarter of MSA women (27 percent) and around one-third of MSA men (36 percent) who made a sexual assault report indicated they perceived some kind of retaliation as a result of reporting.⁷

Because reports of retaliation are infrequently encountered in practice at the MSAs, academy personnel have limited opportunities to develop practical familiarity with how retaliation behaviors manifest in the academy setting and with navigating appropriate reporting channels. Moreover, some MSA unit leaders are not uniformly confident regarding the process of responding to formal retaliation reports, suggesting potential programmatic knowledge gaps.

Staff knowledge gaps or limited practical experience may also contribute to cadet and midshipman uncertainty in recognizing retaliatory behaviors as defined in DoDI 6495.02, Volume 3, “Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases,” understanding who can be a victim of retaliation following a sexual assault, and knowing to whom a formal report of retaliation can be made.⁸ Given concerns about social consequences of reporting retaliation, cadets and midshipmen are likely reticent to make such reports.

MSA personnel describe actions the MSAs are taking to address retaliation, including that retaliation policies are part of overall training for staff, cadets, and midshipmen. MSA personnel also describe having informed conversations with cadets and midshipmen about retaliation to encourage reporting, monitoring the social media platform, Jodel, for retaliatory behavior, and posting retaliation information around the Academies.

Next Steps: The Department encourages the MSAs to review retaliation training so that staff and students can better identify improper behavior.

Enhancing the Academy Environment

Sexual assault and other harmful behaviors occur less often in units with healthy climates. To that end, this section summarizes academy efforts to ensure our future warfighters learn and train in an environment free from sexual assault and sexual harassment.

MSA Climate Transformation Task Force (CTTF)

In August 2023, then-Secretary of Defense released the memorandum, “Actions to Transform the Climate and Help Prevent Harmful Behaviors at the U.S. Military Service Academies,” directing the MSAs to take transformational actions to reverse recent upward trends of numerous harmful behaviors, including sexual assault and sexual harassment at the MSAs. One of these actions directed the formation of the MSA CTTF, composed of senior military and civilian personnel from each MILDEP and MSA, as well as other members of Department

⁶ DSAID does not collect Inspector General Whistleblower retaliation cases or UCMJ retaliation punitive actions.

⁷ 2024 Survey of Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at the Military Service Academies. Available: https://www.sapr.mil/Portals/156/APY23-24_Appendix_G.pdf.

⁸ DoDI 9495.02, Volume 3, “Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases,” provides examples of retaliatory behaviors to include reprisal, coercion, ostracism, maltreatment, and witness intimidation.

leadership, to enhance cooperation with improving command climate and integrated prevention efforts within the MSAs. The Department established the CTTF as a central mechanism to reshape academy climate and address the root causes of harmful behaviors. The leadership provided by the MILDEPs to transform command climate and enhance integrated prevention at the MSAs, along with the MSAs commitment to grow leaders of character, remain crucial to achieving long-lasting change.

As of the final CTTF meeting in August 2025, the Office of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (OUSW(P&R)) conducted five CTTF Executive Council (EC) meetings, 27 CTTF Steering Committee (SC) meetings, and biweekly CTTF evaluation working group meetings. The CTTF provided a mechanism to share feedback with the MILDEPs and Department leadership on developing, implementing, and evaluating plans of action to ensure best practices are adopted across the MSAs, and provided oversight to achieve key milestones in a timely manner. Although the CTTF sunset in August 2025, the evaluation of CTTF efforts is underway; the MILDEPs and MSAs continue to implement plans of action and milestones and remain committed to change at each Academy.

Continued Implementation of 2023 MSA On-Site Installation Evaluation (OSIE) Recommendations

The March 2023 memorandum, “Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault at the Military Services Academies,” required the Department conduct OSIEs at the MSAs to evaluate policy and capabilities and make specific recommendations aimed at preventing harmful behaviors by April 2023. In APY 24-25, the Academies have continued to implement OSIE recommendations as directed.

APY 24-25 Sexual Assault Reporting and Sexual Harassment Complaint Data

The Department seeks greater reporting of sexual assault to connect our future warfighters with restorative care and to hold offenders appropriately accountable.⁹ To that end, the following section summarizes sexual assault reporting and sexual harassment complaint data.

APY 24-25 Overall Reporting Data on Sexual Assault at the MSAs

The Department tracks Restricted and Unrestricted Reports of sexual assault involving cadets, midshipmen, or preparatory school students as victims and/or subjects in allegations made during the APY. This APY, the Department received a total of 128 sexual assault reports that involved cadets/midshipmen/preparatory school students as victims and/or alleged offenders – an increase of 2 reports from the previous APY (see Figure 1 below). Of the 128 reports, 27 were from USMA, 46 were from USNA, and 55 were from USAFA. Given the nature of the allegations and when they were being reported, the increase in APY 24-25 reports was largely due to an increase in the number of cadets and midshipmen who delayed making their sexual assault report until they graduated or were out of the Academies.

⁹ Use of the terms “victim(s),” “subject(s),” or “offender(s),” as used throughout this report do not convey any legal conclusion that an allegation, incident, or event has been substantiated and does not convey any presumption of the guilt or innocence of the alleged offender(s).

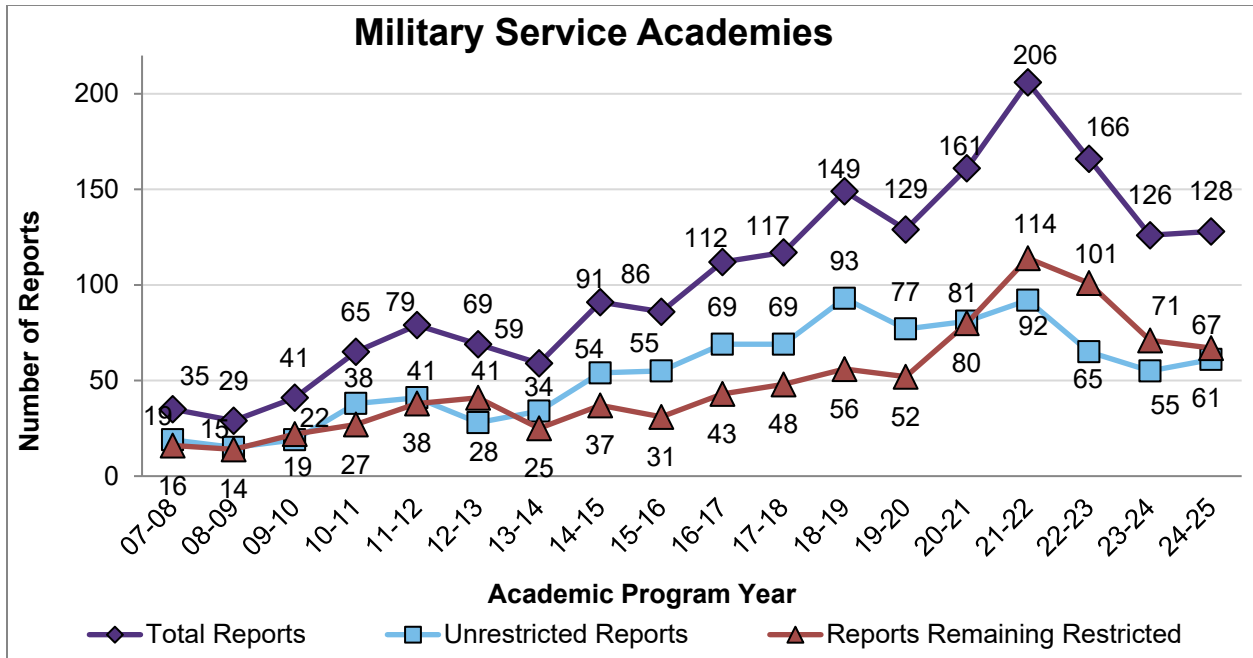


Figure 1. Reports of Sexual Assault by Report Type, APY 07-08 to 24-25

Department policy allows cadets and midshipmen to report sexual assault and receive assistance, even when the reported incident occurred prior to entry into military service. In addition, the Department accounts for reports from non-cadets/midshipmen that allege a sexual assault committed by an academy student.

Of the 128 total reports received by the Department, 98 reports were made by/or against cadets and midshipmen for incidents that occurred while actively enrolled. This was a decrease of eight reports of the same type made during APY 23-24. This categorization narrows the focus to reports that involved actively enrolled cadets or midshipmen, including reports from:

- Currently enrolled cadets or midshipmen reporting an incident that occurred during their four years at the military academies;
- Active duty Service members reporting an incident that occurred within four years of the date the incident was reported, either at a MSA or while they were a cadet or midshipman; or
- Civilians reporting an incident by an enrolled cadet or midshipman.

The remaining 30 reports come from:

- Currently enrolled cadets or midshipmen reporting an incident that occurred prior to military service;
- Active duty Service members or current civilians who did not report an academy-based sexual assault until they were no longer enrolled at the MSA, making a report for an incident that occurred more than four years from the date of the report; or
- Preparatory school students.

Table 1 below provides the breakdown of the 128 total reports into these two overarching categories.

Table 1: Sexual Assault Reports by Victim Category and Military Status, APY 24-25

	Unrestricted Reports	Restricted Reports	Total Reports
All Academy-related Reports	61	67	128
• Reports involving actively enrolled cadets/midshipmen at the time of incident and/or report	47	51	98
– Cadets/midshipmen victims reporting an incident that occurred during their four years at the military academies	40	38	78
– Active duty Service member victims reporting an incident that occurred within the last four years ¹⁰	7	13	20
– Civilian victims reporting an incident that occurred within the last four years	0	0	0
• All other reports	14	16	30
– Cadets/midshipmen reporting an incident that occurred prior to military service	8	3	11
– Active duty Service members or civilians reporting an incident that occurred more than four years ago ¹¹	1	11	12
– Preparatory school students	5	2	7

See Appendix D: Statistical Data on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment for more information on reporting data.

¹⁰ This category may also be active duty Service members who were never part of the academy environment, but the subjects may be cadets and midshipmen. This may reflect delayed reporting post-graduation. Overall, to be included in this category, there must be an academy nexus for the victim and/or subject.

¹¹ Same comment as above.

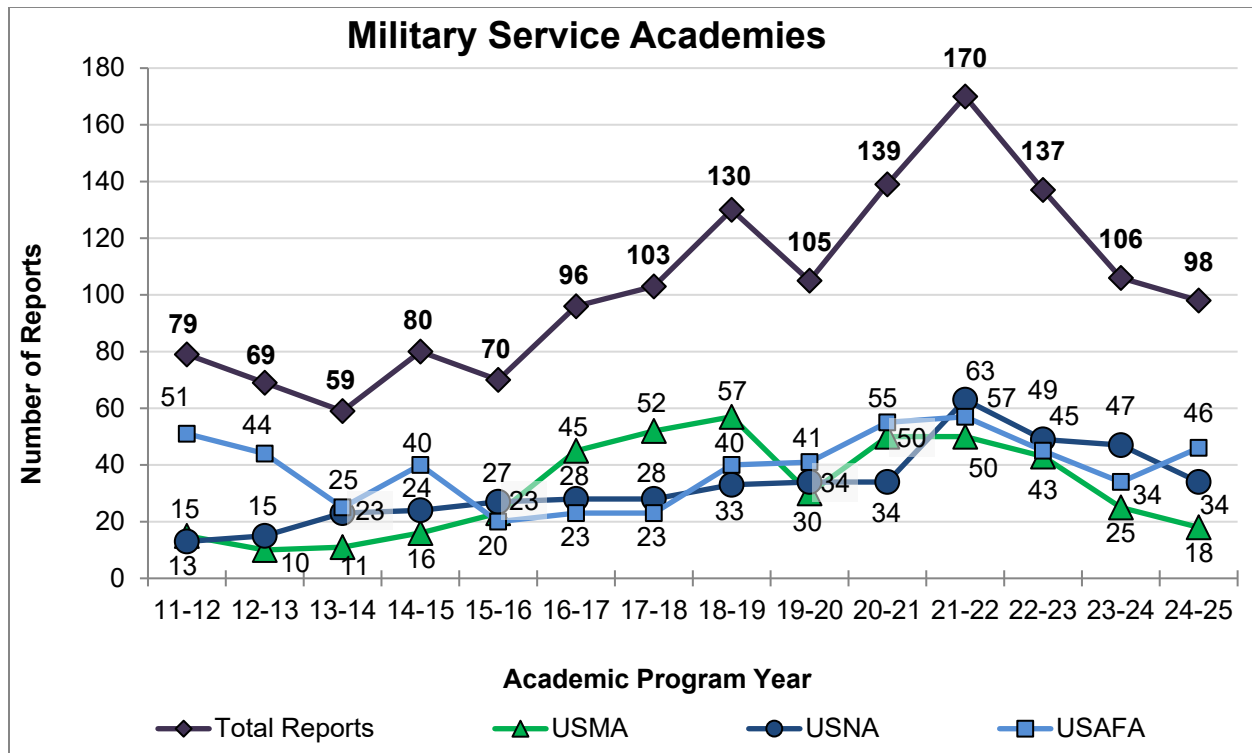


Figure 2. Reports by and/or against Academy Students Actively Enrolled at the Time of Report and/or Incident by Report Type, APY 11-12 to 24-25

Figure 2 above illustrates the number of sexual assault reports made by and/or against academy students actively enrolled at the academies at the time of the report and/or incident. Compared to APY 23-24, the total number of sexual assault reports involving these actively enrolled cadets or midshipmen made in APY 24-25 decreased by eight reports.

Figure 2 also illustrates the number of sexual assault reports involving actively enrolled cadets and midshipmen by Academy. At USMA, 18 reports of sexual assault were made by and/or against actively enrolled cadets for an alleged incident that occurred during their time at USMA, representing a decrease of seven reports since the previous APY. Of these 18 reports, 10 were Unrestricted, and 8 remained Restricted at the close of APY 24-25.

At USNA, 34 reports of sexual assault were made by and/or against actively enrolled midshipmen for an alleged incident occurring during their time at USNA, representing a decrease of 13 reports since the previous APY. Of these 34 reports, 14 were Unrestricted, and 20 remained Restricted at the close of APY 24-25.

At USAFA, 46 reports of sexual assault were made by and/or against actively enrolled cadets for an alleged incident occurring during their time at USAFA, an increase of 12 reports since the previous APY. Of these 46 reports, 23 were Unrestricted, and 23 remained Restricted at the close of APY 24-25.

Because no prevalence survey was conducted this APY, it is not possible to determine if an increase or decrease in crime occurred. The next iteration of the SAES, as required by law, will be fielded at the MSAs in Spring 2026, and survey results will be included in next year's annual

report. For more detailed statistical data from APY 24-25 and analysis of these data, see Appendices D and E.

APY 24-25 Overall Complaint Data on Sexual Harassment at the MSAs

In APY 24-25, cadets and midshipmen made 12 formal complaints, 3 informal complaints, and 2 anonymous complaints of sexual harassment. As depicted in Figure 3 below, sexual harassment complaints at the Academies vary widely from year to year but remain low compared to survey estimates of sexual harassment.¹²

The Department recognizes these lower numbers may reflect resolution of sexually harassing experiences at the lowest interpersonal level, which are not reported, or could be indicative of underreporting and the acceptance of unprofessional language and behavior by some cadets and midshipmen. All Academies have company level leadership chains with active duty members, cadet and midshipman student leaders who assist students at the MSAs.

¹² The Department encourages Service members, including cadets and midshipmen, to resolve sexual harassment at the lowest interpersonal level. However, they may also file an anonymous, informal, or formal complaint in accordance with DoDI 1020.03, "Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces." As of September 14, 2024, they also have the option to make a confidential report of sexual harassment, which will be tracked in future iterations of this report.

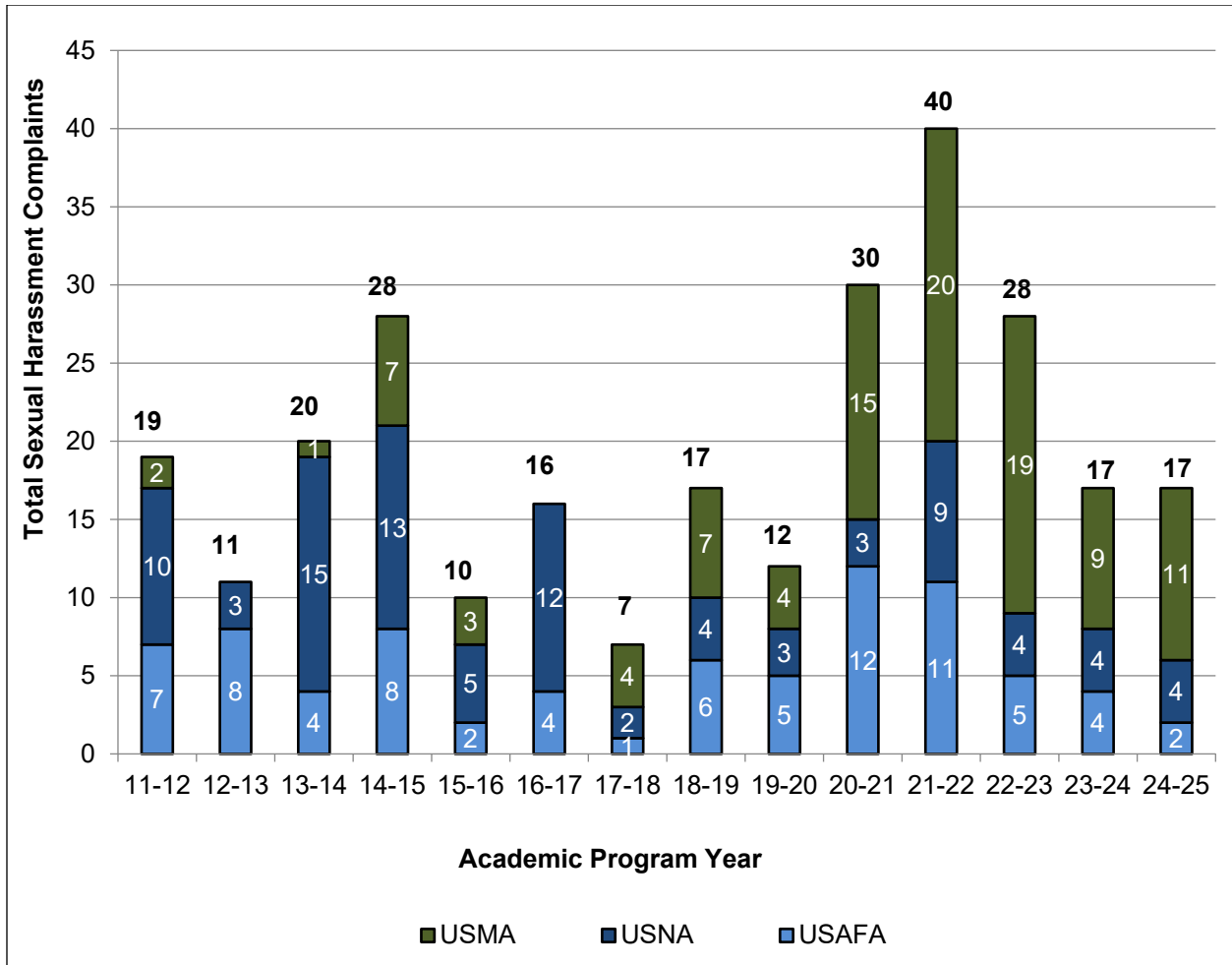


Figure 3. Total Sexual Harassment Complaints by Academy, APY 11-12 to 24-25

APY 24-25 Sexual Assault Reports Made to the Family Advocacy Program (FAP)

FAP is the congressionally mandated program within the Department responsible for supplying clinical assessment, support, and treatment services in response to domestic abuse incidents. Sexual assault occurring within the context of a marriage or intimate partner relationship (sexual abuse) is a subset of domestic abuse. In December 2021, the Department expanded its intimate partner definition to include Service members in a dating relationship. Allegations of sexual abuse within these relationships are referred to FAP for comprehensive safety planning for the victim, including victim advocacy and support. FAP provides guidance to its personnel regarding reports of sexual assault.¹³

Starting in APY 18-19, this annual report began including a section documenting cadet and midshipman reports to FAP to understand better all sexual assault cases reported by cadets and midshipmen. In APY 24-25, one report of sexual assault at USNA and five reports of sexual assault at USAFA were initially made to FAP. There were zero reports of sexual assault

¹³ DoDI 6400.06, “DoD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel,” July 11, 2024.

made initially to FAP at USMA. The six reports across the Academies that were initially reported to FAP are not included in Table 1 above.¹⁴

CATCH A Serial Offender (CATCH) Program Insights

The Department implemented the CATCH program in August 2019 to provide individuals who have experienced sexual assault an opportunity to anonymously submit suspect information to help the Department identify serial offenders. Participation in the CATCH program is voluntary; the victim may decline to participate at any stage, even after being informed of a potential “match” to another entry in the CATCH system or to a law enforcement case.¹⁵ There are no adverse consequences for victims if they do not agree to participate or opt out of the CATCH program after being contacted with information of a potential “match.” This APY, 28 CATCH entries originated from the Academies, down from the 41 entries made to the program in APY 23-24.

The MSAs continue to promote awareness of the CATCH program. At USMA, the CATCH program is reinforced annually for cadets and assigned personnel and is further publicized in posters across the installation. At USNA, CATCH program fliers are widely disseminated throughout the midshipman dormitory and academic buildings, and information is addressed by the GUIDEs during required company reporting briefs. At USAFA, CATCH program information sheets are available to cadets and permanent party members who wish to speak to a SARC or SAPR VA. Program information is also incorporated into all annual SAPR trainings; during these trainings, the CATCH program is defined, including the eligibility, process, and ways to obtain additional information about the program. Cadets are also informed of the anonymity of the process, information about the match process, and options if notification of a match with other entries should occur.

Strengthening Response and Recovery Policies for Cadets and Midshipmen who Experience Sexual Assault

Continued investment in academy response and recovery efforts reinforce military readiness. To that end, the following section summarizes Department and academy efforts to enhance response and recovery policies for cadets and midshipmen who experience sexual assault.

MSA Evaluation of Policy on Physical Separation of Cadet and Midshipman Survivors of Sexual Assault and Alleged Offenders

As required by section 539 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry NDAA for FY 2021, the MSAs policies on physical separation of cadet and midshipman survivors of sexual assault and alleged offenders allow, to the extent practicable, cadet and midshipman survivors and alleged offenders of sexual assault to complete their coursework without taking classes together or being in close, physical proximity during mandatory activities. In APY 24-25, the Department

¹⁴ The six reports initially reported to FAP are not included in Table 1 because FAP cases fall outside the scope of DSAID.

¹⁵ A description of the CATCH A Serial Offender Program is available at: <https://www.sapr.mil/catch>.

found that the MSAs have established and implemented policies and local procedures consistent with applicable statutory and Service guidance.

MSA Evaluation of Return to Health Policy

As required by the March 2023 memorandum, “Actions to Address and Prevent Sexual Assault at the Military Service Academies,” issued by then-Secretary of Defense, the MSAs Return to Health policies formally delineate a process for supporting cadet and midshipman psychological and physical recovery following a sexual assault. The process enables cadets and midshipmen to better balance their continued academic, character, and physical development requirements with access to support services and engagement in recovery. In APY 24-25, the Department found that the MSAs have established and implemented processes as directed.

Departmental Actions to Enhance MSAs Expedited Transfer Policy for Sexual Assault Victims

In addition to the MSAs efforts to promote a high-quality response, the Department continues to refine policies for expedited transfers involving cadets and midshipmen. Section 555 of the NDAA for FY 2020 required the Secretaries of the MILDEPs to develop regulations that inform cadets and midshipmen, who are victims of sexual assault, that they may request a transfer to another Academy or enrollment in a Senior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps program affiliated with another institution of higher education. The MSAs have implemented local policies and procedures in accordance with statutory requirements and have successfully supported expedited transfers when appropriate.

Themes from the SAES Qualitative Analysis of Cadet and Midshipman Comments from Surveys Conducted in 2022 and 2024

As required by law, this year’s report includes a qualitative data collection, which was conducted by the Department’s OPA using open end comments from midshipmen and cadets on the surveys administered in 2022 and 2024 and the *DEOCS* to inform this *SAES* qualitative study. As initially reported last year, results from the 2024 prevalence survey indicated the estimated rate of sexual assault significantly decreased as compared to the rate in 2022. In 2024, an estimated 13.3 percent of MSA women (down from 21.4 percent in 2022) and an estimated 3.5 percent of MSA men (down from 4.4 percent in 2022) indicated they experienced sexual assault. While sexual assault estimates decreased in 2024, they remained high compared to estimates from prior years. The Department chose to review cadet and midshipman comments from past surveys to obtain greater context concerning the observed decrease in harmful behaviors. Insights gleaned from this effort are intended to provide Department and academy leaders with cadet and midshipman feedback on training, policies, programs, and actions related to sexual assault and sexual harassment. Below is a high-level summary of themes, with OPA’s executive summary at Appendix G.

Theme 1: Sexually Harassing Behaviors

DoW policy defines sexual harassment as “a category of harassment that is sexual in nature, including, but not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and repeated deliberate offensive comments or gestures of a sexual nature” (DoDI 1020.03, “Harassment Prevention and Response in the Armed Forces”).¹⁶ Some cadet and midshipman open-end comments described a range of behaviors consistent with this definition (i.e., offensive jokes, degrading comments, and unwanted non-sexual touching) as a continuing issue that affects academy culture, even though rates of unwanted behaviors improved across Academies in 2024.

The 2024 prevalence survey indicated about a third of female (38.3 percent) and one in ten (10.5 percent) male cadets and midshipmen have repeatedly been told sexual jokes that made them uncomfortable, angry, or upset. However, fewer cadets and midshipmen experienced these behaviors as being pervasive or severe enough to reach the criteria in law and policy that qualifies as sexual harassment. Addressing these unwanted behaviors regardless of severity is important to prevent further harm from occurring to both personnel and mission, as these behaviors are detrimental to military readiness.

Cadet and midshipman open-end comments suggested improvements to address sexually harassing behaviors, including encouraging greater use of bystander intervention and providing context to cadets and midshipmen about how their comment may harm or offend others. Open-end comments also revealed that asking the cadet or midshipman to stop the offensive behavior seemed to limit continued unwanted non-sexual touching, but not other sexually harassing behaviors.

The 2024 prevalence survey indicated an estimated 51 percent of MSA women (statistically unchanged from 50 percent in 2022) and an estimated 56 percent of MSA men (a statistically significant increase from 54 percent in 2022) perceived others in their company/squadron recognizing and immediately correcting behaviors that could constitute sexual harassment. While these changes are relatively small quantitatively, the Academies can highlight this progress to encourage more cadets and midshipmen to point out when someone crosses the line with comments or jokes. Continued education and knowledge of what constitutes sexual harassment and how to appropriately intervene can lead to more cadets and midshipmen feeling empowered to step in and correct these unwanted incidents.

Lastly, cadet and midshipman open-end comments provided insights into how sexual harassment is treated at the Academies. Comments described instances of perceived retaliation against sexual harassment complainants by both peers (i.e., ostracism) and leadership (i.e., maltreatment or other negative sentiments), which may expose students to further retaliatory behaviors and distress, as well as impede recovery from these negative experiences. The leadership provided at all levels of the Academies to maintain a command climate that prevents sexually harassing behaviors, along with the MSAs continued commitment to grow leaders of character, remain crucial to achieving long-lasting change.

¹⁶ Full definition also includes “Conduct that constitutes [the] offense at Paragraph 107a of Part IV of the Manual for Courts-Martial [and] is punishable under Article 134 of the UCMJ.”

Theme 2: Sexual Assault Prevention and Training Efforts

Across Academies, there were improvements in cadet and midshipman perceptions of SAPR programs in 2024, noting the programs created an overall awareness of unwanted behaviors and promoted how all should take action against sexual assault. As a result, students noted feeling safer at the Academies. Between 2022 and 2024, cadet and midshipman open-end comments about trainings and programs received mixed feedback. Student-led prevention groups were viewed positively and cadets and midshipmen reported feeling more connected to these types of programs over other academy staff-led prevention efforts. Other promising trainings receiving comments included fact- and scenario-based trainings, healthy relationship training, and prevention programs and trainings that promoted general awareness of safety and surroundings.¹⁷

Cadets and midshipmen suggested improvements to current training and programs at the academy level include using small group discussion formats; adding more training on confidentiality for those involved in sexual assault prevention and response; covering sexual assault topics more in depth; discussing what constitutes sexual assault; and recognizing crisis indicators before they worsen. Comments indicated a desire to have more training on improving bystander intervention, healthy interpersonal and conflict management skills, and teaching healthy relationship and socialization skills.

Theme 3: Sexual Assault Reporting and Response

Cadet and midshipman open-end comments discussed perceived barriers to the sexual assault reporting and investigative processes (e.g., victim blaming, disbelief in victim allegations, stigma). While the policies, systems, and programs in place at the Academies fostered a culture that felt supportive for some respondents, others mentioned that these systems must do more to ensure victim privacy when reporting incidents of sexual assault.¹⁸

Numerous open-end comments in the prevalence and *DEOCS* surveys mentioned the long length or duration of the investigative process. While some respondents felt that the investigative process needed to take less time to protect victims and maintain their trust in the system, others felt that the investigative process needed to take sufficient time to gather necessary evidence to make an accurate determination. Although the MSAs have implemented physical separation policies, some cadet and midshipman respondents perceived that the investigation has to conclude before any protective actions can be taken, causing victims to spend more time in proximity to the alleged offender.

Beyond the investigative process concerns, respondents noted that victims making reports of sexual assault could be retaliated against for reporting (i.e., ostracism) (DoDI 6495.02, Volume 3, “Sexual Assault Prevention and Response: Retaliation Response for Adult Sexual Assault Cases”). Open-end comments revealed that cadets and midshipmen were aware of victim blaming and others spreading rumors about victims. Similarly, some comments described a presumption of guilt for alleged offenders within academy culture, which in turn may prevent

¹⁷ Since OPA collected these comment data, many Academies have begun offering healthy relationship trainings and have generally been responsive to the demand for more engaging training.

¹⁸ It is important to note that OPA administered the 2022 and 2024 prevalence and *DEOCS* surveys prior to the implementation of the OSTC, which shifted prosecutorial discretion for covered offenses from the chain of command to special trial counsel.

more victims from reporting because they do not want to be seen as “ending” someone’s military career.

Open-end comments from the prevalence and *DEOCS* surveys mentioned the concept of false reporting. Respondents expressed a desire to know what is done in instances where a false report occurs, as well as what resources an individual has access to when they are falsely accused of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Cadets and midshipmen expressed concern that false reports may negatively impact their military careers, academy culture and cohesion, as well as derail the mission of the Academies to train and provide future officers with the tools needed for their military service.

Theme 4: Academy Leadership

Comments about academy leadership focused on specific actions they took on sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention and response, as well as the importance of leadership (i.e., superintendent and commandant) holding cadets and midshipmen, staff, and other academy leaders accountable for these problems. In this section, it should be noted that respondents were not always clear what level of leadership they might be referencing. For example, in addition to the Academy senior leadership (i.e., superintendent and commandant), there are mid- and lower-level military officer leaders of varying rank throughout the cadet and midshipman supervision chain. There are also cadet and midshipman peer leaders within the student body. Unless indicated, not every comment about leadership should be understood as referring specifically to superintendents or commandants. The comments are presented as qualitative context for how some cadets and midshipmen interpret their experiences rather than the Department’s assessment of leadership conduct and effectiveness.

Across Academies, open-end comments identified that superintendents and commandants emphasized the importance of preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment. These leaders’ close involvement in the development of education and prevention programs is crucial in communicating the gravity of sexual assault and sexual harassment, with some open-end comments suggesting seeking input from cadets and midshipmen as an additional step. Additionally, some cadets and midshipmen perceived academy senior leadership as taking sexual assault and sexual harassment seriously, thereby creating a safer academy environment.

These insights corroborated results from the 2024 prevalence survey in which perceptions of leaders at various levels improved since 2022. According to the 2024 survey, an estimated 83 percent of cadets and midshipmen indicated that academy senior leadership (i.e., superintendent and commandant) made honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and harassment within the last year, an increase from an estimated 71 percent in 2022. Further, an estimated 78 percent believed that commissioned officers in charge of their units and an estimated 67 percent believed cadet or midshipman leaders were making honest and reasonable efforts to stop sexual assault and harassment within the last year, both of which increased compared to perceptions in 2022.

However, analysis of other survey comments revealed that some cadets and midshipmen perceived academy leadership emphasis on preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment as inauthentic. Cadets and midshipmen noted this perceived inauthentic response by higher leadership resulted in sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention efforts being shifted to either immediate leadership (i.e., junior officers, Non-Commissioned

Officers [NCOs]) or cadets and midshipmen. Others mentioned that leadership did not take this topic seriously and described how leader and officer consistency varied. Some leaders (particularly junior officers and NCOs) were perceived as dismissive of prevention and response efforts while others have been seen as supportive. Respondents in all surveys desired to see their leaders be consistently supportive when dealing with occurrences of sexual harassment and sexual assault. For example, respondents appreciated that leaders (i.e., junior officers, NCOs) stepped in to help and support victims, regardless of the views of higher-ups in the chain of command.

Lastly, some cadets and midshipmen perceived that academy leadership sometimes avoided taking disciplinary actions when alleged offenders held a high rank or have a higher perceived influential status over other cadets or midshipmen (i.e., athletes, relatives of senior military officials). Cadet and midshipman respondents, across both surveys, voiced concerns about the negative repercussions that survivors might face when an alleged offender was in a leadership position. Respondents suggested improving accountability among leadership to act if they became aware that one of their peers was accused of sexual assault or sexual harassment. While the Department does not have specific evidence to support or refute these perceptions, it is important to ensure the Academies create an environment where victims feel safe reporting and alleged offenders are held appropriately accountable.

Way Forward

Our Nation's Military Service Academies forge officers capable of meeting high standards and expectations. Harming or sexually harassing fellow warfighters has no place in the warrior ethos. Mission readiness depends on military units that maintain an unwavering focus on winning the next battle. The Department and Academies will continue to prioritize initiatives that reduce internal threats to readiness, hold those who violate our standards appropriately accountable, and provide best-in-class care and assistance to cadets and midshipmen impacted by sexual assault and sexual harassment.